

Discussion Exercise



Recall some memorable positive words told to you while growing up and share the effect they had on you.



Negative Words

Our words may backfire on us even when we do not even think they are negative. This gets especially tricky when used in connection with disciplining children, and any good study of parenting needs to address discipline. “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6 NIV).

This is a large subject in itself and we could take several courses on just this. H. Norman Wright does an especially good job of balancing the praise and corrective elements of discipline in his book, Pre-Hysterical Parenting-The Frazzled Parent’s Guide to Harmony in the Home.

Here are some phrases that we all use that Wright says can boomerang on us:

- “Do this”, “Do That”, “Get Dressed” (“maintenance talk”, child tunes us out)
 - “How many times do I have to tell you this?” (Are we supposed to count them?)
 - “Can you behave?” (a stupid question--of course he can)
 - “What do you think you are doing?” (Will this really get you somewhere?)
- (Wright, 2001, pp. 97-101).

Discussion Exercise



Sometimes negative words would best be left unsaid and be replaced with more effective wordless actions. Discuss how you could do this with the word expressions above.



It’s Not What You Say, It’s How You Say It

As adults most of us are very touchy about how people talk to us. It is not necessarily what is being said, it is the tone that is being used. We are sensitive to be sure that we are treated with respect and are being understood and listened to. Our children are no different. They are

sensitive, too, and can be corrected without a “put down”. The way we correct can make a big difference as to whether they accept correction from us or rebel against it.

Discussion Item



Your child did not come home at the appointed time and you now have to correct him. What would be the best way to tell him the bad news?



SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES

In the space provided, write down your own thoughts about what the verse means and how it applies to parenting. Be prepared to share in class.

Philippians 3:13,14 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on... (NIV)

Proverbs 18:21 The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. (NIV)

James 3:5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. (NIV)

TRUE/FALSE TEST

Choose True or False for each answer below.
Share your answers with the group.

1. We should forgive ourselves because...
 - a. God has forgiven us.
 - b. we won't be much good to anyone else until we do.
 - c. if we don't we won't be able to move forward like we should.
 - d. None of the above. We should never forgive ourselves. We should think about it all the time or we might do something wrong again.

2. "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me..."
 - a. is a true statement.
 - b. means that we should "use the rod" instead of talking to our children.
 - c. suggests that we should make our children tough by speaking roughly with them.
 - d. means that what we say to our children is not important.

3. Telling a child, "Don't ever trust anyone" ...
 - a. is a good thing. It teaches the child to be tough and realistic.
 - b. is a good thing. It shows the child that you are looking out for her.
 - c. is sometimes a good thing and sometimes a bad thing.
 - d. is a bad thing. Don't ever tell a child that. You may destroy a vulnerable little life.

4. Telling children you love them ...
 - a. is a good thing. They need to hear that to be secure.
 - b. is a good thing. It will make them feel worthwhile and help them to flourish.
 - c. is sometimes a good thing and sometimes a bad thing, especially when you want to punish them or teach them a lesson.
 - d. is a bad thing. Children need to be shown love – not told it. Words are empty.

5. Instead of angrily making statements like "can't you ever learn anything?" it might be more appropriate to discipline a child by ...
 - a. calmly telling him that you have given up all hope in him.
 - b. totally ignoring the situation without saying anything.
 - c. just impose some restriction without a lot of words or fanfare.
 - d. Spank him three times, telling him calmly, between each swat, that you doubt he will ever make it.