

UNLOCK

THE SECRETS TO
PARENTING SUCCESS



7 KEYS to  Building a Healthy Family—
from the Foundation Up!

Jody Johnston Pawel, LSW, CFLE

Unlock the Secrets to Parenting Success

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By Jody Johnston Pawel, LSW, CFLE

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Published by Ambris Publishing, a subsidiary company of Relationship Toolshop® International Training Institute, LLC

World Headquarters: P.O. Box 343, Springboro, OH 45066

www.ParentsToolshop.com



Introduction

Have you ever wondered if there's a simpler, easier way to parent your children than using trial-and-error to respond to challenges as they pop up?

Do you ever wish you could feel competent and confident in knowing *exactly* what to say and do, *in a matter of seconds*, to *prevent* problems from ever starting or respond helpfully when they do?

Well you can, and join countless parents who have said,

"I can't believe how simple this is! Why didn't someone tell me this before?"



Hi, I'm [Jody Johnston Pawel, LSW, CFLE](#). I created this e-book because I often see parents struggling with common parenting challenges that are often preventable, or getting frustrated, overwhelmed and angry when their good intentions and positive attempts don't work, or even make matters worse.

While much of what they are saying and doing is effective, some isn't and it's actually causing some of the problems they say they are frustrated with handling. Often, just small, simple changes make their daily parenting experience go much more smoothly.

I feel for these frustrated parents, because I was once one of them!

Yes, even though I had been involved in parent education since I was eight-years-old, helping my parents create audio vignettes for *their* parenting classes, learning great skills from them.

Even though I had a social work degree, was certified in several parenting curricula and had taught several parenting classes before I ever had children.

Even though I literally researched hundreds of parenting resources to learn every known research-based and highly effective parenting tool.

Once I became a parent myself, I got frustrated and angry, too!



I thought, that given everything I knew, parenting should be a breeze for me. But it wasn't.

That's because thirty-plus years ago, despite all the advantages I did have, what I didn't have was a **system for knowing why a problem was happening, which tool to use, when to use it, and how to use it to get the best results.**

In my daily life with my young children, a challenge would arise and I'd use trial and error, like most parents. Granted, I had the best tools at my disposal, but when they didn't work, I'd get frustrated and call my husband to vent. He'd ask me some of the questions I suggested parents ask themselves, to figure out what to say and do.

I soon saw a *pattern* in which *three* specific questions always seemed to lead me to an effective response. Then the parents I was teaching and I tested this process, as well as when and how to use the tools, until more patterns emerged showing what got the best results.

It took nearly 10 years, but I eventually organized what I had discovered into a parenting *plan* unlike anything any other parenting program had; a "secret-sauce system" for preventing and responding to *any* parenting challenge in a *personalized* way. I call this system the [Universal Blueprint® for Parenting Success](#).

I then tested this plan and its tools during a ten-year outcome-based evaluation study with *thousands* of parents of diverse backgrounds, using pre-post skill assessments and program evaluations.

The statistical results were off the charts!

They showed this system *empowered* parents with effective language and action tools they could use to **prevent the most common parenting challenges and find *personalized* effective responses to any problem, with any child, any time --- in seconds!**

Parents felt they could solve problems

TEN Years of Statistical Results PROVE Parents Toolshop® Programs GET RESULTS!

From 1992 to 2002, 7 instructors taught Parent's Toolshop® classes featuring the Universal Blueprint® model.

Of 1295 parents, 992 attended a full-length class:

Of those 992 parents, 823 (83%) successfully graduated.

Almost 100% (99.67% or 822 of 823 parents) improved their parenting skills.

On a scale of 11 points, the average improvement in skills was 2.40 points,

from below the midpoint (5.41) to the "more skillful" range (7.81).

Nearly 20% scored in the highest skill range!

In participant evaluations:

83% rated the program "excellent," 100% rated it "good" or "excellent"

96% said they learned new information

100% said they would recommend the program to others.

There are many parenting classes in the Dayton area and we fund most of them.

Our statistics show that none have even come close to achieving the results your

classes achieve on a consistent basis. --- Linda Taylor, Community Initiatives

Program, United Way of Greater Dayton



independently, competently and confidently with *all* their children and, most surprisingly, even in adult relationships!

There are many parenting classes in the Dayton area and we fund most of them. Our statistics show that none have even come close to achieving the results your classes achieve on a consistent basis. -- Linda Taylor, Community Initiatives Funding, United Way of Greater Dayton, Ohio

2017 will be the 25th anniversary of The Parents Toolshop® and its proprietary Universal Blueprint® formula --- and in all that time ***this system has never failed.***

Like any system, there can be operator errors and *parts* of the system won't work as well alone as they do when used *as a whole system*. But after thirty years of training and coaching over 50,000 parents and doing hundreds of media interviews, including many call-in-advice shows, I have been able to **rely on this system every time to direct me and the parents I serve to healthy responses to the challenges they face.**

You can get the system and these same results, too. All that's required is to invest a short period of time to learn the system and its tools and consistently use them.

How long? Well, that depends on the kind of results you want. You can get Done4U solutions you can implement in a matter of minutes, but you may not know what to do when a different challenge arises!

Or you can learn the basics of the most important tools in a couple hours, but will likely have questions or want personalized support to apply them to *your* family.

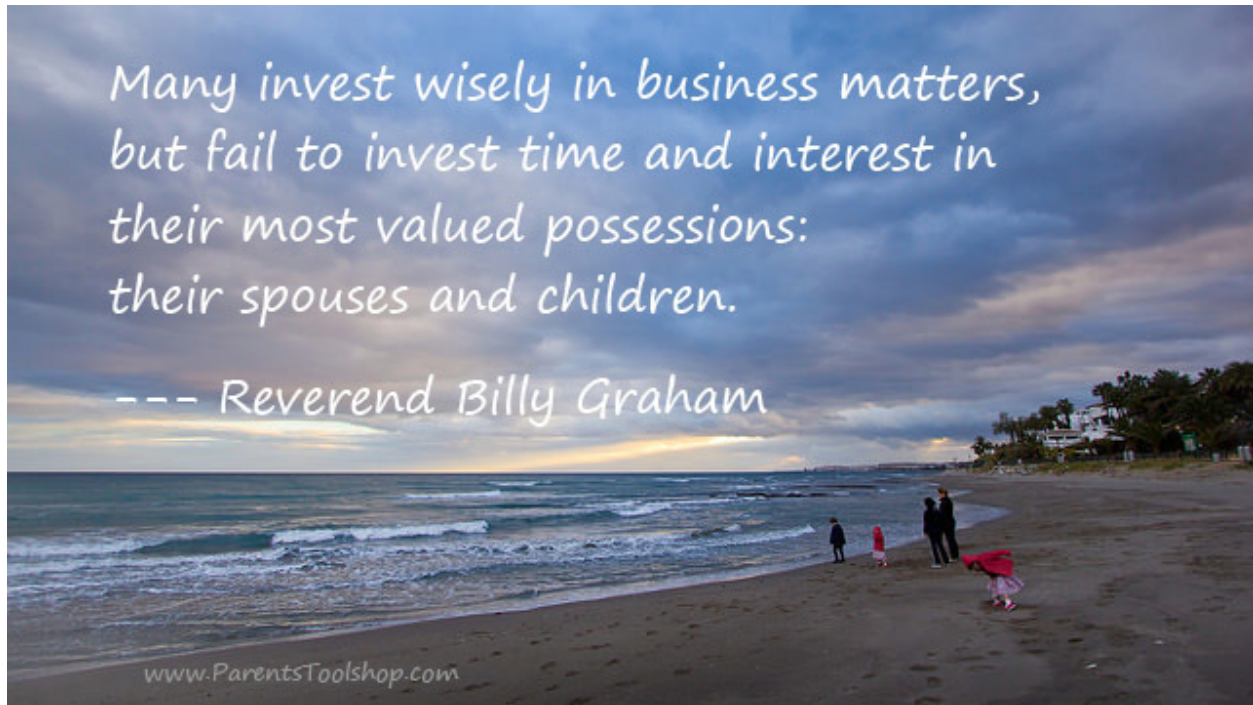
If you choose to invest several weeks to months in learning the Universal Blueprint® system and mastering the advanced skills, with personalized support, you can **experience a total transformation of your parenting --- and your life.**

I can't thank you enough. You have absolutely changed my life. Not only have I learned more effective parenting skills, but my entire style of parenting has changed! I am so much more calm, confident, and consistent. --- Amy Reed

Your children are the most important people in your life and you would do anything for them. Are you willing to make a short-term investment of your time



and resources to create healthy, rewarding family relationships that will last a lifetime (not just 18 years)?

