



Many Parents Teach Their Kids to NOT Listen to Them – Do You?

By Kelly E. Nault, M.A.

“Dinner’s ready!” I yell.
Nothing. No pitter patter of feet. Not even a polite “Coming” or “OK.”
“DINNER’S READY!” I yell louder.
I strain and listen. All is calm. Not a creature stirs, not a sound can I hear.
Walking down the hall toward their bedrooms I manage to croak out one last
“DINNER’S READY!”

Alas, this is how our evening dinners ALWAYS used to begin. Me with a hoarse voice, left feeling underappreciated and unheard! My dog-eared copy of “How to Talk, so Kids Will Listen” just wasn’t helping me when it came to parenting or to really communicate with children.

What Our Children Actually Learn from Our “Helpful Reminders”

Although you know your child’s physical hearing is fine, do you ever tire of saying the same thing over and over again? Are you ever frustrated to find your child responds better and quicker to others—like your spouse! Ever find yourself shouting, “DID YOU HEAR ME?”

I did too, at least until I found another way to ask without having to nag, threaten or take away privileges. When taking my Masters in counseling psychology, I got to study my favorite parenting subject for three years which was ‘what makes kid’s tick’— then I got to practice with thousands of families. Like me, you may be relieved to find out there is a much simpler way to get what you want, and give your children what they most need. Here’s what I’ve learned:

Parenting Reminder Myth #1 – In order to get my kids to do anything, they need to be reminded.

Parenting Reminder Reality #1 – Reminders (gulp!) actually teach our kids to NOT listen to us, and robs children of the opportunity to develop their all important 'responsibility muscle'.

You see, saying ANYTHING more than once, (unless of course they truly have not heard you and ask you to repeat) sends three messages to your child:

Reminding Message 1 – “I don’t think you heard me even though my gut tells me you heard me perfectly well.”

Reminding Message 2 – “I don’t believe you will REALLY do what you say or promise you’ll do.”

Reminding Message 3. “I don’t trust you are totally responsible, and capable of remembering without my reminding you.”

As I state in my parenting book, *When You’re About To Go Off The Deep End, Don’t Take Your Kids With You*: **“Nagging and reminders can actually be an invitation to our children to do the opposite of what we ask! Save yourself the grief and don’t go there.” Thus, *How to Talk so Kids Will Listen*, should be renamed *How to NOT Talk, so Kids Will Listen*.**

Communicating with Child: How to Talk So Kid Will Listen Often Means Talking Less

So if we can’t remind, then what will we do? How will we get our kids to do anything?! Good question. **If you have a child who won’t get anything done without a constant diet of your reminders then you have trained your child well indeed. If this is the case, your child knows (consciously or subconsciously) that they have numerous reminders before they HAVE to act. They know this because your reminders tell them so!**

So what is your child’s cue to finally respond to your request? Usually the volume or intensity of your words, that sound something like this: **“IF I HAVE TO TELL YOU ONE MORE TIME...!”**

The key to nipping reminders in the bud is to frankly, bite your tongue. This is tough work for those of us who like to talk, but it is worth the struggle! Commit to asking only once. Over time, you will retrain your child to listen to you the first time.

Before Trying This At Home, Please Heed This 'Parenting Warning'!

Expect and be prepared for your child to test you. Your child will still forget. This is part of the retraining process, and indicates that you are on the right track. Your child will expect your reminders. Yet, with 100% consistency, it is common to see transformative changes within just one week.

Be consistent, and decide to provide your child with an opportunity to learn from being forgetful without the usual "I told you so."

Instead of reminding, use commonsense consequences that help your child to learn from her actions instead.

When it came to dinners, I called them once and then promptly began dinner with or without them. When they finally arrived, the complaints began: "My peas are cold". I grinned and said, "Why, they were warm when I called you ten minutes ago."

"Will you warm my up my peas?"

"I'm busy eating my dinner. Feel free to warm them up yourself."

Then I sit back, change the subject and enjoy a well-deserved dinner.

Bon appetit! With consistency, you'll be amazed at how eliminating reminders can heal your child's selective deafness and have your kid finally listen.

Kelly Nault-Matzen, MA, family counselor, corporate parenting spokesperson and award winning parenting author of *When You're About To Go Off The Deep End, Don't Take Your Kids With You* shares time-tested tools that motivate children to want to be well behaved, responsible and happy! To gain access to more parenting tools and to access your free online parenting course visit <http://www.ultimateparenting.com>



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