

EMOTIONAL COACHING

Helping Children Deal with Their Feelings

Research shows that children raised by parents who value and guide emotions do better in many ways:

They **form stronger friendships**.

They **do better in school**.

They **have fewer troubles with 'negative emotions'** and bounce back more quickly.

They even **get sick less often**.

Tolaris Research Institute in Seattle, Washington (www.talaris.org) is dedicated to creating tools that help parents raise their children effectively. They scour the world for information with practical applications for parents. Their book, *What Am I Feeling?*, is based on Dr. John Gottman's work on raising emotionally healthy children. It teaches parents how to be effective at emotional coaching. Here are some of the highlights of this significant little book.

IDENTIFY YOUR PARENTING STYLE

How do you handle your child's emotions? Most of the time, the way we handle our children's feelings matches our own attitudes about emotions. Dr. John Gottman has identified four parenting styles. Most parents tend to use one style more often than others (even though they may use other styles during the course of a week).

The DISMISSING Style

Ignoring "Bad" Emotions"

"Just get over it!" Some parents believe the best way to deal with children's emotions is to tell them to ignore their feelings and put on a happy face. They tend to dismiss children's feelings because they don't think they're important or don't know what else to do.

These adults often feel uncomfortable if children are sad or angry. They believe negative emotions are harmful or unnecessary, and they should be avoided. As a result, they might dismiss the emotions, try to "fix" children's moods, or try to distract them from their feelings.

These parents are well-intentioned, but their reactions fall short. When we dismiss a child's feelings, we:

Risk diminishing the child

Teach her that she can't trust her own emotions

Model a pattern of dismissing emotions that our child will adopt in her life

Discourage the child from coming to you when she is hurt or angry or sad.

When we value and guide a child's emotions, many benefits follow, including a much closer relationship.

There is no such thing as a bad emotion. It's how we handle our emotions that matters.

• DISMISSING STYLE •

Parent Says: "Get over it!"

"You don't need to be sad. It's not that bad. Put a smile on your face. There's no reason to be unhappy."

Child Feels: Ignored & Unimportant

A child often feels ignored when she has strong feelings. She learns to believe that emotions such as sadness or anger are "bad" and need to be fixed quickly. She doesn't learn how to handle her emotions and has trouble with her feelings when she is upset.

The DISAPPROVING Style

"Bad" Emotions Are Punished

"Don't be a brat!" Disapproving parents view emotions such as sadness, anger, or fear as unacceptable and controllable. Instead of trying to understand these emotions, they discipline or punish their child for the way he or she feels.

Karina is angry and about to cry. Her mom, who thinks she just wants attention, disapproves of her anger and wants to get her to change her feelings. "Don't be a brat, Karina." Karina starts to cry. "Stop it right now. I said stop it!" More crying. "That's it! If I hear any more crying, you'll be in trouble." More crying, of course. Now, not only is Karina angry about something, but she's also going to be punished for the way she feels.

The problem with this approach is that emotions simply cannot be switched on or off at will. Trying to make children turn them off can be harmful. Furthermore, the disapproving style does little to help children handle their intense emotions.

Research shows that children raised by disapproving parents:

- Have difficulty trusting their own judgment
- Grow up feeling something is wrong with them
- Often suffer from a lack of self-esteem
- Have more difficulty concentrating, learning, and getting along with friends
- Have trouble calming their emotions and solving their problems

• DISAPPROVING STYLE •

Parent Says: "Stop feeling that way."

"You shouldn't feel that way. You have no reason to be sad, and nobody wants a whiner around. If you keep that up, you'll be in trouble!"

Child Feels: Shame

A child feels that something is wrong with him if he gets upset or is sad. He is criticized or punished for showing sadness or anger, even if he does not misbehave. His parents call these bad emotions. Therefore, he feels he is bad. He doesn't learn how to manage his strong feelings.

The LAISSEZ-FAIRE Style

Emotions Without Guidance

"Laissez-faire" is a French expression that means "let it go" or "let it be." It describes the parenting style of some parents who assume an attitude of total acceptance and non-interference with their children's emotions. Some parents want their children to know that expressing emotions is a positive thing, and that no matter what their child's behavior is, they will always be loved. Other parents adopt a "laissez-faire" attitude because they've become worn down by their child's intense emotions, and they don't have the energy or skills to intervene. It's simply easier to just give in or let it go.

