

Parents, How To STOP Coddling Your Child

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script, work, rescuing, problem, helpful, hear, conversation, coddling, enabling, give, listening, sounds, kid, solution, parents, emotion, habituated, child, talking, instinct

SPEAKERS

Seth Perler

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- S** Seth Perler 00:00
Hey parents in this video, I'm going to talk to you about how to stop coddling or rescuing or enabling your child. So if you're a mom or dad and you feel like you want to be doing less coddling or less rescuing or less enabling this video is for you. I'm going to give you a script that you can use. So get ready to take some notes on this.
 - S** Seth Perler 00:21
And I have three things to start in order to get get us started here, the first thing we're going to tell you is that even though I'm going to give you a script, this is not the end all be all. There's a lot of nuance, everybody has different circumstances, I don't have time to address every situation in the scope of this video, but I'm going to give you some good feedback and a basic script that you will want to adapt for your situation, do a gut check, don't just listen to everything I say or what anybody experts says do a gut check. because people have different thoughts about this there's a lot of nuance.
 - S** Seth Perler 00:51
Number two, I'm going to describe what is enabling? What is coddling? What is rescuing? Well, of course, there is a healthy way of rescuing. If somebody drowning, we want to

rescue them. If somebody's suffering, we want to rescue them, we want to help them. But I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about unhealthy rescuing, that doesn't rescue. That is where the parent, or me, or you, or the teacher, or whoever, that when somebody has a very strong desire to fix somebody, to fix something, and there's an emotional attachment to this. And they're really trying to be helpful to this person and it's not in a healthy way. There is some dysfunction, some maladaptive behaviors, some things that aren't working, that's not improving the relationship, it's not helping the person. So enabling, we're really enabling them to continue the behavior, rather than actually helping them change. So I wanted to next define what enabling or coddling or the sorts of things look like. So I'm specifically talking about an unhealthy way, just want to be very clear about that.

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Seth Perler 01:55

Number three, in order to stop that behavior yourself, to stop coddling or to slow down, not do it as much, to stop the rescuing and the enabling, we have to change the conversation. So I work with a group of families online. And one of the parents recently asked about this, how do I stop coddling? And one of the things that I hear from the families that I work with a lot is that one of the things that they're seeing as a result of working with me is that the conversations in the house are changing. So I want to point that out to you right now. What we're trying to do here is you're trying to change the conversation. What we have is we have defaults, we have maladaptive dysfunctional default conversations, you and your child, you and your spouse, you and whoever, we go ping pong back and forth. We're not even hearing each other. It's patterned. It's habituated. We want to change these patterns, to have healthier dynamics, so that we can help everybody, ourselves and the other person better. So how do we do that? We change the conversation. It takes a little bit of time.

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Seth Perler 02:58

All right, here we go. So first part, in this script that I'm talking about is identifying the problem. So either you say to your child, "Hey, there, there's a problem here what's going on with school, you know, you're failing this class" or whatever, or your child comes to you and says, "Hey, I have this problem." So the first part of the script is identifying the problem. So let's say that in this case, your child comes to you and says, "Hey, Mom, Dad, I got a problem. I have a paper due tomorrow, I've known about it for a month, I haven't started it. If I don't do this, I'm gonna fail. Or I'm failing such and such a class or I have so a mountain of makeup work to do in this class, or my friend hates me, or you, Mom and Dad, you are so unfair to me." So and it doesn't matter if your kid is elementary, middle school, high school, college, anything, any age, they're coming to with a problem. Now notice my tone when I said those problems. There's emotion behind when they're coming

to you with a problem. And there's emotion in you when you're going to your kid with the problem. Whether it's subtle or not, we sense that we coregulate it. So first thing in the script is somebody is identifying the problem. Then the second thing, the script is this. So your instinct is often, and I hear this from a lot of parents, so if this is you, it's very common. Don't feel like you're alone. You're not alone. I hear this all the time. Your instinct is to rescue them, to help them, to give them a logical solution. You see the matrix, you have wisdom in your life. You're older, you know so much more about life than your child does. You can see this matrix and you have a logical solution for them. You have a great suggestion. You try to reason with them. You try to convince them of the way that you're thinking and prove to them "Hey, listen, no, I'm trying to tell you I'm trying to help you. You asked me for help." You're nagging them, you're lecturing them, you know you have a solution that would work. But you're not going to say that. You're not going to say it. So in the script, we start with identifying the problem. And like I said, your instinct is to rescue but we're not going to go With the instinct.

