



POWERFUL WORDS

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

DEAR DR. ROBYN

Young students: “Calm brain, calm body!”

Older students/teens/adults: Keeping calm, steady and in control while under pressure.

Dear Dr. Robyn,

I’m finding myself getting frustrated all the time now. And then I yell at my kids. What can I do to keep myself calm and help my kids stay calm while we are spending so much time together?

Jordan C., Miami, FL

Dear Jordan,

You are not alone. Many parents get upset to the point of yelling when their children are engaging in activities that are annoying, rude or potentially dangerous. While most parents know that staying calm when life gets chaotic can be a huge benefit to everyone involved, parents are human. When buttons get pushed, humans react.

How can we stay calm (yet firm, when necessary) and help our kids stay calm too?

(1) **Know the effects:** Yelling is like riding a car on the emergency break. It can work-- but you don’t want to do it for the long term. When we yell, our children hear our tone of voice but miss what we are saying. Staying calm allows children to absorb our message. While yelling can be an important method of communication when

someone is in danger, it needs to be limited during the everyday.

(2) **Know your triggers:** Do you consistently get upset when people leave dishes in the sink? When kids are yelling while you are trying to work? Call a family meeting to lay the issues on the table. Brainstorm ways to address the problems so the blowouts can be avoided. Ask for what triggers others in the family so that they can also be addressed.

(3) **Use brain breaks:** While time outs don’t tend to work well, brain breaks can be a wonderful way to fortify composure. Talk about what is calming for your child (and you) prior to when you need it. A comfy blanket? A beloved book? Play dough? Use a brain break when life gets heated so that “the thinker” can get back to steering the ship and “the caveman” can take a back seat.

(4) **Teach calming strategies:**

This is the time to impart how to take deep breaths for composure, talk it out, meditate, exercise and shift the focus to a more relaxing topic. Find what methods help to calm the body in order to calm the brain.

Remember to model these calming strategies- and give yourself grace when you make a mistake.

Here’s to your success!

