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Conscious Parenting with Kathy Katts

How Inner Wisdom and Listening Can Help Us to Parent Tweens Consciously

When my daughter was ten years old, she gave me the best parenting advice I have ever received to date; the social dynamics of 4th grade, the heart of the "tween" stage of development, presented her with a friendship dilemma that felt, at the time, in what she described, like the saddest day of her life. As I listened to her share the challenge, I could only think about the list of solutions that could possibly fix the problem.

I gave her three great ideas to initiate effective and compassionate communication. I also suggested self-care practices that could support her to self-soothe, build inner connection and confidence. Emotionally, it hurt me deeply to feel her sadness. I ached for her as she cried. Yet the logical part of my brain focused on the solutions I knew could work.

As I held her, I began lovingly sharing the options in detail until she stopped me mid-sentence. My daughter looked up at me with tears running down her face and said, **"Mom...thanks for the advice, but that's not what I need right now; I just really need you to listen, that's all."**

It was an Aha moment of grand proportion! I realized two things:

- 1) **I did not need to fix this for her or do anything in that moment but deeply listen and love her.**
- 2) **I had to be able to sit with my own feelings of sadness for her.**



Our job as parents is not to fix our children's problems but instead to provide stability, support, compassion, and love. We often find ourselves searching for answers and guidance externally when, in fact, the wisdom we need lies within our own experiences as children. Reflecting on our own past allows us to tap into the feelings, challenges, and joys we once experienced at the same age as our children, offering valuable insights into their world.

This connection can bridge the generation gap and enable us to parent more consciously, empathetically, and effectively. The beauty of this paradox lies in the fact that our own memories and experiences serve as a treasure trove of lessons and understanding. We can draw upon the innocence, curiosity, and open-heartedness we possessed as children to connect with our kids. This perspective reminds us to approach parenting with a sense of wonder, presence, and non-judgmental awareness – qualities that can positively impact our children's growth and development.

By acknowledging this paradox, we are reminded of our shared humanity and the cyclical nature of life. Just as we once relied on our parents to guide us, our children now look to us for support and guidance. This realization encourages us to parent from a place of love, empathy, and a deep understanding of the stages and challenges our children are going through.

In essence, the great lesson of parenting serves as a gentle reminder that we carry the seeds of both parent and child within us, and by embracing and nurturing those seeds, we can cultivate a harmonious and enriching parent-child relationship.

It is also essential to remember, as Dr. Shefali Tsabary, parenting expert and author, states, **"When you parent, it's crucial you realize you aren't raising a "mini-me," but a spirit throbbing with its signature."**

All relationships in life require compassion and listening at their core. Active listening is a powerful tool that can significantly enhance conscious parenting, particularly when dealing with tweens navigating modern culture's challenges. By practicing active listening, parents can create a supportive and understanding environment that promotes healthy communication and strengthens the parent-child relationship.

Here are five ways active listening can help you to parent your tween consciously:

- 1) Building Trust:** Active listening demonstrates to children that their thoughts, feelings, and experiences are valued. When they feel heard and understood, they are more likely to trust their parents and share their concerns openly.
- 2) Validating Emotions:** Tweens often experience a roller-coaster of emotions. Active listening involves acknowledging and validating their feelings, even if you may not fully understand or agree. This validation helps them to feel understood and accepted.
- 3) Empathy and Connection:** When parents actively listen, they put themselves in their child's shoes, trying to see the world from their perspective. This empathetic approach fosters a deeper emotional connection and allows parents to respond with genuine compassion.
- 4) Encouraging Open Communication:** Active listening encourages tweens to express themselves openly. By creating a non-judgmental space where their thoughts are welcomed, parents can foster a habit of open communication that will benefit them throughout their lives.
- 5) Problem Solving:** When tweens face challenges, active listening allows parents to fully understand the situation before offering guidance or solutions. This approach empowers children to think critically and problem-solve independently, building confidence and decision-making skills.



Incorporating active listening into your parenting approach requires practice and dedication. It involves being fully present, giving your full attention to your child when they're speaking, and responding in a way that shows you've genuinely understood their perspective. By listening actively, parents can create a positive and supportive parenting environment that empowers tweens to navigate the challenges of modern culture with confidence and resilience.

If you or a loved one needs support, check out my programs or schedule a consultation at

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