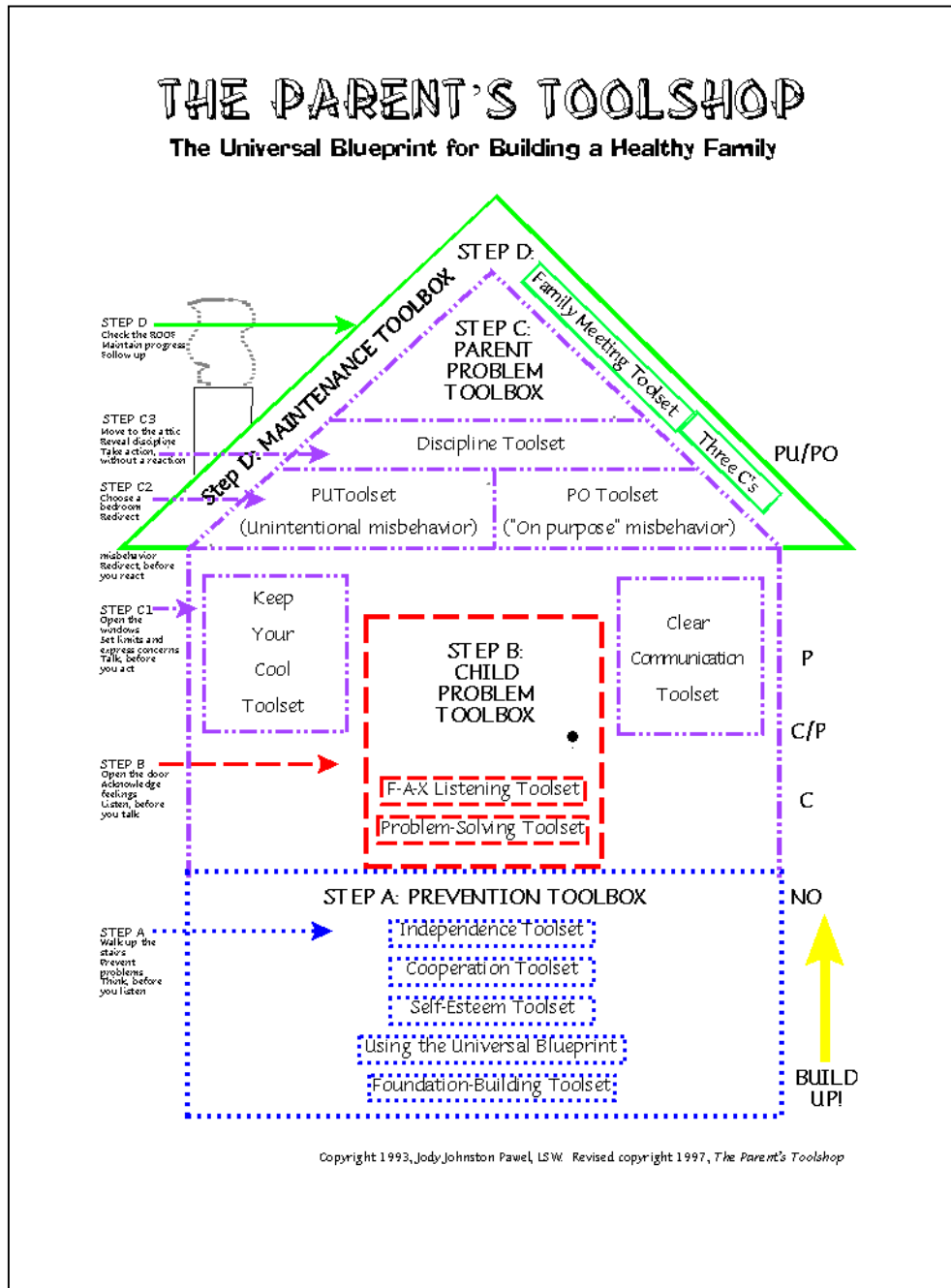


If you want your relationships to grow and evolve, you may need to grow and evolve, too. This e-book will show you where to begin, by introducing you to the key components of this amazing parenting system and explaining why it's so powerful --- and *empowering*.

My hope is that at the end of it you will trust me to guide you in learning more details, so you can build or “remodel” your family in ways that helps you prevent unnecessary challenges, connect more deeply, and create close, loving relationships that will **enrich every relationship in each area of your life, for a lifetime.**



Are You Ready to Build (or Rebuild) a Healthy Family?



The Parent's Toolshop® uses the analogy that building (or remodeling) a family is like building (or remodeling) a house: you need a variety of toolboxes, toolsets and tools.



The Parents Toolshop® is such a wonderful contribution in helping parents. I love your use of the house diagram in presenting the material. It presents the information in a clear and logical manner. Its simplicity aids parents when turmoil strikes. In the fourteen years that I have worked with children with emotional and behavioral issues, your presentation is unique in addressing some obvious problems and problem-solving skills to be used. --- Linda Nicely, LSW, Supervisor, Youth Services Network of Southwest Ohio, Inc.

Just as a home builder has an electrical toolbox to install wiring, a plumbing toolbox and a carpentry toolbox, parents need to have and know how to skillfully use a variety of tools that serve a specific purpose. Many parents already have *some* of these tools, but few have them *all*. (Even though I was raised by parent educators, I didn't!)

That's because ***parental love may come naturally, but effective parenting skills are learned*** --- and most of us don't learn them as children.



In The Parents Toolshop[®], there are 6 toolboxes, which contain 13 toolsets, which collectively house 152 tools that solid parenting research has shown to be effective. You don't, however, have to learn, know and use all 150+ tools! Only 8 are essential.

To prevent overwhelm and make it easy for you to know *what* tools to use and *when* to use them, they are organized according to the type of problem they help solve (toolboxes) and the purpose the skills serve (toolsets).

It's important to know how to use *all* the toolboxes and certain tools from each toolset, because they work best when used together as part of a whole step-by-step system. This course will introduce you to the basics of this system, how it's organized and *why* each toolbox or toolset exists, so you understand the purpose each step serves and the common problems that can arise if you skip steps.

All you really need now are the basics: to better understand why having a parenting system is important and what each toolbox/toolset does. If you want to learn more about a step, toolbox, or the tools in the toolsets, you can.

The Universal Blueprint[®] Organization System

The Universal Blueprint[®] for Parenting Success System organizes effective parenting tools by:

- Toolboxes focus on problem *types*. They contain...
- Toolsets, which are groups of tools within toolboxes that serve a common purpose.



TOOLBOXES
*Types of
PROBLEMS*



TOOLSETS
*Groups of Tools
that serve a
common purpose*



TOOLS
*individual
techniques/skills*



For example, the Prevention Toolbox contains three Toolsets, including the Cooperation Toolset, which houses all the tools that are best for engaging cooperation and fostering self-motivation without bribes, rewards, incentives, and sticker charts. Engaging cooperation is one of the best ways to prevent tantrums and power struggles, which are two challenges most parents face at some time.

You can find most of the tools in *The Parent's Toolshop*® “out there,” but not all in one place and not as part of a specific *plan* for knowing *which* tool to use, *when* to use it and *how* to use it most effectively. That makes the Universal Blueprint® the *only proven-effective, problem-solving process and step-by-step parenting system* in the world.

Parents (or professionals) can know hundreds of skills, but if they don't know *which* skills/tools are the best to use for certain *types* of problems, don't know what *order* to use the skills or don't use them in *specific* ways, the skills will be less effective, the results will be less than desired, and problems are more likely to occur.

With the unique Universal Blueprint® decision-making process, all you need to know is what type of problem you are facing and what you want to accomplish! The system and its tools are organized in a way that leads you straight to the most effective tools for *that* situation, happening *that second* in time, with *that* child!

I especially like the Universal Blueprint®. It gives me a tangible, visual way to organize all that I learned and use the 'tools' to their full potential. My professional training uses similar teaching methods, so it's great to learn about parenting using the same process. Parenting is never easy, but The Parents Toolshop® makes it easy to understand. --- Mike Lowery

Since The Universal Blueprint® is a step-by-step process, you will start by setting a balanced foundation and work your way up to maintaining progress.

So let's begin looking at exactly how to Unlock the Secrets of Parenting Success, with the 7 Keys for Building a Healthy Family --- from the Foundation Up!



Key 1:

Set Free Old Habits, to Reach Your Parenting Potential

Ron and Becky have two children. Like most families, there is always something happening, so they both pitch in. Ron heads one way with one child while Becky heads in another direction with the other.

The children often get to do what they want, so when they are crabby and whiny, Ron and Becky wonder why. They tell their children to be grateful for what they have. When their children complain or talk back, they often get angry and lecture them about their ungratefulness.



When their children are smart-alecky and rude out in public, Ron and Becky get all sorts of advice from friends, family and even strangers:

- *“You need to take away all their privileges, so they will start appreciating what they have. Then they will be more respectful.”*
- *“You know, when you were that age, all I needed to do was count to 10 and I rarely got to 10.”*
- *“All they need is a smack on the mouth and then they’ll show some respect!”*
- *“Just send them to their room and don’t let them come out until they can show some respect.”*
- *“You need to show them who’s boss and lay down the law. I sure wouldn’t tolerate that type of behavior.”*

The list of advice goes on and on.

Ron and Becky have tried many of these tactics, at least the ones that seem respectful, but they always seem to backfire. Their children’s behavior just seems to get worse as they get older and they are becoming resentful and frustrated.

Like most parents, Ron & Becky use trial-and-error parenting. You know, you hear what has worked for someone else and think it will work for you, only to try it and discover it didn’t work for *your* family.

How would you like to learn and master practical skills that can take away the guesswork of parenting and get consistently positive results?



Are You an Intentional Parent?

If you want to be *really good* at something, whether it's golfing, sewing or painting, you set goals, develop a step-by-step plan for reaching those goals and seek additional education and skill-building to help you achieve those goals.

Many parents do this in their professional and personal lives, but don't use this approach with their parenting. Probably because of the belief that children are unpredictable.

At work, I have weekly, quarterly, and yearly goals. To achieve these goals, I develop a plan that I think (and hope) will work. I attend workshops, seminars, and classes to learn better methods to work my plan. The Parent's Toolshop® has the same effect on working my parenting plan. Knowledge is power. --- Rich Munn

When you approach parenting in an intentional, conscious way, you can prevent many common challenges and get quicker, positive, longer-lasting results. When challenges arise, you will know what to do, which reduces your frustration and gives you more patience and confidence as a parent.

Conditioned, Reactive or Conscious Parenting — Which Do You Use?

Conditioned parenting is doing whatever your parents did, often without really thinking about it, because you “turned out okay.” When problems arise, you may wonder why. It's because your children aren't you and today isn't yesterday, so the old programming isn't going to get the same results.



Many parenting traditions that get passed down through the generations are based on inaccurate or outdated belief systems. Some start for a legitimate reason, but today that reason doesn't exist or there's a better way for accomplishing the same goal.

These old ways are not necessarily *wrong*; in fact, they might seem to work, but often only in the short-run. The negative side effects often don't show up until later. By then, undoing them can be challenging.

I learned a lot about myself and how my parents were! I do a lot of things different now with my kids and husband and it really does work. --- Amanda Kallmeyer



Like anything in life, if you allow old programming to control your thoughts and decisions, it can often lead to ruts and bad habits that can be hard to break.

No matter how bad things might be now, it *can* get better! It's just harder to try to undo unhealthy habits than it is to establish healthy habits from the beginning - -- and parenting is challenging enough as it is! It's not impossible, though.

Reactive parenting is doing whatever comes to mind first, usually without much thought, or doing the opposite of what your parents did, because you *don't* like how you were parented.



This program was excellent. It totally opened my eyes to parenting. It not only taught me about parenting my child, but also helped me realize things about my childhood and why I reacted to situations as I did. It made me look at parenting a whole new way. I would recommend this program to everyone. --- Tabitha Markley

Reactions almost always result in the problem escalating and getting worse or accidentally giving the child a pay-off, which causes the problem to happen again.

As for trying to break negative parenting cycles by doing the opposite, any extreme may be just as ineffective; you just might not realize it until you see the negative long-term side effects.

Conscious parenting is choosing the outcomes you want and then learning the skills to reach those goals. It's thinking of the long-term, right now, to choose a response that will take you one step closer to your parenting goals.



Conscious parenting is also holistic; engaging your thoughts and feelings, logic and intuition, biology and spirituality.

Conscious parenting involves being willing to make an initial investment of time and energy to learn the skills and steps that will achieve your parenting goals.

The good news is that these skills are usually simple to understand, easy to use and are so effective, you usually start seeing immediate results. Most importantly, the results are long-lasting.



The Parents Toolshop® helped me go from a Totally Overwhelmed Parent to a Totally Observant Parent. I am more observant of how my beliefs color a situation; who's problem it really is; respecting my child and my words; and am more observant of the tools I have available to me. Most of all you have given me hope that I can change my bad habits and misguided parenting approaches and be the Mother that I dream of becoming. And to think, my children will learn many of these skills at such a young age. What a wonderful gift to give them! Thank you for all you have done for my family. --- Kay Lynch

Are you Open to Learning?

