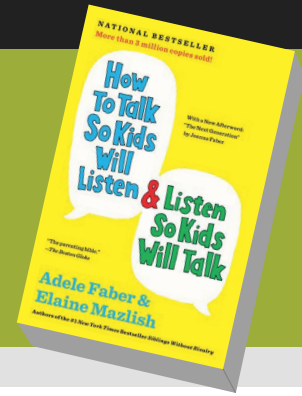


HOW TO TALK SO KIDS WILL LISTEN & LISTEN SO KIDS WILL TALK

Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish

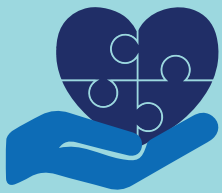


Master the **6 essential skillsets** below to communicate more effectively with children of all ages.



You can combine the skills & techniques and **personalize the approach** to suit you and your child's unique nature, needs and relationship.

Communicating Effectively with Children



Help children to deal with their feelings



When we're upset, what we really want is **empathy** or someone to acknowledge how we feel. This helps us to open up, talk about the issue and work things through.



Unhelpful approaches include: asking questions, denying their feelings, defending the "villain", giving advice, philosophical replies, pity, or psychotherapy.



To help a child to deal with negative feelings:



Listen with full attention when they share their problem.



Acknowledge their feelings with words like "Oh", "Hmmm", or "I see".



Name the feeling ("you seem sad") so they feel understood.



Grant their wishes in fantasy ("I wish I could..."). Don't reject them with logic.



Engage cooperation



It can be hard to get kids to **behave in socially-acceptable ways**. They don't seem to care, and the more we push the harder they resist.



Unhelpful approaches include: blaming/accusing, name-calling, lecturing, issuing threats/warnings/commands, using sarcasm, martyrdom, comparison, or prophecies of failure.



To encourage cooperation without negative feelings:



Describe the problem (what you see).



Provide info so they know what should be done and why.



Say it with 1 word, not long sentences.



Express your feelings; don't attack their character.



Write a note. It can work wonders.



Use alternatives to punishment



Adults **punish** children to keep them from getting out of hand, or because they don't know what else to do.



Punishments don't bring about real repentance. The child is likely to **fantasize about possible revenge** instead.



To gain cooperation without punishment:



Point out a way to be helpful.



Express strong disapproval.



State your expectations.



Show them how to **make** amends.



Let them **choose** between 2 options.



Take action if necessary.



Let them experience the **consequences** of misbehaving.



Problem-solve: Talk about their needs/feelings → Talk about your needs/feelings → Brainstorm solutions → Select idea(s) → Follow through



Encourage autonomy

It's nice to feel needed by your children. But if you constantly offer advice or do things for them, they may end up feeling **frustrated, resentful and helpless**.



To nurture independent, responsible & competent kids:



Let them make **choices**.



Respect their **struggles**; don't do it for them.



Limit your number of **questions**.



Point out **resources** outside the home.



Don't **micro-manage** what they say/do.



Don't rush in with **answers**. Let them explore.



Don't kill hope by preparing them for disappointment. Avoid the word "no" if possible.



Give descriptive praises



Most parents are **quick to criticize and slow to praise**. Or, they may praise in a way that backfires (to being more anxiety and self-doubt).



Use **descriptive praise** to show your appreciation and help children to praise themselves in future.



To build self-esteem with descriptive praises:



Don't just share a generic evaluation. **Describe what you see and feel**: "I see the toys are on their shelf. It feels so good to step into a tidy room."



Sum up the praiseworthy behavior in **1 word**, e.g. "You did [describe activity]. That's what I call taking *initiative*!"



Help children to deal with their feelings

Labels that we use on children (e.g. playful, stubborn) can create a **self-fulfilling prophecy** as they start to behave according to our expectations. Liberate your children by helping them to see themselves differently.



To liberate children from roles and labels:



Find/create situations where they're **seen in a new light** (e.g. when a "stubborn" child shows flexibility).



Let them overhear you **saying something good** about them.



Role-model the desired behaviors.



Remind them of their special moments.



State your feelings & expectations when they act according to old labels.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER



Practice these 6 skillsets with the exercises in the book/text summary.



Be patient if you don't get immediate results. Try to combine the skills/techniques in different ways.



Remember: your **attitude** is as vital as your words. Always treat children with care and respect.



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