

Helping You Navigate Your Journey Through Parenting

Connection Before Correction



BY: **KIM DEMARCHI**

One of my favorite quotes around the topic of parenting is “Where did we get the notion that in order to make children behave better, we must first make them feel worse?” Read this quote again. Slowly. Think about it. Powerful, isn’t it?

It’s a mistake to think the best way to help our children to do better is to criticize, shame, ridicule, humiliate, or punish them. Has that ever motivated you long term? This doesn’t mean you shouldn’t let your children know when there is room for improvement. It does mean that you don’t need to make them feel worse in order to get them to do better. Children usually know when they need to do better, just like adults usually know.

Extensive research shows that we cannot influence children in a positive way until we create a connection with them. It is both a brain and heart issue. Sometimes we literally need to stop dealing with the misbehavior and first heal the relationship. So, how do we create connections with our children?

- **Spend special time with your child.** What would create a greater connection for your child than to know you enjoy spending one on one time with him or her?
- **Listen.** Really listen. Stop doing whatever you are doing and give your child your full focused attention.
- **Validate your child’s feelings.** Don’t we all feel connected when we feel understood?
- **Share your feelings and thoughts when appropriate.** Remember that children will listen to you AFTER they feel listened to.
- **Focus on solutions WITH your child.** That is, after a cooling off period.
- **Ask curiosity questions.** By asking questions it helps children explore the consequences of their choices instead of imposing consequences on them. Sincere questions open the heart and the rational brain, thus equalizing connection.
- **Hugs.** As silly as this sounds, there are times when all of us need nothing more than a hug.

Once the connection is made, children are then much more open to hearing respectful correction. If the correction is seen to come from unconnectedness, the acceptance rate is much lower. If we as parents take the time required to develop

this wide, deep and durable connection, our less popular moves (correction) are more likely to be not only accepted, but effective.

Just like ourselves, children prefer to be treated as persons, not just behavior generating machines. The quality of the relationship we create with our child profoundly influences the course and the outcome of our biggest job ever - parenting our children to autonomy. Connection lasts a lifetime; the need for correction is a must, but minor in comparison. Remember, parenting is a marathon, not a sprint!



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at Passport To Parenting: Helping Parents Navigate their Parenting Journey. Kim’s goal for you is to help reduce conflict, foster mutual respect, and create deeper communication and connections with your loved ones. She can be reached through www.EmpoweredParenting.com or www.PassportToParenting.com.