



VIDEO TWO

*Make Requests
That Get Heard*

**REMOVING BLAME, SHAME,
JUDGMENT, GUILT, & FEAR**

***Make Requests That Get Heard
Removing Blame, Shame, Judgment, Guilt, & Fear***

w/ Lori Petro, Founder of TEACH through Love

PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS
FOR PARENTS & KIDS



VIDEO TWO

Hey there, I'm Lori Petro, founder of TEACH through Love and I'm so glad to have you here for the next video in our series [Make Requests That Get Heard](#).

In this session, I'm going to share with you how to stop arguing, pleading, begging, and demanding that your children listen and follow the rules and instead, teach you to create more natural willingness in your kids by enhancing how you listen and speak, so that you can finally start responding in ways that bring about more cooperation and less resistance.

If you've found yourself out of patience with your strong-willed child or sick of arguing and insisting, today, we're going to build upon the concepts we spoke about last time as we start to take notice of the words we use to connect, motivate, and teach our children.

The goal of this video is to outline the steps to transforming your language and gain willing cooperation from your kids by showing you how to make requests that are free of:

- **Blame** which causes *children to become hypervigilant and defensive.*
- **Shame** which *causes children to feel unworthy.*
- **Judgment** which causes children *to doubt themselves and their decisions.*
- **Guilt** which causes children *to deny their emotions and needs.*
- **Fear** which only serves *to trigger our children into a state of dysregulation.*

I don't think there is a parent out there who has not experienced the rush of anger that fills our bodies when our children openly and self-righteously defy us.

Who hasn't been left exhausted by the fury of a child who is told NO or been aggravated by kids rolling their eyes or arguing their point of view?

So, all children have moments like this. They're unrefined, they're loud, they're crude, and impatient because immaturity is their natural state and childhood is a time filled with opportunities to practice their skills.

So why do so many of us have such strong emotional reactions to our children's developmentally typical behavior - behavior like arguing or resisting?

Where does this powerful urge to stamp out any opposition from our kids come from?

Have you ever considered that some of the challenge is not managing your child's reactivity, but your own? How many challenging times did you have to endure this week without support, awareness or any actionable goals to focus on?

If you've started to implement the [five steps we spoke about in our last training video](#), you've probably already started to make connections between your reactivity and the pain that you experienced at some point in your life.

And if you haven't started this process, I can't stress the importance enough.

Having self-awareness, understanding the root of your behavior and your triggered anger are going to free you from feeling like your kids run the show and change the way you view your life.

So, before you even continue with the communication exercises that I share in this video, I encourage you to make sure that you have, first, taken the time to:

- 1. Decide on your long-term goals for your children.**
- 2. Commit to viewing parenting as a relationship that you build with your child.**
- 3. Make self-care a priority.**
- 4. Know your history, habits, and patterns.**
- 5. Build a support team to uplift you during the challenging times.**

I promise you, if you make the commitment to take action, you will notice that your tolerance grows and your emotional reactivity become way less intense and much more manageable.

Remember, the goal of conscious parenting is not to avoid conflict but handle conflict with grace because when we do we teach our children how to navigate the ups and downs of life without being controlled by their emotions or their outer circumstances. And, that alleviates this need so many of us fight to control every aspect of our life and other people – just so that we can feel OKAY.

Conscious parenting doesn't mean you change your limits but that you consider your children's emotional state, needs, skill set, and how connected they feel to you as an indicator of their ability to listen and stay within the boundaries without your help.

As parents, we can get caught up in demanding all the time – *insisting that what we say goes*. But, humans are not made to be controlled by others. We naturally resist this because we're wired to connect with others for love, for comfort, joy and in times of need.

So, when we threaten the loss of our relationship or attention or use control to force our children to change their behavior, we are not promoting their ability to adapt to negative situations, we are interfering with their natural ability to cope.

Children need to feel their frustration to move to accepting it. But, if you see their frustration as defiance or a refusal to listen then you create the exact circumstances you're hoping to avoid.

When you resist engaging with your children's upset because it triggers you into a state of dysregulation, and you try to then control it, stop it, negotiate with it or ignore it, then your children don't have the opportunity to feel their feelings. And, without that important emotional processing, they can't adapt to their environment in healthy ways.

So, their brains hardwire aggression, resistance, inflexibility, and hypervigilance as coping mechanisms. Those actions are not cognitive choices to defy you, but how the body reacts to stressful situations.

Our brains start out very primitive and highly reactive. It's only through experiencing safe, calm, and connected responses to our perceptions of threat – *real or imagined* – that we can mature into the people we're capable of becoming.

Emotions are normal and useful and important, and yet we, so often, refuse to even acknowledge them, let alone allow ourselves to engage with them.

