

Attitudes and Actions Can Build or Break Connections

Building Connections: These beliefs and actions build greater understanding and connections between parents and children. How much are you creating connection?

1. My parenting actions are based on the belief that “I am emotionally and physically available” for my child as much as possible. **Connection Comes First.**
2. The relationship between me and my child is more important than being right all the time.
3. Listening to **all** of my child’s emotions with love and concern instead of disapproval and disinterest, will build a strong bond of connection between us. Examples: Fear, hurt, frustration, joy, excitement, apprehension, content, afraid, surprised, confident.
4. I will believe in my children’s potential and joyfully encourage them even when their capabilities seem to be hidden or dormant at the moment.
5. After I listen, then my child will be able to think clearly and make better decisions.
6. Our family strives to support each other as we solve problems either individually or together. We believe in each person’s intelligence and ability to think according to their age and level of maturity.
7. We are creating a home that is an oasis of support, warmth and rejuvenation.
8. We all have strengths and challenges that can be acknowledged.
9. No one is perfect and I shouldn’t expect my child to be perfect.
10. I can share some of my own personal growth with my child as an example.
11. Children’s basic nature is to love their parents. When they misbehave they are feeling disconnected and can’t think clearly, they lack maturity or could be trying to reach a goal through negative means. The important thing is to try to view their misbehavior from their perspective to help them meet their needs positively.
12. Who you are, how you treat yourself and others, is more important than what you accomplish. You deserve to be loved unconditionally no matter what you do.
13. I can laugh at my shortcomings and my child can laugh at hers/his.
14. Each adult and child brings unique strengths to the family that compensate for shortcomings in others.
15. My child is his/her own person and it is not for me to mold her/him into my own expectations. I will hold in check my judgment and criticism when it is hurtful.
16. We all struggle and fall down in the process of learning. This is how we know we are growing. We can always pick each other up and try again.
17. When my children get angry at me for my behavior, I will stop and take responsibility for my part rather than denying and defending myself.
18. I will continue to show love no matter how difficult my children act.

Breaking Connection: Many of these beliefs are inbred in culture. They do not lead to connection and closeness in families. Which do you want to work on discarding?

1. I need to control or please my child in order to make her/him into a good adult.
2. Parents are right because they are the adult and children need to learn how to follow rules. Whether parents and children feel connected isn't as important.
3. Children need to stop crying and whining so much. I am uncomfortable hearing these emotions and I feel helpless when I see and hear my child unhappy.
4. Strong emotions get in the way of getting things done. They should be ignored.
5. The adult has the final word and it doesn't matter if the child feels misunderstood, unheard or unloved.
6. When my child misbehaves, it is a reflection of me and means that I am not a "good" parent. (This usually leads to me feeling angry at my child for embarrassing me.)
7. Strengths are praised but challenges, or weaknesses, should be changed.
8. I am uncomfortable and critical with imperfection and weakness in myself and in other family members. I need to repeatedly point out imperfections in others so they can change according to my expectations.
9. I am uncomfortable looking at my own shortcomings or asking for support from others.
10. Children are bad and need to be "taught" how to be good. They act badly because they are trying to get back at or manipulate their parents.
11. My children are valuable and lovable if they behave or achieve my goals for them.
12. I know what is best for my child so he/she will be successful in the future.
13. I can't trust family members to solve their own problems without giving them advice, interrogating, commanding or making them feel incapable.
14. Making mistakes and failing causes suffering and says we are not "good enough."
15. It is helpful to get angry at children so they learn that their behavior is wrong. They learn from feeling bad about themselves.
16. Punishment, such as time out, separates children and makes them think about what they have done wrong.
17. My children need to live up to my expectations of them without questioning and disagreeing with me. My goals are more important than theirs.
18. When children start to get out of control, I need to put more controls on them.