



Children Communities Connections 2012



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One of the challenges regarding parenting training is that it is such a huge part of all of our lives. We've all had parents or are parents! It isn't really possible to come up with a training course that covers everything. In any group of parents we will find vastly differing issues confronting individual parents. So any parenting course will be a part of a journey rather than a 'complete guide'.

The Parenting Together 'the way it is' DVD and accompanying 'how it is' booklet is designed to be an adaptable resource that can form the basis of a 'parenting course' or just be picked up by individual parents or couples to help them on their way.

The DVD has segments divided into 5 sections which can be discussion starters for 5 group sessions. Sessions can begin with a look at one of the 5-10 minute clips and be followed by facilitated sharing on issues arising from the segment. Participants can then take with them what they have gained from the discussion and follow it up by using the material in the booklet in between sessions and hopefully for the rest of their lives.

This approach implies that facilitators need to have a fairly broad understanding of issues around parenting, yet never pretend to know it all. Some robust group discussion can be anticipated and this training is designed to give more in depth background information for facilitators in addition to the material that is in the DVD and booklet.



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Characteristics of Generation Y

Gen Y was born between 1980 and 1995 and are also known as the Millennium or Net Generation. Millennials are very technology wise and are comfortable with ethnically diverse groups. They are optimistic, confident, sociable, and have strong morals and a sense of civic duty.

Gen Y are not brand loyal and the speed of the Internet has led the Net Generation to be flexible and changing in its fashion, style consciousness and where and how it is communicated with.

- McKay, Hugh., 1997. *Generations*, McMillan Australia Pty Ltd

Generation Z

THEY are thoughtful, aware and moral, but doubt their ability to change their world. This is Generation Z, born in the early to mid-1990s, and now aged 16-22. They also known as Gen M (for multi-tasking), Gen C (connected), and the Net (or Internet) generation.

They are the compassionate and tech-savvy generation. "They are more cynical because they are so aware of being marketed to, but they are also empathetic because they are so much more aware of what is going on, not just in Australia but around the world. They have been exposed to a lot more. The IBISWorld analysis found a level of disengagement, with 50.8 per cent of Gen Z feeling unable to have a say on important community issues



- Naren Sivasailam 2012, IBIS World Market Research

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Some Defining Characteristics of Generation Y & Z

	Gen Y	Gen Z
Age Range	20's – early 30s	Kids & Teens
Iconic Technology	SMS, Playstation	MacBook, ipad
Popular Culture	X Box, ipod	Facebook, Twitter
Influencers	Baseball caps	Skinny jeans
Peers	Men's cosmetics	V necks
Learning Format	Experiential	User generated
Leaders	Peers	Forums
	Multi-sensory	Student-centric
	Visual	Kinesthetic
	Empowering	Inspiring
	Collaborators	Co-creators

- McCrindle Research 2012



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Texting and e-mail and posting let us present the self we want to be. This means we can edit. And if we wish to, we can delete. Or retouch: the voice, the flesh, the face, the body. Not too much, not too little — just right.

Human relationships are rich; they're messy and demanding. We have learned the habit of cleaning them up with technology. And the move from conversation to connection is part of this. But it's a process in which we shortchange ourselves. Worse, it seems that over time we stop caring, we forget that there is a difference

- Sherry Turkle Alone Together: Why We Expect More From Technology and Less From Each Other.



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As Gen Y's, we're accused of being self-centered. And it seems like when it comes to the choices that my generation seems to make for their kids, it appears those decisions are often rooted in self-centeredness. If you're an educated, professional Gen Y like myself, and you have kids or think you want to have kids, ask yourself this simple question, "Am I doing what is best not only for me, but for my child?"

- Mommy Bloggers, Parenting Magazines, Social Media, Facebook: Gen Y's Parenting Enemy?