So your goal – and we'll dive into this more deeply in [Video 3](#) – is to get really good at being calm even when your child isn't. Because then you will be able to access the part of your brain that can say and do more than just count to three or threaten punishment.

Your children need to get upset when the iPad is closed down for the evening or when their little brother intrudes on their space or when there is an obstacle to having what they want.

**The frustration that comes with meeting obstacles
is what leads us to adapt to our circumstances.**

But, when we use the “*suck it up*” approach or the “*because I said so approach*,” we stimulate the lower centers of the brain and force children to adapt by shutting down, ignoring their needs, and getting protective and aggressive.

Using conscious communication, which is rooted in empathy for others, will show you how to soothe your child and prime the brain for learning.

Conscious communication encourages reflection and compassion for others instead of sending our children into a state of fight or flight.

This is one of the toughest challenges for parents and where most of our discipline starts to go off course. We don't set limits with confidence. We set limits, and if we don't immediately get approval and agreement from our children, we question everything – *our children, our decisions, our ability to parent*.

We start making up all kinds of reasons about why our kids resist, refuse or cry when they don't get what they want. We take it personally, and we start to make up all kinds of assumptions about our children's intentions.

They don't respect me, they'll never learn, they have no reason to be upset.

The real reasons that children – like anyone else – behave the way they do are based on 3 things:

1. Their skill-set which is limited to their age and stage – not what you think they know.
2. How stressed out they are at the moment.
3. The level of connection they feel to us.

But as parents, we mistakenly assume that their intentions are to take advantage of us, to manipulate or to cause trouble.

Getting out of the trap of viewing behavior through the lens of fear and using things like judgment and shame or fear to motivate behavioral change requires you to set limits and then get comfortable with allowing your children to express their upset.

You can be a source of comfort, offering calming tools and the space to breathe and release the negativity that your child feels without being permissive.

I don't allow my child to hit *but I don't stop her from telling me how much she dislikes the situation.*

I don't allow her to intrude on the space of others *but I don't try to make her feel bad for wanting what she wants.*

I don't give in and change my limit because she doesn't like it *but I also don't become aggressive because she continues to ask for the same thing over and over.*

When she experiences her negative feelings within the safe context of my nonjudgmental presence, maturity unfolds naturally. She is learning what she needs and how she feels about things, and she learns what makes her angry and how to care for herself and consider others. When I force my agenda, my needs or my expectations upon her, she becomes overwhelmed with things she cannot control.

So, my goal is to remain compassionate and confident in my limit – and calm – even when she isn't, because I know that we're strengthening the right connections in her brain.

Watching her make new choices as she matures is so inspiring. So, if you have a child you think will never learn – hang on. Trust in your ability to be the parent your child needs you to be. Stop questioning yourself based on how your child reacts.

I want to help you access compassion that isn't wrapped up in your agenda because then will you create the kind of emotional climate needed for your requests to get heard. But having compassion and showing empathy for your children means that you have to get really clear on what empathy is and what empathy is not.

Empathy is the process of listening to understand another person's experience. **Empathy is not a technique to get what you want.**

Too often, we use empathy as a behavioral tool and then when kids don't immediately change their behavior – *we blame the empathy for "not working."*

The fact is, there are NO TOOLS which will allow you to easily and effortlessly control your children without serious risk to their long-term emotional health. And, I don't think you really want that anyway.

Empathy does not work like an on-off switch. Turn it on and kids behave. Turn it off and kids misbehave.

Empathy is what children need to experience so that they can show empathy for others and care about how their actions affect others.

Empathy creates a sense of relaxation in us. When we feel understood, we shift out of defensive mode. We can move through our upset.

When we feel as though our feelings and needs are not considered, we react. Inflexibility is a natural reaction to stress – *not a choice to be defiant.*

But what do you most often say when your children become inflexible, rejecting or resisting your requests?

Do you say, “Hey, who do you think you are talking to like that? Or do you say, “I hear how strongly you feel about this. I would like it if you would not use those words, but I really want to hear how you feel about this because you’re important to me.”

You’re important to me. This is what gets lost in the rush of “Can’t you just do what I’ve asked” and “I’m not going to say this again.”

So many of your battles will decrease simply by removing the blame, shame, judgment, and guilt from your language. But, you have to trust that your words and your model of kind, compassionate care will transfer to your child’s skill set.

So, let’s talk about some real-life scenarios to explain the steps to transforming your language from making requests that get ignored to making requests that get heard

As we learn to communicate without the blame, shame, judgment, and guilt, it’s not about following a script or knowing the exact words to say but moving away from things like over-explaining, interrogation, criticism, and denying responsibility for our feelings.

Now, when you’re in the heat of the moment, it’s hard to remember exactly what empathy sounds like. **So use this simple 3-step formula to help keep your language on track.**

1. Notice and name what you see.
2. Validate and acknowledge the feelings and needs.
3. Make respectful requests or offer helpful quality feedback.

