

## “When kids feel right, they’ll behave right!”

Many parents say to me, “how can I connect with my child who doesn't listen and their behaviour is getting worse and I find myself exhausted after the constant battles”.

Typically, if their child feels okay, their behaviour tends to reflect this. The first step is to TUNE IN to your child.

Parenthood is above all a relationship, not a skill to be acquired. It's about CONNECTION.

Start to notice or become aware of your child's emotions. Is your child feeling worried or frustrated?

Chase the WHY behind the behaviour. We may discover that the 'bad behaviour' is an “adaptive” response to something that is too challenging for the child.

To CONNECT with your child, ask a question like “You look upset. Do you want to talk about it?”

Simply LISTEN and give them time to verbalise how they are feeling. In my experience, when someone acknowledges your inner pain you begin to feel less upset and able to cope with your feelings - and provides the opportunity for behaviour to improve.

It's then important to REFLECT and VALIDATE how a child is feeling. This allows the child to feel heard and understood. It builds connection.

The above is part of the TUNING INTO KIDS course that I tailor to individual parents' needs. The focus is on parenting in an emotional coaching style. In the sessions we identify when is the right time to emotional coach and build connection and also identifying when not to emotional coach when your child is Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired. In fact one parent recently commented that they remembered the HALT acronym and found it useful.

- H-HUNGRY
- A-ANGRY
- L-LONELY
- T-TIRED

In effect, connection moves a child from reactivity (the child reacts with undesirable behaviour) to receptivity (the child is more receptive to listening) and as parents we become more proactive not reactive. With connection 'bad behaviour or undesirable behaviour' begins to decrease.

If you are interested in helping your child feel right, then I would happily support you in your connection.

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