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So instead of going with that instinct, what I want to encourage you to do is not say that because when we say those things, any of those rescuing type things that I just listed, the nagging, the convincing the reasoning, the suggestion, the solution, all those things. There is emotion in our voice and their feeling that their nervous system is vibing off the emotion, not the logic, not the reason. Okay, let me say that, again. We're in these habituated conversations that we've had a million times, and we know they're not working, they're not even listening to the words, they're feeling, the coregulation, they're feeling the dysregulation, they're feeling the emotion in your voice, even if it's subtle. It's not to say don't have emotions or anything like that. What it is to say is, you really got to consider is it working? So if they're not hearing your words, what are we going to do? We're going to change the conversation, we're going to say something different. So what I want to suggest to you is that you try this for 10 days. Let me know what you think in the comments or whatever. Put a comment in the right now, if you want. What do you think about this? But we're going to try this for 10 days. So they propose the problem, rather than responding or reacting how we normally would, we're going to respond differently. And you're going to say something like this. First thing you're going to say is you're going to reflect back to them how you see them feeling. So you're going to look at their body language. So like this, like this, whatever it is, you're going to notice that and the first thing you're going to do is you're going to reflect back to them. And you're going to say, "Wow, that sounds really," whatever it is, be honest with them. Notice what's going on with them. And do they look really angry? Do they look really disengaged? Do they look really lost? Do they look like really frustrated? You're gonna say to them, "Wow, that sounds really frustrating. Wow, that sounds like something that would make you angry. Wow, that looks

like it's making you angry. Wow, that looks really disengaging or uncomfortable. That sounds really not fun." So you're gonna reflect to them. "Wow." So this is first of all, your script. "Wow, that sounds really" whatever something honest.

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Seth Perler 07:21

Then you're going to say "I notice" and see what they say. They may say something back, and you want to listen to them. And then you're gonna say to them, "I noticed." So first thing you say is "Wow, that sounds really" then you're gonna say "I notice." And you're going to notice something about them about their nervous system. "Wow, I noticed that you look really closed off. Wow, I noticed that you look really unhappy. Wow, I noticed that your voice sounds really angry or loud," or whatever it is, what do you notice? So that's the second thing. What do you notice?

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Seth Perler 07:51

The next thing you're going to say to them is more logical. And you're going to get clear. This is called reflective listening and what you're going to say to them, is this. "Okay, let me get this straight. Or let me get this clear. Let me get some clarity. Okay, let me reflect this back to you. Okay, let me mirror this back to you." Basically, you're gonna reflect back to them what you heard them say that the problem was. So you're gonna say, "All right, let me get this clear. So you're saying that this is the problem? Am I understanding you correctly?" because you want to get that buy-in in the relationship. So now, most of the time, by this time, parents are so far away from this kind of conversation, because they're already in the problem solving and the rescuing all that stuff. We're not going there. Now we're into, "Okay, so let me get clear. Is this what you're telling me?" So you want them to feel heard. It's not really about you understanding it perfectly. It's about them feeling like you understand them. It's two very different things. I mean, you want to understand them, but you want them to feel heard before you move on to the next step. And when they say back to you, or you say, "Hey, here's what I hear you saying, is that right?" Then they're gonna say, "Yeah, that's right. I blah, blah, blah," or they're gonna say, "No, that's not right." Now, our instinct at that time when they respond, is for us to keep going with conversation. I don't want you to do that. I want you to make an awkward pause called 'wait time.' So when they seem like they're done talking, I want you to wait three to five more seconds and look at them. Like that. Why? Because what often happens is they're still processing they have more to say and us adults interrupt them so much. And what we do when we interrupt them, is we tell them, "I am not emotionally safe for you to talk to you because I'm not going to really hear you. I'm going to pretend like I hear you or act like I hear you. I think I'm hearing you but I'm not really hearing you." So we want to work on that wait time a lot.

