

The 3 Biggest Mistakes Parents Make When It Comes to Discipline ...and what to do instead!



A **NO-YELL**™ *Parenting Guide* *To Positive Discipline*

by Kathy Whitham, RN

Parenting Beyond Words

Because connection matters more than perfection!



Congratulations!

Reading this positive discipline guide is already a step toward more peace at home.

No-Yell™ Parenting Coaching is designed to give you a solid foundation for calm, confident parenting, effective, compassionate discipline and deeper, more connected family relationships. My programs are based on the following 7 principles:

1. **Connection matters more than perfection.**
2. **The better you do, the better your child does.**
3. **Your child wants to please you.**
4. **Behavior is an SOS, not an attack.**
5. **Small changes lead to big results.**
6. **What you focus on increases**
7. **Families are dynamic systems where all members affect each other.**

No-Yell™ parenting is not simply a technique. It's like an internal guidance system - a *Personal Parenting GPS* - to help you find your way through all different kinds of parenting challenges like: tantrums, not listening, sibling rivalry and power struggles over homework, screen time, bedtime, etc.

The *No-Yell™* foundation program takes you through these 6 steps:

- “N” is for NOTICE so you can step off the battlefield.
- “O” is for OPEN THE CURTAIN so you can speak your child's language.
- “Y” is for YOU FIRST so you can avoid power struggles.
- “E” is for EMOTIONAL AGE so you can get through to your child.
- “L” is for LISTEN so you can give your child a voice.
- “L” is for LOVE-BASED ACTION so you can respond from understanding.

When it comes to knowing what to do about discipline, it can be **just as important to know what NOT to do!** That's why in this guide to positive discipline, I'll be showing you the three biggest mistakes you might be making... and what to do instead by showing you the following **3 key No-Yell™ parenting steps and teaching you 3 effective positive parenting strategies:**

1. "Y" - YOU FIRST
2. "O" - OPEN THE CURTAIN
3. "E" - EMOTIONAL AGE

One of the 7 principles at Parenting Beyond Words is "Small changes lead to big results." So **don't rely on the strategy of wishful thinking** where you keep doing the same thing and hoping for a different result. Instead, **practice just one new, simple strategy** from this guide and do it every day, starting today, for a week. See what you notice. Then add the next strategy.

Some encouraging words from parents who've been through it...

*"When I started working with Kathy I felt so overwhelmed - like it was all beyond me and I had no idea how to handle what was going on with my kids. We were always yelling at each other, things would escalate and it was ugly. They weren't happy and I wasn't happy and i didn't know what to do. **Now...I feel very connected to my kids and am able to tune in to what they need in the moment.** When there is an outburst, like, "I hate you Mommy!" I can step back and know it's not about me and I don't have to take it personally. **I have confidence that we can shift from there and deal with what's really going on...and I know we're all going to be OK!"** Janine - MA, Licensed Acupuncturist, Yoga teacher and mom of 2*

"When our teenage daughter suddenly became increasingly volatile and out-of-control, my ex-wife and I turned to Kathy for guidance. Amazingly, she was able to coach us both at the same time over the phone. She helped us see what was beneath the behavior of our daughter that so concerned us. She guided us to alter our own ways of being with our daughter, and we learned to provide a safer, more stable, and more loving environment. That made all the difference. Our daughter is now calm, in control, and thriving."

Thank you Kathy! Jeff - CA, Life Coach, dad

*"I am happy to say that my yelling has decreased-- but that is not the most important part. When I do remember to stay calm and sink into myself, magic happens. Somehow I am getting the opportunity to **connect to my children and give them what I want to give them- love and soothing.** This is the parent I always dreamed I would be when the going got tough..."*

Barbara - NJ, Business owner and mom of 3

*"Now instead of **bracing** myself when my child comes into the room, I feel like I want to **embrace her**" R.K. - MA, mom of 3 teenage girls*

"I think the best thing I learned from you is to look beyond the behavior to try to understand what my child is really communicating...and what I get is a daughter who wants to talk to me more. And that's what I want. Connection matters more than perfection - it's true! The more I trust that, the more peaceful it is around here." Lois - CA, Physical Therapist, mom of tween girl

*"While our son still has his struggles, he has grown tremendously. **He can verbalize his feelings and is able to communicate much better.** We have worked tirelessly with him to identify things that cause him anxiety and Dawn and I are doing a much better job helping him through these difficult times he has. He has grown into a loving young man....We are constantly utilizing the information and strategies you gave us. Thank you for all the time you spent with us..." Erin & Dawn - moms of 8 y/o boy and 5 mo old foster child*

Mistake #1 Trying to Reason With Your Child

Do you ever find yourself trying to reason with your child or threatening to give them a consequence because they're not behaving?

Then you know how frustrating this can be! Without meaning to, this mistake can actually make behavior worse! I know traditional advice says consequences work, and sometimes they do with some kids. But for many kids, not only don't consequences work, they can make things worse! As a result, you may have tried using reason and consequences only to end up feeling like you're not doing a good job or like there is something wrong with you or your child.



Want to know why? Because when your kid is misbehaving, they're in a state of dys-regulation. Their left brain - in charge of **logic, language and words** - is OFF LINE! They're in no state to be reasonable. It would be like broadcasting on one channel when your child is tuned to a different one. It doesn't matter how loud you broadcast, you won't get through! Their right brain - which processes **non-verbally with images, imagination and intuition** is ON LINE! Their emotions are running the show. Your child needs you to connect emotionally to help bring them back to a state of calm regulation.

