How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk by Elaine Mazlish

Alternatives To Yelling, Nagging, Threatening, Criticizing

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk is an excellent communication tool kit based on a series of workshops developed by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish. Faber and Mazlish (coauthors of Siblings Without Rivalry) provide a step-by-step approach to improving relationships in your house. The Reminder pages, helpful cartoon illustrations, and excellent exercises will improve your ability as a parent to talk and problem-solve with your children. The book can be used alone or in parenting groups, and the solid tools provided are appropriate for kids of all ages.

My Personal Review:
If I could entice every new parent to read just one book, this would be it. Thousands of childrens lives have been improved, and in some cases transformed, as a direct result of their parents reading this book and practicing its kid-tested, nonpunitive approaches to discipline. The authors have little time for abstract theorizing, concerning themselves with down to earth practical issues of parenting, using sensitivity, empathy, communication skills, and humor. This book is crammed with invaluable suggestions, techniques and ideas for parents committed to raising great kids without resorting to discredited, harmful, pain-and-fear-based methods of the past.
This book is in its twentieth edition for a reason: these methods WORK. I personally know a mother who formerly used the harsh, punitive methods of James Dobson, only to find that her problems with her daughter became worse and worse over time rather than better. After she read How To Talk So Kids Will Listen And Listen So Kids Will Talk and put its suggestions into practice, she literally threw Dobsons volume into the trash. And after a year and a half, she told me her relationship with her daughter had improved so much that shed previously had no idea that it COULD be that good. The fact that the problems shed been having had vanished now
seemed almost an afterthought compared to the deepening of their parent-child bond. Their communication had improved profoundly, opening up previously unguessed levels of richness in their relationship. She is such a terrific kid, my friend once told me, and with genuine incredulity added, I cant believe I actually used to HIT her!!

Another acquaintance of mine, who is raising two great kids using nonpunitive methods of the sort Faber and Mazlish recommend, summarized her entire philosophy in just one sentence: I dont want obedient children, I want COOPERATIVE children! I think the great majority of parents, if they thought about it, would realize that this is what they too would prefer. Faber and Mazlish show the way.

This book appears at first glance to be a collection of nonpunitive discipline techniques, but it is actually much more: a whole new way of thinking about the parent-child relationship which transcends the permissiveness vs strictness continuum with an approach to parenting based on neither punishments nor rewards. Authoritarian methods use coercion to make the child lose and the parent win, while total permissiveness makes the parent lose and the child win. Faber and Mazlishs methods, on the other hand, show the way towards families in which everybody wins.

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