

One Strategy For When Your Kid Doesn't Want Your Advice

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SPEAKERS

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Hey, parents, what's up? It's me, Seth Perler. I'm an executive function coach out of Maui, and I hope you're having a great day. Look, parents, the problem is that a lot of times parents are working, you're working with your child and you want to help your child, but your child does not want to hear it from you. So they don't want your advice often, and you know that you want to be able to connect with them. You want to be able to help them. The problem is, and this is for moms and dads both, when you're trying to help your child, especially your child who struggles with executive function, and is really struggle with school for a while, it doesn't matter if they're an elementary school or college, what can happen is when you're trying to be helpful, what your child hears is they hear you nagging them, or bugging them, or annoying them, or lecturing them, or giving them unsolicited advice. So you're trying to be helpful, but what they are hearing or what they're experiencing are those sorts of things. And unfortunately, those sorts of things are doing the opposite of what you're trying to do. You're trying to create connection, and you're trying to be helpful and give advice that they can implement so that you can help them help themselves. Right.

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So that's the intention. But what often ends up happening is that it can create more

distance, and it can create more resistance. It doesn't help them actually take action, which is what you're trying to get them to do is to get them to take action for their own well being. So it doesn't end up doing that unless they're doing it just so that you stop bugging them, which isn't a good thing to continue doing. That's not good for the relationship. It's not good for anybody. And it's not good for their agency and their independence to be making choices on their own. Anyhow, I got this email from parent last week that had a pretty incredible tip about this. I'm going to show you that email right here. So the first thing in the email is the parent says that their favorite takeaway, so I did a vlog last week on communicating with your child, "my favorite takeaway was hearing you really explain wait time. I've heard you reference that before," because I talked about all the time, "but you really clarified that the wait time is extra critical after the response. I can wait so long for that first response and I know I failed to wait after it. I'm going to try that this week." So what I was talking about was a bunch of relational tools, and wait time is one relational tool. What happens is that we, as parents with our kids, we are reactive. You say something, they say something, you say something, they say something, nobody's hearing each other. It's almost a script, right. One thing that helps is wait time, is when parents learn to really wait, pause, don't go so fast. Once they respond to you, is to wait. Now, this is complicated. I'm not gonna explain this all in this video, but that's the gist of it. So you ask your child something, they say something, and you wait, they give you a better response. And you wait even more, and you say "I'm listening, I'm still listening. I hear you, I really want to understand you." So we're not going to that reactive response that we usually do. Now, when your child is an introvert and quiet and doesn't talk much, it's really hard and it can take a long time. But that time after is the magic time. When you've asked them what they thought or about whatever issue you're talking about, they give you a response, you pause a little bit, they give you a little bit more of a response. Then after that you keep pausing, and you practice this maybe multiple times. Keep implying "I'm listening, I'm open, I'm here for you. Tell me more, I'm really trying to hear you." That is where the magic happens. So when I'm working with kids, the first response is usually called an 'unconscious response.' We're telling people what we think they want to hear a lot of times, a lot of times it's not a mindful, present thoughtful response. So we want to give wait time.

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Why? Why wait time? Because of attachment theory, because of emotional safety. When we wait, and we pause, and we really listen, we're telling them, "I'm really trying to get you, to understand you. I've got your back, I will take time for you. I know sometimes it doesn't seem like it but I am now taking time for you." And it might take many times. Days, weeks, or months for your child's nervous system to understand that it feels safe when you are trying to communicate with them because they don't feel suffocated. That sense of

suffocation when they feel like it's nagging, or annoying, or bugging, or lecturing, or those things, that sense of suffocation is a constricting sense on the nervous system. It doesn't feel good. They can't get away from it and they don't know where the conversation is going, yada-yada-yada. All this to set you up for what this tool was.

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This tool that this parents said, I'm going to show you right now, it's excellent: "Here's a strategy I've been using to build safety and connection with my teen who's introverted, stressed, not doing well in school, etc." So executive function struggles with the not doing well in school, and the emotional regulation, "When I knock on his door and ask red, yellow, green, if he gives me a red light, I immediately close the door and walk out." What does that do to the child's nervous system? It tells the child's nervous system, "I respect your space. Okay, I'm backing off. I got it." I know what some of you are thinking right now, what if they always do that? Don't worry, I'll address that. "If he gives me a yellow, I know, it means I can say one thing or ask one question, maybe two. I've yet to get a green, but what has happened is now he comes out of his room more or makes a comment to me if I'm in the hallway, I'm taking those as green lights, or at least a more open yellow." This is amazing. And I'm gonna explain why. "I'm going to be practicing all those other strategies. But this week, I'm going to really work on wait time." So the other strategies, were just the ones I mentioned, in last week's video, I went through a bunch of them.