Although this approach is good in that it shows acceptance for feelings, it stops short. It does not do enough to nurture healthy emotional development. While children do need to *experience* their emotions, they also need help *understanding* them. A critical part of nurturing emotional development includes setting limits on behavior. Children need to learn that their feelings are okay, but not all behaviors are acceptable. Children need to be guided as they learn how to cope with their emotions.

Without the guidance of limits, children in "laissez-faire" homes don't learn how to handle their emotions. They often:

- Lack the ability to calm down when angry or upset
- Lack "coping skills" when encountering stressful situations
- Find it more difficult to concentrate or learn new skills
- Have more difficulty picking up on social cues, so they find it harder to make and keep friends.

• LAISSEZ-FAIRE STYLE •

Parent Says: "Anything goes..."

"That's it, just let the feelings out. Do what you need to do. It doesn't bother me. Whatever you feel like doing is okay."

Child Feels: "I'm the King/Queen!"

- Indulged but Overwhelmed -

A child feels comfortable in expressing her feelings and knows that it is acceptable to show emotions whether she is happy, angry, or sad. But there are no limits on her behavior and there is little guidance on how to deal with emotions. She learns that her emotions are okay, but she doesn't learn how to handle them in appropriate ways.

The EMOTIONAL COACHING Style

Empathy and Guidance

Emotional coaching is an approach to caring for children that values their feelings while guiding their behaviors. Emotional coaching takes effort and patience. It's not necessarily easy—but it's definitely worth the effort. This approach encourages healthy emotional development so that “children delight in the happy times and recover more quickly from the bad ones.” Using emotional coaching does get easier with practice. It's like learning a new skill in sports or learning to play a musical instrument. The more we use it, the better we become.

Parent says: “I Understand...”

“Tell me how you feel. I've felt that way, too. You can't hit somebody when you're angry. Let's think together about other things you can when you fell this way.”

Child feels: Accepted and Safe

A child feels valued and comforted when all of her emotions are accepted. At the same time, she learns that there are limits on her behavior when she has strong feelings. She receives empathy when upset or angry and guidance in learning to deal with her emotions. She feels comfortable in expressing her emotions and she learns to trust her feelings and solve problems.

Five Steps to Emotional Coaching

1. Be aware of your child's emotions.

The first step towards helping a child learn about emotions is being aware of what a child is feeling. This awareness begins with you. Parents who understand their *own* emotions are better able to relate to their child's feelings.

Sometimes it's hard to figure out our children's emotions.

Your job is to try to see the world through your child's eyes and to uncover the emotion. Watch body language and listen closely to identify feelings. Help your child learn about her feelings.

EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

What Can You Do?

- Recognize when your child is upset, sad, afraid, or happy.
- Stand in your child's shoes when he is struggling with an emotion & see things from his perspective.
- Listen during playtime to find clues about what makes your child anxious, scared, proud or happy.
- Share your emotions, when it's appropriate.
- CAUTION: your child is learning about emotions by watching YOU and how you handle your own feelings!

2. Recognize that emotions are an opportunity to connect.

Emotions are new and sometimes overwhelming for young children. They need adults to teach them how to handle their emotions in a healthy way.

The best time to teach children about emotions is *during the experience* when the feelings are real. This means sharing the moment of feeling sad or feeling angry with a child *before* those feelings grow to a high level. Talking about feelings helps reduce their intensity. “Talking it out when you are upset” teaches children that issues can be handled when they are small, which is a key problem solving strategy. If children can learn this skill when they are young, they will be better able to manage stress later in life.

CONNECTING

What Can You Do?

- Pay close attention to your child's emotions—don't dismiss or avoid them!
- Think of emotional moments as “opportunities to draw closer” to your child.
- Encourage your child to talk about her emotions and try to share in the feeling yourself.
- Share your own feelings, when it's appropriate.
- Tell your child her feelings are okay...and then offer guidance in sorting out those feelings.

3. Listen with empathy.

Two of the most important steps parents can take to help their children deal successfully with their emotions are *listening with empathy* and *supporting a child's feelings*. Comforting children with their feelings reassures them that they are not alone and lets them know their feelings are okay.

