

6 TIPS ON HOW TO COMMUNICATE TO STAY CONNECTED WITH YOUR CHILD



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Raise your words,
not your voice.
It is rain that
grows flowers,
not thunder.

— RUMI

THE QUALITY OF YOUR COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR
CHILDREN EITHER NOURISHES YOUR RELATIONSHIP OR
PUTS DISTANCE BETWEEN YOU.



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PUT CONNECTION FIRST

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How often do we think about the quality of the relationship we have with our children?

As parents, we all strive to help our children to get good grades, to develop good habits, and to behave consciously.

And as a result, we too often find ourselves mainly disciplining, redirecting, correcting, and nudging. And it seems as if the more we care, the more our relationship with our children suffers. Every little thing can seem to turn into a big deal.

However, it doesn't have to be this way. We can start building a strong foundation for our connection with our children when we focus less on what we say and more on how we say it. Through conscious communication, we will experience less conflict and power struggles, and our words will be heard and have more impact.

Everything seems to become so much easier when you have a good rapport with your child, and he senses that you care and love him no matter what, she will care about what you have to say and will listen to your advice. And you will, without any doubt, experience greater ease and joy in your interactions.

So let's explore *how* to communicate to stay connected.

One of the keys to communication that develop connection is using *uplifting words* with our children.

The words that we choose when speaking with our kids go a very long way. They can make a tremendous impact on how our children feel, think, and behave.

We may be able to get away with using poor communication when our children are younger because they look up to us as heroes and cannot fight us back with their words.

But as they grow older into teenagers and begin to have a mind of their own, they may not be as apt to take negative communication from us anymore. If we speak to them disrespectfully, put them down, or judge them, they will most likely roll their eyes, answer back, or walk away.

Distance between our children and us is created slowly over time with each interaction.

On the other hand, when we use more uplifting language, it builds their self-esteem and self-worth, they feel heard, seen and connected to you and, therefore, are more likely to stay present in the conversation.



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USE UPLIFTING WORDS

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Appreciate. Acknowledge. Ask

Some examples of uplifting communication:

- Instead of saying *"Don't throw the ball inside!"* say *"Please take the ball outside"*
- Instead of saying *"Don't yell at me ..."* say *"I hear you better when you ask nicely..."* When we tell your children what you want them to do rather than what you don't want them to do, it puts the focus on the desired action and increases your chances of a positive outcome.
- Instead of just saying *"No!"* say *"I know you like more candy, but eating too much of it isn't healthy."* Unless you're dealing with a serious safety issue, for example, near a road or a swimming pool, explaining the reason behind your "no" helps children feel respected and included.

Our body language and facial expressions play a big part in our communication. You may be using positive words, but if you're not aware of it, your face and body may be stating the exact opposite.

For example, you might be saying, "I'm not upset, it's ok," but standing there with your arms crossed or with your lips pursed clearly showing anger and frustration.

The point is to bring our whole self to a place of love, compassion, and understanding. So even in a necessary disciplinary conversation with our children, they will feel our love and support.

Let your face, body, and heart sync together to deepen the connection with your child regardless of the situation at hand.



WATCH YOUR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND BODY LANGUAGE

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THE POWER OF PAUSING

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One of the more simple yet profound tools to use in conscious communication is pausing before speaking.

When you pause before you speak, you create the space necessary to check in with yourself and get in touch with how you feel. You may be feeling stressed, anxious, or angry, all of which are normal reactions to challenging situations with our children, but speaking from that place isn't useful. Effective communication starts with creating the space that the other person is open to hearing from you.

Pausing allow you to center yourself before responding, which will enable you to manage your own emotions and finding a more neutral and calm place to listen and speak.

An essential part of communication is learning how to listen. It is crucial to make eye contact, pay attention, and letting our children finish their sentences. But it is also important to look between the lines to what our children say to us indirectly.

When your child is speaking to you disrespectfully, try to look beyond the offensive act and listen to what he is trying to say.

Often, when our kids communicate with us with anger, frustration, or disrespect, it is a cry for help. When we are able not to take it personally, we can hear what they are crying for, and respond to what they need. That's how instead of getting into an argument, we are getting closer.



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ACTIVE LISTENING

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THE POWER OF SILENCE

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Another whole level of communication that is just as important and, at times, even more, powerful is silence.

Often, we feel uncomfortable sitting in silence, feeling that we have to say something, ask questions, and comment on anything to break the silence. But when you learn to get comfortable and stop trying to fill up space with words, you will be surprised how you will feel.

There is so much we can say without words. We can give reassurance, love, acceptance, and feel a deep connection.

Silence can sometimes be the best response when your child misbehaves. Not responding or not calling them out on the way they behaved or spoke to you can be way more powerful and impactful. Don't be surprised if your child will come back soon and say, *"I am sorry for talking to you this way."*

Our children innately know right from wrong, and we may think we need to keep reminding them, but sometimes giving them the space to realize on their own can be a beautiful gesture of trust.

Notice the situations when not saying anything may be more appropriate than words and find times to spend with your kids in silence.

Summary

When we make our connection with our children a priority, we naturally use words and a tone of voice that uplift, we pay attention to our facial expressions and body language to match our love and compassion. We pause before we speak, we actively listen, and we choose being silent when it's due. That's how we slowly build a strong foundation for a sincere and loving relationship with our children and with ourselves.

TIPS TO REMEMBER

- Use uplifting language.
- Communicate with respect.
- Watch your facial expressions and body language to reflect your love and compassion.
- Empower your children to feel they have choices.
- Give your children the space to express their emotions, no matter how uncomfortable it is for you.
- Always keep the door open for a conversation.



About Michal Berg

As President and CEO of Spirituality for Kids, a certified professional coach, and a mother of five beautiful, imperfect human beings, I have come to see parenting as a transformational journey for our children and us, parents. I believe that children teach us just as much as we teach them. As we parent our children, we also have the opportunity to let go of old patterns, grow-up, and connect with our souls.

I welcome you on a joyful quest to create strong and meaningful connections with your children, so you can truly support them as a channel of love, compassion, and self-awareness. Your commitment and courage will generate greater peace and harmony within your family and within your community and the world.