

Better Words from Adults = Better Children's Outcome: Session Outline

Biography information:

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Subconscious mind vs conscious mind—

Understanding the impact of the subconscious mind on children—1) attitudes 2) beliefs 3) habits 4) sensory input 5) dreams and memories 6) body systems

Three facts about children: 1) literal 2) easily influenced 3) ears are always open and listening

***Unintended messages adults give to children can affect future outcomes like weight, fears, stress, confidence, bad habits, problems taking tests, fears when going to the doctor, sleep problems, and more**

Four specific strategies: Adults must understand and become aware that the language they use affects children's behavior, well-being, attitude, learning, health habits, confidence, self-esteem, skills, and more! Therefore, create the verbal patterns that get the desired results, both short term and long term.

1) Avoid red flag statements 2) Say what you want, not what you don't want 3) Find the opposite (flip so you don't get a future 'flop') 4) Use a neutral if opposite isn't believable

Ten language patterns you'll want to understand and avoid:

1) predicting 2) commiseration 3) use of negatives 4) 'lumped' together 5) fear based statements 6) always and never/absolutes 7) labeling 8) embellishing/catastrophizing 9) literal statements 10) 'try' statements

Practice examples to become an expert at using better words! Handouts 1-3

Conclusion: We all say things sometimes we wish we could take back. This presentation will help you think about what you say and how to say it to get best outcomes. Thank you for attending, and please contact me for questions or more information, or just to say 'hello'.

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Handout #1 Red Flag Statements: Ten Language Patterns to Avoid:

I call these 'red flag' statements, and encourage grownups to understand the possible ramifications before using statements like these indiscriminately. Do any of them seem familiar?

***Predicting**—"Just wait till you're older and you'll have the Smith Family Hips"..."That sugar makes you hyper"..."You probably won't like reading"

***Commiseration**—"I was a klutz too, when I was your age"..."I hated going to Speech Therapy too"..."I got car sick too"..."Math was hard for me too"...

***Use of Negatives**—"Don't"---"Don't forget to do homework"..."Don't be late"

***Lumped Together**—"You kids are the worst class I've ever taught!"..."You're all lazy"..."You all played like crap today, what's the matter with you?"..."Everybody hates practice"..."We have terrible eyesight in our family"...

***Fear Based Statements**—"Be careful, you might hurt yourself"..."I hope this plane doesn't crash!"..."Who wants to be tortured first?" (regarding giving a speech in class)..."Stay away from that spider/snake/bug/bee!" (Parents instill this fear into child)

***Always and Never Statements/Absolutes**—"You know you always get a stomachache before a test"..."She's always shy around new people"..."My kids never sit quietly, they are always so hyper!"

***Labeling**—"He/she/they is/are ____ (shy, nervous, anxious, naughty, ADHD, bossy, dumb, boring, smart, strong-willed, reliable, sweet, etc.). "Good" labeling can be detrimental also!

***Embellishing/Catastrophizing**—"You think THAT'S bad, when I gave birth to you they could hear me screaming two counties away!"..."You should have seen the blood when you cut your finger when you were little—I practically fainted!"... "That's the worst looking cut I've ever seen!"..."I just about wet my pants I was so scared!

***Literal Statements**—Children are very concrete. Even into HS age, they often have difficulty discerning sarcasm, making connections, interpreting tone of voice, double meanings, humor, etc. "Stop crying or Mommy won't come back from her work conference!"(Dad to 4 year old daughter—the daughter's subconscious absorbed 'Mommy won't come back!')

***'Try' Statements**—Well-meaning adults often use variations of the word 'try' but it usually elicits an opposite outcome. "Try to make the basket" (but you probably won't)... "Try to be nice to your brother" (but I don't really expect you to)... "Try to go to sleep" ... "Try to get into soccer" ...

Adults often say the same thing: "I'm trying to quit" (but not really)

Handout # 2 (page 1) Identifying (4) Strategies

Practice editing the statements below. How could they produce better outcomes if they were restated in a better way? Rewrite and identify which strategies apply:

- 1) **Avoid Red Flag** statements
- 2) **Say what you want** (not what you don't want)
- 3) Find the **opposite**
- 4) Find a **neutral** if can't do opposite.

Some educators may say things like this:

Don't forget to do Chapter 3 tonight.

Remember to do Chapter 3 tonight. (Opposite)

Don't run in the halls.

Walk slowly in the halls. (Say what you want or Opposite)

You are all 'ESTUPIDO' (Spanish teacher actually calling the class 'stupid')

Stop! Red Flag statement

You have to hold it in (can't use bathroom during class time)

If you notice you have to go, just let me know (teaches child to trust their body)

I know you don't want to go to Speech Therapy! I used to hate going there too!

Hey, it's okay, I've heard they do fun stuff in that room! (Get to neutral)

This is the hardest class you'll ever have in your life, and most of you will cry over all the homework you get from me.

We have our school assessments tomorrow so everyone has to try to get some sleep. I know you are nervous and anxious but you have to try. If you do poorly, our school won't get funding and your teachers will be fired.