The best way to help children understand their feelings is to put their feelings into words with simple statements. Reflecting children's feelings back to them is extremely comforting ("*Oh, that made you really sad.*") It also helps them feel like someone is 'on their side.' Using reflective listening puts the parent in a better position help the child find a solution to the problem.

LISTENING

What Can You Do?

- Encourage your child to share what he is feeling. ("*Tell me what happened/Tell me what you're feeling..*")
- Reflect your child's feeling back to her by saying, "*It sounds like you are feeling _____ .*"
- Don't dismiss emotions as silly or unimportant. Never criticize your child's feelings.
- Listen in a way that helps your child know you are paying attention and taking her seriously. ("*You didn't like it when he said that to you. That really hurt your feelings.*")
- Find a way to show your child that you understand what he or she is feeling. ("*So you don't want to play with him any more today. You just want to play by yourself.*")

4. Help your child name emotions.

Children don't always know the words to talk about what they are feeling. They don't know how to make sense of complicated emotions that overtake them, like jealousy, hurt, fear, or worry.

Research shows that when children can *name* their feelings, they can handle them better. Naming emotions helps different brain areas communicate with each other, which in turn helps children calm themselves. This process is called learning "emotional regulation," which is a critical coping skill needed for managing life's up's and down's.

Naming emotions can be tricky. Children can feel mixed emotions, just like us. It takes a little detective work to identify exactly what a child is feeling. Ask 'door-opening' questions, look for clues in a child's tone of voice, and watch body language. The wonderful thing about children is that they are very, very forgiving. If you try naming an emotion and you're off-base, they'll let you know ("*No, I'm not sad...I'm mad!*") Children desperately want to be understood, so if you just keep listening, they'll keep trying to make clear to you what they are feeling.

NAMING EMOTIONS

What Can You Do?

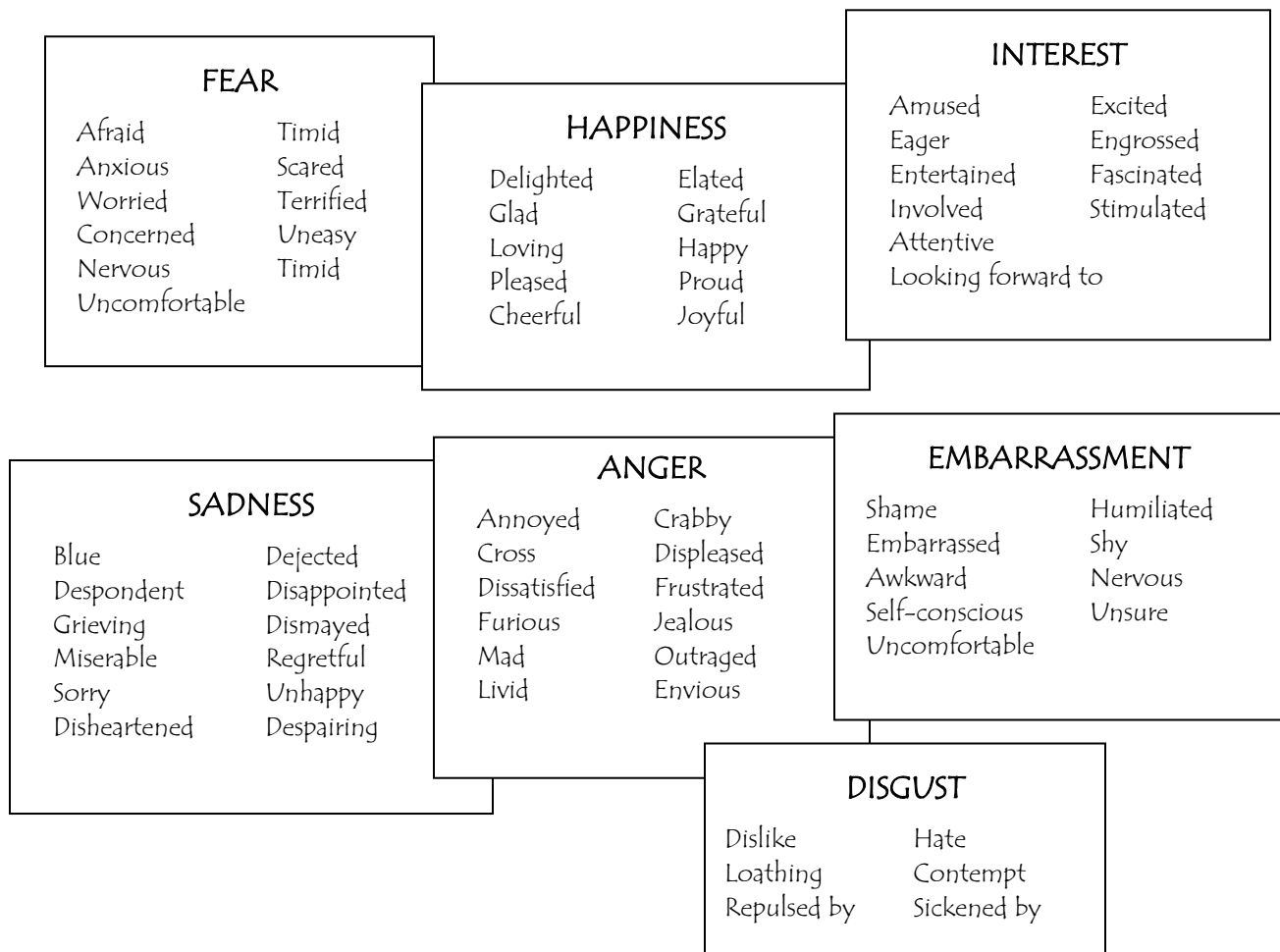
- Start to name emotions early—even before your child can talk. ("*Oh, you're really mad!*")
- Work very hard to identify the emotions your child is feeling, instead of telling her what she ought to feel.
- Listen in a way that helps children know you are paying attention and taking them seriously.
- Find a way to show your child that you understand what he or she is feeling—don't judge or criticize the emotion.

