

How To Speak So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk

Potential Plus
Big Family Weekend
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Presentation Plan

- Introduction
- Who we are
- Helping children deal with their feelings
- Engaging cooperation
- Alternatives to Punishment
- Problem resolution process
- Encouraging autonomy
- Praise
- Non-violent Communication
- Emotional Freedom Technique (tapping)
- Exercises
- Resources



Who we are



- Potential Plus Members since 2011
- Parents of 8 y.o. daughter, Aliyah
- Private psychologists recently contracted to revamp our child's school wellbeing policy



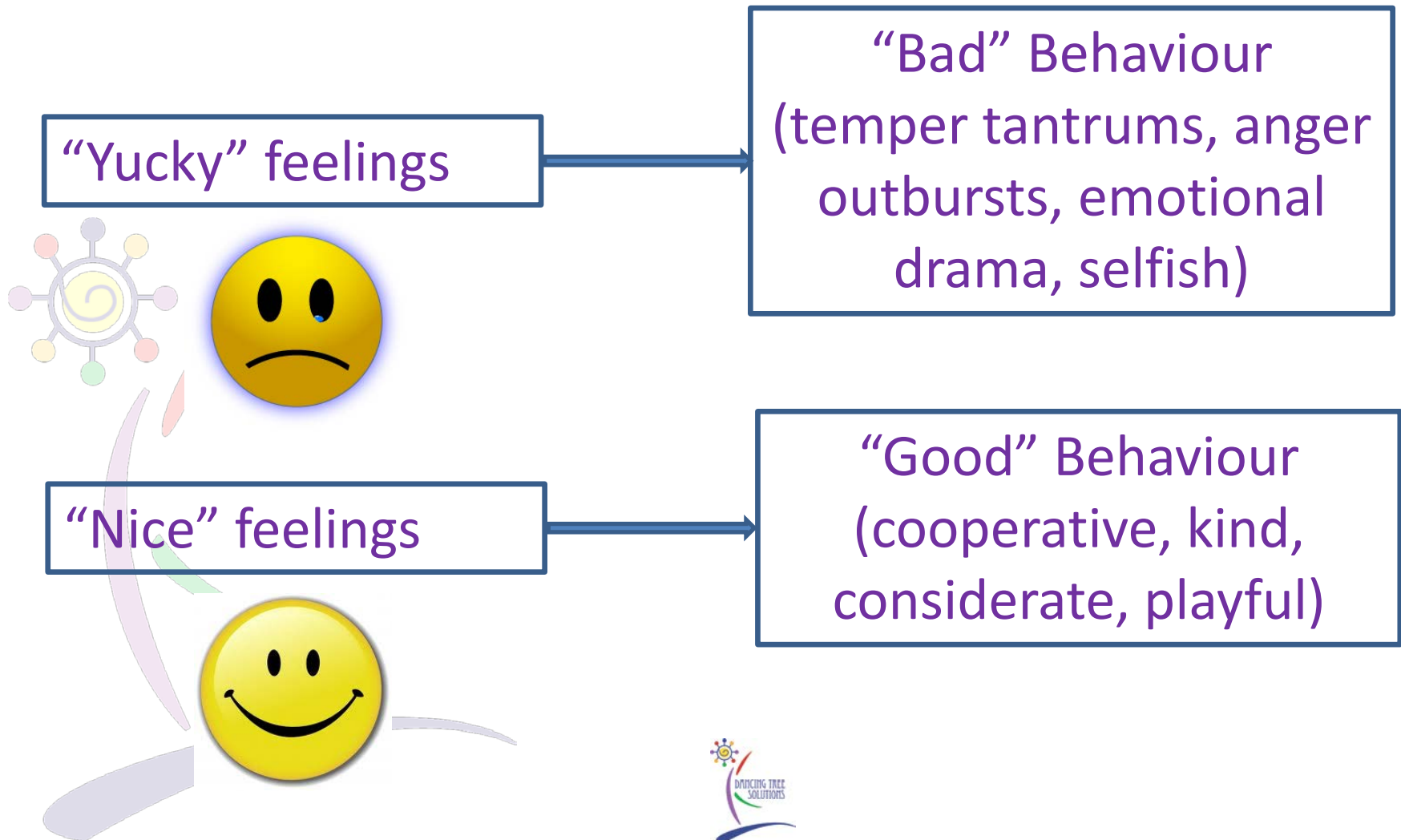


Introduction

- Why do we want our children to listen to us?
- Why do we want our children to talk to us?
(i.e. about their feelings, about what is going on for them)
- What stops our children from listening to us?
- What stops our children from sharing with us?