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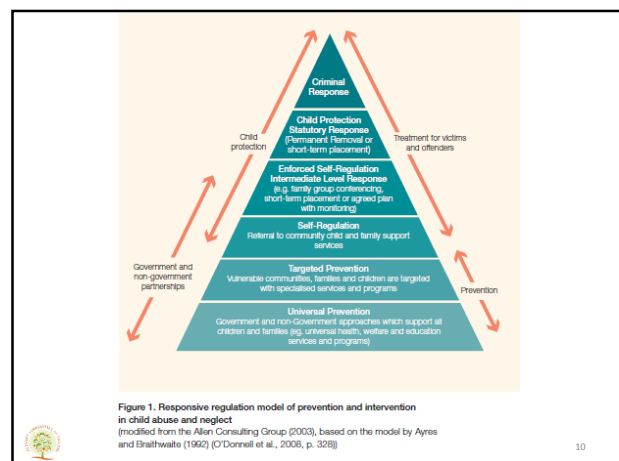
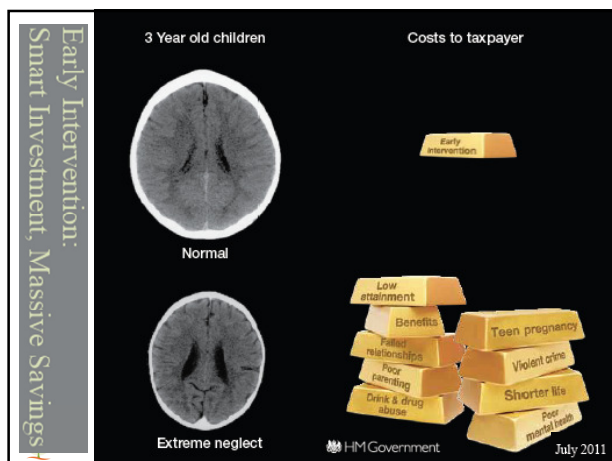
Young mums & dads parenting together Does anybody still do it???

An adaptable resource for:

- individuals
- couples
- families
- coffee conversations
- parent educators
- showbags
- shops
- birthdays

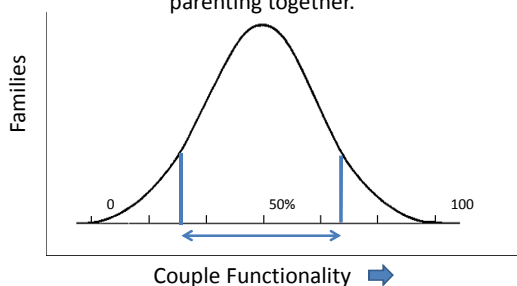


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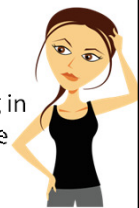
'How it is – young mums & dads parenting together' has a target audience of young mums and dads who have a mid range of functionality as a couple parenting together.



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•Services are not inclusive of the needs of young fathers when caring for mothers but that the inclusion of fathers is desired by young mothers.

•Quality of the relationship with the child's mother was a more powerful predictor of young fathers' remaining in contact or losing contact than was the background disadvantage.



- Quinton et al 2002



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A snapshot of fatherhood in Australia

20% of Australia's population is made up of dads. There are approximately 4.6 million dads in Australia, with an estimated 2.2 million dads currently with children aged under 18. Of these, approximately 156,000 are single-parent fathers, who look after 228,000 children, which averages at 1.5 kids for each single dad.

Interestingly, Google search trends show "Father's Day" was one of the most popular searches in Australia... in June 2012! Rather than it being about shoppers getting in early, this shows the globalisation of these events, as America's Father's Day took place on June 16.

- McCrindle Research



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Time spent fathering the same...but roles are a-changing

While fathers spend roughly four hours a day caring for their children (the same in 2006 as it was 11 years before in 1997), the role of the father has significantly evolved. In a study in 2010, it was uncovered that men under 30 are less likely to be adept at building a cubby house, fixing a tap or a punctured tire, but more likely to be able to change a baby's nappy, bake a birthday cake, wash clothes and drop the kids off at school. In comparison, mum's spend 8.5 hours caring for their children, up from just under 8 hours in 1997.

- McCrindle Research



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Children of highly involved dads tend to have:

- Better friendships (and with better adjusted children)
- Fewer behavioural problems
- Better educational outcomes
- Greater capacity for empathy
- Non-traditional attitudes to earning/childcare
- Higher self-esteem and life-satisfaction
- Lower criminality and substance abuse
- More satisfying adult sexual partnerships."

Invisible Fathers: Working with young dads
Fatherhood Institute 2010 p12



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The First Years

"Forming a secure attachment between the child and his/her parents is the most important developmental task of the first year of life."