5. Set limits and find good solutions.

Learning positive ways to express emotions is an important life lesson. The challenge for parents is to accept children's emotions while setting limits on children's inappropriate behavior.

Setting limits is the first step in any good problem-solving. Once adults have made clear what children shouldn't do, the next step is helping kids come up with what they can do to solve their problem. This teaches children to find their own solution to problems.

Do you need some words for different FEELINGS?



Source: John Gottman, Ph.D. and Tolaris Research Institute, *What Am I Feeling?*

Helpful Books on Managing Emotions

Helping Our Children:

- How To Listen So Kids Will Talk and Talk So Kids Will Listen*** by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, 1999.
- Dealing with Disappointment: Helping Kids Cope When Things Don't Go Their Way*** by Elizabeth Crary, 2003.
- The Highly Sensitive Child*** by Elaine Aaron, Ph.D., 2002.
- Raising Your Spirited Child*** by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka, 1991.
- Taming the Dragon in Your Child*** by Meg Eastman, Ph.D., 1994.
- The Explosive Child*** by Ross Greene, Ph.D., 1998.
- No More Misbehavin': 38 Difficult Behaviors and How To Stop Them*** by Michele Borba, Ph.D. 2003.

Helping Ourselves:

- She's Gonna Blow: Help For Mom's Dealing with Anger*** by Julie Ann Barnhill, 2001. (Parental Anger)
- Love and Anger: The Parental Dilemma*** by Nancy Samalin, 1991. (Parental Anger)
- I Swore I'd Never Do That*** by Elizabeth Fishel, 1994. (Changing Patterns)
- Giving The Love That Heals: A Guide for Parents*** by Harville Hendrix & Helen Hunt, 1998. (Changing Patterns)

There are times when Emotion Coaching should **NOT** be used:

- 1) When you are in a **hurry** – you will not be effective, and it will probably make matters worse.
- 2) When you are out in **public** or with others and it may embarrass the child.
- 3) When **safety** is more important
- 4) When **you are too upset** to be effective at EC
- 5) When you need to address **serious behaviors**- stealing, hitting, etc (when safety is an issue)
- 6) When the **emotion does not match the situation**- crying when nothing really happened (example-child is tired or hungry)

The Five Steps to Emotion Coaching

- These critical steps have been developed to help us as parents work through issues with our kids.
- The steps are simple, but the application is what is hard-it has to be learned and practiced.
- It is easy for us as parents to “react” to our children. Instead we need to view it or reframe the experience and as a gift every time our child acts out or becomes emotional

1. Recognize lower intensity Emotions

What Can You Do?