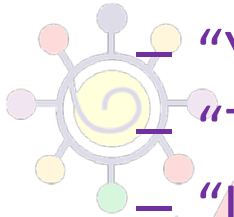


A link between feelings and actions



Problems with accepting feelings

- Parents don't usually accept their children's feelings. For example:
 - “You don't really hate me/your brother/your sister/the broccoli”
 - “You're just saying this because you're hungry / tired”
 - “There's no reason to be angry / sad”
 - “It's not a big deal”
- Denial of children's feelings leads to their confusion and anger (and ultimately to not trusting / suppressing their feelings)
- Acceptance of feelings doesn't remove accountability for actions; boundaries on acceptable behaviour must still be set, and it is fair to appropriately defend, e.g. the broccoli.





Eight ways to get it wrong when first responding to a child in distress

1. Denial of feelings

– “There’s no reason to be upset...”

2. The philosophical response

– “Look, life is like that. Things don’t always turn out the way we want...”

3. Advice

– “You know what I think you should do...”

4. Questions

– “Why did you do it? Are you dumb? Have you not realised what was going to happen?...”



Eight ways to get it wrong when **first** responding to a child in distress

5. Defence of other person

- “I can understand why he behaved this way...”

6. Pity

- “Oh, you poor thing. That is terrible! I feel so sorry for you...”

7. Amateur psychoanalysis

- “Has it ever occurred to you that the real reason you got so angry was because you didn’t forgive him for stealing your teddy?”