In parenting, there is never only one “right” way to do anything; but there *are* “more effective” and “less effective” ways to reach your parenting goals.

People who are more concerned about being “right” than being “effective,” may assume any new or different idea is an accusation that what they’ve been doing is “wrong” and may be closed to new ideas. That shortchanges both parents and children. To be a more-effective parent, you want to be open to new ideas.

No matter how skilled you think you are, this course can really give you very effective ways to parent that you never thought of before. --- Rudy Thomas

You know that the only person you can really change is yourself, so you want to be willing to look at how *you* can improve. When you change, everyone around must adapt to that change. These adjustments are actually quite predictable, though not guaranteed, since each person has free will. Nevertheless, it’s like a pebble in a pond that has a ripple effect. You might not get a quick fix or even see immediate results, but over time you *will* see positive change in yourself and others.

If you focus on being “more effective” you will usually see quick improvement in your parenting skills, see signs it is working (often little signs and sometimes miraculous immediate results), and get the most profound, long-lasting results the quickest.

If you are or want to be a more conscious, proactive, responsive parent, you will *choose* to:

- Educate yourself



- Be calm in the moment
- Become aware of your thoughts
- Recognize your beliefs as your own
- Adjust your attitudes
- Have a positive mindset
- Make positive choices about your parenting
- Choose what you think
- Decide and plan what you say and do

When you make *those* choices, you will feel:

- Competent
- Confident
- Positive
- Joyous

Then, the natural outcomes are that you will become more:

- Conscious about parenting
- Energized *by* parenting
- Realize your potential as a parent

What I took away is the importance of awareness. Being aware and mindful of what we are doing and saying as parents is so important! Before, I did and said whatever felt right in the moment. Definitely not the best parenting approach. Thank you for giving us so many logical, sensible, respectful ways to prevent problems and to respond effectively when problems arise. I feel better equipped to handle situations in a positive way. And I have a much better relationship with my children. --- Robin Barrett

Your Mission, Should You Decide to Accept It

To reach any goal or intention, you must line up your thoughts, words and actions in the same direction. If any one of them is out of line, you won't get the best results.

The Universal Blueprint® Parenting Success Formula includes suggestions for what



to *think, say and do!* So your Mission, should you decide to accept it, is this:

Your Mission

When you experience a problem. . .

1. STOP and THINK for 1-10 seconds,
2. PLAN a helpful response (what you say)
3. DELIVER it effectively (what you do)

Many parents who choose to accept this mission start seeing immediate results, even before they learn a single tool! That's because simply stopping and being more consciously aware and choosing a response is always more effective than reacting.

Set Your Parenting Goals and Commit to Reaching Them

To set your parenting goals, ask yourself, **“What are the skills and qualities you want your child to develop to be a well-adjusted successful adult?”** I've heard over 50,000 parents' answers to this question over the past 30 years. Amazingly, although these parents are from diverse backgrounds, they usually list almost the same goals and intentions.

So why is it that parents can agree so much on their goals, yet differ so greatly in their parenting? Because they have different *opinions* about *how* to reach those goals.

Fortunately, the Universal Blueprint® system is not based on someone's opinion. It is [quintuple research based](#). A combination of the research studies on which it is based shows that there are five parenting styles, one of which gives you the best chance of reaching what most parents list as their top 10-20 parenting goals.

So set your goals now. In the next chapter, you'll find out if your current approach is likely to reach those goals.



Then, with each chapter (key), you'll explore a different toolbox. Each one contains special tools that are part of an effective parenting approach, which you can use to prevent or respond helpfully to any type of parenting challenge.

Action Steps:

- Write your Top Ten Parenting Goals (or 20!). “What are the skills and qualities you want your child to develop to be a well-adjusted successful adult?”
 - Next to each, write what you are currently doing to achieve that goal.
 - Then ask yourself if you are seeing results that indicate you are making progress in achieving that goal.
- Whenever a potential challenge arises, follow through with “Your Mission” to the best of your ability. Don’t worry about being right or wrong. Just be sure to do Step 1 of Your Mission --- stop and think for 1-10 seconds. You’ll find it automatically leads you to the most effective response you can give *in that moment* with the knowledge, skills and awareness you currently have. Granted, it might not be as effective as it will be in a few days or weeks from now, but it will still be a *response* and not a *reaction*.



Key 2: Unlock the No-Longer Secret Plan for Parenting Success

Jill and Roy's son, Ryan, has trouble managing his time after school and has been failing to complete all of his homework assignments.

Roy comes home from work and finds Ryan sitting at his desk with headphones on tapping his pencil to the beat of the music. Roy immediately gives the same lecture he's said a million times before,



"What do you think you are doing? You know you need to have your homework done before you can play. Your grades are suffering and you need to buckle down. How are you ever going to make it in life? You won't get into college and no one will want to hire you. You won't even have the basic skills to get a decent job. Now shut that music off and get to work right now or that player is going in the trash!"

Ryan grudgingly says, "Oh, yeah, I'd like to see you do that. I don't believe you anyway. This thing costs too much for you to just throw it away!"

Jill steps in and says, "That is a little harsh Roy. Ryan is trying to get his homework done. He says the music helps him focus. I thought I'd let him give it a try."

"Well, how long has he been at it? School has been out for two hours already. Show us what you've got finished so far," Ron demands.

Ryan hangs his head and shows his parents that he has only completed half a page of homework.

Ron is livid. "That's it! I've had it! I'm taking that player away for a week. If this continues, you will lose it even longer," Ron yells as he grabs the player from Ryan.

Jill quietly tells Ryan, "Just get your homework done. That way you can have your player back."

Jill and Ron have completely different parenting styles. Although Jill is trying to balance out Roy's stricter style, their inconsistent conflicting styles will likely have negative consequences long-term.



Have you ever wondered what style is best to reach your parenting goals? Well that's what you'll discover in this lesson.

Key 2: The Foundation-Building Toolbox

When building a house, the first step is to lay the foundation. Once it's solid, firm and balanced, you are ready to build on it. For that, you need a blueprint to follow.

In parenting, it's no different. You've set your parenting goals, so it's time to see whether the foundation you've set and the path you are on are the most direct and effective way to achieving those goals.

So today's lesson focuses on two very important, foundational toolsets:

- The Parenting Styles Toolset
- The Universal Blueprint® Formula for Parenting Success



Parenting Styles Toolset

Your beliefs about parenting are the foundation on which you to use all your parenting decisions. These beliefs and the resulting things you say and do are your parenting "style."

If your foundational parenting beliefs are imbalanced or methods are unhealthy, then problems are more likely to develop over time. It's similar to pouring a house's foundation partially on rock and partly on sand. The foundation might seem level when you pour the cement and it dries, but over time the underlying weakness will cause cracks in the foundation and the house will start to sink.



We all are primarily influenced in *our* parenting by how we were parented as well as other experiences we had as a child. That programming is what naturally runs in the background, in the sub-conscious. As long as those habits are running on auto-pilot, you aren't consciously choosing your responses.

That's why, despite your best efforts and intentions, you might find yourself saying something at your children and then, upon hearing yourself, say to yourself, "Oh my gosh! I can't believe I just said that! That was what my mom/dad used to say. I said I'd never say that to *my* children." Then a self-inflicted guilt trip often begins.

The good news is that if you already have the intention to be a healthy, effective parent and are willing to continue putting forth your best efforts, you now have the opportunity to *choose* a parenting style based on the outcomes you want (not old habits). No more guessing, trial and error, or wondering if you are "on the right track."

I'm so glad I took this class four years ago. My children are confident and well adjusted. I believe it's due to the great foundation I've received from learning and using the skills from your classes. It was truly beneficial to me in dealing with my children, adult relationships and learning more about myself. --- Jacki George

The Five Parenting Styles

Parents Toolshop® identifies five different parenting styles, with each getting certain outcomes. These styles are based on the theory of Alfred Adler's five personality priorities overlaid with the results of what multiple long-term research studies (from 1961-2016) have identified as five distinct parenting styles. (It took several decades for the research to validate all five styles that Parents Toolshop® has been teaching for over 25 years!)



To see what these parenting styles are, in a way that will create a picture in your mind you will always remember, [watch a Parenting Style Show](#).



Power Patrols want obedient children, so the parent maintains a position of power and control. The long-term effect is either blindly compliant children who are fearful of making mistakes and incapable of solving problems — or rebellious children who resist any type of control or rules.

Perfectionistic Supervisors often micro-manage their children's lives and think their child's behavior is a reflection of their parenting. The long-term consequences of this style are children with poor self-esteem who are afraid to make mistakes and feel that nothing they do is good enough.

Over-Indulgers want happy children, so they give too much and rescue children from conflict and disappointment. These good intentions rob children of opportunities to experience real life. They also result in children who are spoiled and expect to have life handed to them on a silver platter.

Avoiders want parenting to be easy and conflict-free, so they withdraw or rescue the child to keep the peace. They often deny or avoid problems and seek the easiest solution — even if it's not the most effective solution. These short-term short-cuts cause huge long-term problems. Children think their parents don't care, think they can get away with anything or deny responsibility for their actions.

Balanced Parents want to raise self-sufficient, *self*-disciplined adults, so they teach children values and skills. Seek win/win solutions by listening to children and involving them in problem solving. The long-term consequence is children who have the confidence and life skills to get along with others and succeed as adults.

Although the outcomes of each style are predictable, they aren't necessarily guaranteed; they manifest in direct proportion to how extreme and consistent the parenting style is followed. For example, a rare occasion of spoiling a child won't turn the child into a brat and teens may rebel against controlling adults who aren't their parents. If a particular style is a daily, consistent occurrence, however, then the likelihood of getting the predicted outcomes increases.

If you are like the majority of parents, you want to have a Balanced parenting style. If you realize that's not the style you are currently using, you are in the right place to learn the concepts and tools to move you there.

By getting in the Balanced zone and staying there, no matter what happens, you will:

- Have the best chance of reaching your parenting goals, because you will:
 - Identify what your long-term parenting goals are,



- Learn the skills you need to reach those goals and
- Consciously choose the beliefs, thoughts, words and actions that all line up with those goals.
- Avoid starting new problems or escalating existing problems that imbalanced parenting styles can cause.
- Be a positive role model for your children, which will also help them be better parents to your grandchildren!
- Avoid double standards that confuse children and lead to rebellion and resentment.
- See positive changes in yourself and your children simply because your perceptions are different.
- Get more cooperation between parenting partners and prevent arguments about who is too soft or harsh.
- Still have *many* options available to you, and each is healthy and effective in helping you reach your long-term goals. *Those* tools are what *The Parents Toolshop*® provides.