- Recognize when your child is upset, sad, afraid, or happy.
- Stand in your child’s shoes when he is struggling with an emotion & see things from his perspective.
- Listen during playtime to find clues about what makes your child anxious, scared, proud or happy.

2. Recognize this as a time to connect with child and for teaching

What Can You Do?

- Pay close attention to your child’s emotions—don’t dismiss or avoid them!
- Think of emotional moments as “opportunities to draw closer” to your child.
- Encourage your child to talk about her emotions and try to share in the feeling yourself.

3. Listen Empathetically and validate your child’s feelings

What Can You Do?

- Encourage your child to share what he is feeling. (*“Tell me what happened/Tell me what you’re feeling...”*)
- Reflect your child’s feeling back to her by saying, *“It sounds like you are feeling _____ .”*
- Don’t dismiss emotions as silly or unimportant. Never criticize your child’s feelings.
- Listen in a way that helps your child know you are paying attention and taking her seriously. (*“You didn’t like it when he said that to you. That really hurt your feelings.”*)
- Share your own feelings, when it’s appropriate.

4. Help child to label emotions

What Can You Do?

- Start to name emotions early—even before your child can talk. (*“Oh, look/sound really mad!”*)
- Work very hard to identify the emotions your child is feeling, instead of telling her what she ought to feel.
- Listen in a way that helps children know you are paying attention and taking them seriously.
- Find a way to show your child that you understand what he or she is feeling—don’t judge or criticize the emotion.

5. Set limits while problem solving (see 5 steps to problem solving)

5 Simple Steps of Emotion Coaching

There are 5 steps to emotion coaching. Each step is important and builds upon the previous step. It is very important that you do not miss a step since doing so will decrease the effectiveness of the intervention.

1. Attend to the emotion
2. Name it (put it into words)
3. Validate the emotion
4. Meet the emotional need
5. "Fix / Problem-solve"

Step 1: Attend

Attend to your loved one's emotional experience by approaching the situation calmly and acknowledging the presence of emotion (essentially not ignoring the child's expression of emotion, whether subtle or obvious).

"I see that something is up."

Step 2: Name the feeling

Put into words the emotions (or range of emotions) that you think your loved one might possibly be experiencing. You may also help them to identify and describe the bodily felt sense that accompanies each named emotion.

"You look sad."

Step 3: Validate

This is the most important and yet the most challenging of all of the steps of emotion coaching. It communicates: "I understand you and your unique experience."

Validating involves putting yourself in your loved one's shoes and conveying understanding of their experience as they are experiencing it. This involves imagining what the situation must be like for them. It is important to accept, allow, and validate emotions that are different from what you expected or that are hard for you to understand.

When validating, it is also very important to resist going for the bright side, explaining with logic or trying to help them to see the situation as you see it. If you can do this, you will be showing your loved

one that you understand them (and their unique experience) and this will 1) improve your relationship, 2) encourage them to keep coming to you when things get tough and 3) help them to move forward from the emotional challenge.

When validating it is also very important to “speak the unspoken”. Speaking the unspoken involves speaking that truth that you both know, but that neither of you want to say out loud.

“I can understand why you might feel sad. It really hurts to be excluded, especially when all of your friends are going to the party”.

4. Meet the need

When meeting the emotion need, it is important to refer back to the basics of emotions. Each emotion has a corresponding need from the environment.

- Sadness: soothing, giving a hug
- Anger: helping to set and defend boundaries
- Fear: protecting from danger (we do not protect anxiety! A real danger must be involved)
- Anxiety: helping to confront the anxiety-provoking situation with love and support "Come here. Let me give you a hug."

5. Fix it/Problem-solve

Attending to, naming and validating an emotion/emotional experience goes a long way in reducing the power of the pain. As such, this step often is unnecessary since engaging in the prior steps decrease the strength of the emotion and help the child to engage in their own problem-solving.

When this step is required, problem solving communicates “I will help you sort to this out” and it can be very helpful, but only if it comes after attending, labeling and validating the emotional experience of the child.