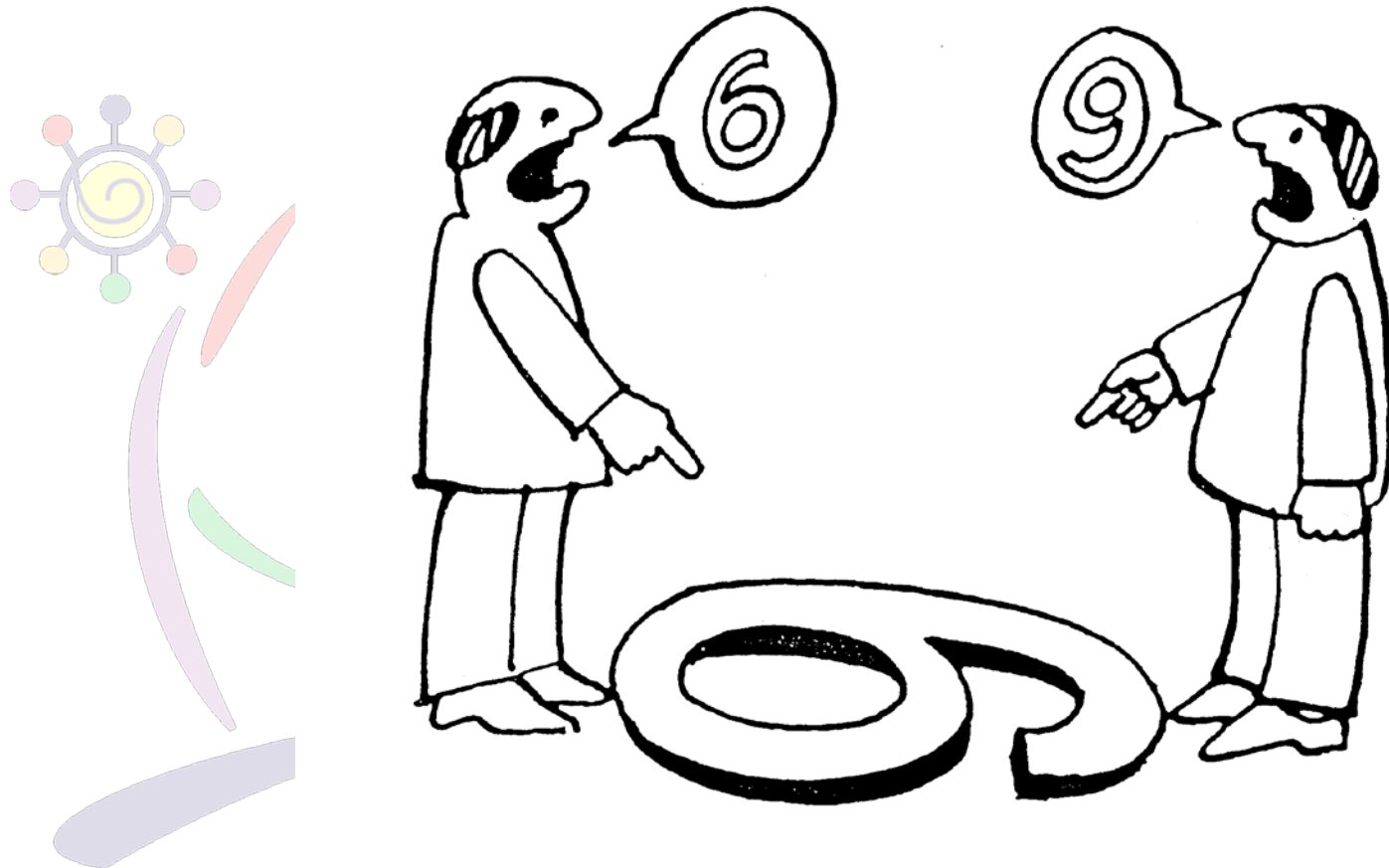
8. An (inappropriate) empathic response

- “That must have been pretty hard for you...” (when it wasn’t)



We see things differently as adults...

So we need to reach beyond our own justified views to connect with our children...



Empathy

- Getting in touch with what may be going on for your child without getting absorbed/flooded/overwhelmed by their feeling
 - Rather, be attentive and curious
- Whenever possible take an appropriate empathic / compassionate stance
- Expressing empathy
 - Non-verbal: hug, touch, soft eye-contact, gentle voice tone
 - Verbal: “I’m sorry honey...”, “You must be in pain”, “You look so distressed, darling...”



Four simple ways to help your children talk and start feeling better

1. Listen with full attention
2. Acknowledge their feelings with a word
 - “Oh”... “Mmm”... “I see”
 - (BTW, “Acknowledge” ≠ “Agree”)
3. Give their feelings the right names
 - “Oh, that was a shock”, “Looks like you’re feeling anxious”
4. Give them their wishes in fantasy
 - E.g. “I wish I had a magic power to... (find your toy)”
 - (Only after that: ask questions, give advice, set boundaries and consequences.)



Exercise 1



What prevents us from accepting our children's feelings?

- Being tired
- Being in a rush
- Being angry
- Being scared / anxious
- Seeing things from a solely adult perspective
- Forgetting to be curious
- Being right
 - Sometimes it is a choice to be right or to be intimate.



FAQs

- What's wrong with giving my children advice?
- If I accept all of my child's feelings, may he/she get an idea that everything he/she does is OK?
- What if I try to identify a feeling and get it wrong?
- What if I got it wrong? (E.g. shouted at my child instead of listening)

Ways to get your children to cooperate

That cause resentment and defensiveness

<p>Blaming and accusing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Why do you always do that?”	<p>Warnings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Careful, you’ll get hit by a car!”
<p>Name-calling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Are you dumb or what?”	<p>Martyrdom statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Are you trying to give me a heart attack?...”
<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Just do that again and I’ll give you a smack”	<p>Comparisons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Why can’t you be more like your brother?”
<p>Commands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I want you to do your homework right now”	<p>Sarcasm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “You left your book at school. Oh, smart! It was a brilliant thing to do.”
<p>Lecturing and moralising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Do you think that was a polite thing to do? You have to understand ...”	<p>Prophecy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Just keep on being selfish. You’ll have no friends.”



Respectful ways to get your children to engage and cooperate

Describe

- “The light is still on in your room.”
- “I need to use a phone now.”

