

Top Ten Phrases to Instantly Be a Better Parent

By Judy Arnall

Many times as parents, we blurt out sayings that we heard as children and later vowed to never say to our own children. However, that is easier said than done. In times of stress, we revert very easily back to actions and phrases we heard and seen when we were parented.

Parenting skills are learned skills, and we can consciously effect change if we become aware of what needs to be changed. Here are 10 common parenting phrases and alternatives of “what to say instead” to nurture closer, caring, and more respectful relationships with our children.

INSTEAD OF:

TRY:

You are a bad boy!

**What did you learn from this?
What can you try next time?**

Hurry Up! We are late!

**It’s okay. Take the time you
need... (vow next time to leave
more time!)**

**Oh NO! Fudge! Look at
what you have done!**

**It really won’t matter five years
from now! I will show you how
to fix this...**

You need to...

I need you to...

Because I said so!

I'll explain my reasoning in five minutes when I'm not distracted so much.

Stop that tantrum right now!

You feel frustrated and angry. Can I give you a hug?

No!

I can see you really want that but I can't provide it right now.

You've wrecked my....

I'm really angry right now. I need to take a time-out.

Stop doing that!

Would you consider this?

Suck it up and stop crying.

It's okay to cry and feel your feelings. Want a hug?

Go play and leave me alone.

I love you!

Try any one of these substitutions today and you will see how much better your parent-child relationship will be. If you are not sure what to say and how to say it, especially in the moment, just offer a hug. You will be surprised how much body language can communicate empathy and affection, and then you can get on with solving the problem with your child.

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