

Shift Behavior Patterns with Ease



OVERVIEW

- The subtle dynamics of relationship
- How to get out of a negative cycle
- Align yourself before responding to behavior

THE SUBTLE DYNAMICS OF RELATIONSHIP

Kids and parents are highly attuned to one another from birth in order to get information. Some kids are more fluent in subtle cues or energy than words.

Examples of subtle energy - Have you ever felt

- Someone staring at you?
- Drained?
- Energized?
- Like you were talking to a wall?
- Connected to or disconnected from someone?

You may know when your kids need to eat or go to the bathroom before they recognize it! Your kids may know how you're feeling before you recognize it.

When energy and words or actions don't match it gives a mixed message. Kids may follow energy over words. Or they may read parents' energy to see what their expectation really is.

Difference between control and influence

We can't control anyone else but we can influence them. We can't change anyone else, only ourselves. As long as we want someone else to change we are giving our power to them.

Parents and kids are each responsible for their own behavior. We all get into patterns and as parents it is our job to change ourselves first.

Guiding Question: How can I shift my being to help the situation?

Reflection: What situations or behavior patterns feel challenging right now? List a few and then pick one to pick with tonight.

HOW TO GET OUT OF A NEGATIVE CYCLE

A negative cycle can be internal to one person or between two or more people.

Examples:

Internal negative cycle – I’m too busy, this shouldn’t be happening.

Internal resistance keeps increasing making the situation worse.

A negative cycle between two people – One person does something.

Person 2 reacts to what person 1 did. Person 1 reacts to the reaction of person 2, etc. It becomes a downward spiral that gets worse and worse.

Why does this happen? The focus gets zoomed in on the “problem” and it gets larger and larger and more detailed. Soon the problem fills the entire field of vision.

Focus creates your experience and resistance fuels problems.

Zoom out of the problem

Take your focus back out to the big picture. Leave the problem for a moment. Make the problem really small. Shift your own energy first and then address the behavior or issue.

Release resistance through acceptance

Practice radical acceptance: What if this is supposed to be happening? What if this is not wrong? Or, from Eckhart Tolle: Accept your circumstances as if you had chosen them.

Ask open ended questions to engage intuition or right brain problem solving: How is this useful? What can I learn from this? How can I use this as a teaching moment?

Guided Exercise: Zooming out and releasing resistance

Reflection:

ALIGN YOUR ENERGY BEFORE ADDRESSING BEHAVIOR

The feeling of what you want vs. the feeling of what you don't want

Step 1: What do you want to happen?

Example: I want my child to brush his/her teeth easily and happily.

Step 2: Imagine or get into the feeling of what you want

Visualize, or feel what it is like when your child is brushing his/her teeth easily and happily. Feel the joy or relief.

Step 3: Practice asking from the feeling in step 2.

Of course s/he will do that, it's not a big deal

It takes practice, patience and repetition to develop a new pattern. Be easy with yourself and your kids.

In your situation, what do you want? Phrase it in the positive meaning what you want rather than what you don't want.

Guided Exercise: Getting into the feeling of what you want.

Reflection:

TAKE-AWAY

What's your biggest aha or take-away from tonight? What are you going to play with?

SOME OF MY FAVORITE PARENTING BOOKS

Unconditional Parenting by Alfie Kohn

Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child, by John Gottman

How to Talk so Kids will Listen and Listen so Kids will Talk, by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

Connection Parenting, by Pam Leo

Real Boys, by William Pollack

The Highly Sensitive Child, by Elaine N. Aron

Radical Collaboration: Five Essential Skills to Overcome Defensiveness and Build Successful Relationships, by James Tamm and Ronald Luyet