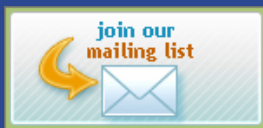


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Kids Won't Listen? Try This!

If you're a parent living with small children, you may often feel like you're invisible to your kids. After spending a day cajoling, reasoning, threatening and even screaming in an attempt to get your kids to behave, you may feel as if they never listen to you, much less respond. But all that talking is precisely the problem. If you feel like you're invisible, you're probably way too audible.

When it comes to discipline, silence often speaks louder than words. Many parents complicate the job of discipline by setting for themselves two goals instead of just one. Their first goal is to get the kids to do what they're supposed to do, which is fine.

But when kids don't respond right away, many parents add a second goal: getting the youngsters to accept, agree with, or even like the discipline. So Mom and Dad start reasoning, lecturing and explaining.

ONE EXPLANATION IS FINE

All this extra talking accomplishes only two things—both of them bad. First, it aggravates the kids, and second, it says to the children that they really don't have to behave unless you can give them four or five reasons why they should.

One explanation is fine. But the mistake many parents make is trying to reason with their kids as if they were "little adults," and too often adult logic does not impress or motivate young children. Once you say "No" to an obnoxious behavior, you should save your breath. Further pleading will irritate you more and give the child a chance to continue the battle—and the behavior.



Stop Nagging Your Teens

Nagging can be defined as a set of repetitive, often hostile, verbal reminders about something that one person wants to see accomplished. It is usually directed at a second person who does not share the first person's enthusiasm for the project.

Nagging never works well because it usually just produces friction. But it is a very frequently used parental tactic when Mom or Dad is trying to get a child to do something. This brings up a very interesting paradox: why would a parent—being a basically reasonable, intelligent, and well-meaning person—use a strategy over and over that has been proven time and again not to work? **Continued page 2**

There may be two answers. First of all, the parent may not know what else to do. Second, nagging is a spontaneous, poorly thought out action that comes primarily from emotional frustration.

Perhaps what is also behind nagging is a parental delusion that repetition will make the idea or request sink in. If asking the teen 22 times to clean his room didn't work, maybe the 23rd time will be the charm!

WHAT'S THE ANTIDOTE TO NAGGING?

What is the antidote to nagging? First be sure that what is going to be discussed is absolutely necessary, and then make an appointment with your adolescent to discuss the problem. Tell him—short and sweet—what you want to talk about, and agree on a time to get together

"I'm concerned about your grades. When would be a good time for the two of us to talk this over? It won't take very long." This is a better approach. Some parents' reaction to this, however, is something like, "Give me a break. What am I supposed to do coddle the kid all his life!?" This reaction is common and certainly understandable, but before talking to an adolescent about something sensitive you'd better ask yourself if you're just trying to cause trouble or if you are really trying to solve a problem. If you know in your heart that the likely reaction to your request or statement is going to be negative nine times out of ten, you had better come up with a different approach.

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