Give information

- “Milk turns sour when it isn’t refrigerated”
- “The house gets cold if the door left open”

Say it with a word

- “The light”
- “Your lunchbox”

Talk about your feelings

- “I don’t like being screamed at”
- “It bothers me to see the house being messy”

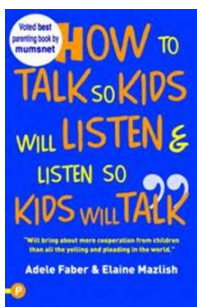
Write a note

- “Before you turn on the TV – THINK – Have I done my homework?”
- (on a bedroom door) “Shhh! Mommy and Daddy are sleeping.” EXERCISE

To punish or not to punish?

- What's wrong with punishment?
 - Child feelings: hatred, revenge, defiance, shame, unworthiness, self-pity
 - Ultimately: breaking trust and rapport
 - Control instead of intimacy
- Punishment vs. Natural consequences
- What can you do instead of punishing?



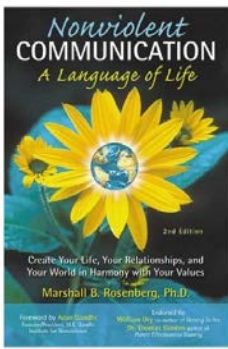


Alternatives to punishment

- Point a way to be helpful
 - “It’d be helpful if you picked out two big oranges for us”
- Express strong disapproval (without attacking)
 - “I’m furious you walked in dirty trainers on a freshly mopped floor”
- State your expectations
 - “I expect my stapler to be returned to my desk after you’re done.”
- Show the child how to make amends
 - “You can wipe the floor with that rug”
- Offer a choice
 - “No running. You can either walk by my side or sit in a trolley”
- Take action (remove, restrain, lock things away)
- Allow the child to experience the consequences of his/her misbehaviour.
 - “You didn’t eat above the table, now you have to sweep the floor.”

Exercise





Non-Violent Communication (NVC)

1. Observation

- “I noticed that you left your coat on the floor in the hallway again”

2. Feeling

- “It bothers me to see the house untidy”

3. Need

- “I need to be able to walk through without stumbling on your stuff”

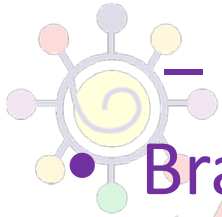
4. Request

- “What needs to happen for you to remember to hang your coat on a hook in the future?”



Problem solving / resolving process

- Talk about the child's feelings and needs (NVC)
 - Do not permit the child to blame or accuse you
- Talk about your feelings and needs (NVC)
 - Without blaming or shaming
- Brainstorm together to find a mutually agreeable solution
- Decide together on the future plan of action
- Decide together on accountability and consequences





Encouraging autonomy

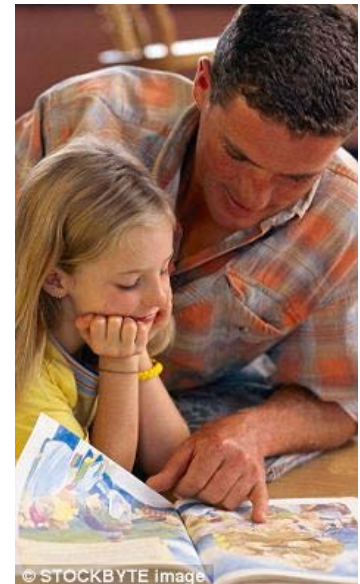
1. Let your children make choices (*and mistakes...*)
 - “It’s colder than yesterday - Do you want to zip up your coat today?”
2. Show respect for a child’s struggle
 - “It can be hard to take off trainers. It may help if you loosen the laces.”
3. Don’t ask too many questions
 - “Glad you got that issue resolved.”
4. Don’t rush to answer questions
 - “That’s a good question. What do you think?”
5. Encourage children to use sources outside the home
 - “Why don’t you ask a librarian to help you find that book?”
6. Don’t take away hope
 - “So you’re thinking of joining that chess competition? That would be a significant experience.”

