

Love & Logic Tips

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Dealing with Power Struggles:

Power is a major issue between children and adults. While still very young some kids realize they don't have much control over anything. A toddler unconsciously thinks "I'm the smallest. They tell me what to do, and I don't get to make decisions. I need to find a way to get some control." Then, winning the power struggle becomes all-important – more important than making good decisions.

When we offer kids a choice instead of making a demand, no power struggle ever begins. When we make a demand we own the wise choice, leaving the child with only one way to win the power struggle – by making a foolish choice. Given a range of choices, a child has endless opportunities to choose wisely.

How to destroy the teaching value of a logical consequence:

- Say, "This will teach you a good lesson"
- Display anger or disgust
- Explain the value of the consequence
- Moralize or threaten
- Talk too much
- Feel sorry and give in
- Contrive a consequence for "getting even"

Rules for giving choices:

- Always be sure to select choices that you like. Never provide one you like and one you don't, because the child seems have a sixth sense in selecting the one you don't like.
- Never give a choice unless you are willing to allow the child to experience the consequence of that choice.
- Never give choices when the child is in danger
- Never give choices unless you are willing to make the choice for the child in the event he or she does not choose within 10 seconds.
- Your delivery is important – try to start your sentence with:
 - You are welcome to _____ or _____
 - Feel free to _____ or _____
 - Would you rather _____ or _____
 - What would be best for you _____ or _____

Consequences with empathy:

Children learn from their mistakes:

- They experience the consequences of their mistakes
- Adults in their environments provide empathy

Bad choices have natural consequences. If David fails to wear a coat, he gets cold. If Jan misses the school bus, she stays home with an unexcused absence for the day. Adults are tempted to scold and reprimand but may be surprised to learn that children actually learn best from consequences when adults empathize:

- "I'm so sorry you are cold, David"
- "What a bummer that you missed an after school party on the day you were absent, Jan."

If adults reprimand them, children may transform sorrow over their choice into anger with the adult-and a lesson may be lost.

If adults express sorrow, children have a significant learning opportunity. David may think, "Tomorrow I'll wear my coat." Jan may decide, "I'll get up 15 minutes earlier tomorrow."

Consequences + Empathy = Learning

Tips for Parents

*The question we want our children to learn to ask themselves is "How is the next decision I make going to affect me?".

*Kids who have parents who make all decisions for them don't learn how to make their own decisions. Then, when they need to make a decision, they make it not based on what is right but on who is going to find out, how that person will react, and how they can hide it from that person. (Randy's Story - The Lifesaver Kit (cd's))

*Parents have a choice in how to deal with any situation. They can rant and rave, give in and take away the child's sadness, or they can allow the consequence to sink in, which will in turn create a life long lesson.

*Kids need to feel they have an investment in something in order to take it seriously.

*Kids often lie because the odds are on their side. They believe that if they tell the truth 100% of the time, they will probably get in trouble 100% of the time. But if they lie 100% of the time, they will probably only be caught 40% of the time. The odds are on lying.

*Kids need to understand that trust is about making and keeping agreements. The more agreements that are kept, the more trust is built. The more agreements that are not kept, the more trust is broken down.

*Remember to pick your battles wisely. Not many things are worth fighting over. If you choose to fight, you better win.

*Never argue with your kids. Always tell them what you will do, not what you want them to do. "I would love to have you sit with us at the dinner table when you can do it quietly." "Feel free to come watch TV with me when your homework is done." "Our car is leaving in 10 minutes, we'd love to have you come with us." No need to remind or nag. Tell them once; they are smart enough to remember if it's important to them.

*Keep in mind the 5 steps.

1) Lead with empathy. Sad not mad. "That must really be sad to get such bad grades" "That must be sad to have to miss that party you were looking forward to".

2) Now give it back to them. Remember : IT'S NOT YOUR PROBLEM!!!! "What do you think you're going to do?"

3) Give suggestions if they want them. "Would you like to hear what other kids have tried?"

4) If they say yes, give only suggestions you can live with if they pick them. Never threaten something you don't plan on following through with. "Some kids would ask their parents how they could win their trust back so when the next party comes, they are trusted enough to go." If they say no, go straight to "Well, I'm sure you'll figure something out. Let me know how it works out for you". Then walk away.

5) After you've given suggestions, let them decide what to do. "Do you think any of those will work for you?" They will say yes or no or come up with their own. Just let them know that you have confidence they are smart enough to figure it out and you would love to know what they decide and how it works out.

*Talk about the things the child likes to do and then explain exactly what you need to see from them in order to gain access to those things.

*Allow the child to have the power to gain access to the things that are important to him.

*Let the child choose what is important or the most critical thing for them to earn back.