"Why don't we sort out how you are going to deal with this situation when you see your friends next. And then why not catch a movie? It won't be the same - but I think we can still have a nice time."

Additional note: This step is critical if the child is the victim of bullying. The child will need your support to develop strategies to stand up to bullies and to access supports at school or in the community, if appropriate. Walking away from a bully is not an effective strategy despite prior teachings encouraging children to do so.

The Art of Emotion Coaching

During the last few decades, researchers have increasingly come to understand how important it is to understand our emotions and handle them in a healthy way. The term “emotional intelligence,” introduced by Daniel Goleman in a book by the same name, has become common in both research literature and books written for the general public.

Emotional intelligence is learned, and a child’s first teacher about emotions is his or her parents. You can help your child develop emotional intelligence by “coaching” him, using principles researchers have found work well. “Emotion coaching” can help you avoid common pitfalls as you guide your children toward becoming successful, happy adults.

What Is Emotion Coaching?

Emotion coaching is helping children understand the different emotions they experience, why they occur, and how to handle them. In the simplest terms, you can coach your children about emotions by comforting them, listening and understanding their thoughts and feelings, and helping them understand themselves. As you do this, your children will feel loved, supported, respected, and valued. With this emotionally supportive foundation, you will be much more successful at setting limits and problem solving.

Benefits to Your Children of Emotion Coaching

The better you are at emotion coaching your children, the better you can prepare them to become happy and healthy adults. Researchers have found that children who feel love and support have more friendships and live healthier, more successful lives. They also are at lower risk for youth violence, antisocial behavior, drug addiction, premature sexual activity, and adolescent suicide.

According to John Gottman, author of the book *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child*, “Researchers have found that even more than your IQ, your emotional awareness and your ability to handle feelings will determine your success and happiness in all walks of life, including family relationships” (p. 20).

Learning How to Emotion Coach

While emotion coaching may seem complicated at first, as you practice you’ll find that it becomes second nature.

Step 1: Understand how you deal with feelings.

Before you can become an emotion coach, you must first understand your own approach to emotions. Some parents, for example, are uncomfortable with their child’s negative emotions. If a child feels sad, you might think that if you fix the problem that created the sadness, the sadness will go away. You might be uncomfortable with your own anger because it makes you feel out of control, and in turn you discourage anger in your children.

Gottman suggests several questions you can ask yourself to discover why you feel the way you do about emotions:

1. Did your parents treat sad and angry moments as natural occurrences?
2. Did your parents lend an ear when family members felt unhappy, fearful, or angry?
3. Did your family use times of unhappiness, fear, or anger to show each other support, offer guidance, and help each other solve problems?
4. Was anger always viewed as potentially destructive? If so, what did this teach you about how to handle your anger? Are you taking this same approach with your children?
5. Was fear looked on as cowardly? If so, how did you learn to handle fear?
6. Was sadness seen as self-pity in your family? What ways were you taught to handle sadness?
7. Were sadness, anger and fear shoved under the blanket or dismissed as unproductive, frivolous, dangerous, or self-indulgent?

Research has shown that parents who have become good at emotion-coaching believe the following about emotions:

1. Their child's feelings are important.
2. Their child's feelings and wishes are okay, even if their actions aren't.
3. Experiencing negative emotions, such as sadness, anger or fear, is important.
4. Negative feelings are a chance for parents and children to grow closer.
5. Understanding what causes their child's feelings is important.
6. Negative feelings are an opportunity for problem-solving

Step 2: Believe that your child's negative emotions are an opportunity for closeness and teaching.

Reasoning away your child's emotion with logic rarely works. Parents who try to do this usually end up arguing with their child. Instead, a child's negative feelings are more likely to go away when children talk about them, label them, and feel understood. When children feel understood by their parents, they feel closer to them.

James, a college freshman, came home one evening frustrated and bewildered, announcing long and loud that he didn't understand material in one class. "Everyone else gets it and I don't!" He declared. Initially Dad told his son to calm down and stop obsessing so much, but this only made matters worse. Eventually Dad realized that his son needed to vent the negative feelings and have his concerns understood. This area of study was one that Dad knew well, so after understanding, Dad helped James work through some exercises until he understood the principles and was making good progress on the assigned work.

