



ACCEPTING CRITICISM FROM OUR KIDS



PUT THE RELATIONSHIP FIRST

Healthy relationships are built on the conflict-repair cycle. They are NOT conflict-free. In any healthy relationship, each member has the right to express their needs, feelings, and boundaries. Even (especially?) the parent-child relationship. If they'll let you, hold their hand or otherwise connect to show your receptivity and send safety cues.



MAKE THEM FEEL SEEN/HEARD

Young ones communicate without the typical nuance of more mature people. That doesn't make their message invalid. And creating safety and security means taking time to make sure they know you hear them, see them, believe them, and take their concerns seriously. "I hear you didn't like when I said..." "Yeah, you're right, I have said I won't yell anymore, then I did. I should have said I'm working on it and I'll probably mess up but I'll keep getting better."



DON'T GET OFFENDED

It takes tremendous trust to tell someone when they've crossed your boundaries. Most of us stay quiet instead (until we explode that is). VALUE this risk your child is taking. It means they WANT to have a good relationship with you, AND they know they are worthy of consideration and respect. Good job! You fostered that! This is not a personal insult, there is no malice. Thank them for telling you.



ASK WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you're repairing, ask what you can do to make it better.

If they are exaggerating (young kids speak in hyperbole), see what truth you can pull out and own that part to apologize for.

If they are just venting, see the feeling under the outburst and honor that.

Run a re-do and end with a hug or play. Repair complete.



MOVE ON!

Do NOT drown yourself in guilt or shame. This is not a bad process, you are not bad. You're human and you're raising a human who values your relationship and themselves. This is all good. You're still learning and growing and imperfect.

That's good too, because so is your child. If you need help building a plan on a particularly difficult behavior, a therapist or coach is a great tool millions of people use. We were never meant to do this alone!



*NOTE: IMPACT VS INTENT

I know without a doubt you did not *intend* to hurt your kids feelings or otherwise! I believe you. And, that intent does not negate the felt impact of our actions within our children's nervous systems. We are still responsible for our growth and change and our positive intention can inspire us to pursue that improved behavior so that our impact *can* match our intent. We can apologize for our impact and take responsibility even if it surprises us that something we thought was "fine" caused that impact to begin with. That doesn't mean we're a "bad" parent, it means we are learning how to be in relationship with this unique person. And I for one, consider it an honor to walk with these incredible kids!