

USING THE RIGHT PARENTING VOICE

There are many different types of verbal techniques that we can use while parenting our children. How we use our voice matters depending on the situation at hand. We can be intentional and strategic with our voice, but using it is a skill we must practice. In his book, Positive Peer Culture, Harry Vorrath argues that we use three basic voices as parents: a Demander, a Stimulator and a Soother.

1. The Demander

Kids thrive under stability, and the Demander voice helps maintain structure. Being a consistent demander helps your kids learn about expectations, rules, and consequences. Yet, a harsh and controlling demander can scare and intimidate everyone in the home. If you are only using the demander voice, chances are your kids are not obeying you because they respect you; they are obeying you because they fear you.

2. The Stimulator

The kids of a gifted and caring Stimulator feel listened to, appreciated, valued, and respected. When you use it, the stimulator voice helps your kids think for themselves and therefore able to withstand peer pressure and take pride in their own critical thinking. However, parents who overuse the stimulator voice can often be viewed by their kids as being indecisive, lacking in confidence, and somewhat emotionally uninvested. Stimulators ask lots of questions, and kids may feel pestered and frustrated with constant analyses.

3. The Soother

The kids of a Soother commonly feel emotionally validated and understood. They feel safe, supported, and close to their parents. Soothers try hard to create a safe place for hard conversations where kids are more likely to be open and honest with their parents. The danger of overusing this voice is that kids may become overly dependent on their parents' emotional support and therefore lack the emotional resources and practical skills to solve problems such as setbacks, conflicts, or crises on their own.

USING THE RIGHT PARENTING VOICE

What is your default voice?

What voice do you need to work on the most?

If you asked your children, what voice would they say that you use the most?

Write down specific examples of a times when you should use different voices.

Balancing Voices

Understanding and leveraging these three voices gives us tools in our toolbox as parents. It allows us to have a great deal of diversity and range in our conversations, and we can impart the highest standards and expectations for our children in the most loving and supportive manner. The type of voice we use will be circumstantial and also dependent on the personality of our child. Finding a balance of these three voices can help give a well-rounded approach to your communication.