They're so _____ (shy, naughty, hyper, good, slow, smart, etc.)

Tomorrow everyone will be presenting their projects/papers/reports to the class. You'll be nervous, but just try to do your best. And students, please don't laugh or fidget during the presentations because we all hate public speaking and it's hard to get up in front of the class.

Boys are better in math and science.

What's wrong with you Kendra? Did you lose your brain on the way to school today?

I don't know why I bother to stand up here and teach you kids—you never listen anyway!

Janelle you're so distracted—can't you ever pay attention?

Handout #2 (page 2)

Some preschool teachers may say things like his:

You cannot go potty now because it's circle time. (Bedwetting, hold in till relax at night)

Let's all go to the bathroom now...then we can enjoy circle time. (Say what you want...)

Eat your snack now—you are such a slow poke.

Thanks for finishing up now so we can do our next activity. (Say what you want.....)

You can't have your Popsicle now because you weren't good.

Show me how you sit quietly so I can give you your Popsicle. (Opposite)

It's time to lay down now, even if you can't sleep.

You are all hyper today!

Josie's such a shy child.

It's hard to keep your hands to yourself, isn't it Kelly?

Your parents are late coming to pick you up—they must not want you!

We need your parents to give donations or we won't have any fieldtrips this year.

Don't eat sand.

Some parents may say things like this:

Stop having a fit or I won't kiss you good night.

Relax...sit quietly....Now I can give you a kiss good night. (Say what you want...)

Be a good boy/girl... be quiet...

(Possible Red Flag--Child grows up and doesn't stick up for him/herself--confidence)

Zip your lips...Stuff it....Stop interrupting....Keep your opinions to yourself!

Red Flag Statements—biting, chewing, stuttering, confidence issues, teeth grinding

If you keep crying, mom's not going to want to come back!

Why did I ever have kids? Sometimes I wish you had never been born! You were a mistake!

Life is tough....It's hard....It's never easy...It's one problem after another!

This is going to hurt (fixing boo boos)

When you were little I picked you up and threw out my back... I've had back pain since then!

Go to your room and stay there (child feels isolated, locked in, fear of small spaces)

Eat everything on your plate...you don't want to let this go to waste (waist) LOL

Handout #2 (page 3)

Some coaches for sports and artistic performers (music, art, theater, etc.) may say things like this:

You just dropped an easy ball—what’s wrong with you?

You just have to practice more! (This can be a problem because you can “practice” it WRONG)

Kyle gets so anxious he makes himself sick before every game!

Just try a little harder.

I know you are all nervous about this piano recital/game/performance.

Smith High School is an unbeatable team, but we can still try.

That’s okay, everybody throws gutter balls.

Be careful, don’t strike out!

Everyone’s scared of balance beams.

I get sick before every performance.

Ballet ruins your feet.

Girls can’t play_____.

You’re not tall enough to play basketball.

Everyone gets saddle sore.

Got your 'water ball' ready? (golf)

Never eat before swimming; you'll get a cramp.

You'll probably throw up at the end but you'll make it (marathon and cross country)

In football you're going to get hurt.

Handout #2 (page 4)

College students/parents/professors may say things like this:

Get a real major; you don't want to be a starving artist.

Everybody parties in college.

Nobody gets any sleep.

Nobody works and goes to college at the same time—you can't do both.

Nobody gets above a C in that class.

Nobody uses _____ (chemistry, biology, etc.) after college.

Everybody gains the Freshman 15.

I just know I'm failing that class.

Handout #3

Adult's Words May Have Future Implications

Hypnotists help people with many things, such as **sleep, confidence, weight, self-esteem, fears, sports/ artistic performance, study/test taking, elimination of fears, bad habits, stress, focus, motivation, dental issues, limiting beliefs**, etc. Hypnotists know if you change the words, you can change the outcomes. Let's help adults help children we love and care for, to be their best selves, now and in the future!

Find issues (above) and match to sentences (below). Why might these statements be problematic for kids when they are older? Rewrite statements, incorporating strategies, **for better outcomes**.

(Example) If you're good, we'll get ice cream on the way home. (*weight, bad habit, reward*)

Rewrite: *Thanks for behaving nicely while we were out. I'm proud of you!*

John is such a light sleeper--he wakes up at the least little sound....Takes him forever to get to sleep!

Sorry kid, but you're built like the Smith side of the family—they're all shaped like pears.

Now I know all of you are nervous about performing in front of your parents for our recital today...

What is *wrong* with you today? Can't you do anything right?

Otto is a slow reader.

Cameryn gets so stressed out!

Math is hard for you.

That candy will make all your teeth fall out and you'll have to go to the dentist.

Be careful or you might fall off/in/down.

She always gets nervous before a test.

I'm sure you'll find a friend next year.

Watch out! There's a spider!

You can eat anything you want now, but when you are older it will catch up with you.

All women get cramps.

Stop talking now!

Sometimes I wish you had never been born!

We have to get your shots—yes I know they hurt but you have to have them.

It's that time of year again—everybody's sick.

Your eyesight will get worse when you're older.