

# SOLVING CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

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MEGHAN BARLOW  
AND ASSOCIATES  
TURNING CHALLENGES INTO GROWTH

# DO YOU HAVE IT IN YOU?

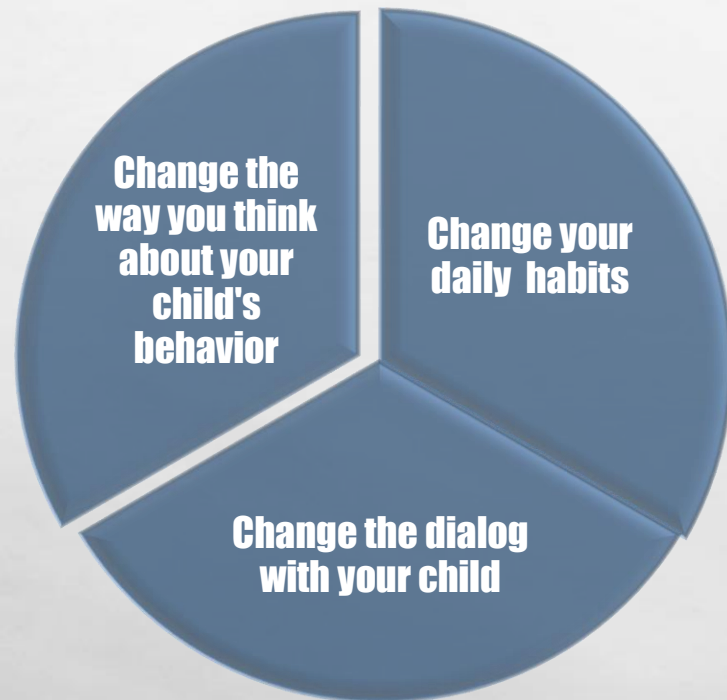
- **IS THE WAY YOU SEE YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOR GETTING PREVENTING YOU FROM MAKING PROGRESS?**
- **ARE YOU FOCUSING ON BEING PROACTIVE RATHER THAN REACTIVE?**
- **HOW WELL CAN YOU REALLY LISTEN TO (AND BELIEVE) WHAT YOUR CHILD SAYS?**
- **CAN YOU RESIST TRYING TO SOLVE BEHAVIOR WHILE IT'S HAPPENING?**
- **WHAT YOU DO VS. THE WAY YOU ARE**
  - **CAN YOU DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY AND CHANGE THE CULTURE?**

# QUICK RECAP: PODCAST

- **KIDS DO WELL IF THEY CAN! (NOT THE POPULAR BELIEF THAT THEY WILL IF THEY WANT TO)**
  - **DOING WELL IS ALWAYS PREFERABLE. WHY WOULDN'T A CHILD WANT TO?**
  - **IF I CAN BEHAVE, THERE'S NO REASON TO CHOOSE TO NOT BEHAVE**
    - **THERE'S NO PAYOFF!**
    - **COERCIVE, LIMIT TESTING, MANIPULATIVE = WHY WOULD I DO THIS IF I COULD DO IT A BETTER WAY?**
    - **40-50 YEARS OF RESEARCH TO SUPPORT THIS, YET WE CONTINUE TO VIEW KIDS OTHERWISE**
  - **DR. ROSS GREENE – COLLABORATIVE AND PROACTIVE SOLUTIONS ([WWW.LIVESINTHEBALANCE.ORG](http://WWW.LIVESINTHEBALANCE.ORG))**

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# PLAN OF ATTACK



- **YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD WILL IMPROVE**
- **EASIER TO ACT POSITIVE IF YOU ARE THINKING POSITIVE**
- **IMPROVED CULTURE AT HOME**
  - **EVERYONE WILL FEEL BETTER**
- **CHANGE YOUR LENS FIRST**

# SKILLS: WE'RE SPEAKING THE WRONG LANGUAGE

## COMMON LAGGING SKILLS

- **FRUSTRATION TOLERANCE AND EMOTIONAL CONTROL**
- **FOCUSING/PERSISTING ON CHALLENGING OR TEDIOUS TASKS**
- **CONSIDERING PERSPECTIVE OF OTHERS, CONSIDERING A RANGE OF SOLUTIONS**
- **EXPRESSING THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND NEEDS IN WORDS**
- **SEEKING ATTENTION IN APPROPRIATE WAYS (WHO DOESN'T WANT ATTENTION?)**