Depending on the situation, you may be doing one or both.

So, let’s walk through a couple of scenarios in the different age groups. These are situations that I have personally experienced and you may have too, but no matter what age or stage your children are in, I want you to notice what we are removing from the language more than I want you to focus on the actual words.

You can always adjust expectations and language to meet the needs of your individual child. It’s more important to notice the subtle shift in the intention.

First, Parents, we explain way too much – *way too often.* I want you to feel confident and **stop defending your limits with logic and rationalization.**

Young children, especially, do not have the capacity to immediately shift their behaviors or consider other people's perspective. Children process our words much more slowly and young children put a greater emphasis on the emotional context of the situation, more than they consider our words.

They need lots of side by side guidance as you limit their actions and remain unoffended by their immaturity. Don't wait for your young children to do what you ask, help them through it.

Let's take a young child who runs away and won't stay by your side. We've all dealt with the child who just wants to sprint off into the sunset, no matter what we say.

Have you experienced this one? You probably even started off even-tempered, calmly saying things like –

"Please come back here right now."

"This is not safe."

"You cannot run away."

"Do you understand?"

Or, maybe you've tried the guilt angle just because of the seriousness of the situation. And you say something like –

"Do you want to get hit by a car? I would be very sad if that happened."

Or, when all else fails or when our impatience with feeling unheard becomes unbearable, we might resort to the punitive and say something like –

"If you run away once more, we're never coming back again. Do you understand?"

And sometimes, but not always, that makes your child go *Aaahh!* and pay attention. And, then we say – see it works – nothing works unless I threaten.

But what did we really communicate to our children? More importantly, what did your children hear through the filter of their inexperience?

Stop having fun exploring.

Life is dangerous.

I won't let you have FUN.

You're going to get hit by a car.

You're never going to get to play here again.

The immature mind does not comprehend rational, logical limits. They see obstacles and they feel frustration because their perspective is limited.

Immaturity makes us irrational. So we must refrain from rationalizing our limits because their minds are not ready for the big picture.

If you've ever wondered why the negative tension keeps escalating, look to whether you are over-explaining limits which your child is not ready to understand.

Is the complexity of your rational argument making their head spin in frustration? Sometimes my daughter will ask me to just stop talking because she's feeling stressed... and because I can talk a lot 😊.

Instead of trying to make your children understand you, let your words reflect your understanding of them.

Instead of making demands that are grounded in logic (*come back here right now, it's not safe*) try **noticing and naming what you see**.

"You're having a hard time staying close."

This gives the child quality feedback. It informs him about the situation without creating fear or shame or using guilt.

Next, be curious about their perspective by **acknowledging and validating** their feelings and needs, instead of sharing yours from a place of *fear* (*do you want to get hit by a car? I would be very sad if that happened*). You can empathize with your child's experience.

"You'd rather choose where to walk on your own. You're growing up." Or *"It's fun to walk along the street, up and down on the curb like that."*

This is the spark of connection your child needs to trust in your guidance and listen to what you have to say.

You don't need to insist on that adult logic to convince your child that your limit is valid (*you cannot run away*) or wait for agreement (*do you understand*).

You can **make a respectful request** or as we often have to do with young children because they can't always make changes without us – **offer help that gives quality feedback**.

Now, here's where most of us get caught up. We say, *"I know it's fun, BUT you have to hold my hand."*

We just can't help ourselves from adding *"but you can't or but you have to"* on to the end of our empathy – which just negates everything that we've just said.

So, I have a little secret for setting limits without dismissing our children and it's an old Improv rule called, **"Yes, And."** Never negate or deny what the other person says. You just say, *"Yes, And..."*

"Yes, it sure looks fun. And I am going to keep you safe. I won't let you hurt yourself."

"Yes, I know you'd like to do this on your own. And I'm going to hold your hand because I know this is frustrating."

Now, you've just taken responsibility without denying your child's reality, eliciting defensiveness or giving away your power.

You'll be amazed at how much less energy it takes when you stop unnecessarily defending your limits.

In this next example, we're going to **eliminate interrogation and harshly criticizing our children** without changing out limits.

Again, follow the same 3-step formula of noticing and naming what you see, validating and acknowledging, and making respectful requests or offering helpful quality feedback.

Now, as children get a bit older, we sometimes assume that their newly acquired skills of self-regulation and emotional management are fully formed and that they're capable of making good decisions.

They're not. Always... It's hit or miss.

They've got a weak set of skills because the pre-frontal cortex which is responsible for mature behaviors like problem-solving, empathy, planning, organizing our thoughts, and regulating our emotions is still very immature and inefficient.

In fact, we now know that brain development continues throughout early adulthood and undergoes periods of major reconstruction in the teen years, limiting our children's skills and narrowing their perspective.