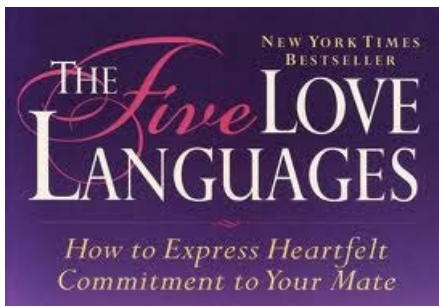




Praise

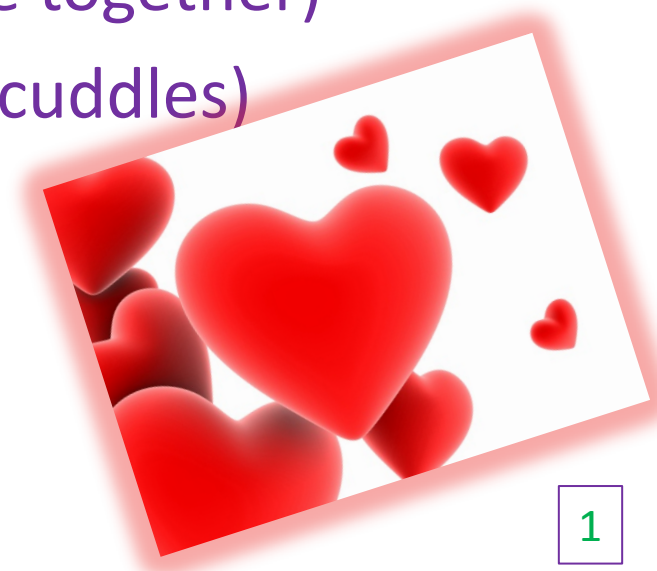
- The importance of specific praise (vs. just evaluation)
 - High self-esteem
 - Willingness to cooperate and to share
 - (Trap of good boy/girl bad boy/girl non-specific feedback)
- Using emotive, descriptive praise
 - Describe what you see
 - “Wow, this room is really tidy now!”
 - Describe what you feel
 - “It’s so pleasant to be in your room now.”
 - Sum up the behaviour with a word
 - “That’s what I call being well-prepared!”





The Five Love Languages

- **Gifts**
- **Words of affirmation** (e.g. saying “I love you”, “Thank you”, “You look cute in that” (etc.))
- **Acts of service** (e.g. doing washing up, fixing things)
- **Quality Time** (e.g. watching a movie together)
- **SAFE Physical Touch** (e.g. hugs and cuddles)

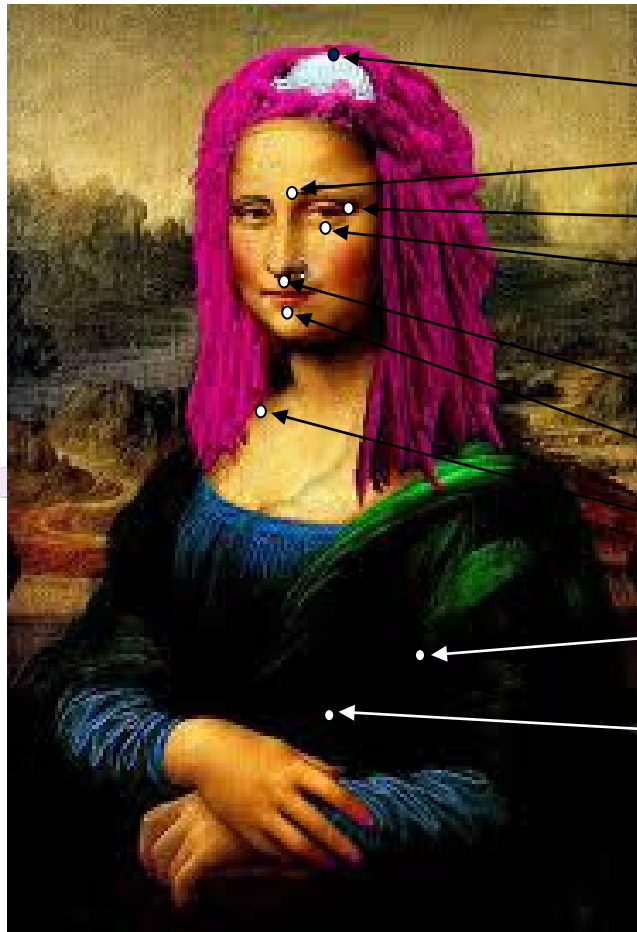


Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) or Tapping

- A process that allows you to...
 - release emotional blocks
 - handle unpleasant emotions
 - sometimes release physical pain
 - Increase brain/body capacity to generate positive emotion
- ...by talking through an experience whilst simultaneously tapping on end-points of acupuncture meridians