## OBSERVED IN ACTION...

- **WE CALL THIS: TANTRUMS, MELT-DOWNS, IRRATIONAL BEHAVIOR**
- **WE CALL THIS: HE'LL DO IT IF IT'S SOMETHING HE LIKES TO DO**
- **WE CALL THIS: HE'LL DO IT IF IT'S SOMETHING HE WANTS TO DO, HE WANTS WHAT HE WANTS WHEN HE WANTS IT**
- **WE CALL THIS: HE'S STUBBORN, DISRESPECTFUL, HAS AN ATTITUDE, IS MOUTHY, BELLIGERENT**
- **WE SAY: HE JUST WANTS ATTENTION**

# SKILLS: WE'RE SPEAKING THE WRONG LANGUAGE

## COMMON BEHAVIORS

- **PHYSICAL AGGRESSION (HITTING, KICKING, THROWING THINGS, ETC)**
- **TALKING BACK, THREATS, 'SASS'**
- **WHINING AND COMPLAINING**
- **THROWING TANTRUMS/CRYING & SCREAMING**

## SKILLS REQUIRED FOR IMPROVEMENT

- **FRUSTRATION TOLERANCE, EMOTIONAL CONTROL, SEEKING ATTENTION IN APPROPRIATE WAYS**
- **EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE (PUTTING THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, NEEDS INTO WORDS) SEEING 'GRAYS' (BLACK AND WHITE THINKING)**
- **SENSE OF TIME, MAINTAINING FOCUS, PERSISTING ON TEDIOUS TASKS, APPRECIATING HOW OTHERS ARE AFFECTED BY ACTIONS**
- **EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE, EMOTIONAL CONTROL, FRUSTRATION TOLERANCE**

# SKILLS: WE'RE SPEAKING THE WRONG LANGUAGE

## COMMON BEHAVIORS

- **REFUSING DIRECTIVES**
- **LYING**
- **NEEDING TO BE ASKED MANY TIMES**
- **LOW SELF-ESTEEM**
- **NERVOUS, ANXIOUS, PERFECTIONISM**

## SKILLS REQUIRED FOR IMPROVEMENT

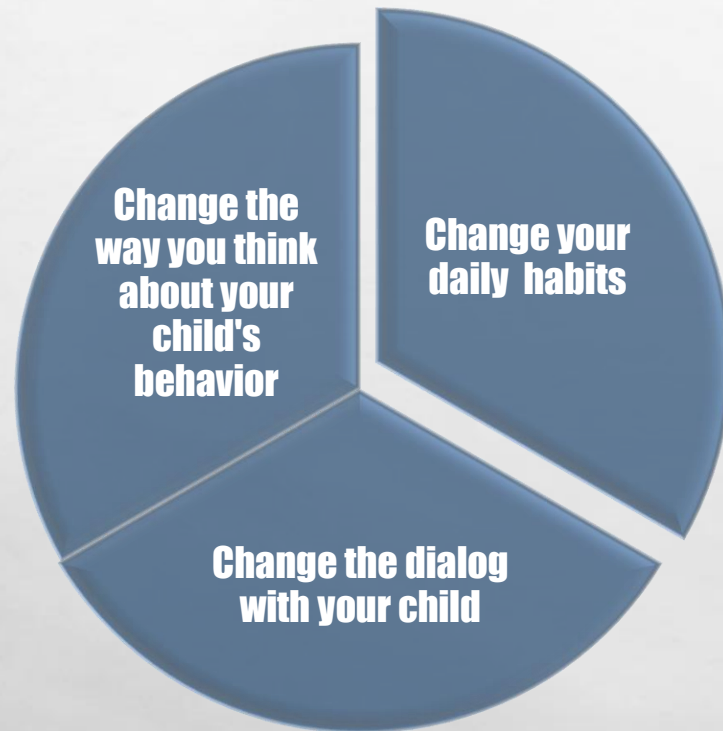
- **CONSIDERING RANGE OF SOLUTIONS, DEVIATING FROM RULES OR ROUTINE, IMPULSE CONTROL**
- **EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE, CONSIDERING RANGE OF SOLUTIONS, IMPULSE CONTROL**
- **PERSISTING ON TEDIOUS OR CHALLENGING TASKS, FOCUSING**
- **PERSPECTIVE TAKING, APPRECIATING HOW S/HE IS COMING ACROSS, CONNECTING WITH OTHERS, BASIC SOCIAL SKILLS**
- **HANDLING UNPREDICTABILITY, EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE, THINKING IN THE GRAYS, ENTERING GROUPS/SOCIAL SITUATIONS**

