



Psychotherapy and Life Coaching

for Children, Teens, and Women

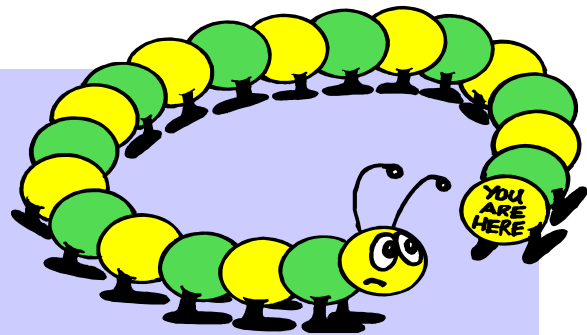
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Yes, I incorporated last year, and the name of my business is ASH Psychological Services!

Parenting in 3 Easy Steps!

Of course, nothing as important as parenting could ever be broken down into 3 steps, much less EASY steps. However, there are a few strategies that you can keep returning to time and time again to get you through most of the trying periods of parenting.

1. You are Here (and Now)
Mindfulness and its benefits are



better understood and more prolific than ever. A key component to mindfulness is being present in the moment.

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When we are on “automatic pilot,” we are not aware of what is happening right now, and we often miss important clues to our children’s behaviors.

Often, parents are stuck in the past or the future. If a parent is stuck in the past, a child’s behavior may be presumed to be a recurrence of a behavior that has already occurred many times. Or a parent stuck in the past may be reacting to a child in the same way that parent’s own parent reacted. In the first instance, a parent is likely to see a pattern of behavior and label a child (e.g. lazy), when in this moment a child may simply be tired, hungry, or upset about something that happened earlier. Such labeling may lead a child to see oneself as the label and act accordingly. In other words, “Why make an effort if I’m lazy?”

I have updated my HIPAA notice. Please pick one up in the office or see my website.

HIPAA

*You may not always love parenting,
but you are always parenting to love.*

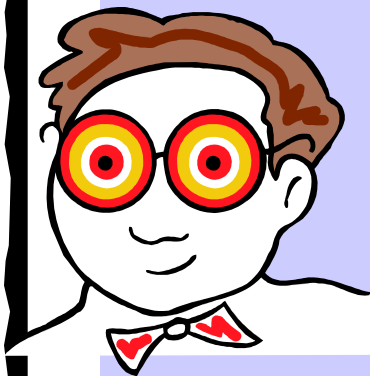
In the second instance, a parent’s reaction is unlikely to fit the child or the behavior occurring right now, and poor habits, such as yelling, get passed down to another generation.

What about stuck in the future? In some ways, this is more difficult to overcome, even though the future hasn’t happened yet. Being stuck in the future has to do with expectations we have for our children. When we are stuck in the future and our children fail to meet those expectations, we become frustrated and continue to push for some ideal in the future. We have to start here (and now) with our children. We might want them to achieve a skill in the future, but if they do not have that skill now, we can’t expect them to have it now. In fact, we will likely see more progress by returning to skills already learned, so that we might reward and encourage them as a step toward achieving the

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skills we want them to have in the future. The decreased frustration on our part decreases our children's frustration and opens up the possibility for growth and development in our children.



2. Focus

Children see through our eyes. If a parent tells a child to clean up 10 times each day, the child will learn that the parent

values cleanliness and may come to value it as well. However, that same child may rebel against cleanliness if the child feels inadequate at cleaning or is devalued with respect to cleanliness. Thus, it makes sense to choose our focus wisely.

When we focus on the behavior we want more of in a positive and encouraging way, we tend to

get more of that behavior. For example, focusing on the neatness of the bed is more likely to result in a neat bed in the future than is focusing on how messy the bed is, particularly when we fail to notice the other, neater parts of the room. When we focus on behavior we do not want, we give that behavior unintended value. Because our children absorb information like sponges, they are attuned to this value and may repeat the (mis) behavior frequently. If the focus on the behavior is also pejorative and shaming to a child, the parent and child often get locked into a negative parent-child interaction pattern that is unlikely to be broken until the parent changes the pattern. Changing the pattern involves focusing on positive behavior in a positive way. (See more in my previous newsletter on behavior change, [Dolphin Training 101.](#))

I have Square to swipe credit cards, and, as a covered health provider, I am able to take HSA cards as well!

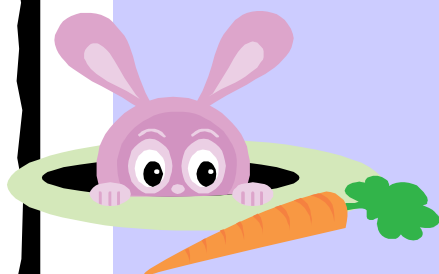
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3. What is the Carrot?

Almost all behavior occurs for a reason and has a specific purpose. Whenever you are struggling with your child's behavior, take a moment to ask



yourself what purpose your child's behavior is serving.

Yes, sometimes behavior is attention-seeking. While we do not want to reward unacceptable behavior with attention, if we understand that to be the purpose, we can help our children find more socially acceptable ways to ask for attention with words rather than misbehavior. Keep in mind that the purpose may be to manage a difficult emotion.

Children do not always know what to do with anger. They unknowingly act out their anger with inappropriate behavior. Lying and stealing are often signs of anger. Parents react to such behavior with anger or

frustration, giving children an outlet and target for their anger. Parents who are aware of this process, can interrupt it by helping children use words and verbalize their emotions or release those emotions in other, healthy ways (e.g. writing, drawing, physical exercise).

Children want to please their parents. Most children are not lazy (unless they learned such behavior from their parents!) or bad. They may be avoiding something that they fear they are unable to do or to do well enough to please their parents. Sometimes not doing something is less disappointing than doing it poorly.

REMEMBER: Here (and Now), Focus, and Carrot!

I welcome feedback about the services you receive. Please visit my website and click on the [QIQ](#) link to give anonymous responses!

QIQ