Location of face and torso points



Top of Head

Eyebrow (medial beginning of eyebrow)

Side of Eye (corner of eye on eye socket)

Under Eye (looking straight ahead, under pupil on eye socket)

Under Nose (on philtrum)

Under Lip (indent between lip and chin)

Collar Bone (about 1½" up from medial end of CB)

Under Arm (about 4" down from armpit on the side of the body)

Liver Point (down from the nipple, under where an underwire bra would be, and about 1½" laterally (towards the outside of the body)).

Basic EFT process

- Setup statement (while tapping karate-chop point):
 - “Even though I’m feeling [...], I love & accept myself”
- Repeat what you’re feeling and thinking and what is happening for you / your child as you tap through the rest of the points
- Breathe and reassess, if required, tap on the remaining distress
 - “Even though I’m feeling some remaining anger, ...”



Resources

- “How to talk so kids will listen and listen so kids will talk” by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish, Picadilly Press, 2013
- “How to talk so kids can learn at home and in school” by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish, Scribner, 2003
- “Non-Violent Communication” by Marshall Rosenberg
- “The Five love languages” by Gary Chapman
- EFT Training DVD Set:
www.unlimitedemotionalfreedom.com/products.html
- Bringing up Emotionally Resilient children, Helping your kids to be happy, Effective Parenting techniques:
www.wellbeingforschools.com/freevideos



Exercise 1: Helping your children feeling better

- Practice 4 ways of responding:

1. Listen with full attention
2. Acknowledge their feelings with a word
3. Give their feelings a name
4. Give them their wishes in fantasy



- Possible Scenarios:

- Your child lost his/toy favourite toy on the bus
- Your child failed the spelling / numeracy test at school
- Your child has been bullied by someone
- Your child doesn't want to go to the dentist's



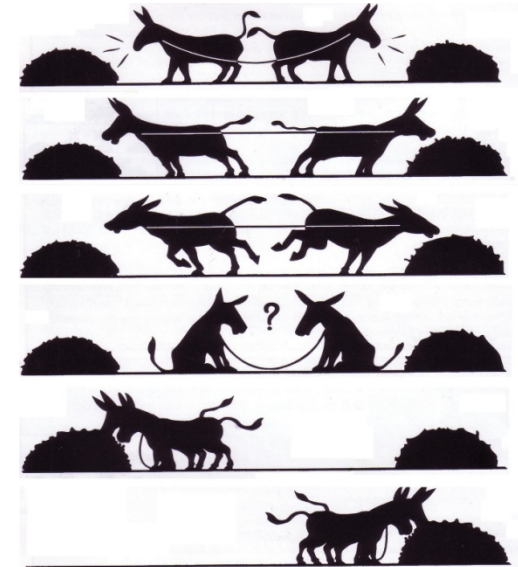
Exercise 2: Getting your children to cooperate

- Ways to get your child's cooperation

- Describe
- Give Information
- Say it with a word
- Talk about your feelings
- Write a note

- Possible Scenarios

- Your child is walking very slowly and you are in a hurry
- Your child forgot/ didn't put on his/her jacket and it's cold outside
- Your child left the tap on in the bathroom
- Your child is walking in dirty shoes on the freshly mopped floor



Exercise 3: Alternatives to Punishment

- Alternative ways
 - Point a way to be helpful
 - Express strong disapproval (without attacking)
 - State your expectations
 - Show the child how to make amends
 - Offer a choice
 - Take action (remove, restrain, lock things away) (*careful with this one!*)
 - Allow the child to experience the consequences of his/her misbehaviour
- Possible Scenarios
 - Your child smashed a crystal vase while playing with a ball
 - Your child forgot to do a piece of homework and got a low mark on the test
 - Your child did not tell you about the important parent-teacher meeting at school
 - Your child broke one of your tools out of negligence
 - Your child spilt flour on the kitchen floor



The End