# REST ASSURED

- **YOUR CHILD IS ALSO LAGGING IN THE FOLLOWING SKILLS:**
  - **MANIPULATION**
  - **COERCION**
  - **EXTORTION**
  - **CONTROLLING OF OTHERS**



# PLAN OF ATTACK



- **CHANGE YOUR DAILY HABITS**

- **FEAR**
- **TAKE THE PRESSURE OFF**
- **NOT THE QUICK FIX**
- **TEACHING SKILLS AND SETTING THE STAGE FOR OPTIMAL DEVELOPMENT**
- **WORK WITH YOUR CHILD'S BRAIN, NOT AGAINST IT!**

# STRATEGY: CHANGING DAILY HABITS

- **WATCH YOUR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS**
- **HOW DO YOU REACT WHEN YOUR CHILD ANSWERS YOU? HOW ARE YOU RESPONDING WITH NON-VERBALS WHEN YOUR CHILD SAYS SOMETHING YOU DON'T AGREE WITH?**
  - **YOU MAY BE ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS OR AVOIDING SENSITIVE WORDS/TOPICS**  
**BUT:**
    - **ARE YOUR NON-VERBALS LESS PATIENT AND UNDERSTANDING?**
- **WATCH THE 'BUTS'**

# DAILY HABITS: JUDGEMENT FREE

- **DON'T ASSUME**
- **WATCH YOUR TONE**
- **REMEMBER SKILLS**
  - **TELLING A CHILD TO HAVE A SKILL IS NOT TEACHING THEM A SKILL**
  - **IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO – DON'T FOCUS ON FAULT**
- **BE CAREFUL WITH HUMOR: KNOW YOUR PURPOSE**
  - **IS IT COMEDIC RELIEF AND PUTTING IT INTO PERSPECTIVE OR DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO FALSE SENSE OF INTENT/LACK OF PERSPECTIVE?**
    - **4 YEAR OLD LOOKING SELFISH & LACKING EMPATHY IS NOT A 'FUTURE SERIAL KILLER'**
    - **10 YEAR OLD WHO BECOMES AGGRESSIVE WHEN HE'S NOT ABLE TO MANAGE HIS FRUSTRATION IS NOT A 'JUVENILE DELINQUENT IN TRAINING'**

# PLAN OF ATTACK



- **FIGURE OUT WHAT THE ACTUAL PROBLEM IS FOR YOUR CHILD**
- **YOU'LL PROBABLY BE THE FIRST ONE TO DO THIS**
- **SOLUTIONS WILL ACTUALLY GO WITH THE PROBLEM (NOT RANDOMLY APPLIED)**
- **FIGURE OUT A DIFFERENT WAY TO GET TO THE FINISH LINE (ONE THAT WORKS WITH WHAT YOUR CHILD IS ABLE TO DO)**
- **PROACTIVE**

# STRATEGY: CHANGE THE DIALOG

- **'SAY THIS, NOT THAT'**
- **ASK YOUR CHILD ABOUT THE EXPECTATION SHE'S HAVING TROUBLE MEETING**
  - **NOT ABOUT THE BEHAVIOR/WHY SHE (KICKS, HITS, SCREAMS, WON'T DO THE THING...)**
  - **THIS SOUNDS LIKE: "YOU'RE HAVING A HARD TIME... (KEEPING YOUR HANDS TO YOURSELF WHEN BROTHER TAKES YOUR LEGOS, BRUSHING YOUR TEETH BEFORE LEAVING FOR SCHOOL IN THE MORNING, TURNING OFF VIDEO GAMES WHEN IT'S TIME TO START HOMEWORK, ETC)"**
  - **FOLLOWED BY: "WHAT'S UP?" OR "WHAT'S GOING ON?"**
- **NOTE: YOU CAN HAVE THIS EXCHANGE VERBALLY OR NON-VERBALLY—AND ANYWHERE IN BETWEEN.**

# STRATEGY: THE TALK

- **REMEMBER: YOU'RE TRYING TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THE PROBLEM THAT YOU WILL SOLVE TOGETHER WITH YOUR CHILD.**

- **1<sup>ST</sup> OF A 3 STEP PROCESS<sup>1</sup>**



- **TIMING REALLY MATTERS**

- **YOU ARE NOT DOING THIS WHILE OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE BEHAVIOR OCCURS**
- **THE CHILD/ADOLESCENT BRAIN IS NOT WIRED TO SOLVE PROBLEMS WHILE EMOTION IS RUNNING THE SHOW!**