Imagine parenting as a journey or trip. Your decision about which parenting style to use is like choosing the freeway you want to take. Some parents spend a lot of time going around and around in circles, repeating themselves and using trial and error to figure out what works. You want to choose the freeway that will take you the most direct route to your chosen destination, without the fewest detours, roadblocks, or potholes.

The Universal Blueprint® Formula for Parenting Success

Once you have laid the foundation of your house, you are ready to start building or remodeling your house/family. For that, you need a blueprint to follow.

In parenting, *The Parent's Toolshop*® is the *only* place you will find a Universal Blueprint® for Parenting Success. It's a universal parenting *plan* you can follow to build (or rebuild) your family and to prevent or find effective responses to problems that arise.



Most importantly, you use it in a completely customizable way that fits *your* values and rules and your children's needs.

No matter the issues I felt were unique to my child, there seem to be an answer to the problem. These simple steps to building a family blueprint for MY family apply. The more I do it, the easier it gets. It is not just about making life easier for me as a parent, it is all about raising my children in a healthy way despite how I may have been raised or how the rest of the world says I need to be. I do not have to read a thousand other books. All the information is in one "Universal Blueprint®". --- Dawn Warren

Why Are Systems So Important?

Having a S.Y.S.T.E.M. is important in many areas of life, because it lets you:



- Save
- Your
- Self
- Time
- Energy &
- Money



Having a *system* for something helps you move from finding a solution to one problem to having a system you can apply to *all* situations or challenges *in an individualized way*.

It's the difference between giving you a fish and teaching you to fish!

A parenting plan helps you:

- Approach problems calmly and logically, while still using your intuition to find the clues you need to figure out what's happening.
- Stay organized and focus, which can help you avoid confusion.
- Work through complex problems step-by-step, which prevents overwhelm.
- Remember important steps and concepts, to avoid mistakes.
- Plan ahead, to prevent problems.
- Get better results, faster, in *every* situation in *every* relationship in your life.



Chances are you are skeptical that there could even *be* a reliable parenting *system*, given the gazillion situations and factors that play into each moment of your parenting journey. That might be because you believe...

**There isn't *one right way* to parent children.
Each situation and child needs an individualized response. That's TRUE!**

The Universal Blueprint® system doesn't propose *one right way* to respond to a particular situation. It is a universal, reliable plan for finding an *individualized* response that's specific to the situation, child and parent involved.


The simplistic brilliance of the Universal Blueprint® takes you by surprise once you start realizing that these tools really do make a difference. Not all at once but, day by day, situation by situation, that you handle a little or a lot, differently from before. It all adds up to a whole new way of lowering stress in your life, as well as your child's life. --- Don Cotere!

The Parent's Toolshop® and its proprietary Universal Blueprint® System offer you:


- **A *universal plan for effective parenting*.** You can use the Universal Blueprint® and its tools with any age child — and even in adult relationships — because they are consistent with the universal laws of human behavior, feelings, and thoughts. The tools are so valuable, you will want to use them in every relationship and model and teach the skills to children and others.
- **A way to apply this plan in ways that meet the *individual needs* of each individual family,** even when these needs (such as personalities or backgrounds) differ from other families or among family members. While families are similar in some ways, they are different in even more. To build a stable family, you want to address these individual needs while following the universal principles of effective parenting.
- **The freedom to express your *unique personal style*** while using the Universal Blueprint® and its tools. You have your own unique personality, so you want to feel comfortable and genuine in your responses and expressions. You can use your imagination and resourcefulness to add to or adapt these tools to fit your unique style, while still remaining true to the universal parenting principles.




What Route To Take to Your Goals?



Trial and error




Ask for directions




Use a GPS

Universal Blueprint® GPS System
GPS = Guidance to Parenting Success



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Remember the analogy of driving? Choosing to be in the Balanced zone gets you on the most direct path to your end destination --- your healthy parenting goals.

When you are driving along and need to get off the freeway to reach a specific destination or solve a problem (need gasoline?) you want to find the most direct route to your destination. For that, you have several options:

- You can use trial and error --- which can lead to making a lot of wrong turns and being confused and overwhelmed.
- You can follow a path recommended by someone else who's been there before, but there might be better routes to take since they made the trip, a more direct route than the one they found, or include points of interest you are interested in that they aren't.
- You can get a GPS device and have it map out the most direct route and include any places you want to see along the way.

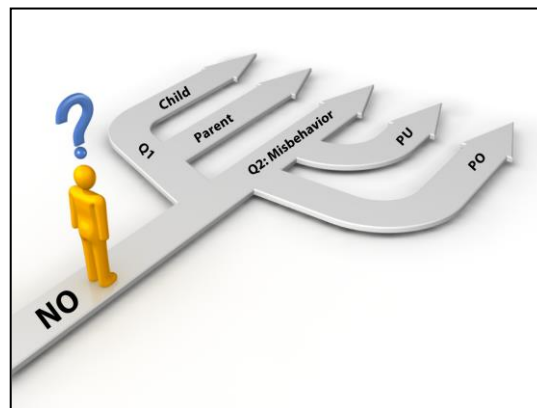
When you set your parenting goals, it's like setting your GPS to the destination location. Your parenting style is the freeway you are using as your main route. When problems arise, The Universal Blueprint® is like a GPS system that maps out where to get off the freeway and find the best route to the solution. You could call it the Guide to Parenting Success (GPS) system.



The Universal Blueprint® involves:

3 questions to ask yourself, which tell you *which type* of problem you are facing and the best tool(s) to use.

The way you answer these questions engages your logic, emotions *and* intuition --- it's an integrated, comprehensive, holistic approach to conscious parenting.



You will base your answers on who is involved in the situation *you* are facing at *that* moment and *your* values, rules, etc. *This* is how you “individualize” the Universal Blueprint® Parenting Success Formula to fit your needs each time.

In parenting, there are an almost-infinite number of potential parenting challenges you could encounter. Yet, *each individual parenting challenge will fit within one of five problem “types.”*

Using the driving analogy...when a problem arises, you get off the freeway. At the bottom of the ramp, there are five possible paths you can take. In real life, you look at a map to see which route gives you the most direct path to where you want to go. In this system, the answers to the three questions tell you which path to take.

+ **5 steps** you might take on that path, choosing the tools that fit the individual needs of the child and situation at hand. Which steps you take depends on the problem type. Some only require one step. Regardless of how many steps you take, you want to take them in a specific *order*, that covers your bases, from prevention to discipline.

Altogether, your response is usually only one word to four sentences long --- and you never have to repeat yourself! Instead, each sentence or half sentence serves a specific purpose, so you often only need to take all five steps *once*!

+ **5 key tools** to use during these steps, in *specific ways*, to get the greatest benefits. There are more tools available, but all you need are a few basic communication tools and five practical tools that specifically match the five types of misbehavior.

= An effective *individualized* response to *any* situation with *any* child.



Each part of the Universal Blueprint® system is pulled from a resource that is research-informed and has shown to be effective for *decades*. Other research-informed parenting programs might teach *some* of the concepts or tools, but none teach *all* that *The Parents Toolshop*® does and *none* organize them as part of a reliable problem-solving, decision-making system.

This is what sets apart the Universal Blueprint® from other parenting resources. Add to that a 10 year outcome-focused research study with almost 2000 parents showing its effectiveness. Plus, successful application for the past 30 years with over 50,000 parents and professionals. You just won't find anything like it anywhere else.

By using the Universal Blueprint® you will:

- Know which steps to take in your response. This will prevent you from accidentally skipping steps, which would make your response less effective.
- Choose the best tool to use at each step. There are many tools at each step from which you can choose. You'll get less frustrated because you have more options.
- Stay organized, instead of randomly trying tools.
- Master the most effective, practical skills at your disposal. You might understand the philosophy of effective parenting, but unless you learn the special language and actions that apply that theory, you won't get the best results.
- Find positive solutions. By focusing on what you *can* do and having choices at each step, you can replace any old or ineffective habits with healthy new skills.

Because this Formula covers ALL the bases, from foundation-building to maintenance, prevention to discipline, you can actually prevent problems from escalating and eliminate *future* misbehavior!

In this free e-book, you are getting an introduction to each part of the Universal Blueprint®. At the end, you can learn more details or the entire system, if you want.

Action Steps:

- [Take a parenting style quiz](#) and get the free bonus report at the end.
- Watch the [Parenting Style Show](#) video.
- Learn the Universal Blueprint®'s three questions in a fun musical [video](#).



Key 3:

Reveal the Simple Steps for Preventing Problems

Christine's 4-year old son is whining in the grocery store because he wants a toy he saw hanging on a hook. Her 8-year old daughter keeps running off and coming back throwing items she wants into the cart, even though they are not on the list.



All Christine wants is to hurry to get the shopping done so she can get home to make dinner after a busy day at work.

Other shoppers start looking at her. Christine tells her son, "That's enough! Stop your fussing." Then turns to her daughter and says, "Don't run up and down the aisles and stop grabbing things and throwing them into the cart. Look what you've done! Now the bread is smashed!" Everyone is staring.

Christine feels embarrassed by her children's behavior. "Stop it!" she yells at the children. This causes her son to carry on more and now her daughter is arguing that she wants the food she put in the cart, because she never fixes anything that tastes good.

Christine just wants this to stop, so she bribes her children by saying, "If you stop right now and are good during the rest of our shopping, I'll get you the toy. Then you can pick out what we pick up for dinner instead of me fixing it tonight."

Wouldn't it be great if you knew exactly what to say and do to get children to cooperate the first time without resorting to yelling, bribes, or threats?

Well, that's exactly what this key's Toolbox will help you do!



The Prevention Toolbox

It's hard to pick one Toolbox within The Parents Toolshop® that is the most important, because each serves an important purpose and work best when used all together. If a choice *had to* be made, though, the Prevention Toolbox would be it. That's because it contains three very important toolsets that contain four out of the five top, five-star tools every parent needs to know and use.



You want to use the Prevention Toolbox 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, because it contains the basic, essential tools *every* parent needs to know and use to prevent problems from *starting or worsening*. You don't need to use each tool 24/7, just those that are appropriate, *when* they are appropriate, to prevent common problems. While these tools are “the basics” of parenting, it may be surprising to know that most parents (and some family-service professionals) *don't* know about these tools or how to use them in ways that can *dramatically* improve your results.

While knowing how to use tools in the most basic ways will often result in some instantaneous improvements, it's important to also know how to use these tools in advanced ways, to respond to misbehavior and to discipline.



Some benefits of using prevention skills are obvious — they can *prevent* many common everyday parenting challenges, like power struggles, temper tantrums, sibling squabbles, bedtime hassles, messy rooms, picky eaters, neglected chores...and more! In addition to having fewer problems, you'll also have more fun, because your children will become self-disciplined, self-responsible, and self-motivated.

