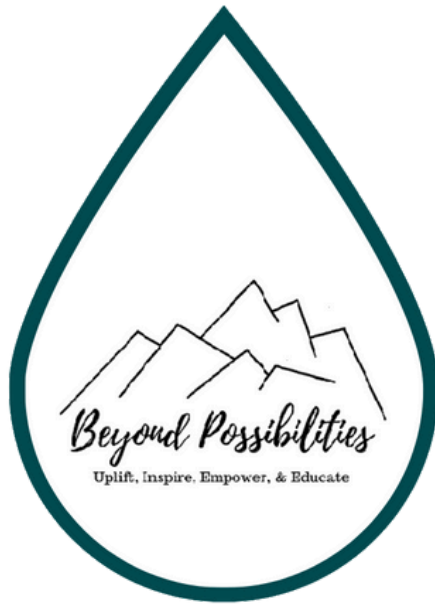


# FAMILY COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

*Building Trust through  
Positive Communication*



INCLUDES 7 PAGES

## SECTION ONE



TAKE THESE LESS EFFECTIVE PHRASES AND REFRAME THEM INTO POSITIVE COMMUNICATION.

AGE 10:

"WHY DO YOU ALWAYS FORGET YOUR LUNCH?!"

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AGE 12:

"YOU NEVER LISTEN WHEN I TELL YOU TO CLEAN YOUR ROOM!"

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AGE 15:

"YOU'RE CONSTANTLY GLUED TO THAT PHONE INSTEAD OF HELPING OUT!"

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AGE 17:

"WHY CAN'T YOU JUST BE MORE RESPONSIBLE WITH YOUR CURFEW?"

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AGE 20:

"YOU NEVER MAKE TIME TO VISIT YOUR FAMILY ANYMORE!"

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AGE 20:

"YOU NEVER MAKE TIME TO VISIT YOUR FAMILY ANYMORE!"

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## SECTION TWO

### TAKE THESE PROBLEM PHRASES AND REFRAME THEM INTO AN AUTHENTIC I-STATEMENT.



This exercise helps us see that clear, respectful phrasing builds trust at every age and help children develop their own healthy communication habits (Lohia, 2023; Zapf et al., 2022.)

SCENARIO: YOUR CHILD FORGETS TO TAKE OUT THE TRASH, EVEN AFTER BEING REMINDED.

PROBLEM PHRASE: "YOU NEVER LISTEN WHEN I ASK YOU TO DO SOMETHING!"

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SCENARIO: YOUR CHILD INTERRUPTS YOU WHILE YOU'RE ON THE PHONE OR IN A MEETING.

PROBLEM PHRASE: "YOU'RE SO RUDE — YOU ALWAYS CUT ME OFF!"

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SCENARIO: YOUR CHILD BORROWS SOMETHING (CAR, HEADPHONES, JACKET) AND RETURNS IT BROKEN OR DIRTY.

PROBLEM PHRASE: "YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S THINGS — YOU ALWAYS RUIN EVERYTHING!"

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SCENARIO: YOUR CHILD FORGETS AN IMPORTANT FAMILY EVENT (DINNER, BIRTHDAY, GATHERING).

PROBLEM PHRASE: "YOU ONLY THINK ABOUT YOURSELF — YOU NEVER PUT FAMILY FIRST!"

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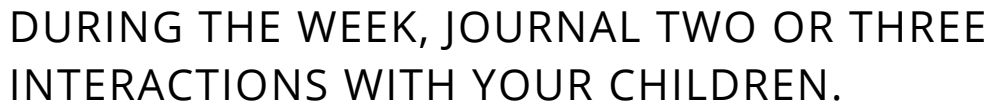
SCENARIO: YOUR CHILD DISMISSES YOUR ADVICE OR OPINION WITH A SIGH OR EYE ROLL.

PROBLEM PHRASE: "YOU'RE SO DISRESPECTFUL — YOU NEVER VALUE WHAT I SAY!"

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## HOMework





A series of horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 25 evenly spaced lines across the page.