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Then after they tell us and we get some clarity on what's going on, now, this is the kicker. You want to say, "Wow, what are you gonna do to solve that problem?" So instead of me rescuing or you rescuing, or enabling or solving a for them, we're gonna say, "Wow, what are you going to do to solve that problem?" And then we want to see what they're gonna say. And I will say that probably 90% of the time when a student says something to me, and I'm like, "Wow, what are you gonna do solve that problem?" they'll give me actually a pretty decent answer if I've done the beginning and set the tone that it's an emotional safe conversation. If you don't do the rest of that you don't just go to "Wow what're you going to do to solve that problem?" You may, but you have to have a relationship with it first. But they'll often give a really great answer.

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Seth Perler 10:43

And my response is usually, and this is the next step in your script here is great, "You've got this, if I can be helpful, let me know or how can I be helpful?" So in other words, they're telling me what they're gonna do to solve their problem or what their ideas. I'm not rescuing them, they often have a great idea. And I'm like, "Wow, that sounds really good. I think you're on the right track. You've got this, how can I be helpful?" Now at that point with the how can you be helpful, that's different for me as a coach and you as a parent, because what you're often going to want to do at this point is start shifting your energy, where you're really acting like you really believe that they've got this even if you don't. They're allowed to make mistakes. Do you know how much they can learn from mistakes? I'm not saying anything unsafe or anything, but if they make a mistake that they can learn from that's healthy and safe, we got to let them do this instead of enabling them, because they're the ones who need to learn the lessons. So oftentimes, I'll be like, "Sounds like a great idea. Let me know how it can help you more, can I be helpful to you?" What you don't want to do is when you say can I be helpful, is you don't want to linger. That emotional pressure of you being like, "Can I help you? How can I be helpful?" Notice, notice how that feels with me on this video. "How can I be helpful? Can I help you?" Like it's overbearing, and now I'm exaggerating a little bit, but that energy comes through to your kid if you're doing that, so just be like more detached. "Alright, cool. I think you've got this sounds like a good idea. That's a great solution. Let me know if I can be helpful. Anything I can do? No. Okay." And then shift your energy, where you're really detaching or you're trying to, again, this is a practice. Now, if they say, "I do want your help Dad, I do want your help Mom." At that point, you know, they say that to me, as the coach, I don't want to rescue still, I want them to come up with their own solutions.

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Seth Perler 12:40

So this is the next question in your script. "Okay, yeah, I'm happy to help you. But what do you think would work?" So what do you think is the next part of the script. And then, "That sounds pretty good to me." And then I'll often ask, "Do you think it'll work? Or what do you think the problems will be? What might be a barrier or a challenge?" And then, you know, then I say, "Okay, so you asked me what I think. Or you know, how I can be helpful. Do you really want to hear what I think? Because if you don't, I'm not gonna tell you." So I want that buy-in first. And then I want to say it depends on the kid, but for the parents, you're definitely going to want to say this. "Well, what if I feel like you're not listening to me?" Now, at this point, parents, you might be like, Seth, you're saying so many details. Don't worry, I'll go over it all. And yes, there's a lot of nuances in this, but just follow me here. You're gonna find this helpful, because this is how we change the conversation. So okay. "Do you really want to hear what I think? Well, what if I think that you're not listening?" see what your kid says. And then you say, "Okay, here's what I think," then you tell them now you're finally ready to do the rescuing or enabling or helping, but you're not rescuing enabling because they've been doing the work. They've been trying to find the solution. Okay. And so you can say, "Okay, here's what I think." And then you tell them your opinion, and then you can say, "What do you think of that?" And then really listen to them. So you, as the parent, listening to me, Seth, are probably going to be a lot like your kid right now in our thinking, "Seth, yeah. But you don't understand. My situations different. My kid is different. It would take way too long for us, or I don't have time for that conversation. But whatever it is, a lot of you watching might be like, Yeah, but yeah, but yeah, but yeah, but I'm different. And I'm telling you, I've worked a lot of families and you can say that all you want, but I am encouraging you to try this for 10 days. And then tell me what you think. You know, you're gonna have resistance like your kids do. You're gonna have excuses or reasons why you think you're different and wouldn't work for you. This is all about what's called secure attachment. Secure relating, emotional safety, and things like that. Sorry, something just fell outside the window, crazy day here in Colorado.

