

## Parenting With Love and Logic-Part II

Ever find yourself in the middle of an argument or power struggle with your child? Do you find yourself believing that your child was born knowing exactly how to 'push your buttons' and engage you in arguments with the sole purpose of getting you to give them exactly what they want when they want it? Reasoning with an angry arguing child is like fighting a fire with gasoline! Love and Logic parenting offers a technique that allows you to respond without taking the hook and arguing with the child. Jim Fay, author of Parenting with Love and Logic suggests you try one of the following one-liners and repeat it as often as needed until the child gives up trying to engage you in a 'no-win' argument. You might want to practice these in front of the mirror so you can say these with genuine compassion, empathy, and understanding. "I love/respect you too much to argue". "Thanks for sharing", "I'll bet it feels that way." "I know." "What do you think you're going to do?" "Nice try." or "I don't know. What do you think?"

\_\*\*Warning\*\*\_Any of the above statements delivered with sarcasm would not work and may be more hurtful than helpful!

\*There is a difference between punishment and consequences. "Punishment hurts the child from the outside in, while consequences help the child realistically hurt from the inside out." When a child is punished and sent to his room, he tends to spend the time in the room being angry at the parent who sent him there, devising plans to not get caught next time and/or feeling bad about himself. When a child goes to his room as a consequence, he spends his time thinking about his actions and is mad at himself. (That's a good thing.)

The hard part AND the best part is enforcing the consequences when the child does not follow through with the choice he/she has made. Your job is to set clear boundaries and your child's job is to make the right choice. Your golden opportunity is when your child tests the limits by pouting, whining, complaining, arguing, stomping, throwing things, and/or talking back. The love and logic parent empathizes but continues to enforce the limit. Consider what your response would be to the child who made the decision to watch TV after school even though he had a paper due for school the next day. Many good parents would discuss the paper and the child's plan for getting it done by the due date and be available to assist if needed. The love and logic parent would do that and resist the temptation to remind or nag about the assignment. As the drama unfolds on the morning the paper is due and is still unfinished, the child begs to be allowed to stay at home 'sick' so he can finish the paper. The good parent might then leap into the sermon on responsibility. The love and logic parent would respond by saying something like "Oh no! I'm sure glad that's not my late assignment. I hope it doesn't mess up your final grade too much. I know how hard you have been working to improve your grades." When the child persists in the quest to stay home sick, the love and logic parent might respond by saying, "I'd feel the same way if I hadn't finished this project I'm doing for my work. But, under the circumstances, try to have the best day you can."

Children learn to make responsible decisions by having lots of opportunities to make age appropriate decisions and choices about little things while they are still young. When a

child makes a wrong decision the costs of the mistake is relatively small compared to the cost of making adult mistakes. Choices define the limits and are delivered through what Jim Fay calls 'enforceable statements such as "I'll listen to you as soon as your voice is as calm as mine." or "I listen to people who do not yell at me." teaches your child how you want to be talked to. "You are welcome to join us for ice cream as soon as your room is clean" puts the focus on the enjoyable family activity leaving the child to make the decision about the chore. "Be sure you eat enough to hold you until morning" addresses the whining child refusing to eat dinner. "Feel free to go outside and play as soon as you have finished your homework." does not include the choice of whether or not to do the homework.

Love and logic parenting emphasizes the responsibility of the child to make responsible decisions. Empathy along with consequences is crucial! When your child messes up, you have the choice to get angry, punish, or lecture, but your sincere love and concern will deliver the lesson that decisions have consequences and that you believe in their ability to solve their own problems.

Jim Fay and Dr. Cline have so many other simple and practical but profound ideas for parents. Additional ideas and examples can be found on the website:  
[www.loveandlogic.com/](http://www.loveandlogic.com/)

*Resources:*

*Parenting With Love and Logic* by Jim Fay and Foster Cline

*The Pearls of Love and Logic for Parents and Teachers* by Jim Fay

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