

Keep Your Fears to Yourself! CUT IT OUT!

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Kids will have enough opportunity to develop their own fears, the last thing they need to do is take on ours. If you openly express your fears of dogs, bugs, snakes, dirt, heights, spicy food..... the list goes on, CUT IT OUT! Kids are highly influenced by your reactions to things and this can easily create a crippling fear in them.

When my son was about two, I was lying beside him while he drifted off for an afternoon nap. Suddenly out of the side of me eye I saw a big, brown spider. I shrieked and grabbed my slipper to protect my baby from this terrifying monster. (yikes) My son quickly developed a strong fear of spiders! When you feel terrified of things that don't really pose a serious danger it might be wise to borrow a calm behavior. You can take a breath, remain calm and bite your tongue.

When it comes to more serious threats like strangers, earthquakes and illness, you can also be mindful of the amount of fear you pass on to your children. It can be a shock to a child when they discover that such awful things happen and they look to the parent for reassurance. So be conscious of how you handle your own fears so that you can be there for your child:

- Spend time listening without interrupting or trying to fix their feelings
- Give children facts and truth at an age appropriate level.
- Give them any honest assurance that you can.
- Be real and avoid sugar coating the truth if they are old enough to hear it.
- Stay calm yourself and model an optimistic outlook.
- Teach the child relaxation skills such as breathing, meditation, positive imagery, prayer or comforting daily rituals

Note, I am much kinder to spiders today.