

Choices & Consequences – Parenting video transcript (6)

Hello everyone.

Today I want to talk about choices and consequences. And when we talk about choices and consequences in the Parenting Programmes the evaluations have all said you all love this strategy. We do really appreciate your feedback and we ask you at the end of each session to write your feedback and the following week we talk about the strategy. So I found that everyone loved the consequences strategy.

You find when we are running these programmes we leave consequences for later on because for choices and consequences to work, it is really important that you have a good basis, that you have built a positive relationship with your child with lots of praise and empathy going on.

So why are choices and consequences a good strategy? Well you know choice and consequence is a life skill. We all have choice and there's consequences for our actions. So if I choose to work I get paid. If I choose not to work I don't get paid. In one sense it's one of these very simple ones but in another sense it can be quite complex.

That's why at first I am going to talk a little bit about the psychology behind choices and consequences. So the first thing I want to talk about is what are the influences on behaviour?

There's a triangle here and they're all linked up. There's self-esteem, the choices I make, and my personal power. So I want to talk a little bit about these.

Self-esteem to make the proper choices that links up to our personal power and then the choices we make. If I have good self-esteem I will use my personal power appropriately and then I will make a choice. Self-esteem is quite a big thing in itself. How do we build self-esteem? That's where the other things we talk about come in to play – play, empathy, boundaries, listening, fairness and consistency – all of those things will build our children's self-esteem. When we have good self-esteem then we have personal power.

When I talk about good personal power it's not about power and being powerful, it's about inner strength. If you have good self-esteem you have that inner strength to make the choices.

We talk about that more in the programme and we do some exercises to highlight that. I am just giving you a quick rundown with that. And in the Nurturing Programme we do talk more about building up self-esteem and getting you to do these exercises and how to build up our children's self-esteem.

There's boundaries, listening, praise, fairness and consistency. Because input by us as parents affects how we feel and how we behave, and that results in good behaviour.

I've got a little chart here to link it all in, 'The cycle of feelings and behaviour'. How I think affects how I feel which in turn affects how I behave. If I think happily, then I

feel happy, then I behave appropriately. If I think negatively, then I feel negative, then I may behave negatively. So how we think fits how we feel which in turn affects how I behave. That's not just for us as adults but for our children as well.

So that's the psychology behind the strategy of choices and consequences.

Now we'll go through the steps for choice and consequences. The second one - be clear and specific about the positive and negative choice of behaviour and the positive and negative consequences. For example, for the choices: If you eat your dinner then you get your pudding. That's a positive behaviour and a positive consequence. So you can choose - you can eat your dinner and then you get your pudding. If you don't eat your dinner you don't get your pudding. So I'm being very specific.

Relate the consequences to the behaviour. So with that example, "if you don't eat your dinner you don't get your pudding".

Choose consequences that mean something to the child. Don't use threats, a threatening manner or an ultimatum. So not, "Eat your dinner now". I'm giving them choice. I'm not giving them threats; I'm not using a threatening manner and not giving ultimatums.

Don't give a choice if there isn't one. So it's no good saying, "And then you can have your pudding", but you find that you don't have any pudding. Be absolutely sure you can follow through with your consequence. Choose consequences that you can keep to and don't demand an instant answer – give the child time to reflect.

So that's choices and consequences and as I've said before parents love this strategy because it is a fantastic strategy but there's a lot of stuff to do before it as well. I hope that all makes sense.

Take care and in these surreal times remember be kind, be grateful and have some structure at home. Thank you.