

From the book:

Parenting from the Inside Out

How a Deeper Self-Understanding Can Help You Raise Children Who Thrive
by Daniel Siegel and Mary Hartzell

Research in the field of child development has demonstrated that a child's security of attachment to parents is very strongly connected to the parents' understanding of their own early-life experiences. Scientific studies show that *it is not what happened to you that matters most in determining how you raise your children; instead, it is how you have come to make sense of your early life experiences that is the most robust predictor of how your children will become attached to you.*

This means that:

Contrary to what many people believe, your early experiences do not determine your fate. If you had a difficult childhood but have come to make sense of those experiences, you are not bound to re-create the same negative interactions with your own children. Without such self-understanding, however, science has shown that history will likely repeat itself, as negative patterns of family interactions are passed down through the generations.

So many times parents have said, "I never thought I'd do or say the very things to my children that felt hurtful to me when I was a child. And yet I find myself doing exactly that." Parents can feel stuck in repetitive, unproductive patterns that don't support the loving, nurturing relationships they envisioned when they began their roles as parents. Making sense of their own life and childhood can free parents from patterns of the past that have imprisoned them in the present.

Some interesting thoughts on attachment from Daniel Siegel:

- The brain is profoundly relational
- Experience shapes connections in the brain
- Early relationships sculpt the mind which affects brain structure
- Attachment promotes the integration of different parts of the brain
- Attachment is open to change throughout the entire life span
- New connections in the brain can be made throughout one's life
- Healthy relationships require both connection and autonomy
- A ruptured connection with a child provides an opportunity for healing and repair
- Repair is an opportunity to deepen your relationship with your child

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Things children control:

What foods they will and will not eat

What comes out of the child's mouth (profanity, nonsense, arguing, whining)

Who their friends are

Their personal hygiene

The effort they put into their schoolwork

Their response to adult caregivers

Their ability to tell the truth

Where and when they will go to the bathroom

Stealing when at a store with adults

Things adults control:

What foods they will serve in the home

How adults respond emotionally and verbally

Who enters the home

Importance placed on the child smelling or looking good

Their signature on the form allowing the child to repeat his grade

Their response to the child in their care

Their ability to trust the child

How adults respond emotionally and verbally

Upon discovery of stolen items adult caregiver can report child to the police

HOW TO AVOID POWER STRUGGLES

- ❖ Give the child choices
- ❖ Use one-liners like:
 - "Would you rather _____ or _____?"
 - "You can either _____ or _____?"
 - "Feel free to _____ or _____."
 - "Take your best guess."
- ❖ Encourage the child to do the thinking
- ❖ Consequence behaviors
- ❖ Ignore invitations to power struggle
- ❖ Don't offer advice unless the child has requested feedback
- ❖ If the adults suddenly find themselves in the midst of a power struggle - stop talking and then politely excuse yourself.

Never raise your voice from what you
start with

ONE-LINERS:

- NOTE: Delivery is very important when using one-liners - **do not say things in a sarcastic manner.**

- 1. Sad for you.
- 2. Bummer for you.
- 3. Do I look like I just fell off the dumb Mom Truck?
- 4. What do you think I think about that?
- 5. Uum.
- 6. Interesting.
- 7. Nice try.
- 8. I hope you figure it out.
- 9. Try again
- 10. I hope you get over it.
- 11. Bummer for you.
- 12. Who lies a lot?
- 13. Bad choice!
- 14. Good choice!
- 15. I will love you know matter how long it takes you to go through the ____ grade.
- 16. Do you think you will still hate me at dinner time.
- 17. Oh Sweetie, do I look like I believe that?
- 18. Could be!
- 19. Interesting!
- 20. Would you rather _____ or _____?
- 21. I will love you no matter where you live.
- 22. Good Luck!
- 23. Do you have a plan?
- 24. Do I repeat myself?
- 25. If by chance I am wrong, I will make it up to you!
- 26. I'll get back to you later on that.
- 27. Sorry sweetie, but I don't argue with ____ year olds
- 28. That's an interesting way to do that.
- 29. Got it!
- * Sometimes the best response is NO response, just smile and walk away.

ABSOLUTELY NO SARCASM ALLOWED!

- * One-liners should never be used as a put down, or a means to hurt the child. Remember, the child and the bond are what you are trying to retain and preserve. These one-liners are just a few that the therapeutic treatment families from the Institute for Attachment & Child Development have compiled and used over the years.