<sup>1</sup>Collaborative and Proactive Solutions. [www.livesinthebalance.org](http://www.livesinthebalance.org)

# STRATEGY: THE TALK

- **COMMON PITFALLS:**

- **YOUR CHILD SAYS, “I DON’T KNOW.”**

- **WHAT TO DO: ADMIT THAT YOU DON’T EITHER. TALK ABOUT HOW HARD IT’S BEEN. BE TRANSPARENT. DON’T RUSH IT, YOU CAN REVISIT LATER. BE A DETECTIVE.**

- **YOUR CHILD SAYS SOMETHING YOU BELIEVE IS NOT ACCURATE**

- **WHAT TO DO: REMEMBER, THE PROBLEM IS OCCURRING FROM THE CHILD’S PERSPECTIVE. UNDERSTANDING IT THIS WAY IS CRITICAL. RESIST THE URGE TO REFUTE, MINIMIZE, INVALIDATE. (\*OUR ABILITIES TO PERSPECTIVE-TAKE, SOLVE PROBLEMS, BE FLEXIBLE, ANTICIPATE THE OUTCOME, ETC ARE LIKELY MUCH STRONGER THAN THE CHILD’S.)**

- **YOUR CHILD WON’T HAVE THE CONVERSATION WITH YOU**

- **VALIDATE – IT’S TIRING TO HAVE TO KEEP REVISITING TOUGH THINGS, ISN’T IT??**
- **REASSURE**
- **BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT THIS ‘NEW WAY’ YOU’RE TRYING**

# STRATEGY: EMPATHY & REFLECTION

- **“LET ME SEE IF I HAVE THIS SO FAR...”**
- **“WOW, I’M IMAGINING WHAT YOU’RE SAYING, AND THAT SOUNDS REALLY HARD.”**
- **“I’M REALLY SORRY THIS HAS BEEN SO DIFFICULT FOR YOU...I DIDN’T EVEN REALIZE (FILL IN THE BLANK WITH WHAT YOU JUST LEARNED.)**



# STRATEGY: EMPATHY & REFLECTION

## INSTEAD OF...

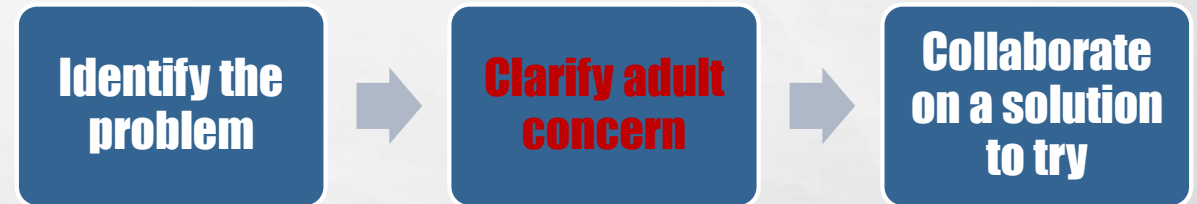
- **“I KNOW YOU’RE UPSET, BUT...”**
- **SOUNDS LIKE YOU’RE ANGRY.**

## TRY THIS...

- **“WOW, THIS HAS BEEN REALLY HARD FOR YOU. I’D REALLY LIKE TO KNOW MORE SO WE CAN MAKE SURE IT DOESN’T HAPPEN ANYMORE.**
- **LET ME MAKE SURE I GOT EVERYTHING YOU SAID. YOU SAID...**

# STRATEGY: THE TALK

- **STEP 2: YOUR CONCERN IS IDENTIFIED AND PUT ON THE TABLE WITH THE CHILD'S CONCERN**
- **ONLY AFTER CHILD'S CONCERN IS IDENTIFIED**
  - **KIDS CAN LISTEN AND UNDERSTANDING BETTER WHEN THEY ARE HAPPY AND CALM**



# WHY SHOULD YOUR CHILD CARE ABOUT YOUR CONCERN?

**NOT : "I'm the parent and you're the child."**

**NOT: "Doing what I say will make mommy's life easier."**

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**Because understanding that there is another perspective and a different course of action takes skills but also creates buy-in.**

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**"I'm better able to see that you have a stake in this. I should be working with you."**