- Silburn & Walker (2008)



- How it is p 7-11

- The way it is DVD Clip 3



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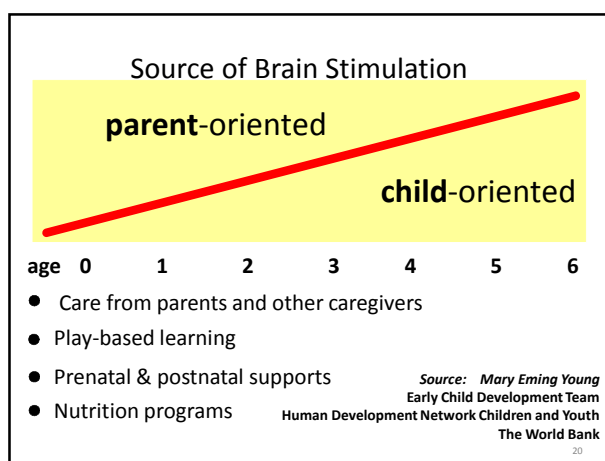
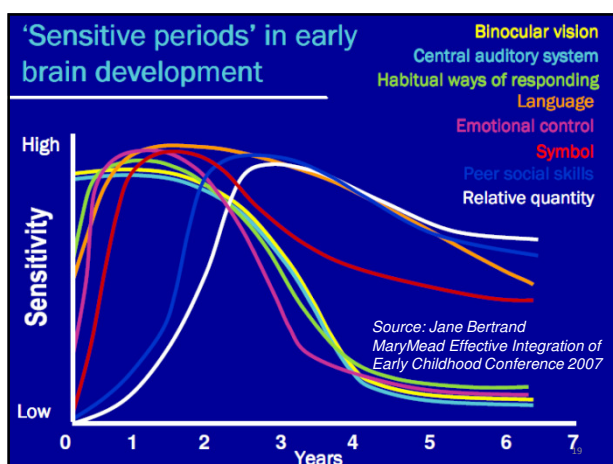
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Brain Development

- A newborn's brain is about 25 percent of its approximate adult weight. But by age 3, it has grown dramatically by producing billions of cells and hundreds of trillions of connections, or synapses, between these cells
- Early years research has shown that seventy five percent of brain development occurs in the first three years of life.
- Plasticity of brain is greatest in first 3 years
- Two-thirds of brain size is achieved by 2 to 3 years



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"There is now good evidence that the establishment of a secure attachment is aided by parents being responsive to their children's needs. A secure baby is confident that their needs- comfort, contact, hunger, thirst and pain –will be met and their expectations of others.



In contrast a baby that is left wet, cold or lying in a dirty nappy, left hungry or screaming for long periods is likely to be more panicky and angry and wary in their relationships with others."

(Manne 2008; cited by Silburn & Walker 2008, p13-14) and see also Schore (2009).

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When the development of social bonds is disrupted then social, behavioural and emotional states are not well regulated. (Perry, 2004)

These states are more disturbed when the disruption of social bonds is earlier in the child's life. This suggests that "attachment to caregivers may be subject to a sensitive period early in postnatal development and that early deprivation may lead to subsequent social and emotional disturbances in a dose-dependent manner.

- Nelson, Zeanah, et al., 2007; O'Connor, Marvin, et al., 2003; Smyke, Dumitrescu, and Zeanah, 2002.



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The **quality of co-parental relationships** in intact families is important for children's social-emotional wellbeing and that the same applies to separated families.

Where a single mother had an OK relationship with the father, children recorded a higher social/emotional index score than situations where the single mother had a hostile relationship or no contact with the parent living elsewhere. **It is important for parents to maintain a non-hostile relationship for the sake of the children and the ability for parents to do this is an important ingredient of "quality parenting".**

- Baxter, Qu & Weston 2009



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Changes

"Adults have a large role to play in creating a positive environment for children. This means:

- Supporting each other
- Discussing and solving problems together
- Using teamwork.

Teamwork is about working together to solve the solvable problems, managing the unsolvable ones and managing conflict should it arise."

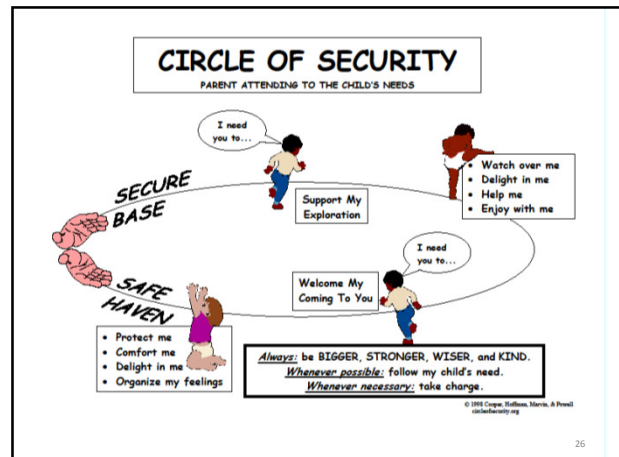
- Parenting Research Centre 2005

http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/parent_teamwork_skills_-_overview.html/context/304



- The Way it is DVD Clip 1

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How do we do parenting together?



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Parenting as a team



- How it is p 16-18

- The way it is DVD Clip 2



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Step 1.

