

## Communicating More By Saying Less—With Kids!



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**“Communicating more by you saying less will provide your child with an opportunity to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas at whatever stage of development those thoughts are in – and feel validated and not judged.”**

I listened with admiration to the senior partner of a top tiered accountancy practice as he briefed his colleagues, personal assistant and several staff about the challenges of an unprecedented workload that lay ahead. He masterfully delivered the information by following the successful 7 Keys to Dealing with Conflict.

1. *Briefly outlining the circumstances*
2. *By acknowledging people may be feeling anxious about the changes and the impact on them*
3. *The predicated short and long term outcomes*
4. *His contribution to assisting others during this time*
5. *His suggestions as to what will be needed, how and when*
6. *Asking each person to offer 2 things they believe will help them manage the situation*
7. *By ensuring he will initiate an action plan they have all contributed to*

On leaving the meeting I congratulated “Simon” on the professional manner in which he handled what could have been a potentially difficult situation. He thanked me politely and said “Wish my kids would respond in the same way when I tell them how to manage when things get tough - they don’t seem to want to even want listen to anything I say. In fact my daughter even said she wanted me to stop trying Human Resource techniques on her for she was not one of my staff...that hurt”

At this point, I immediately thought “Hmm, that could be part of the problem – *Do the kids want to be told what to do or simply have someone listen to them?*”

I broached the subject with Simon later that day and asked if he minded telling me more about what he meant when he said his kids didn’t respond to him. He told me that when they seemed to have a problem or concern and came to him, the discussion invariably ended up in an argument in a very short time and nothing was achieved. Sound familiar?

As parents, one of the most natural instincts is to protect and provide for our children and what Simon was doing was what he believed was just that. However, what he was actually doing was in fact preventing “Melissa” from finding solutions to her own problems by failing to give her the opportunity to consider or discuss various options or ideas without giving advice. If Simon were to follow the masterful listening keys as effectively as he was able to deal with his staff he may find better outcomes. This is how he, and you can achieve those results.

1. *Invite them to a quiet and uninterrupted place and space for dialogue where you and they will not be interrupted by mobile phones or other people*
2. *Set the scene by saying that you would be really interested to know what your child is thinking and feeling about the situation*
3. *That you will not interrupt them while they talk to you – unless they choose to have your comments. You will be there simply to listen and be a sounding board for what is going on in their mind and for when they are feel ready to discuss the issues in greater detail*
4. *That you will suspend judgement, and see it through their eyes*
5. *By asking your child how you can be of best help to them*

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Communications  
help bring the  
best out in your  
most valuable  
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# CONFIDENT COMMUNICATIONS

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*validated and not judged.* Communication is a process – not an event and so is the evolution of their ideas. The most effective way you can assist them coming to their own conclusions is by having a conversation that steers the questions to help them find the answers themselves.

Resist the temptation to fill the gaps, rush in and solve problems, give your solutions and ultimately change *their* dialogue into *your* monologue. The unintended consequences of this can mean your child stops talking to you about their issues, stops asking for your help, or worse still, loses confidence in their own ability to problem solve. Most people only feel the pain when emotion and anger gets in the way of communication. If you would like to ensure your conversation continues, respect the emotion and feelings of your child above anything else and the communication will continue.

The bottom line is this – the **7 Keys to Dealing with Conflict** are ideal when you need to be in control of an outcome in the workplace and your team, but when you need to help others get to outcomes and directions, apply the masterful listening skills and sit back and give your children the greatest gift of all – Your ability to really listen to them and the time to be themselves.

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