# **Building Trust Through Positive Communication: How Word Choice Builds Trust in Families**



GOOD COMMUNICATION IS AT THE HEART OF EVERY HEALTHY FAMILY RELATIONSHIP. IN OUR LATEST WORKSHOP, WE EXPLORED HOW THE WORDS WE CHOOSE — ESPECIALLY IN MOMENTS OF STRESS — CAN EITHER OPEN A DOOR TO CONNECTION OR CLOSE IT. EVEN IF YOU WEREN'T ABLE TO ATTEND, THE PRINCIPLES WE DISCUSSED CAN HELP YOU STRENGTHEN YOUR COMMUNICATION AT HOME.

## **WHY WORD CHOICE MATTERS**

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS DON'T JUST HEAR OUR WORDS — THEY INTERPRET THE TONE, STRUCTURE, AND INTENT BEHIND THEM (ALEJANDRA & KATAOKA, 2017; ZAPF ET AL., 2022). A PHRASE MEANT AS GUIDANCE CAN SOMETIMES SOUND LIKE BLAME. FOR EXAMPLE:

- SAYING TO A TEEN, “WHY CAN’T YOU EVER REMEMBER TO TEXT ME?” MAY FEEL ACCUSATORY AND LEAD TO WITHDRAWAL.
- REPHRASED AS, “I FEEL ANXIOUS WHEN I DON’T HEAR FROM YOU AFTER SCHOOL BECAUSE I CARE ABOUT YOU. A QUICK TEXT REASSURES ME YOU’RE SAFE,” THE SAME CONCERN BECOMES COLLABORATIVE AND CARING.

THESE SUBTLE SHIFTS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE IN WHETHER YOUR CHILD SHUTS DOWN OR LEANS IN. RESEARCH SHOWS THAT POSITIVE COMMUNICATION IS LINKED TO BETTER FAMILY HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (KANG ET AL., 2019) AND CAN BUFFER STRESS FOR BOTH PARENTS AND CHILDREN (ROSLAND ET AL., 2011).

## **“I-STATEMENTS” VS. “YOU-STATEMENTS”**



WHEN EMOTIONS RUN HIGH, OUR PHRASING MATTERS.

- YOU-STATEMENTS (E.G., “YOU NEVER LISTEN!”) POINT OUTWARD AND OFTEN TRIGGER DEFENSIVENESS AND CONFLICT (BUSBY & CHIU, 2017).
- I-STATEMENTS (E.G., “I FEEL FRUSTRATED WHEN INSTRUCTIONS AREN’T FOLLOWED BECAUSE IT CREATES MORE WORK FOR ME”) TAKE OWNERSHIP OF FEELINGS, REDUCE BLAME, AND MAKE ROOM FOR DIALOGUE (THE IMPORTANCE OF “I-STATEMENTS,” N.D.).

STUDIES SHOW THAT AUTHENTIC I-STATEMENTS HELP CHILDREN FEEL RESPECTED, EVEN WHEN THEY ARE BEING CORRECTED, AND ARE ASSOCIATED WITH GREATER TRUST AND HEALTHIER EMOTIONAL REGULATION (OUYANG & CHEUNG, 2023; YANG ET AL., 2024). FAMILIES THAT PRACTICE OPEN, CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION BUILD RESILIENCE AND STRONGER BONDS (FAMILY STRENGTHS: COMMUNICATION, 2020).

### **HOW TO PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE**

- PAUSE BEFORE REACTING. TAKE A BREATH AND THINK: AM I ABOUT TO USE A “YOU-STATEMENT”?
- REFRAME WITH “I.” CENTER YOUR MESSAGE ON YOUR OWN FEELINGS AND NEEDS, NOT BLAME.
- MODEL GROWTH. IF YOU SLIP, REPHRASE ALOUD. THIS SHOWS YOUR CHILDREN YOU ARE WORKING ON COMMUNICATION TOO.
- PRACTICE TOGETHER. TRY REWRITING COMMON HOUSEHOLD FRUSTRATIONS INTO I-STATEMENTS AS A FAMILY EXERCISE.

THE MORE YOU PRACTICE, THE EASIER IT BECOMES. OVER TIME, YOUR WORDS CAN BECOME A TOOL FOR CONNECTION, COOPERATION, AND TRUST.