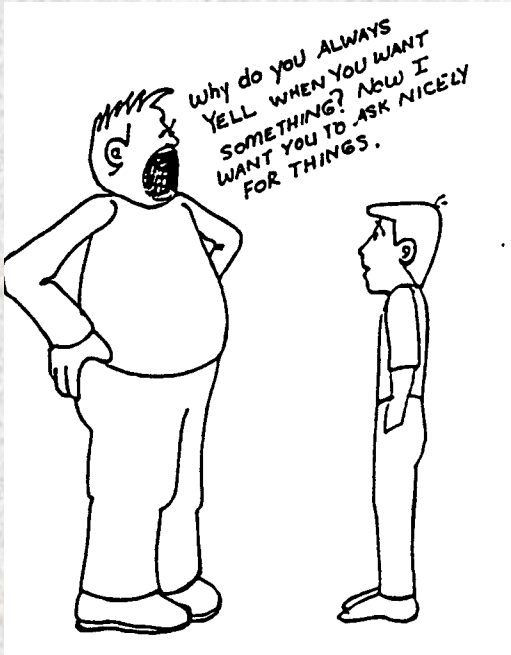


No Respect? Cut It Out!

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My radar is on when I hear parents say that their kids don't respect them. How dare kids act like a bunch of...kids! If you are always thinking that your child doesn't respect you, CUT IT OUT! Perhaps what you really mean is that your child isn't obedient and isn't afraid to have an opinion or a choice. Fear and respect are two different things. Yes, many of us were afraid of our elders yet I don't think that was actual respect. So why don't you say, "My child isn't afraid of me." Or you could say, "Yikes, my child is acting just like me!" The hardest part of parenting may be looking at our own behavior. Listen to yourself and invite your child to complain a little, and it's possible you'll learn how he or she sees things and how you may be contributing to the family dynamic.

Understanding your child's temperament can help you think differently. Distractible children are often accused of not listening because they don't always follow through with instructions. But it's distractibility not disrespect!

The big feelings of an intense child combined with immaturity equal blurting out inappropriate things. So don't say, "You're so disrespectful!" That would be labeling and that is disrespectful. You can say, "It isn't okay to call me Butthead! You have a second chance to tell me your feelings instead of calling me names!"

Remember, your own thoughts have a strong influence on your words and behavior. Catch yourself if you think your child is being disrespectful and ask yourself what your child's behavior really means. Understanding and healthy boundaries, not fear, are the roots of respect.