Imagine knowing a few secret “tweaks” you can make in the way you speak and act each day or approach situations that can prevent them from ever becoming a problem or can prevent a previous problem from returning! You would have fewer conflicts, less stress and everyone in the house would feel more peace, joy and harmony.

Now, here's an introduction to the Three Toolsets in the Prevention Toolbox.

The Self-Esteem Toolset

The Self-Esteem Toolset always starts with the definition of self-esteem and how it's different from self-image and ego-esteem. This is important, because there are many research studies on self-esteem that experts cite in their advice. Unfortunately, some of the researchers themselves didn't know the difference between these three definitions, so the conclusions they make are actually inaccurate! So it's important to first know both what self-esteem *is*, as well as how to build it without boosting the other two less-desirable outcomes.

Then, we define the difference between the two types of tools parents are usually told to use to *build* self-esteem. A lot of parenting advice tells you to “praise” children to build self-esteem, but praise often adds pressure or focuses on pleasing others. This can actually cause children to become discouraged, *more* susceptible to peer pressure or get big egos.



Preventing discouragement is particularly important, because Rudolf Driekurs, whose theories are the foundation of almost all proven-effective research-based parenting programs, says that discouragement is the root cause of all *intentional* misbehavior.



Once you know the proper definitions, you can easily see what type of tools you want to use to build self-esteem. Rather than having to research hundreds of resources, filtering and screening the advice for what's accurate, that work has been done for you!

The Self-Esteem Toolset has 28 practical language tools that build self-esteem without creating egotistical children or praise junkies, including one of the Top Five Five-Star Tools that not only boosts self-esteem, but stimulates internal motivation!

This tool is a three-part formula for boosting self-esteem that you can use to create hundreds of encouraging statements to give children. Simply describe the child's positive qualities, behavior or feelings in ways that leave children feeling good about themselves instead of having children focus on pleasing or being better than others.

Every time I teach this formula to parents, they are shocked by the self-realization that many of the positive things they are saying to their children, with the intention of building self-esteem, actually have the opposite effect! This is partly due to how children interpret communication differently than adults. There are also hidden messages parents unintentionally send and children hear.



This toolset also has tools that can help *prevent* sibling conflicts and rivalry, including: the "it isn't fair," "he got more" and "who do you love more" games, plus bullies, victims and other roles and labels...and more!

You can even use these tools in *all* your relationship, to improve relationships or begin to heal any wounds that might have broken the relationship.

When you use the tools in the Self-Esteem Toolset:

- ✓ You avoid accidentally discouraging or pressuring children. (Ever have someone argue with your compliment?)
- ✓ Children know *exactly* why someone noticed what they did. With praise, children know someone thought it was "good," but might not know why.
- ✓ Children tell *themselves* they did a "good" job, instead of depending on others' approval for their self-worth. They no longer need constant praise, reassurance and attention to feel validated. Now, they can encourage themselves anytime and avoid becoming "praise junkies"!
- ✓ Children feel good about what they did, so they will do it again! No external bribes



or incentives needed!

- ✓ You start noticing more of your child's good qualities and positive behavior; and because you notice, your children use them more often!
- ✓ Children learn to trust their own judgment, so they make responsible decisions and avoid becoming people-pleasers who "follow the crowd." This helps them avoid giving in to negative peer pressure, especially as a teen.

I just wanted you to know that we have had a wonderful week here at our household. My husband and I are going to make a Parenting Plan and he has already started to change his praise into encouragement with our two children!! I have also change my attitude to a more positive one and have seen wonderful results already in just four days!! --- Dawn Armyey

The Cooperation Toolset

All parents want their children to do what they want them to do, when they ask them to do it, preferably the first time they ask! There are two ways to go about doing this. One way is to demand obedience or *make* children obey. The other is to engage cooperation using the tools in The Cooperation Toolset.



While both might get children to do what you want them to do, they are very different approaches. One has exclusively positive long-term outcomes while the other can start power struggles and lead to resentment, rebellion and revenge.

So the Cooperation Toolset provides 15 practical tools for getting cooperation, building teamwork and fostering *internal* motivation. It also is the only toolset with *two* of the Top Five Five-Star Tools.

One tool shows you how to use positive words to make requests or deny children requests. This is important, because it's actually often the *way* parents make their requests that *start* power struggles --- unintentionally, of course. If you are like most parents, you probably have no idea how often you say, "Don't," "No," "Stop," or "Quit"



until you started paying attention. This one tool gets credit for more immediate, miraculous changes than any of the other 152 tools, which is how it got its five-star rating.

Almost every day was constant negativity and power struggles. I can't begin to tell you what it feels like to enjoy my child again and to feel good about myself as a parent." — — Joy I.

The other Top Five Five-Star Tool in The Cooperation Toolset has to do with finding win/win solutions, which can prevent or stop power struggles. Parents are often clear about what they want. Children often want to feel like they have *some* control or say in what happens to them. When these needs aren't balanced, power struggles are sure to follow. When children test limits or try to negotiate them, parents often think their only options are to fight or give in, when there is one five-star tool that can be used to find win/win solutions, from prevention, to intervention, to discipline.

I liked The Parents Toolshop® because it gave me power - not over my child, but over the situation and myself. It also empowers my children to be in control of themselves. I'm spending less time being in power struggles and they are learning to make choices. I know, now, that there is going to be a solution to every problem. I especially like the fact that you tell me what to do, instead of what not to do. --- Bonnie Sessely

When you use the Cooperation Toolset:

- ✓ Children usually cooperate the first time you ask, without threats, bribes, stickers, power struggles, rebellion or resentment.
- ✓ Being positive gets more positive results; your child will respond better to positive requests and you will feel better being positive.
- ✓ You usually see immediate changes in your children's behavior when using these tools, especially if your children have been into testing and defiance.
- ✓ You get into fewer power struggles with your children and, when one starts, you find win/win solutions that leave *both* you and your children feeling good. Because no one feels like they "lost," there's no pouting, whining, complaining, sabotaging or getting revenge later!
- ✓ Your children learn how to reach win/win solutions with others, so they are more able to resolve problems on their own with others.
- ✓ Children also learn how to identify priorities and make responsible decisions.



Imagine how much more enjoyable daily life would be and how much smoother your household would run without all the time you are currently spending trying to get children to obey! These tools get them to voluntarily cooperate and be contributing members of the family team. *That's* why the Cooperation Toolset is most parents' favorite Toolset.



The Independence Toolset

The Independence Toolset has 23 practical tools for teaching children skills, fostering independence and teaching children responsibility *without* taking over, doing things *for* them, rescuing or micro-managing them.



You might be already telling children what you want them to do, but are you *teaching them how* to do it? If you have, has your child fully mastered the skill? It can take time. While it takes a little extra time and effort to teach children skills, it saves you lots of time and frustration down the road, because children are able to do things for themselves, skillfully. You also avoid power struggles over what they are and aren't ready to do.

While many of these tools you can use at any age, independence issues of toddlers and teens are unique and different, so there are special tips for modifying the tools for younger children and teens. The Terrible Twos and teenage rebellion are *not* inevitable when you use all the tools in the Independence Toolset.

This toolset also offers a three-step allowance system that teaches children responsibility without them expecting payment for every little task they do.

When you use The Independence Toolset:

- ✓ You can prevent misbehavior that's the result of children now knowing any better, forgetting what you taught them, or not having mastered skills.
- ✓ As children develop skills, parenting becomes easier, because children do things themselves and do them competently! You can stop being a maid, short-order cook and eventually even stop being a chauffeur.



- ✓ Your children will learn important life skills, such as: anger management, not procrastinating, time management and being organized — and behaviors like good manners and being responsible.
- ✓ As children learn and master skills for doing tasks, behaving properly, and being responsible, you feel more comfortable letting go and allowing more freedom.
- ✓ You get children who clean their rooms without always being asked, who talk respectfully to their elders and have good manners. Why? Because you teach them *how* and then hold them accountable!

I highly recommend The Parents Toolshop® to anyone with kids – there has so many amazing recommendations to help your children grow to be independent, strong and loving people. --- Amy Rhode

In all, The Prevention Toolbox contains 66 tools, including four of the Top Five Five-Star Tools. That’s why using a combination of these tools 24/7 will usually bring a significant decrease in many of the daily parenting challenges you are currently experiencing.

The results *you* get will depend on how many tools you use, how skillfully you use them (there are specific scripts and tips) and whether you use them consistently, long enough to see results.

And if you *don’t* get instant results, remember you are only in the *Prevention* Toolbox. You want to use these tools all the time to *prevent* problems *and* can use them as part of an effective *response* to problems. The other parts of that response are where you’ll go in the next lesson as you head into the “Problem” Toolboxes.

Action Items for Today:

1. List 1-3 common problems you frequently find yourself addressing.
 2. Is there anything you could do to *prevent* that problem from happening again?
- Consider trying some of the Prevention tools:
- ✓ Notice and comment on children’s positive behavior in a descriptive way that focuses on their internal qualities, instead of behaving well just to please you.
 - ✓ Describe what you want your children *to* do or deny their requests with positive words.
 - ✓ Find win/win solutions to prevent or stop power struggles.
 - ✓ Teach children skills and give them enough freedom to practice them.



3. Now that you have some ideas for *preventing* challenges, list a few problems that have been popping up in *your* home and brainstorm new ideas you now have for what you could say and do. Then test them out *consistently* for a week and see the results!

a. Describe the situation: _____

List ideas you have for what to say and do to *prevent* this from happening again:

b. Describe the situation: _____

List ideas you have for what to say and do to *prevent* this from happening again:

c. Describe the situation: _____

List ideas you have for what to say and do to *prevent* this from happening again:

d. Describe the situation: _____

List ideas you have for what to say and do to *prevent* this from happening again:



Key 4: *Open the Door to Communication by Deciphering Emotions*

Kim and Robert's daughter, Karly, comes running into the house holding back tears. She was just dropped off by her friend's mom after volleyball practice.

Kim notices Karly is a bit shaken up and asks, "What's wrong?"

Karly replies, "A couple girls on the volleyball team were making fun of my school uniform. Now my friend, Jessie isn't sure she wants to hang out with me anymore or give me a ride to practice!"

"Well, what a bunch of snooty girls! Do you want me to call their moms? Hey, I know Sarah's mom. I'll call her. I'm sure she would be willing to carpool to practice," suggests Kim.

Robert adds, "Jessie isn't a real friend if that's all it took to push you to the curb! Don't let it bother you; they aren't worth it. There are plenty of other girls you can be friends with."

Karly starts sobbing and runs to her room yelling, "You don't understand! Jessie is my best friend!"

Kim and Robert just look at each other, roll their eyes and say, in unison, "Drama Queen."



Kim and Robert thought they were being helpful by offering to intervene, giving advice and suggesting Karly find new friends. Instead, Karly got more upset!

Do you want your children to share their problems with you, but think sometimes they are way too dramatic?