Listen

Your child needs to **feel like they have been heard**. Don't always put them off. Ask them for more details. Ask them about their feelings.



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Step 2.

Agree and form an alliance with your child and partner

Once your children feel they have been heard ask them "**How are WE going to handle this?**" This approach takes out the power struggle which usually happens between parents and children.



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Working together is unnatural

- One of you tends to parent like police officer
- The other tries to parent like friend
- The police officer tries to discipline and feels no support
- The friend resents being told what to do
- The child wins!

www.thinkWE.com

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The well-kept secret of parenting

The United Front (WE)

- Look at each other
- Smile (to control the mood)
- Look back at child & say "WE"

www.thinkWE.com

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Parenting as a WE



www.parentingfamilies.com

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Include the Child in the WE

- As a parent, you are responsible to parent your children together
 - It is not a case of ganging up on the child
 - Ask the child for an opinion, including him/her in the WE
 - That will help the child grow up

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Step 3.

Boundaries

It shouldn't be the one who is loudest who always wins!! You need to **agree about what the boundaries are** for your children and what **consequences** there will be if they are crossed.



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Step 4

Rules

Keep the boundaries fair and develop healthy family rules that help you **work together as a team**.

Step 5

Emotional self-regulation

When the rules are broken or the boundaries crossed try to **be sad about it rather than angry** remembering anger is an emotion worth exploring.

- How it is p 25-31



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The Five Key Steps to Emotion Coaching - John Gottman

- 1. Become aware of the child's emotion**-To do this, a parent must be aware of and comfortable with their own emotions. This can be scary or intimidating, but is crucial in allowing for all feelings in a non-judgmental way.
- 2. Recognize the emotion as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching**-As parents, we can teach empathy, build intimacy with our children, and teach them ways to handle their feelings. Here, negative emotions are not threats to our authority or something else we need to fix. When you talk to your kids when problems are small, you show that you are their ally, and that together you can face their difficulties-they don't have to do it alone!
- 3. Listen empathetically, validating the child's feelings**-Here, listen in many different ways, with your ears for information, with your eyes for physical evidence of emotion, with your imagination to see the situation from the child's perspective, and with your words to reflect back what they are hearing and to help label emotions. But most importantly, use your heart to feel what the child is feeling. Simple observations may work better than probing questions in making a connection. Also, avoid questions to which you already know the answer-don't set up mistrust or ask them to lie.
- 4. Help the child find words to label the emotion he is having**-this goes hand in hand with empathy. Saying to a child who is in tears "You feel very sad, don't you?" not only shows understanding, but helps the child to describe this intense feeling. This is labeling only what IS, and not telling what kids OUGHT to feel. Be as precise with the child as possible-not just angry, but frustrated, jealous, enraged, or confused. It is important to name and allow for several, often contradictory feelings at once.
- 5. Set limits while exploring strategies to solve the problem at hand**-there are five steps involved here. **1-SET LIMITS**-set limits on the behaviors or actions, not the feelings or wishes. State clearly what is not appropriate about what happened. Allow here for "normal" kid stuff. Provide consequences that are fair, consistent, and related to the misbehavior. **2-IDENTIFY GOALS**-ask or work with your child to figure out what they would like to accomplish related to the problem at hand, whether it's accepting the loss that led to the anger, or fix the broken item that led to the tantrum. **3-THINK OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**-What can get you toward the goals? Have the kid come up with these as much as possible, directing them toward past successes (when older), but when young, try several and then decide what worked the best. **4-EVALUATE YOUR PROPOSED SOLUTIONS BASED ON YOUR FAMILY'S VALUES**-Validate their ideas, and perhaps use these questions-Is the solution fair? Will this solution work? Is it safe? How am I likely to feel? How are other people likely to feel? **5-HELP YOUR CHILD CHOOSE A SOLUTION**-Encourage them to choose, but involve yourself a bit more here. Tell how you solved a problem like this and what you learned from it. Allow them to pick one that you don't think will work, and encourage them toward another if it fails. Help this be a learning process and show that failures don't mean all is lost.



- Paraphrased from *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child: The Heart of Parenting* by John Gottman 1997

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Step 6.

Consequences

When boundaries are crossed **count to 5 while you send your child to their room for a short time out.** After a few minutes sit down and put in place the consequences you both have agreed about.

Step 7

Choices

Say something like "Remember we talked about this and you just decided to lose your play station for a week. We hope you will make **a better choice** next time."



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How are we going to remember this in the heat of battle???

