



FREE RESOURCE

Parenting tips and worksheets
to help you raise respectful,
responsible, and resilient kids.

vickihoefle.com



What Would Vicki Do?

Trust yourself first - then try this tip!

Parenting Philosophy

The goal in creating an intentional parenting philosophy is to guide your parenting decisions and help you parent in a more conscious and thoughtful way.

Exercise - Here are a few questions to help you create your own Parenting Philosophy

- What word or phrase do you want your adult children to use to describe your role as their mother or father? (*I wanted my children to say that I was a mother with Radical Faith – faith in herself, her children and the world at large.*)
- What actions will you take that will ensure that your children describe you in this way? (*The morning routine was a challenging time of day for me. I could easily have been described as a dictator rather than a mother of Radical Faith. I had to develop strategies that would ensure I behaved in a way that supported my goal.*)
- Identify your core values and the ways they influence your daily interactions with your children. How do you model these values each day and use your values to inform your parenting decisions?
- Do you support your children in their messy process of understanding and mastering their world? What message do you think it sends to your kids when you encourage them to make choices and learn through their mistakes?
- Do you see your children as extensions of yourself or as unique individuals separate from you? How do you think this influences your parenting decisions?
- How would treating your child as a fully realized, individual, human being impact the way you spoke and behaved toward them and their self-ideal?
- What guiding principal do you live by that has brought you clarity, confidence and courage? Are you helping your children develop their own guiding principals?
- What one or two motto's do you wish you had lived by when you were younger and how can you help your children become familiar and utilize these motto's in their own life.

Here is an example of a statement I read each day before I said good morning to my kids. It set my head and reminded me of my primary responsibility to each of them. And, of course, it became a guiding principal in each of my kids' lives.

Above all else, I will make sure that each day my children hear from me, what it is I most admire about the way THEY walk through the world so that they have the ability to show others the same deep respect for the way they walk through the world.



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Building Character Traits

Helping our children develop character traits that will assist them in living a meaningful and fulfilling adult life begins today. Consider this:

The thoughts we have about our children influences the way we treat them. If you experience your child as untrustworthy, sneaky, out of control, clingy, it is likely that your child will come to see herself in this way and you will begin to treat her in accordance with these words. None of these are character traits we wish to see our children embrace and embody – and yet often, this is where our focus is.

Today, challenge yourself to replace these negative labels and create a comprehensive list of Character Traits you hope your adult child embodies AND Character Traits that might also benefit your young child and make life more enjoyable for everyone in the family.

Exercise:

1. What qualities do I want to see in my children when they are adults? (list several).
2. If I fostered these qualities now, in my young child, would they have an immediate impact on my child's life and the life of the family? (How could fostering Self Control as a character trait for my adult child, benefit life with a young child?)
3. What action will I take each day to help foster one quality at a time until I see this quality develop and flourish?

For every quality you listed as something you value and want to see in your adult children, turn it around to reflect the quality or values you want to live. For example, if you said that you want your adult children to be honest, ask yourself how YOU model this quality in your daily life. If you are modeling these qualities at the same time you are fostering them in your child, it will become another way to build a connection and deepen the relationship you have with your kids.

Remember, it's unreasonable to ask more of our children than we ask of ourselves, so be sure that you are actually living the qualities you want to foster in your kids. As I like to say – you can't give your kids something you don't have yourself.

Character Trait/Quality I value	Specific Actions I will take to model this Quality	Specific Actions I will take to foster this Quality in my child



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One Way to Connect – Respecting Your Child's Feelings

The Purpose: To find new and creative ways to focus on Connection as part of the Crucial C's Strategy for Investing In The Best.

(Instead of half listening...)

You Can Listen Quietly and Attentively

A Smile and Eye Contact does the trick

It can be discouraging to try to get through to someone who is only half-listening ... Watching TV, doing dishes, etc...

(Instead of questions or advice ...)

You Can Acknowledge Their Feelings with a Word.