When James felt understood, he was open to receiving some guidance from his dad. And James felt closer to his dad because he understood and took the time to help him.

Step 3: Listen with empathy and understanding, then validate your child's feelings.

In the book *Between Parent and Child*, psychologist Haim Ginott discusses his belief that children need to be understood before they can accept correction. If you want to understand your child, you need to put yourself in his or her shoes. Empathetic listening can help you do this. Empathetic listening is the heart of emotion coaching. John Gottman says empathetic listeners do the following:

1. Use their eyes to identify physical evidence of their child's emotions, such as a suddenly reduced appetite.
2. Use their ears to hear the underlying messages behind what a child is saying.
3. Use their imaginations to put themselves in their child's shoes to understand how they're feeling.
4. Use words to reflect back what they hear, see, and imagine in a soothing, nonjudgmental way. These words also help the child label the emotion.
5. Use their hearts to feel what their child is feeling.

Once your child feels understood, let her know that her feelings and wishes are okay, even if her actions aren't. The following tips will help you listen empathetically and validate your child's feelings:

Share simple observations. Say what you see and hear rather than ask probing questions. Children often don't know what they're feeling or why they're experiencing a feeling. For example, six-year-old Elizabeth is much quieter than usual. She eats her afternoon snack with little enthusiasm before trudging off to her room. Her mother silently notices all this, and then makes the observation, "Elizabeth, you seem quiet today." When Elizabeth hardly responds, her mother offers a second observation. "Often when I'm quiet, I'm worried about something." Elizabeth then opens up to her mother and confides her worries about her friends at school.

Avoid questions you already know the answer to. When you ask questions like "Who muddied the carpet?" – knowing very well the answer – you create an environment of mistrust. Instead, be direct: "You muddied the carpet; I'm disappointed."

Share examples from your own life. This helps children feel that what they're experiencing is normal.

Step 4: Label your child's emotions.

Children often don't know what they're feeling. If you label an action – observe aloud that they seem "angry" or "sad" or "disappointed" – you can help your child transform a scary, uncomfortable feeling into something identifiable and normal. Researchers have shown that the simple act of labeling an emotion has a soothing effect on the nervous system, which helps children recover more quickly from an upsetting experience.

Often a chance to label an emotion comes up when you're listening empathetically. Keep in mind that it's easy to fall into the trap of telling your child how he ought to feel instead of what he's feeling. For example, four-year-old Jared announces that he hates his friend Billy because Billy took his toy, then hit him when Jared tried to get his toy back. His mom, instead of telling Jared that he doesn't hate Billy and that he actually likes Billy because they are friends, says, "It sounds like you're pretty angry that Billy took your toy and hit you."

Step 5: Set limits while exploring possible solutions to the problem that caused the negative emotion. John Gottman describes several parts to this step.

1. Set limits.

Even though it's important to validate your child's feelings, you don't have to validate their actions. Once you set a limit on inappropriate behavior and its consequences, follow through and be consistent. The ideal time to use emotion coaching is right after your child misbehaves and before you deal out the consequence. For example, a parent might say, "You're mad that Danny took that game away from you. I would be, too. But it's not okay for you to hit him. What can you do instead?"

2. Identify goals.

After you've followed through on consequences for inappropriate behavior, identify the goal your child was trying to reach with his or her behavior. Simply ask your child what he was trying to accomplish.

3. Think of possible solutions.

Allow your child to think up solutions to a problem situation before you offer suggestions. This helps your child develop problem-solving skills. Don't shoot down his solutions if they're not workable. Instead, ask questions that will help him see the outcome of his solutions.

4. Evaluate the proposed solutions based on your family values.

When your child suggests solutions, ask questions like:

"Is this solution fair?"

"Will this solution work?"

"Is it safe?"

"How are you likely to feel? How are other people likely to feel?"

5. Help your child choose a solution.

If your child comes up with an unworkable solution, it's okay to go forward as long as it's harmless. Let her learn from seeing the consequences of her choices. Just leave the door open to rework the solution if it doesn't seem to be working. Also help your child come up with a plan of action to accomplish the solution.

For Further Reading:

Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child: The Heart of Parenting
by John Gottman