But, we forget and we can unconsciously question or criticize their actions. Ultimately, if we do it too much, we don't make them think before they act – we actually undermine their ability to learn and we risk our influence because they stop trusting us with their vulnerability.

If our kids don't feel safe making mistakes with us, they won't grow to be positively influenced by our care and concern.

Have you ever told your child very clearly the exact steps to take and yet their behaviors made it seem as though they completely ignored everything you said?

That's an example of the inefficient brain at work.

Our own stress can sometimes make us so intolerant to the mistakes of others that we start to **question and criticize** and say things like –

"Can't you just follow directions?"

"What's wrong with you? Forget it. I'll do it myself."

"If you would have listened more closely, you wouldn't have made this mistake."

And then, feeling responsible for our feelings rather than reflective of their behavior, our kids shut down. Some get angry and lash out and others turn inward and withdraw.

If this is what our relational interactions look and sound like, over time, our children stop listening to us. They feel no sense of attachment or any grace for their mistakes and the effort it takes to try becomes too much.

Or, it becomes the number one goal and you raise a child who lives to please others but denies their own needs and feelings in the process.

So how do you flip it around?

Instead of challenging your children to behave in the ways you want (*can't you follow directions*), invite them to **notice their situation by naming** what you see.

"It looks like you're having some trouble remembering how it's done."

Then **acknowledge and validate**.

"I imagine that this feels frustrating. You were excited to try this on your own."

And finally, **make a respectful request or offer helpful quality feedback** by saying something like –

"This isn't working. I wanted to follow the directions so things turn out the way we were hoping. Would you be willing to try this in a different way?"

Now, you've opened up the possibility for your child to care about what you have to say because you've shown them the value of making mistakes. We can come together and help each other.

Isn't that what you really want when you say, *"I want my kids to listen."*

Let's do one more.

I think that we have all encountered the child who speaks disrespectfully and this leads us to **deny responsibility for our emotions** and asking our children to change so that we feel better.

One of the greatest gifts that you can give your child is to not be offended by their immaturity.

But, how do you remain a respected leader if you don't confront the disrespect and show them that it isn't okay?

You choose to see the pain behind the actions.

Instead of making demands, challenging them or making them responsible for your reactivity with words like –

"You will not speak to me like that!"

"Who do you think you are?"

"You're really are pushing me too far."

"I'm about to get really angry."

Focus on putting the relationship first and **regulating your emotions before you work on building skills** and helping your children practicing new behaviors.

We'll talk more about specific tools for regulating strong emotions in our [next video](#) but for now, in these heated situations, I want you to **notice and name**.

"I think we both need some time to cool off."

Then **acknowledge and validate**.

"I know you're angry. I hear that you don't like my decision and it feels unfair."

You're not changing your mind or denying your feelings or making your child feel responsible for anything but their own behavior and actions.

Then you can **make a respectful request and offer a helping hand**.

"It doesn't work for me to continue like this. I don't want us to yell at each other, though. My decision is not negotiable but I'm here to listen to what you have to say."

Calm confident limits and our willingness to LISTEN and hold the space for our children's discomfort is what prompts the development of the emerging skills that we so desperately want to see.

Our words can be powerful motivators and we must consider the long-term impact that they have on the developing minds of our children.

You might think, *"Well I just want my children to do what they're told without the constant battle of asking and negotiating or punishing."*

And so, I respectfully ask you, for your children, to please think about how you speak to them on a regular basis.

I've included a [set of communication worksheets for you to review and put into practice](#) the steps that I've outlined here for you. When you look beyond the behaviors that you see, you can transform negative situations with empathy and connection – instead of consequences.

When you speak from the heart, show mutual respect, and validate your child's point of view, you set up a powerful model in his brain that teaches him how to interact, how to be self-motivated and self-directed.

Kids thrive on boundaries and communication that allows them to retain their dignity. They learn to "listen to you" because they truly have felt that they have been unconditionally heard and accepted for who they are and not what they've done.

Your connection can never reward inappropriate behavior.

Connection is a basic human need that helps us mature into people who are able to be compassionate, responsible, and able to regulate our behaviors.

In the words of one of my favorite authors, Brené Brown, she says, *“Rarely can a response make something better. What makes something better is connection.”*

Thank you so much for connecting with me here today, and I hope to see you in our [online community](#) where we are waiting to help you shift your focus away from behavior, slow down, decode the messages your kids are sending, and acknowledge what they are feeling and needing so that you can become a reliable source of feedback.

So, be sure to visit us on the web and join the thousands of parents who have made the shift to conscious parenting.

And, I will see you next time for the final video in our series where I’m going to show you how to [stop yelling and start connecting](#) – so that you can create peaceful solutions in your home.

Until then, please remember it’s about consciousness – not perfection.