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Tips on Managing Your Behaviour to Improve Your Child's

'Many parents are confused about the purpose of discipline. They believe the purpose of discipline is to control a child's behaviour, make them behave no matter what. That goal is unreasonable and unattainable. The purpose of discipline is not control but cooperation.'
(Dr. Sal Severe. How to Behave So Your Children Will Too)

When you do or say something wrong apologise for it, even if that means apologising to your child that you over-reacted to something or said an offensive word. By doing this you are teaching your child that even adults make mistakes and must apologise, even to little children. Everyone is accountable for their own behaviour. Then you are being a good role model for your child and teaching them life long values.

If your child is screaming the supermarket down and you buy a bar of chocolate to shut them up, you are setting yourself up for having to buy chocolate every time they misbehave. You have said 'I will reward you if you misbehave'.

It is better for your child if you don't reward the tantrum. You must instead introduce choices and consequences. If they help with the shopping tell them they will get a treat once you get home, not exactly when they demand it. If you do want to give them chocolate as soon as you get to the supermarket then agree this before you leave the house so they know they are getting it because it was agreed and not because they kicked up a fuss and were rewarded.

If your child misbehaves frequently it means that they have not learned appropriate methods of getting what they want. As a parent it is your job to teach them acceptable ways and this will take time and patience. Always give children a choice in every situation so they feel they have some control over what is happening. However always have consequences for decisions, these may be rewards or punishments depending on the decision. Remember that punishments are not for hurting your child but to help them learn, so make sure they are fair and respectful of the child at all times.

Parents often forget to praise children when they are behaving well and this is a big mistake. Praise your child whenever you can and try to ignore their misbehaviour. Children want our attention and if this means they have to misbehave all the time to get it, then that's they will do.

Pick and choose your battles. If you battle with your child over every little thing then when something big comes along it will be difficult to argue your case with them. It will seem as if you just complain about everything. Try saying yes as much as possible.

When speaking to children it is very important to be aware of the language we use. You can easily say 'look at this mess, you are so lazy' but what you are achieving? You are only making your child cross and making them feel inadequate and useless. This is not how you are going to get them to do things. If you think of it in terms of need, it will help you say things in a more respectful way. Your need as a parent is to have the room tidy however your child might like to have their room messy, as the whole house is very tidy. So you must first let the child know what your need is, it is for tidiness, but also acknowledge that maybe the child needs some mess. Then you must try to agree what is acceptable for both of you. Maybe its OK if the floor is clear but the shelves are untidy. You cannot expect your children to behave in a way that constantly meets your needs without you giving any consideration to their needs. The same rule applies for every situation in the home. Think first, what is my need? Then, what is their need? And then, how can we compromise so both of us feel our needs have been met?

Children need encouragement, especially children with poor self-esteem and children who lack persistence and determination. Encouragement gives children a boost of motivation. It helps them through difficult situations, helps them face fears and helps them solve problems and feel successful. Encouragement provides support, trust and belief.