# STRATEGY: THE TALK

## OLD WAY

- **I NEED YOU TO LISTEN, WE HAVE A LOT TO DO TODAY**
- **YOU CAN'T JUST DECIDE WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO AND WHAT YOU AREN'T**
- **I CAN'T HAVE YOU HITTING YOUR BROTHER—HE'LL GET HURT!**

## NEW WAY

- **I KNOW YOU WANTED TIME TO BUILD YOUR LEGOS BEFORE DINNER. I'M CONCERNED IF WE DON'T WORK QUICKLY, YOU WON'T HAVE TIME.**
- **I'M CONCERNED THAT WE'RE STARTING THE DAYS OFF ON A BAD NOTE. IT MAKES ME SAD TO SEND YOU INTO SCHOOL CRYING EVERY DAY BECAUSE WE HAD A BAD MORNING**
- **I'VE SEEN YOU REALLY ENJOY PLAY TIME WITH YOUR BROTHER—I'M CONCERNED YOU'LL MISS OUT ON THAT IF YOU CAN'T KEEP YOUR HANDS TO YOURSELF.**

# STRATEGY: THE TALK

- **STEP 3: INVITE YOUR CHILD TO COME UP WITH A SOLUTION TOGETHER THAT ADDRESSES BOTH CONCERNS**



# STRATEGY: COLLABORATE



**A solution to try when the problem comes up again (proactive)**



**Invite your child to suggest elements of the solution first**



**Don't sign off on a solution that you're pretty sure your child will fail with – this is to help him succeed!**



**Don't sign off on an unrealistic solution or one that doesn't address the original problem**

# COMMON CONCERNS



**My child is too young to communicate that way.**



**So, now my kid gets to rule the house? This is going to teach her that her bad behavior gets her what she wants.**



**I get what you're saying, but I want to know what to do in the heat of the moment...when the behavior is happening.**



**I really just want to know how to make my child listen.**

# YOUR TURN!

- **TRY IT AT HOME**

- **WHAT SKILLS IS YOUR CHILD LAGGING IN? (TAKE A LOOK AT THE ASSESSMENT OF LAGGING SKILLS AND UNSOLVED PROBLEMS (ALSUP) [WWW.LIVESINTHEBALANCE.ORG](http://WWW.LIVESINTHEBALANCE.ORG))**
- **IDENTIFY YOUR CHILD'S UNSOLVED PROBLEMS (USE THE ALSUP AS YOUR GUIDE)**
  - **REMEMBER: WORDED "DIFFICULTY/HAVING A HARD TIME WITH \_\_\_\_ (EXPECTATION NOT MET) \_\_\_\_"**
- **PICK THE TOP 2 – 3 UNSOLVED PROBLEMS, START STEP 1 OF THE NEW CONVERSATION**
- **MAKE UP YOUR MIND TO PUT THE REST ON THE BACKBURNER UNTIL YOU GET TO THEM**
  - **THIS IS THE SLOW WAY, BUT IT'S THE SURE WAY**
  - **WHAT'S THE WORST THAT CAN HAPPEN IF....?**



# RESOURCES

- **PODCAST/WEB-BASED RADIO PROGRAM *PARENTING YOUR BEHAVIORALLY CHALLENGING CHILD* AIRS EVERY MONDAY, SEPTEMBER THROUGH MAY) [HTTPS://LIVESINTHEBALANCE.ORG/PYCC-RADIO-PROGRAM-AND-LISTENING-LIBRARY](https://livesinthebalance.org/pycc-radio-program-and-listening-library)**
- **THE WHOLE-BRAIN CHILD: 12 REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGIES TO NURTURE YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPING MIND BY DANIEL SIEGEL AND TINA PAYNE BRYSON**
- **RAISING HUMAN BEINGS & THE EXPLOSIVE CHILD, BOTH BY ROSS GREENE**
- **[WWW.LIVESINTHEBALANCE.ORG](http://www.livesinthebalance.org) (FOR READING, VIDEOS, AND RESOURCES PERTAINING TO COLLABORATIVE AND PROACTIVE SOLUTIONS)**
- **FACEBOOK GROUPS:**
- **ELEVATE YOUR PARENTING (FOR PARENTS OF ALL KIDS):  
[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/ELEVATEYOURPARENTING/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/elevateyourparenting/)**
- **THE B TEAM (FOR PARENTS OF BEHAVIORALLY CHALLENGING KIDS):  
[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/THEBTEAMLITB/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/thebteamlitb/)**
- **MEGHAN BARLOW AND ASSOCIATES – CALL US IF YOU NEED SOME EXTRA HELP (440) 409-0307**