

PARENTING SKILLS - BE DIRECT - 1

**TO MOTIVATE
COOPERATION BE
VERY CLEAR AND
DIRECT ABOUT
WHAT YOU WANT**

Use the words **WILL** or **WOULD** instead of **can** or **could**.
I.e. if you say **Would** you clean up this mess - you are making a request. When you say **Could** you clean up this mess you are posing a question

**CONSISTENT
ORDERING DOES NOT
WORK**

A Child's life is full of orders. Do this and do that. The alternative skill to ordering is asking. It is a simple shift but takes a lot of practise.

ASK

E.g. "Don't hit your brother" - change to "Would you please stop hitting him now"

**GIVE UP RHETORICAL
QUESTIONS**

Instead of saying "Why is this room still a mess?" (throwing in a little shame and guilt) just say "Would you please clean up your room"

**GIVE UP
EXPLANATIONS**

As well making sure you ask instead of ordering or demanding, don't give them a reason. When children resist parents they are mostly resisting the reasons, leave it out and they have less to resist.
Most parents give talks to children when they are resistant or done something wrong. This timing just increases feelings of inadequacy and guilt and discourages willingness to co-operate.

GIVE UP LECTURES

The only time to give children or teenagers lectures is when they ask for one. Lectures are a major reason why children do not talk to parents. Parents offer way too much advice and too many lectures.

Children under nine try to figure out right from wrong, good from bad - instead of willingness to co-operate. Younger than nine they are not prepared for such heady stuff and after nine they will just stop listening.

DON'T USE FEELINGS TO MANIPULATE

If parents share their negative feelings to motive behaviour, (i.e. I am really angry) the child just feels guilty for upsetting the parent and feels manipulated and resists co-operating.

It is not appropriate for the "boss" to get on an equal footing with the child, and you lose power to create co-operation.

AN INVITATION TO COOPERATE

The most powerful word for creating co-operation is "let's". Generally children under nine have not formed a sense of self - to order them around reinforces separation.

When ever possible invite children to participate with you in some activity.

PRACTICE

Order: "Brush your teeth"

Request: "Let's get ready for bed now. Would you please do and brush your teeth"

Order: "Put this away"

Request: "Let's clean up this room - would you put this away"

From Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus, Children are from Heaven by John Gray