"Oh ...Mmmm...I see..."

It's hard for a child to think clearly or constructively when someone is questioning, blaming or advising her.

(Instead of denying the feeling...)

You Can Give The Feeling A Name.

"That sounds frustrating!"

When we urge a child to push a negative feeling away – The child tends to get more upset. But when he hears the word for what he is experiencing, he is comforted. Someone understands. You become his ally.

(Instead of explanations and logic...)

You Can Give The Child His Wishes In Fantasy.

"I wish I could make the banana rip for you right now!"

When children want something they can't have, adults usually respond with logical explanations – the harder we explain, the harder they protest. Sometimes just having someone understand how much you want something makes reality easier to bear.



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Make the Switch to Encouragement

The Purpose: Sometimes it is difficult for parents to make the switch from praising to encouragement. Here's a little exercise to get you started.

For one week, watch yourself and write down all the things you say to your children that could be considered praise. You will probably find that there is one "praise phrase" that you say more often than others. Start with this phrase, and brainstorm some other things that you could say that would be encouraging rather than praising. Then, for the second week, do not allow yourself to say your go to "praise phrase," and instead say something from your list of encouraging phrases.

Here's an example: The "praise phrase" you say the most often is "Good Job!"

Instead try one of the following, depending on the situation:

- You look happy when you draw. Tell me about your picture.
- You set the table for dinner. Thanks for helping with the family work.
- You got dressed by yourself. You are getting very independent.
- You finished your homework quickly. What are you going to do with your free time?
- You got an A on your test. Did you have to study a lot, or did the material come easily to you?

One thing you might realize with this list of encouraging phrases is that each one starts with the parent **noticing** something. Noticing is encouraging because it sends the message: "*I am paying attention.*" That's all our kids need. So, notice everything. Kids love it.

The Benefits: Encouragement implies faith in and respect for the child as he IS. Using encouragement on a regular basis will also help you to feel more curious about your children and their decisions. So, instead of commenting on your child's life, you can step into your child's life as the result of an invitation.

What will it take for me to end the cycle of praise-junkies and encourage my child towards an increased sense of self-worth?



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C-h-o-i-c-e-s

Purpose:

To allow our children to make as many choices as possible throughout their day so that over many years, they become confident and comfortable making choices as young adults. After all, isn't that what we, as adults, do all day, every day?

Examples:

- Would you like to wear the boots or carry the boots?
- Would you like to hop up the stairs or crawl up the stairs?
- Would you like to stay in your bed and leave the door open or shall I close it now?
- Would you like to pack your lunch or buy lunch?
- Would you like to do your homework before basketball or after?
- Would you like to resolve this now or wait until morning?

The Barriers:

There are no good or bad choices; only choices that move us either closer to our goals or further away from them. Parents who are overly concerned about good or bad choices will hinder their child's learning process. Their children will lack the confidence to make choices, learn from them, experience both satisfying and unsatisfying results and make the necessary changes to ensure a better outcome the next time they are asked to choose.

The Benefits:

Here's how to get the full benefit of Choices:

1. Set choices so that they are "win-win"—a win for you and a win for your child.
2. Only offer choices that you can support.
3. Remain firm and kind.
4. Stay friendly.
5. If a choice is not the best option, use another strategy.

What will it take for my child to make responsible decisions?

PRACTICE!



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Useful vs. Useless Communication

Democratic, positive parenting means communicating with our children in a way that is Firm and Kind. This will enhance the atmosphere of Freedom with Order that we are trying to create. Here are some examples.

