



**THINGS
WE
SHOULD
NEVER
SAY TO
KIDS**

JIM HANCOCK

Ten Things We Should Never Say to Kids is temporarily offered free by the author under a [Creative Commons](#) License. Share it as widely as you wish but don't alter, charge or take credit for it. comments to: j.hancock.web@mac.com or thetinycompanycalledme.com.

The Last Word | 30 Days or Your Money Back

1. **Do You Have Your Jacket-Homework-Gym-Bag-Back-Pack-Ticket-Keys?**
2. **What Were You Thinking!**
3. **Because I Said So**
4. **You Are Such a Pretty Little Thing**
5. **I'm Proud of You!**
6. **You Can Do Anything You Set Your Mind To.**
7. **Let Me Tell You What Happened Here**
8. **That's Not How You Do It!**
9. **Don't Make Me Turn This Car Around.**
10. **I Give Up.**

These are ten things I hope you'll never say to your kids. Because they are the absolute worst things you can say? Of course not. What qualifies them for the list is:

- 1) we hear them all the time and
- 2) they are relationally toxic despite the fact that
- 3) they sound so plausible.

These ten things are not really deal-breakers—at least not in the near term. We're not talking about neglect or child-endangerment, physical or sexual abuse. Nothing on the list will get you arrested. In fact, I'm not sure any of these would merit a raised eyebrow from your mom.

Which is precisely the problem: It's not that we were raised by wolves; but that we were raised by amateurs. We heard all these things from the good-hearted people who brought us into the world and brought us up. They meant us no harm but look what happened. So many of us are broken in pretty much the same places as our parents. In the process of bringing many of their best traits into our adult years we also brought some of their worst—including the habit of saying things our children would be better off never hearing.

It's not supposed to be like that and it doesn't have to be like that.

So, in the spirit of free enterprise (and to stimulate whatever gland it is that makes people salivate at the thought of getting something for nothing) I want to offer you a 30-Day Money Back Guarantee. Don't say the ten things we should never say to kids for 30 Days and I promise you'll see a dramatic difference in your relationship. If you don't see a dramatic difference, I'll give you back the cover price of the book. No kidding. I'm not asking you to do anything new. I'm asking you to hold your tongue and whatever body language you employ in conveying these ten messages. And I'm guaranteeing results.

**30-Day
Money
Back
Guarantee**

Right?

I'm not guaranteeing miracles—that's not my department. So if you take me up on it, don't anticipate an overnight response. I am promising significant results. 30 days is enough to set a new pattern. Especially when the pattern is mainly not doing something you used to do—or, in this case, not saying things you used to say. When you look at it that way, 30 days is nothing. I mean it's not like trying to start exercising or cutting back on coffee. We're talking about something you really *want* to do

here, right? Something you have a fighting chance at; something you'll need to do only once and it will stick for the rest of your life.

OK, you're smart enough to know that what I'm *not* saying may be as significant than what I'm saying. And what I'm not saying is, if you're in the *habit* of treating children...how to say this diplomatically...*like people treat children*, it may be harder to stop doing that for a month than it would be to start doing ten brand new things where no habits exist.

And that is where the rubber meets the proverbial road. The question is: "If you've come to believe you're doing some things that drive your kid nuts, can you find what it takes to stop doing those things?"

The easy answer is, "Of course; I'd do *anything* for my kid," and if that's your answer, the place to start is deciding to stop saying toxic things for just 30 days. The hard, realistic answer was in Thing Six: *If you think you can, you might. If you think you can't, you won't.*

If you're anything like me (I find myself half-hoping you are and half-hoping you're not), you may need several restarts on the 30-Day Guarantee. In my case that's because I'm a

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career criminal when it comes to relationships. I mean well except when I mean ill. And when I mean ill, I do things that hurt—or at least don't help—the people I love. It's crazy. I've found and continue finding that I need a power greater than myself to restore me to sanity. I leave it to you to puzzle that out (with the aforementioned invitation to send an email with your phone number if you'd like to chat. I promise to call you within a year).

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If you or your spouse were pregnant right now you would have 18 years, give or take...

...to help your child internalize the reality of cause and effect so he wouldn't grow up believing in magic.

...to help your kid understand the law of unintended consequences and learn to think through whole scenarios instead of acting on impulse.

...to teach by example the art of generous, reasonable negotiation instead of self-gratification and artless unilateral action.

...to raise a young woman defined by her character and behavior—not her appearance.

...to reward the right things and so teach your child to value the right things.

...to instill a potent blend of realism and idealism so your offspring would attempt important things knowing *if you think you can, you might, if you think you can't, you won't*.

...to turn your kid into a problem solver.

...to transfer parental authority and responsibility to trustworthy personal responsibility.

...to model the surpassing virtue of Win-Win relationships.

...to engage your children with stories of mercy and grace and do-overs and so teach them to love and love and love.

Make no mistake. The ten things we should never say to kids are toxic to those outcomes.

So toxic that bit by bit they set our children against us as they come to believe we may be the tiniest bit *against* them—or in any event not *for* them.

And that, after all, is what children long for: Adults—especially parents—who are wildly, passionately *for* them; people who treat them beautifully, who don't look down on them because they're young; people they believe will go the distance with them because they're

right there with them in the small things, taking them seriously (but not too critically) day after day for as long as they have.

I called this section *The Last Word*. We both know that's not true. We both know the last word is up to you. God speed.