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Seth Perler 14:57

This is not a quick fix. This is about creating an emotionally safe way to have a two way communication that is win win with you and your child. In order for this to work, you must do it patiently, you must do it persistently. You must change the conversation. Now, here's what we got. I'm gonna go over this one more time. Thank you for listening. I'm glad you're here. All right, here's what we got.

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Seth Perler 15:17

Hey, there's a problem. Your instinct is to save to rescue. But you're not going to do that.

You're gonna say, "Wow, that sounds really blank. I noticed you blank." And then you're gonna listen. And then you want to listen to what the problem is. Have them tell you, use wait time, have them tell you more. Then you want to get clear and you want to say, "Okay, okay, so what I hear you saying is blank," use what's called reflective listening or mirroring, "Okay, so what I hear you saying is blank, is that correct?" And then they're gonna say yes or no. And then you're gonna give wait time. And then, "Wow, what are you gonna do that about that problem?" And then they're going to tell you, hopefully, some idea that they have, and then you can be like, "Great, that sounds pretty good. You've got this." Now, that's the point where in your mind, you're like, "No, they don't got this, they do not get it." See if you can allow, depending on the situation, if it's safe, just let it go. Be like, cool, you got this. And then then you're gonna say, let me know how it can be helpful. Or can I be helpful? And then you know, maybe they say, yes, they want you to be helpful, then you can be like, "Cool. Well, what do you think?" and ask them more about what they think they should do. And then say, "Oh, that sounds pretty good. Do you think that'll work?" And notice you haven't even told them your opinion yet. And then you say, "You know, what, do you really want to hear what I think? And what if I feel like you're not listening? Like should I keep talking? Because that doesn't feel good to me." And then you can be like, "Okay, here, here's what I think. What do you think of that?" And that's it.

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We're not solving, we're not rescuing, we're allowing them to come up with solutions. We're trying help. We're trying to collaborate. It's collaborative. It's not authoritative. It's not nagging. It's not lecturing. It's not giving advice. It's collaborative. It's working with them to help them come up with the solution and implement it. I hope that's helpful. I really tried to go in depth and be nuanced, so that you can walk away with this and have a pretty good vibe of what to do. Maybe you took some notes here with a little script. Don't worry about perfection. Just try the basic script. Get your key points down, however it resonates with you, and try it out for 10 days. Put it up on the fridge or somewhere where you can remember it and keep trying it.

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Seth Perler 17:36

Leave a comment below, let me know what you think right now. Leave a comment and a little while let me know how it works for you. My name is Seth Perler. I'm an executive function coach Colorado and I help struggling students navigate this thing called education so they can have great life. I'm glad you're here. If you like what I'm doing, give me a thumbs up on YouTube. Leave a comment, leave a like, subscribe, share with people. Go to my website, get my freebies sign up, follow me, share my stuff with people. I put my heart and soul into serving you and trying to make my little dent in the universe by

helping people through these types of situations. Be well be safe. Take care of each other.
I'll see you soon.