Useless Communication	Useful Communication
Ordering, Directing, Commanding ("You must...", "You have to...", "You will...")	Inviting Don't worry about getting a no. Think beyond the no. Children who feel connected to their parents tend to cooperate. Remember, if they aren't willing to cooperate, there is probably a fracture in the relationship, so work on the relationship.
Warning, Admonishing, Threatening ("You had better...", "If you don't then...")	Ask for their understanding of the situation. Take the time to talk with your kids about HOW the situation looks to you and then ask them to share what the situation looks like to them. You will often find a common theme that will help bridge the gap.
Moralizing, Preaching, Obliging ("You should...", "You ought to...")	Would you be willing? Again, don't worry about the no. Just ask—"What would you be willing to do then?"
Judging, Criticizing, Blaming ("I don't like it when you...", "You could do that another way")	Mutual Respect Firm and Kind here. Firm is respectful to me as the adult and kind is respectful to the child.
Praising, Agreeing, Evaluating ("Good Boy/Girl...", "Good Job...", "I like...")	Encouragement Noticing, Acknowledging, Asking "How" and "What" Questions
Persuading with Logic, Arguing, Lecturing ("Do you realize...", "Here is why that won't work...")	What do you think about this? Kids have great perspectives and ideas. Ask them, and see what happens.
Probing, Questioning, Interrogating ("Who...", "What...", "Where...")	Listening Really listen. That includes eye contact and NO MULTI-TASKING

Using positive, useful communication will enhance your relationship and help you connect with your children instead of creating roadblocks.

What will it take for me to connect, in a positive way, with my children every day?



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MORNING MAGIC

Set the tone for everyone's day, EVERYDAY!

As parents, we understand that the morning routine sets the tone for the rest of the day, so it is important to start on the right foot.

What am I doing in the morning now that my children can easily do themselves? (Brush hair and teeth, pick out clothes, make breakfast, etc.)	
What am I doing in the morning now that my child could do if I took some time to teach him how to do it? (Make breakfast, brush teeth, get dressed.)	
How do I show my children, each morning that I appreciate them and that they make a difference to my life?	
What small changes could I make to the morning routine that would better support my children's unique nature and rhythms?	
Am I consistent with the morning routine or does it change depending on my mood or decision to hit the snooze button one too many times. 😊	
What am I doing to make a deep connection with my child before they leave our home to enter a sometimes challenging and frustrating world?	



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Bedtime Bliss

Letting go...gently, sweetly, on schedule

A calm and connected end to the day is what every parent and child hopes for.

<p>What am I doing in the evening that my child could easily do himself? (Put PJ's on, brush teeth, etc.)</p> <p>Allowing kids to take on more responsibility will make everyone's evening more pleasant. As tempting as it is to "help" it often times increase stress and frustration in both parents and their children.</p>	
<p>What am I doing in the evening now that my child could do if I took the time to teach her how to do it herself? (Put PJ's on, brush teeth, etc.)</p>	
<p>How do I show my children, each evening, that I appreciate the time I get to spend with them and the difference they made in my life today?</p>	
<p>Is the evening routine set up to support my child's natural rhythms and preferences or have I set it up to accommodate me and my preferences? What changes can I make? (I have a night owl and I might be putting him to bed too early.)</p>	
<p>What one small change could I make today that would ensure my child and I ended the day feeling connected and made bedtime a more peaceful and relaxing experience for all of us?</p>	

If you take the time to really connect with each of your children, every day, you will uncover the happy, secure, cooperative child hiding inside your mischief-maker.



