

I Wish I Didn't Have to Yell at My Children

Do you find yourself yelling sometimes just to be heard? Does the yelling frustrate you, but you feel there's no other way to get through? We find that parents often yell when they don't have a plan. Some parents don't know how to fix a problem with their kids so they become louder, thinking that the intensity created through yelling will have some kind of positive effect. It doesn't work.

Motivating with harshness can keep children in line or get them to accomplish a task, but that method damages family relationships. In Jer. 10:24, Jeremiah prays, "Correct me, Lord, but only with justice—not in your anger, lest you reduce me to nothing." In the end, it is closeness that provides parents with teachable moments and the relaxed enjoyment of family life. Yelling and harshness discourage trust, essential to help young people learn valuable principles about life.

You might be saying, "Wait a minute! My kids won't obey unless I get angry." If that's true, then maybe you've trained your children to respond to your anger as a signal that it's time to obey. Kids are smart. They know they can wait until the last minute before responding. They've figured out how many warnings you'll give, and they recognize the tone of voice that says you're ready to deliver a consequence.

One solution is to teach children to respond to a different cue. If yelling is the sign that you mean business, then change the cue to a more constructive signal. If you teach your kids that you'll back up your words sooner, without anger, then your dependency on anger to get things done will decrease.

For practical ideas about developing plans and avoiding anger

*in parenting, consider the book, Good and Angry: Exchanging Frustration for Character In You and Your Kids by **Dr Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN.***