Do you care about what's happening in your children's lives, but just don't have time to sit and listen to their long stories? Would you like them to cut to the chase, get to the point, and get over it (whatever "it" is at the moment)?



When your children share a problem, do you usually have words of wisdom to share, because you've "been there, done that"?

Have you ever wanted to rescue your children, take away their pain and make them feel better?

All of these feelings and responses are common among busy parents. Unfortunately, they each send unintended messages:

When children have a problem and you try to relieve the pain, quickly, because it's painful for you to see them in pain, children may feel like *they* are "the pain." If sharing with you makes you visibly uncomfortable, then they'll stop sharing.

When children are told to "calm down," or "you're okay," they get the message their feelings are "wrong," or it's not okay to feel emotions, or that you don't really understand. They may either shut down emotionally or ramp up the dramatics, because they think you aren't hearing or understanding them. If you acknowledged their feelings, they would know you understood.

If you are too busy or impatient to listen, they think you don't care, feel unimportant, and shut down.

If you interrupt and don't let them finish, because you [think] you already know what they are going to say, children feel disrespected and cut off. They won't share more.

And if you give advice, they will often believe they are incompetent and incapable of solving their own problems and need a rescuer.

Obviously, *none* of these messages are what any caring, loving parent *means* to send. Yet children often tell themselves these things, even if they aren't true.

So how can you open the door to communication with your children, so they'll share their lives with you and engage in conversation? And how can you respond in ways that don't shut the door on their feelings or end up with you taking over?

The answer is in the next Toolbox, The Child Problem Toolbox.



This has opened new doors for all our relationships and has literally stopped the door slamming effect in every area of our lives. --- Allison Wilson-Brennan

The Child Problem Toolbox

You'll notice that the word "problem" is now in the name of a Toolbox. That means we've just crossed over from the "No Problem Zone" into the "Problem Zone." You use The Child Problem Toolbox when someone else, your child for example, has a problem.

The Child Problem Toolbox contains two Toolsets.



The F-A-X- Listening Toolset

The main Toolset is called The F-A-X Listening Toolset, which you can actually use to improve *any* relationship, find win/win solutions, and empower others to solve their own problems, without taking over and giving advice.

This Toolset gives you the final five-star tool, called ***F-A-X Listening***, which is possibly ***the most important skill for solving problems and improving any relationship.***

F-A-X Listening is a three-step *process* that helps you support others who are sharing a problem with you, without taking over or taking it on. When you use it, others can work through their feelings, get their logic back on-line, identify the *real* problem they might not be sharing or even aware of, and find possible solutions to that core issue.

The process is named after a fax machine (remember those?), because the first step is to *decode* what other actually *mean*, despite what they say. This is the difference between *hearing* someone and *listening*. You'll learn more about that later in this Key.

The Sibling Toolset

You can use F-A-X Listening with one person who has a problem or to mediate conflicts between two people, such as siblings or peers.

So the other Toolset in the Child Problem Toolbox is the Sibling Toolset, which offers practical suggestions for preventing conflicts, complete with specific steps and scripts for the most common sibling issues.

Sibling and peer conflicts are one of the most common problems children experience and, ultimately, they need to know how to solve on their own, independently, responsibly, and respectfully. That means parents need to get out of the referee role in a way that empowers children with these skills.



With the Sibling Toolset, when sibling or peer conflicts arise, which they naturally will, you will know *if* you should get involved and, if you do, *how* to do so in a helpful way that neither abandons the children nor takes over and referees.

Both of these Toolsets use part or all of the F-A-X Listening Toolset, which addresses the following three super-important concepts.

The Language of Emotions

Most people believe (whether they are consciously aware of it or not) that “emotions are bad, unless they are good.” In other words, it’s only okay to express “good” emotions. “Bad” emotions are to be pushed down, ignored, or deflected.

Most human cultures devalue emotions --- children are trained to not feel their emotions, squelched when they cry, and told to be tough. Then we wonder why there’s so much hardness, hatred and fighting in the world.

Emotions are a foreign language to most people. Yet they are probably *the* most important language for every human on the planet to learn to speak, hear, interpret, understand, and respect.

The language of emotions is what gives color to life. Imagine not knowing what joy feels like or not appreciating a joyful moment, because you’ve never felt sorrow.

Emotions are the language your intuition uses to whisper Truth to your heart, or to scream an alarm when you might be in a dangerous situation without realizing it.

When you feel hurt, betrayed, or angry, you are receiving a message that might be saying, “be careful,” or “Don’t blindly trust everyone,” or “use discernment,” or “That person violated my boundaries! I have a right to be treated respectfully!”

When someone shuts down emotionally, it’s a sign that trauma has occurred, to some degree. Then these important safety messages don’t get communicated.

Yes, feeling pain isn’t pleasant, so most everyone wants to avoid it, but numbness also affects how much joy and happiness we can feel, too. We can be more fully human and



have richer lives by fully experiencing emotions, which doesn't have to involve drama, crying or extreme reactions.

Sometimes, when children don't understand their feelings, are afraid of them, or don't know how to express them, they can become more dramatic. When feelings are given *names*, it's incredibly validating and normalizing for them ---- and they calm down, because they work through and release emotions quicker.

"My relationship with my step-children has always been tense. Before I was finished with the first class, my relationships had improved dramatically. One night my step-daughter left a rose and note on my pillow that said, 'Thanks for knowing how to listen and for being there for me. I love you.' I never thought that could happen!" --- Andrea Rabiner

Negative Emotions & Behaviors are Only Symptoms of a Core Issue



In The Parents Toolshop® we say that “Child problems are like onions;” they have lots of layers. Those layers are often defenses that protect a vulnerable core hurt.

It's too risky to reveal the true hurt, or maybe the child (or person) doesn't know how. So the symptoms show up as problematic behavior or extreme emotional outbursts.

When parents react to and try to stop these surface emotions and behavior, it doesn't address or resolve the real problem.

And if the real issue isn't resolved, it *will* come back, possibly even expressed in a different way.

The first two steps of the F-A-X process identify the core issue and the last step explores solutions to it.

When parents skip this step of acknowledging the child's feelings *first*, the core issue often never gets resolved and the problem may get worse.



Children are Innately Capable of Solving Problems

Surely, good problem-solving or decision-making skills were in your list of parenting goals. That's because you know *everyone* needs to have these skills. Unfortunately, most children don't learn *how* to make decisions or a *process* for solving problems. As a result, they either impulsively do whatever comes to mind or struggle on their own.

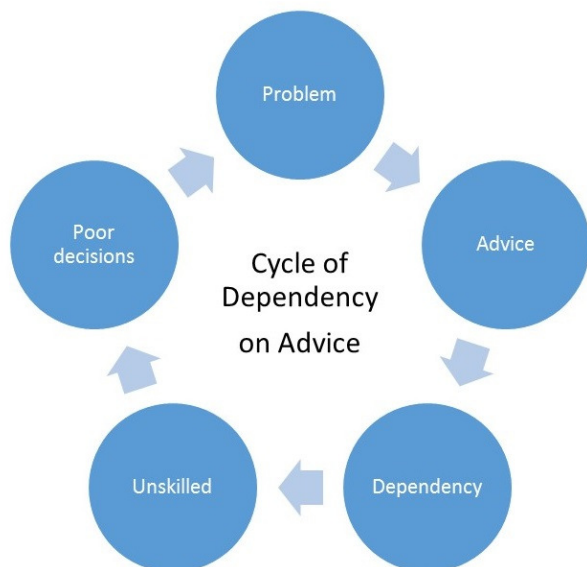
When your child has a problem, you will usually feel empathy for your child and naturally want to help. You might assume the child doesn't have the skills, knowledge or life experience to solve the problem, so as a more-experienced adult you might give your child advice. If you want to protect your child from problems or make sure they do the "right" thing, you might even take over, rescue or solve the problem *for* the child.



Despite the good intentions, all of these approaches unintentionally rob children of an opportunity to learn *how* to solve problems and make responsible decisions, because someone else is doing all the thinking *for* them.

When children expect you to solve problems *for* them, it makes them less likely to take responsibility for their behavior and blame others for their problems.

Since they haven't learned *how* to solve problems or make decisions, they tend to be impulsive, which can lead to poor choices, irresponsible behavior and bigger problems!



Then, because they keep making poor decisions, it reinforces the belief that they are incapable of making good choices, which leads to more advice-giving...and the cycle continues!

If you are inflicting yourself with feelings of guilt by seeing yourself in these descriptions, give yourself credit for having good intentions. Then make a commitment, today, to empower your children with the skills they need to become better decision-makers.

Start by realizing that all human beings are innately capable of solving problems. Think of fetuses in utero; when they are cramped they stretch. Babies cry to communicate distress. Even young children, as young as two-years-old, *are* capable of solving *some* problems; they just need to learn *how*. As they mature and their skills improve, they can solve increasingly complex problems.



"My son and I had been having communication problems for the last couple of years. Rather than tell him what he had to do, I let him do all the talking. I asked a few pertinent questions, but kept the answers to myself. All week long I did this. Amazing! He not only started talking about a lot of things, he also did chores around the house that I never told him to do! My son is a good kid and is very capable. I just needed to let him show it. Thanks." --- Mary Keferl

Pay it Forward

Being a parent provides you with the opportunity to learn these skills yourself. Then you can teach them to your children, by guiding them through the process of working through their feelings, identifying the problem, and brainstorming solutions to try.

Your children will have a learning curve, too. They need to learn the language of emotions, so they can express and work through their feelings in healthy ways. Their critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills will also be rusty at first. These skills use muscles that need to be flexed, built and strengthened.

Express confidence in your children's ability to find a solution to their problem and be patient with the process. Be comfortable with silence while they think.



Resist the urge to jump in with advice, solutions or to rescue them from the problem. You won't be there every day of their lives ready to save the day --- and if you were, you'd be doing your child a great disservice.

Start teaching your children these skills now, when their problems and decisions are probably less critical and life-threatening than they may be later. It's for those times, which will likely happen when you aren't there, that you want them to be able to think on their feet and independently make responsible decisions.

Our family is now talking and listening to each other. The kids are more enjoyable and learning the skills for themselves. --- Candace McCabe

Listening effectively:

- Opens the door to communication by inviting your child to share.
- Gives your child a chance to express his or her feelings, perspective and ideas.
- Gives children a chance to express their feelings clearly and appropriately, without tantrums, yelling or being overly dramatic to get sympathy.
- Helps children calm down amazingly quickly sometimes, just because you validated their feeling (which is different from *agreeing* with them).
- De-escalates tense situations and reduces your child's defensiveness.
- Provides children a feeling of safety so they are willing to peel off their defensive layers, to reveal the core issues they are dealing with.
- You get more than yes/no, one-word answers. This usually reveals the core issue, which is rarely what it appears to be on the surface.
- Teaches children to become good listeners, which improves their relationships with their siblings, peers, parents and extended family — and in the future, with their spouses, co-workers, supervisors and employees.