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Basically, the purpose of this sort of strategy is to build connection, build security, not distance, but to build connection. And it can be really frustrating as a parent when you're looking at your kitchen, like, "If my kiddo doesn't get this stuff done, there's going to be consequences, and I know it, and I need to get that moving." But what you're trying to do isn't working, it's not creating that and you're gonna have to go back way up and do some healing work here with you and your inner child's relationship so that they can feel emotionally safe to tell you this stuff. So the purpose of this stuff is emotional security. Now, what's really cool about what this parents said, is they said they're taking the yellow as a, you know, they're basically looking at it as a win, which it is. From where they came from, this as a win. And they're looking at the yellows, maybe they can ask one or two questions, but you can tell by the way this parent is writing, they're really being mindful of where that line is. Now, I want to tell you that yellow is gray. And here's what I mean, I talk about play in the gray, play in the gray, play in the gray. This is learned helplessness, enabling, doing too much for your child, not letting them have their own experience, that's this side. And then this is a gray area, and then this is called the threshold. This is where if

you put your child too far they withdraw from you or get angry at you, they won't listen to you. So you parents are working in this space. This is where growth happens. You can't stay in the comfort zone, you can't stay and learn helplessness land, right? You can't push them past the threshold all the time because you lose them. So you have this little area of gray. Now her yellow light is the gray. That's where she knows that that's where the win is. And she will get to a green if she persists. So what I always talk about is patient persistence and baby steps. This parent is indicating that they are willing to play in baby steps. So this is how I know that, the parent says "I know that if he says yellow, I know that that means I can say a thing or ask one question, maybe two. I have yet to get a green light. But what has happened is that now he comes out of his room or makes a comment if I'm in the hallway."

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Coming out of his room or making a comment in the hallway is a win. Parents, this game of helping your child is played with baby steps. Baby steps win. It's not giant strides. You know giant strides need to be made, but that's not what works, sorry. The baby steps are everything. This parent acknowledges, "Oh my gosh, my kid comes out and says something like that, for us, that's a win." You have to know when a win is win, and you have to know how to nurture that win. Then this parent, "Also since I'm going to be practicing all these, but I'm really going to work on wait time." So this parent understands patiently and persistently. I talked about patient and persistent, patient and persistent. If you want to help your child, you got to be patient and you got to be persistent. Don't just try an intervention and it works, that doesn't happen very often. Okay, this is played in baby steps. This is the marathon game, this is the long run, this is not the sprint. We're looking at the long game with our kids. And I want to tell you that there is hope. If you're like, "But my child blah blah blah, but but but but but but, we this but we that." Look, I've been doing this a long time. If you patiently and persistently move towards these baby steps and work on the relationship, you will see growth and change. It will feel like nothing's happening, it's a millimeter, millimeter, millimeter, it doesn't look like anything. But just like when you look at how tall your child is, and you stand them up at the door and mark their head. Months have gone by, you can see that it adds up, they're growing. Same thing. Same metaphor applies here. It is the baby steps, the millimeters, the micro-successes. These are everything parents. Do not give up. There's so much hope, there will come a time when you look back and go, "Whoa, we're not there anymore. It's not perfect, but we are not there anymore. We have grown."

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The last thing I want to say is this, don't forget parents, your child is on their own hero's

journey. They're not on your journey, they're not on your spouse's journey, or your other relatives journey, or cultures journey, or society's journey. They're on their own hero's journey. We want them to have certain things of course. We have wisdom to know when they may or may not be walking into things, situations, that are helping them or not helping them. We have that wisdom, they don't yet. But they get to build that wisdom. That doesn't mean just let go of everything and not intervene, but it does mean be patient, let them have their life experience. Be very mindful of when and how you intervene and if your intervention is doing what you anticipate. Again, this type of intervention that we started with here, where they sense nagging, they feel like they're being bugged, or annoyed, that creates distance and more resistance to doing what we want them to be doing. So how do we create closeness and less friction, less resistance, so that they can do the things that we want them to do to be able to launch a great, great future for themselves while having a great life right now?

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My name is Seth Perler. I got a bunch of freebies on my site, SethPerler.com. You can subscribe there, share my stuff. If you like it, give it a thumbs up, leave a comment below. You got any strategies? What do you think? And what do you think of this one? The red light, yellow light, green light. Love to hear what you have to say. If you have any ideas for me for further topics, you can add those in the YouTube comments as well as my blog comments. Have an amazing day. I wish you the best. Take care.