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In the Moment

Surviving a Red Zone Moment with your kids

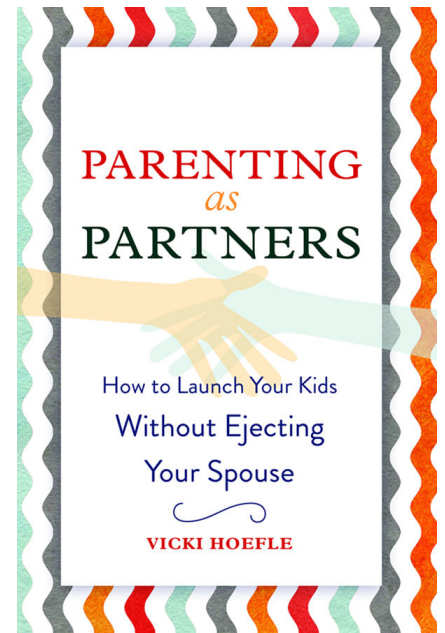
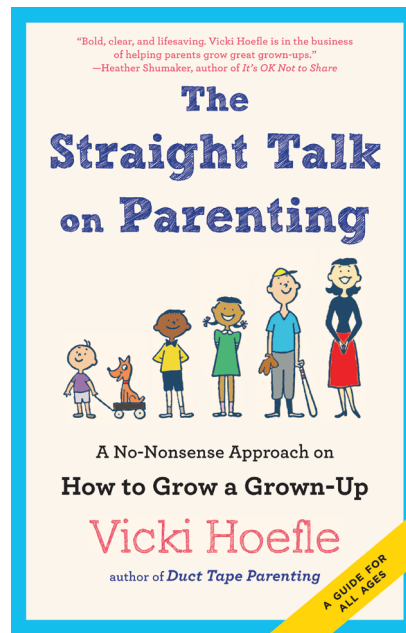
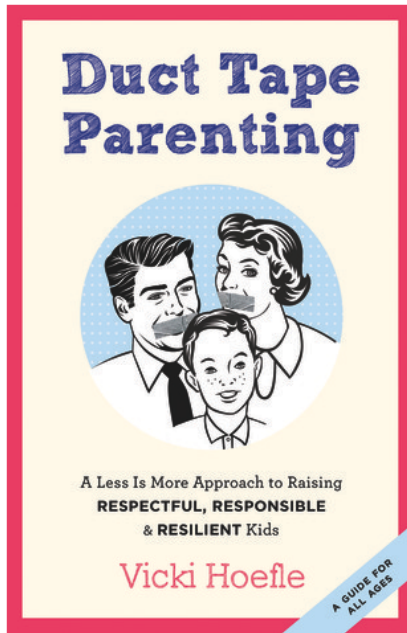
Contrary to popular belief and supported by scientific research – the worst possible time to try and teach a lesson, especially to a young child, is during a moment of stress, frustration or at the peak of a temper tantrum.

As tempting as it is to jump in and “teach” the child something important, there are only 3 things to do in a Red Zone Moment.

1. **Take a snapshot of the situation** so that when you are calm, thoughtful and loving, you can assess what happened and develop a plan to use to help prevent further incidents and/or a plan for navigating through another event with respect and love for yourself and your child.
2. **Do not make the situation worse.** If you know that you will deal with the incident when you are calm, there is no reason to jump in and make things worse. Do whatever you have to including, giving a hug, walking away, allowing for another 5 minutes on the playground, carrying the coat or backpack, picking up the discarded soccer shoes, carrying the plates to the dishwasher or feeding the dog. You are not giving up. You are acting in a responsible and respectful manner becoming of a thoughtful and loving adult who is also a parent. In other words, you are MODELING for your child the self-discipline it takes NOT to make things worse. You are, in that moment conveying the message that the relationship you have with your son or daughter is more important than winning this particular power struggle.
3. **Move the action forward.** So often we get “stuck” in the Red Zone Moment and feel we must stay there until everyone is calm and the problem has been solved. This rarely happens. Instead, move yourself and your child to the next thing. Physically moving will do a lot to minimize the intense feelings of the moment and if you can move your emotions forward, it’s possible to regroup in a matter of minutes and find yourself on sure footing as you continue with your day. Remember, you are not giving up, you are utilizing your good sense to make an informed and thoughtful parenting decision that will benefit everyone.
4. **Be sure to assess** what happened, make corrections that will lead to a better outcome next time, reconnect with your child and assure them that the incident was part of life and nothing to be concerned about and then work on a solution with your child to build cooperation and connection.

Before long you will find yourself avoiding Red Zone Moments all together.

Additional Resources



Contact

If you have a questions about private coaching, speaking engagements, or classes, please contact us by emailing Vicki at

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