HOT TIP #1: Change the Channel

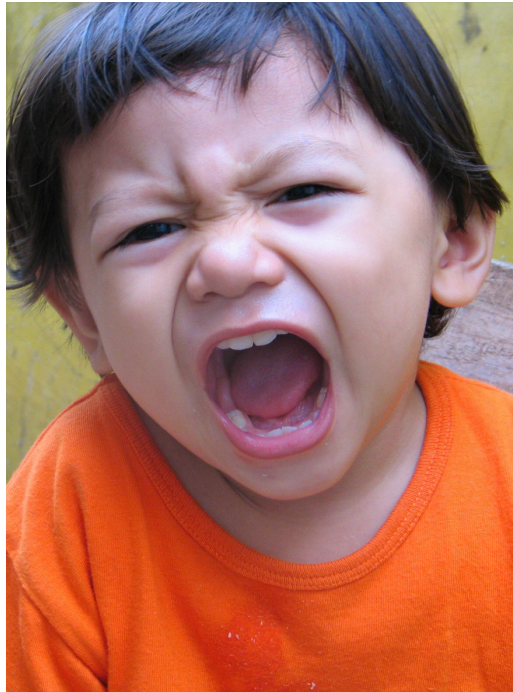
This mistake can be remedied by understanding that your first job is to become as calm and present as possible in order to diffuse the situation...not always an easy job when the s***t's hitting the fan! **"Y" stands for YOU FIRST.**

A simple, powerful, strategy for calming is to **PAUSE** and **take 3, slow, deep breaths in and all the way out before you say anything.** This starts to calm your stress, change the channel in your brain (on a physiological level) and you'll be able to think more clearly, follow the advice for mistakes #2 and #3 and better help your child.

Mistake #2 Taking It Personally

Do you ever take what your child does personally?

Of course you do! So do I. It's easy to feel hurt if you take your child's words and actions at face value. Sometimes what they do feels like a personal attack. It can also trigger some of your biggest fears about whether your child will be OK down the road.



Did you know behavior is the language your child uses to communicate their feelings of stress and overwhelm? Their brain is still immature and hasn't yet developed the complex wiring and executive functioning required to fully use their words. And, yes! This applies to your teenager too. (Remember in mistake #1 how the left brain, responsible for language, goes off line when your child is misbehaving?) So when they're in the midst of challenging behaviors, stress and overwhelm is driving the behavior.

Think of it like this: In the movie, The Wizard of Oz, the wizard appears like a big, scary, monster head, right? That's how your child's behavior can sometimes appear. When the dog, Toto, pulls the curtain open at the end of the movie, behind the

curtain is the "real" wizard who is small and uncertain. Behind your child's big, scary behavior is the "real" little child who is scared, stressed or overwhelmed.

That's why one of the principles here at Parenting Beyond Words is: **Your child's behavior is an S.O.S., not an attack.** Breathe and feel into that. I know it may be really different for you, but doesn't it feel less personal?

HOT TIP #2: Open the Curtain

This mistake can be straightened out by remembering "**O**" for **OPEN THE CURTAIN**. When you do, you'll **see the child behind the behavior** who needs your help. Step #3 will show you what to do once you open the curtain

Mistake #3 Expecting Them to Act Their Age

Ever felt your child's emotional & chronological ages don't always match?

It's true - especially when your child is being difficult behavior and you hear yourself saying, "you're old enough to know better!" Brain science tells us that **when we stress, we regress!** Think about the last time your child melted down in the middle of a store, or your teen stormed off and refused to talk to you. Did you feel helpless? Locked in a power struggle. I know just how that feels!

Now, imagine looking at your child in that same situation and ask yourself, "If it wasn't for the fact that I know he is 3 or 13 how old would he be?" What age came up for you? This is your child's emotional age in that moment of stress and overwhelm. Making the mistake of relating only to your child's chronological age leads to unrealistic expectations, frustration, anger and feelings of failure for both you and your child.

HOT TIP #3: Respond to Emotional Age

This mistake can be turned around easily by responding to your child's emotional age when they're acting out. First, ask yourself how old your child seems in the moment, and respond to him or her based on that awareness. In other words, ask yourself what you would do if they were literally that age and do that!

It might seem strange at first, but with this powerful insight of **"E" for EMOTIONAL AGE**, you will feel more connected to your child and more empowered to give them what they need emotionally. This will build the resilience your child needs to become more, not less, able to act her age.

In support,
Kathy





Kathy Whitham, RN, is a Child Behavior Specialist, Mom, Grammy and poet. She helps parents and caregivers at their wit's end to understand what's happening with their child and learn to respond rather than react to challenging behaviors and big emotions. Her *No-Yell™* approach promotes deep connection and communication for the long-term and lies at the intersection of brain science, attachment theory, inter-generational family dynamics and parents' inner wisdom.

When Kathy went through a divorce in 1993, she became a single mother of three, the oldest of whom was only 11. What she learned along the bumpy road that followed brought her to the great relationships she now enjoys with her grown children and inspired her to create Parenting Beyond Words in 2008. Since then she's gone on to work with hundreds of parents in both workshops and one-on-one, in-depth coaching sessions, helping them make sense of their kids' behavior and restore peace at home.

Kathy's multifaceted coaching style builds on over 30 years of experience as a nurse, holistic practitioner, yoga teacher, and artist, as well as a mom who imperfectly raised her three children to happy, successful adulthood. According to Kathy, the key to good parenting is to remember, "Connection matters more than perfection!"

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If you're looking for further help, I invite you to reach out for a 50 minute one-on-one consultation. It's designed to give you the opportunity for the following:

1. To talk freely about the challenges you're having with your child(ren)
2. To receive some immediate help, empathy and relief
3. To learn about my philosophy and coaching approach
4. To see if we might click as allies to achieve your goals for your family.

Find out more at <https://www.parentingbeyondwords.com/child-behavior-consultations>

Parenting Beyond Words celebrates diversity and welcomes LGBTQ+ families

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