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Coaching Skill Of The Month: Focus On The Important Issues

As parents we deal with numerous issues with our children on a daily basis. We are constantly teaching, fixing, planning, organizing and tackling obstacles both big and small.

Sometimes we can get so caught up in the moment that we lose track of what is really important. I often observe parents struggling with their children over seemingly minor items, while losing track of the big picture. This can create unnecessary stress for both parent and child, while doing absolutely nothing to resolve the important issues.

The next time you are caught in a power struggle with your child, ask yourself what is really important. Once you identify the most important point to resolve or lesson to teach, focus your attention accordingly.

If you feel that other side issues also need resolution, make a note of them, and attend to them at a later time.

Good Luck!

Greetings,

I hope this note finds you and your family well!

I am pleased to say that all is well at my end. I am so fortunate to be working with such inspirational people! My work is a blessing on many levels, and I appreciate the good health and support that allow me to pursue this career that I adore.



In March I look forward to hosting several Teleconferences, and continue to enjoy presenting parenting seminars, classes, and workshops, as well as working with individual clients.

On a personal note, last night was one of the most extraordinary evenings of my life! As a young child my oldest son experienced significant delays due to Autistic Spectrum Disorder. In his early years, sensory defensiveness and an inability to regulate his emotional or physical state rendered him "unavailable for learning."

Last night this same child, who is now almost 17, played in the final Junior Varsity basketball game for our local high school!! In the final minute, he scored two three-point shots and received rousing applause from his team, the opposing team, and the entire audience! After the game, his teammates congratulated him, included him completely, and treated him like any other member of the team. I will carry the treasure of this extraordinary and humbling moment in my heart for the rest of my life, and I know that my son will as well.

I am relaying this story as more than just a proud mother. I have a simple message to share. If you are frustrated, hopeless, or overwhelmed by your child's struggles, whatever they may be, NEVER GIVE UP! If you are exhausted, confused, or in pain, NEVER GIVE UP! If professionals tell you the situation is dire, NEVER GIVE UP. Envision your child as his or her healthier self. BELIEVE in your child, in yourself, and in the power of miracles! Sometimes they really do happen.

I thank you for your support, and for allowing me to share this very personal story with you.

Happy Valentine's Day,

Elizabeth Pflaum
AAA Parent Coaching Services

Love and Parenting

When I was newly married and totally self-absorbed, I used to end every conversation with my husband by saying "I love you." Often he would quote the Ninety's Rock Band, Extreme, and respond "More than words." Eventually, I understood what he meant, and recognized that love is reflected in our day to day choices, tone, body language and in everything that we do.

All too often the day to day demands of living get in the way of our ability to reflect

our love for our children in our behavior. I have heard many clients describe terrible guilt and sorrow over the discrepancy between their emotions and their actions with respect to their children. I have written this article with their pain in mind.

When I feel myself slipping into unconsciousness, I quickly try to visualize myself holding my child as an infant, absolutely enthralled by the intensity of a new mother's love. After a moment or two I feel myself naturally expressing my love again in the present. This is a simple but powerful exercise that I hope you will consider should the need arise.

Here are a few additional simple suggestions for expressing love to your child so that he or she really feels it:

- **CELEBRATE** small victories with enthusiasm
- **LISTEN** with attention and focus
- **PLAY** together every day -- this even works for teenagers, who still need lots of nurturing
- **BE PRESENT** when you are with your child. Try to clear your mind and appreciate the joy of the moment you are sharing. It is a gift.
- **HUG** freely and often.
- **IGNORE REJECTION** and do not let anger, defiance, or challenging behavior get in the way of your love for your child. Just keep on loving your child, and loving your child, and loving your child, and loving your child some more
- **LOVE UNCONDITIONALLY.** Communicate to your child that you love him despite his messy room, recent temper tantrum, or D on the math test
- **SPEAK TO YOUR CHILD WITH LOVE AND RESPECT.** Try to use encouraging language instead of sarcasm and put-downs
- **RECOGNIZE** when your child needs attention and give it
- **DISCIPLINE** with love instead of anger

Feeling loved on a deep level is absolutely transformative for children and adults. In addition, since we are always modeling behavior for our children to emulate, you will be teaching your child how to express love actively, which will enhance your child's life forever.



Protect Your Child's Right To Recess

Children need recess. A recent study conducted by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine found that children behave and learn better when they receive outdoor recess. As few as fifteen minutes a day of free play outside can make a difference in a child's learning and classroom performance.



Recess provides children with the opportunity to release pent-up energy and frustration, to improve social skills, and to relax by losing themselves in play. Recess allows children to benefit from exercise, and to return to the classroom better able to focus on their school work.

Unfortunately, many classroom teachers take away recess as a punishment for disruptive behavior, instead of applying a more positive and productive strategy. Ironically, often the children who need the release provided by recess the most to function at their best in class, are also the most likely students to lose it for poor behavior choices.

If your child reports that she is losing the privilege of recess as a consequence for some mistake, I urge you to speak with the classroom teacher. Perhaps by working together you can establish a more effective approach to managing your child's behavior in the classroom. If not, you have the right to advocate on your child's behalf to ensure that this important school support is not taken away.

Thank You

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this. Please feel free to share your current parenting challenges. I will try to address them in future newsletters.

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