I started using the F-A-X Listening process with my employees and was amazed how well it works! I kept the ball in their court and asked questions that helped them solve their own problems. My employees are showing increased self-confidence, motivation, and self-reliance. These skills are G-R-E-A-T! — Bryan Belden



When children feel heard and understood, they will either move on to finding a solution to their own problems or be willing to listen to your feelings, perspective and issues and be involved in finding solutions to problems that affect both of you.

You ultimately want children to be able to resolve their problems independently and responsibly. So The Child Problem Toolbox also contains skills and specific scripts and tips for how to handle the four most common problems children experience and need to know how to resolve: peers & sibling conflicts; emotional meltdowns and fears; and school problems, including homework.



If the problem involves issues parents are ultimately responsible for (such as safety, health, rules, etc.) you still want to acknowledge the child's feelings *first*, then calmly, clearly, and assertively communicate your concerns. For that, you'll use the next Toolbox, The Parent Problem Toolbox, which is tomorrow's lesson.

Action Steps:

The following exercise isn't the entire F-A-X process, but it's an important first step to opening the door to communication. It's also the most important and (for many) the most challenging step of the process. It can take practice to master the art of empathetic listening, so take some time this week to practice doing the following:

1. The next time your child seems to be upset or is sharing something with you (positive or negative), *stop, look and really listen --- without judgment!*
 - a. **Stop** what you are doing
 - b. **Look** at your child
 - c. **Listen** to what they are saying verbally and non-verbally.
 - d. Then **summarize** in your own words what you think they *mean*, and **check out** if you heard and understood them correctly.
 - e. **Give no advice**, no solutions. Simply ask children for *their* ideas.

Bonus: ([Download a cartoon emotions chart from *The Parent's Toolshop*® book.](#))



Key 5: Unhook Your Trigger Buttons & Communicate Clearly

Linda gets home from work to find her teenage son, Mike, in the family room playing a video game.

His coat is thrown on the couch; his backpack is on the floor.

As she walks down the hall, she sees he left the bathroom light on.

When she enters the kitchen, she finds a mess from where he made a snack for himself when he arrived home from school.

Linda spins herself around and as she stomps to the family room she yells, "Geez, Mike, when are you ever going to learn to clean up after yourself? Do you think I am a maid around here? Turn off your game and clean up all your messes."

She starts walking back down the hall, thinking he will follow her to the kitchen. Part way down the hall, Linda realizes he isn't coming. She returns to the family room and without warning turns off the video game.

Mike explodes. "Hey, I was in the middle of a game! Now I have to start that level all over!" He grabs his coat and backpack and throws them into his room, then stomps into the kitchen, mumbling under his breath how mean his mom is as he wipes the counter.

Linda hears it and starts fuming inside. "Teens are so sassy and disrespectful," she thinks to herself. "I never would have talked to my parents like this!" To Mike, she says, "That's it! I've had it with your attitude. You can just spend the rest of the night in your room."

Mike smirks and chuckles as he walks back to the family room, saying, "Yeah right. I'd like to see you make me."



Disrespectful children, whether they are teens or not, is a big trigger button for many parents. You can imagine how this situation could continue to escalate from here --- to the point it either gets hot and heated, maybe even physical, or Linda gives in.



Was there a more respectful or effective way Linda could have communicated with Mike? How can she deal with her anger when someone pushes her trigger buttons, to prevent a blow up? That is exactly what the next key Toolbox does.

The Parent Problem Toolbox

Parent problems involve issues that are ultimately the parent’s responsibility to solve, such as safety, health, misbehavior, setting rules, etc.

These are the most likely issues to create stress and cause you to blow up, yell, or say things in less respectful ways than you’d prefer. So this Toolbox contains two Toolsets that, together, can help you respond respectfully and helpfully to Parent problems:

- The Keep Your Cool Toolset
- The Clear Communication Toolset



The Keep Your Cool Toolset

Children have a way of pushing parents' trigger buttons, even though it's not their intention to do so (at least not at first).

So the first and most important step in responding to Parent problems is to keep your cool, because *all* the other tools you might use from here-on in your response can be turned into weapons *if* you use them in anger.



Just as important is the awareness that “anger is a secondary emotion,” according to Albert Ellis, who developed the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy process. When you experience an emotion and it's not resolved, it can intensify and feel like anger.

For example: if someone hurts your feelings, you can become angry. If you are embarrassed or humiliated, you can become angry. If you are challenged and become defensive, it can lead to anger. In each situation, if the primary emotion isn't expressed and resolved, it can lead to anger. Once you are angry, you can't think clearly and are more likely to react unhelpfully than respond effectively.

So The Keep Your Cool Toolset has 7 core tools and dozens of suggestions for using each one. Of all the Toolsets, this one has evolved the most during the 25 year history of The Parents Toolshop®, as new research discoveries have been made about the brain, neurology, genetics, mind-body connection, and unseen energies.

All of the information that is spread throughout the various basic-to-advanced Parents Toolshop® programs and resources on this topic could fill its own book and is regularly offered as a six-hour and six-week training.

It starts with the basics of discovering what *really* causes anger and stress. It's not other people or events; it's your interpretation of them.

The thought, belief or meaning you give events is what signals your body to create the biochemical reaction you experience as emotional feelings, including stress and



anger.

There are some basic skills every human being can benefit from knowing and using, to prevent or reduce stress build-up, such as:

- Take a deep breath, to get oxygen to the brain and get your logic back on-line.
- Use prayer, meditation and creative visualization for stress reduction and to achieve your goals.



Next, you get a systematic way to develop individualized anger/stress management plans for yourself *and* your children. This is important, because what works for you might not work for your child.

These plans are based on the different ways people are wired, which need considered when planning how to calm down:

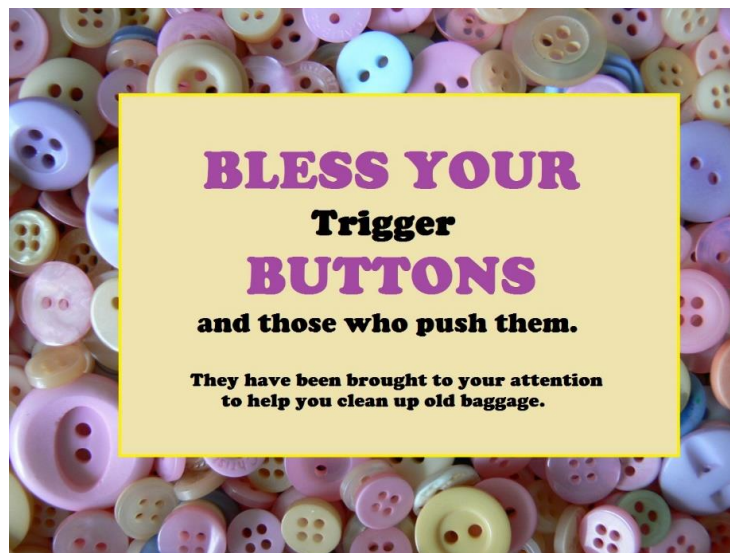
- *Where* people can go: by themselves or with others, and
- *What to do* when they get there:
 - Expressive or verbal activities,
 - Physical activities, or
 - Activities that are both expressive or verbal *and* physical.

Once you know what your or your child's individual style combination is, it points you towards lots of options for channeling and relieving anger energy in healthy ways.

Should you choose to access more advanced Toolshop® training programs or resources, you can learn about how emotional trigger buttons work, how to reprogram them, and even how to **totally and permanently eliminate stress and anger from your life! (Yes, you read that right!)**

Briefly, trigger buttons get programmed in by your past experiences. Because trigger buttons upset your natural calm state, your mind and body want to get rid of them, to restore your inner peace. So these buttons get triggered as a reminder that they need to be removed.





It may seem impossible at first, but you *can* learn to reprogram your buttons and control your reactions, changing them into helpful responses. The key is to be aware of and understand their purpose, and to have both the knowledge of and skills for how to de-program them.

In the past, 25 years ago when The Parents Toolshop® first debuted, it could take months or years to deprogram trigger buttons, but today there are scientifically-proven-effective tools you can use to shortcut that process into *minutes!*

One of these tools is a one-minute tapping protocol, called [Emotional Freedom Technique](#) that often instantaneously deprograms trauma, phobias, anxiety, and even chemical imbalances and physical ailments that are stress-related. In Parents Toolshop®, you not only learn the technique, but more importantly, *why* it works!

The entire essence of my personality has been power and control. From Vietnam to being a business owner. I am so much calmer, handle problems more consistently, and am able to control my temper and 'buttons' better. If I can change, anyone can!
--- Craig Rabiner

When you use The Keep Your Cool Toolset, you can:

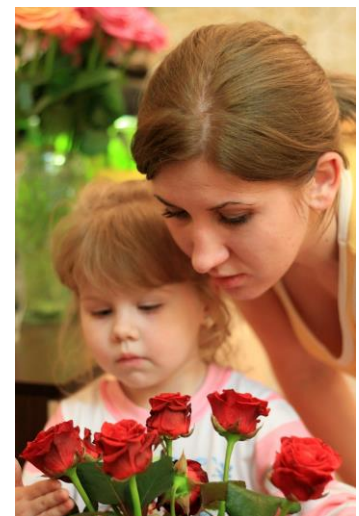
- Understand what *really* causes anger, so you are empowered to become a victor over it and not a victim to people and circumstances in your life.
- Think clearer, stay calmer and respond to situations, instead of reacting.
 - Respond calmly and effectively in any situation.



- Have healthy, helpful skills to teach your children, so they can prevent angry blowups and express their feelings appropriately.
- Avoid blow ups and escalations — which make problems worse, start new problems and can give accidental pay-offs to children. This, in turn, can cause problem behavior to change, worsen, or repeat, just to see if they can get the pay-off again.
- Yell and overreact less. Everyone stays calmer, thinks straighter and is less stressed. Less yelling leads to better parent/child relationships. It also leads to better health and longevity.
- Practically eliminate unhealthy anger from your life, without stuffing it or avoiding it.
- Remove or reprogram your trigger buttons, so things that other people say and do won't "hook" you anymore. You might not *like* what they do, but it won't upset you or cause you to react unhelpfully. Sometimes, when you no longer have the hook, these events and people seem to miraculously change or disappear from your life!
- Realize the magnificent process your body goes through to create your emotions, and appreciate them more.
- Understand the effects of stress on your health and learn techniques for reducing or eliminating it, so your health can greatly improve.
- Use all you've learned in an intentional, pro-active way, to change your life from being a series of reactions to situations and people to consciously creating the life if your dreams.