LABREC

1. Listen
2. Agree to form an alliance with your child and partner
3. Boundaries
4. Rules
5. Emotional self-regulation
6. Consequences/Choices

If we get the **LAB** working well we usually won't have to worry about the **REC** !



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Let's Role Play

- Listen
- Agree
- Boundaries
- Rules
- Emotions
- Consequences/Choices



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Partner Relationship Issues



- The way it is DVD Clip 4

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Why do we fight?

Some of the big issues between the sexes usually include:

- lack of communication
- broken trust
- affairs
- drug & alcohol issues
- intimidating behaviour
- money



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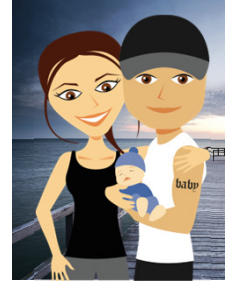
None of us had perfect parents. We all came from different backgrounds and had different experiences, especially when we were very young, that still effect the way we behave. Despite this, we need to remember that no-one else is to blame for what we say or do and how we act towards others. We are all responsible for our own actions and reactions to things.

It's wrong to use our background as an excuse for unacceptable behavior like domestic violence. This can include restricting our partner's options through abuse of power and control. Sometimes anger can be healthy but violence against a partner is not.



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Tips on resolving conflict through negotiation



- How it is p 39-40

- The way it is DVD Clip 5



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7 tips to resolving conflict through negotiation

1. Focus on how things can get better
2. Show respect for each other
3. Speak to each other calmly
4. Identify the problem
5. Work on one issue at a time
6. Listen to what your partner is saying
7. Suggest what could work for you



- How it is p 39-40

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Step 1 Focus on how things can get better



- The biggest predictor of breakdown in couple relationships is when one partner speaks from a superior place over the other. Contempt results in 'put downs' and destructive criticism.
- This usually leads to partners becoming defensive and emotionally withdrawing from the relationship which sabotages any real attempts at communication.
- Couples need to recognise that this behaviour (which most of us were brought up with) is abusive and that it needs to change.
- We can learn to use alternative ways of communicating which are more likely to lead to resolution of the conflict.



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Step 2 Show respect for each other



- Think about what it was like when you first met each other. No doubt here was lots of admiration and fondness.
- Think about the times you looked forward with great anticipation to talking with each other so that you could get know each other better.
- Think about the qualities you appreciated about each other and how you enjoyed listening to each others thoughts.
- Think about how much easier it was to admit you were wrong during these times and take responsibility for what you did.



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Step 3 Speak to each other calmly



- It's pretty hard to resolve anything when you are agitated and in emotional overload.
- Take some time doing something which calms you down such as deep breathing or muscle relaxation.
- When you are relaxed and in a more positive frame of mind you are better prepared to be able to talk about what you are wanting to communicate with your partner.
- A key part of this will be your willingness to listen to your partners responses and allow them to influence the way you are thinking in the same way you are hoping you will influence them.



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Step 4 Identify the problem**I feel...**

- You can start the conversation more easily by talking about your feelings about a specific situation.
- Do this by using 'I' statements rather than 'you' statements. Eg I need to talk to you about.....I feltwhen you said I need you to...
- If a partner goes back into 'put downs' insults and criticising you need to stop the conversation as it is becoming destructive.
- Eg you might say " Louise by calling Max selfish you are criticizing his character. Research tells us that means you won't end up being listened to. Describe what you are feeling instead. ie what you would like to see and why you would like to see it.



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Step 5 Work on one issue at a time

- Stay with one issue at a time. When we bring up other issues we're not likely to make any progress with the first one.

Speaker - Listener**Step 6 Listen to what your partner is saying**

- It's usually best to structure the conversation so that each partner gets about 10 minutes to speak followed by 10 minutes of listening
- While one is speaking the other could be encouraged to take notes and feed back what they have heard at the end of the 10 mins.



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Step 7 Suggest what could work for you**Moving Forward**

- Find areas you can be flexible about
- Think about areas in which you are not open to being influenced
- Consider that you are probably both right about what you are seeing
- Validate each others point of view.
- Take responsibility for what happened.
- Make an apology
- Each come up with something that will make next time

**Some websites to look at**

- Raising Children Network www.raisingchildren.net.au
- The Line www.theline.gov.au
- Parenting Ideas www.parentingideas.com.au
- Parenting SA www.parenting.sa.gov.au
- Parenting Families www.parentingfamilies.com
- Relationships Australia www.relationships.com.au
- Zero to Three www.zerotothree.org
- Love and Respect www.loveandrespect.com
- Circle of Security www.circleofsecurity.org
- Salisbury Communities for Children www.salisburyc4c.org.au



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