



Parenting Tip

October 6, 2011

Building a Tape

Many times we, as parents, don't see the results of our discipline as fast as we'd like. The process is slow, at best, and change seems to be taking a long time. In those situations we need to focus on building a tape in our child's heart.

Think about some of the things your parents said over and over again that continue to play in your mind. "Turn off the lights before you leave the room." "Eat your vegetables." "Be nice to your sister," "Say excuse me." Did you heed their instructions then? Maybe not, but the tape still plays in your head.

It may not appear that your children are listening but loving and consistent reminders have a long-term effect. It's important what you say and how you say it, though, because children will remember. If your words have a pattern of being harsh and critical, that tape also will continue to play later on.

Simple observations repeated over and over can go a long way. If you have one son who is continually picking on another, he may have a character weakness in the area of kindness. Make statements and observations that add to the tape. "Johnny, you need to be kind." "Johnny, it looks like you're being selfish and not thinking of Billy's feelings." "Johnny, was that the loving thing to do?" "Johnny, let's not be hurtful."

As we repeat instructions and make observations, we're impacting the hearts and minds of our children, whether we see the results in their behavior or not. Change takes time. It's important to pray that God will use our words to make lasting changes in our kids. We may not actually see the results as fast as we would like, but we are building a tape that will last a long time. Take a moment and think about the tape you're creating in your child's heart. Is it the one you want remembered?

Consider what you'd like your child to say to himself or herself and begin to repeat those words throughout the day. In doing so you'll be creating a heart script to help your child mature.

This tip comes from the book, [Home Improvement](#), by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN.

What are some constructive things you repeat to your child throughout the day? [Click here](#) to tell us about it.

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