

Parenting: How to Turn Your Word from Garbage into Gold

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**PARENTING:
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ut how enforceable statements can help raise responsible children!

As parents, how often do you find yourself saying phrases like “hurry up,” “sit still” or “eat your food?” If you’re reading this thinking you say those things all the time... you are not alone!

When parents see an undesirable behavior, the natural tendency is to tell their children what to do. The problem with this strategy is that these phrases are not enforceable and cannot truly be controlled by the parent. Every time a stubborn child is told what to do, it risks training him or her not to listen because there is no guaranteed follow through.

So what should you say when your child needs to eat his or her food, hurry up or sit still? How can you turn your word from garbage into gold? Give enforceable statements a try!

Enforceable Statements

Enforceable statements are all about setting limits with an “I will” message rather than a “you will” message. The “you will” message says “you will do what I tell you to do, when I tell you to do it.” This type of messaging doesn’t usually sit well with anyone, regardless of age or responsibility level. Contrary to “you will” messages, “I will” messages are all about how you are going to take care of yourself, and what opportunities you are going to provide for your children. Can you control if you give your child dessert? Or if you take them places they want to go? Absolutely! Check out examples below of how you can rephrase common “you will” messages into “I will” messages and turn your word into gold!

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| <u>“YOU WILL”</u> | <u>“I WILL”</u> |
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|---|--|
| Please sit down. We're going to eat now. | We will eat as soon as you are seated. |
| Please be quiet. I can't listen to your brother when you are both talking at the same time. | I'll be glad to listen to you as soon as your brother has finished talking to me. |
| Hurry up! | My car leaves in 5 minutes, sure hope you're in it! |
| Eat your food or you don't get any dessert! | I'll be glad to give you dessert as soon as you have finished your dinner. |
| Don't talk to me in that tone of voice! | I will listen as soon as your voice is as calm as mine. |
| Clean your room so we can go shopping | I'll be happy to take you shopping as soon as your room is clean. |
| You show some respect | I'll be glad to discuss this when respect is shown. |
| Stop throwing your food | I allow children to be at the table as long as they're not throwing food on the floor. |
| You need to be a better sport! | I'll pay for sports for those who show good sportsmanship on and off the field. |
| Do your homework! | I'll be happy to let you play with your friends as soon as your homework is finished. |
| You need to come home by curfew or you are grounded! | I allow kids to go out at night who come home when they say they will. |
| Don't interrupt! | I listen to kids who don't interrupt. |

Learn More

Want to learn more concepts like these? Register for a free Parenting the Love and Logic Way™ course offered by Healthy Relationships Utah. Parenting the Love and Logic Way™ is a research-based parenting course that teaches parents how to raise responsible kids and enjoy parenting. Courses are available throughout all of Utah. To learn more, visit healthyrelationshipsutah.org.

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This article was written by Megan Hargraves, Media Specialist with Healthy Relationships Utah, megan.hargraves@usu.edu.