Once you understand the causes of anger and stress and how to prevent or move through it in healthy ways, you will find that situations that would cause you stress or anger in the past either don't happen or don't upset you so much. If a situation does occur, you won't get as stressed about it, will understand *why* it's happening, *what* to do (or not do) about it, and *how* to use the experience for continued self-growth.

What I really got out of The Parent's Toolshop® was how to control my temper, not to shout and yell so much about everything that happens and to spend a little more time with my children. --- Charles Epps



Parent problems can be upsetting! That's why the first step in Your Mission (from Key 1) is to "Stop and think for 1-10 seconds." If you are upset or getting upset, take a deep breath during those 10 seconds. It will get oxygen to your brain and help you think clearly.

Then you will be ready for the next step in your mission, "Plan a helpful response." For that, you need the next Toolset...

The Clear Communication Toolset

The key to healthy communication is to be assertive.

- Assertive communication means you are speaking up, expressing your concerns or needs, and are doing it in a way that is respectful to others.
- Aggressive communication is speaking up for yourself in a way that is disrespectful to others.
- Passive communication is *not* speaking up for yourself, in an effort to avoid conflict.
- Passive-aggressive communication is using passive means to be aggressive or hurt others. Sarcasm and insulting humor are two examples.



It is very common for parents to use blame, shame, criticism, and other angry communication tools when they are upset. These are never helpful.

Many adults were raised with blame and shame; it's how adults, authority figures, and institutions controlled *our* behavior growing up. Maybe that's why it comes so naturally.

Yet even simply forms of blame ("Who did this?" or "You...") or respectful-sounding guilt trips, like "I'm disappointed in you," can be unhelpful, because they are demotivating. They can even be harmful if they deeply damage someone's self-esteem.



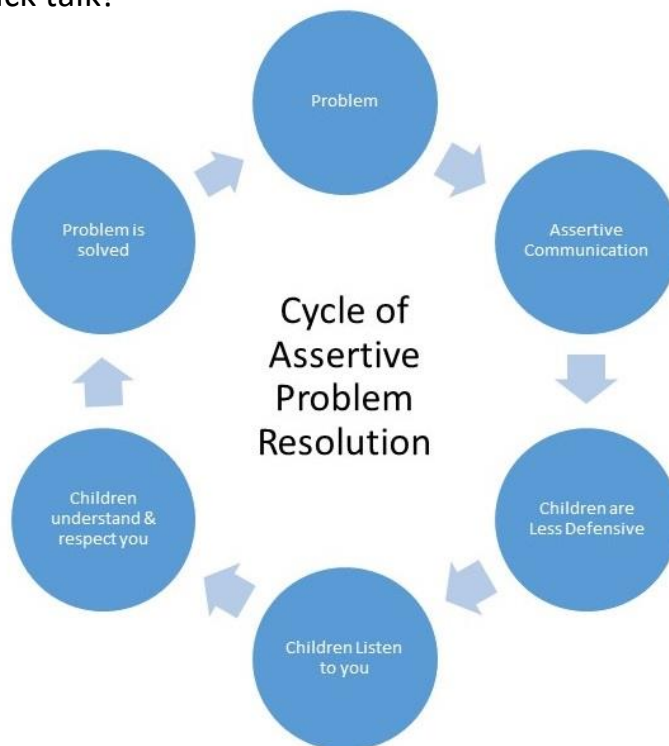
So the Clear Communication Toolset has 11 practical tools and they all relate to being respectful and assertive when *you* have a problem and need to set limits/boundaries or express your concerns.



When you speak about your concerns, you must be careful. You can make matters worse by using a negative tone of voice or poorly-chosen words.

When you communicate assertively *and* respectfully, instead, it sets a wonderful chain of events in motion:

- When you express *your* feelings and concerns respectfully, without blame, shame, criticism, lectures, nagging, or hidden messages, you feel better about yourself and children don't feel defensive.
- Because children aren't defensive, they are more likely to *listen to you* instead of tuning you out.
- Because children listen to you, they are more likely to understand and respect your feelings your perspective and concerns, your limits, rules and expectations.
- Because you modeled respectful assertive communication, children learn to express *their* opinions and concerns respectfully. That means fewer smart-aleck attitudes and back talk!



All of the tools in the Clear Communication Toolset are assertive. Best of all, these tools are the basis of effective communication in *every* human relationship. Try using them at work, with your partner, friends, and family and see what happens.

I truly can take what I have learned from this class and use it with children and adults with positive results. The approaches that Jody has taught me facilitate better communication in my relationships at home and work. --- Chioma Patterson

Action Steps:

When a situation or issue arises that is a problem *for you*, remember *and complete* “Your Mission”:

1. *Stop and think for 1-10 seconds.* During this time, take a deep breath. Get your brain back on line and restore calm and peace in your inner being.
2. *Plan a helpful response.* The first half of your first sentence is *always* to acknowledge the other person’s feelings *first* (Key 4). The second half of your first sentence can be an assertive expression of your concerns.
3. *Deliver it effectively.* Use the word “I” and focus on what you see, feel, want, expect, or need. Keep out the blame, shame, and focus on solutions.

Since you can use this process in *all* your relationships, you can get lots of opportunities to practice these skills!



Key 6:

Crack the Code to Resolving the Root Cause of Misbehavior

Derek and Sonia have two girls: Natalie, 6, and Morgan, 3. Each night it seems to take forever to get the girls to settle down, get in bed and fall asleep.

Natalie whines at each step of the bedtime routine. She wants to know why she can't play longer before taking her bath. Once she is in the tub, she wants to know why she can't have more bubbles. Then it's hard to get her out of the tub.

Trying to get Natalie to brush her teeth is a battle. She complains about the yucky toothpaste, barely touches the brush to her teeth, and makes a mess all over the sink. If Derek or Sonia try to help, it can turn into a wrestling match!



Once in bed, no matter how many books Derek and Sonia read, Natalie always wants another! Then, when they leave the room, Natalie finds lame excuses to get up or come out of her room. She'll say, "I'm hungry," although she had a snack, or "I'm thirsty," although she just drank water. Her list of demands goes on and on.

Morgan needs to be coaxed to get her pajamas on each night and wants her books read to her in the living room. Once in bed, she cries hysterically, clinging to Derek or Sonia, and wants one of them to stay with her.

Derek and Sonia take turns sitting in Morgan's room until she falls asleep. If they don't, she continues to cry, runs out of her room when they leave, and throws a tantrum each time they put her back into the room. This gets everyone more upset.

Derek and Sonia are exhausted by the time the girls are asleep. They have little time to themselves or to spend time together. The stress is taking a toll on their relationship. They disagree on what to do and often argue.

*If they could figure out why their girls behave this way at bedtime and resolve **that**, their nights would be more pleasant and they would have time for each other.*



When your children misbehave, would you like to know *why* they are behaving that way and *what* to do to stop it? Well, that's what the next key Toolbox helps you do.

The Misbehavior Toolbox

In The Parents Toolshop[®], the Misbehavior Toolbox contains three Toolsets:

- The PU Toolset: for Problem behavior that's Unintentional.
- The PO Toolset for Problem behavior that's On purpose.
- The Discipline Toolset



Parents Toolshop®'s Universal Blueprint® is the *only* parenting plan in the *world* that teaches the *difference* between unintentional and intentional misbehavior, offers a *system* for identifying the root cause of each, and *matches* the tools you've already learned (in the Key 3: The Prevention Toolbox) to these causes.

This helps you identify the underlying issues that are *causing* the behavior and respond in ways that resolve those issues. **When you do this, the problem behavior usually *disappears* and often never returns!**

You've already learned part of that response formula: Keys 4 and 5 told you what to *say*: acknowledge the child's feelings and assertively express your concerns. If you are "all talk and no action," however, children might not be held accountable for their poor behavior and think it's okay to behave that way.

But the *quality, skill and effectiveness* of your response are extremely important. If you stop the behavior for the moment, but what you did is illogical, children won't *learn* from it and the behavior might recur. If it gets a reaction, it might give them a payoff and could recur. And if it's too harsh, it might "work," but harm could be done.

All of these might be quick fixes that "work," and it's tempting when children are misbehaving to do "whatever works," but quick fixes usually don't last. In fact, they usually make matters worse in the long run. So here's a one-liner to keep in mind:

Just because it "works" [now] doesn't mean you should do it!

Here are some admittedly exaggerated, but humorous, examples:

- Your child won't stop talking? Duct tape will work...but that doesn't mean you should do it.
- Child won't sit still? Sitting on him will work...but that doesn't mean you should do it.

If what you want are long-term results, you're better off taking a little extra time to learn a system that will help you *prevent* problems and give helpful responses, rather than reacting rashly.



The PU Toolset (Problem behavior that's Unintentional)

The PU Toolset has 6 practical tools for **redirecting unintentional misbehavior**, which results when children haven't *mastered* the skills needed to behave properly.

Most parents *and* professionals *assume* almost *all* misbehavior is *intentional*, unless it's an obvious accident, especially if they have already told the child not to do it or think the child "knows better."

If you believe this, you are more likely to feel angry, react in anger, and go down a path in a direction that will be both unhelpful and make matters worse.

In reality, **it doesn't matter how many times you tell the child their behavior is a problem — you could "tell them a million times" — until they *master* the skill to behave properly, they might behave that way.** (Don't you sometimes forget to use a new skill or use it inconsistently until you master it?)

There are five reasons *why* children don't master skills immediately: they lack the knowledge or skill, need more time and practice, or the behavior is caused by their developmental stage, personality traits, or medical conditions.

These aren't *excuses* for their behavior; they are *explanations* as to *why* the child is behaving that way or why it's taking time for the child to master the skills.

You must *teach children skills* and have realistic expectations about how quickly children can master the skills. Otherwise, you can experience common problem behaviors such as not sharing, whining, messy rooms, picky eaters, testing limits and rules, arguing, impulsive decisions, unsafe driving, inappropriate clothing, dating and peer relationships, etc. These *all* involve *skills* and too often children aren't taught *how* to behave, just punished if they don't.



When you recognize a behavior is unintentional, due to a lack of skills, and you remember to teach skills, it brings dramatically quicker results:



- You will understand *why* children are misbehaving and feel less angry and frustrated.
- You won't take the behavior personally and avoid overreacting.
- Your response will get at the root cause, which eliminates the misbehavior quicker.
- Children will master skills faster, because you are teaching them. If children are just punished, with no teaching, they might not know what they are supposed to do, and might repeat the behavior. Parents often assume at that point that the behavior is intentional, but if the child hasn't learned or mastered the skill, it's not!
- You will know how to prevent or effectively respond to common age-related misbehavior and have more realistic expectations about how quickly children can learn skills based on their age, personality or medical conditions.

The Parents Toolshop® is very useful for parents in dealing with their children's misbehavior. It gives the parents tools to effectively deal with root issues that cause the misbehavior in the first place." --- Andrew Lynch

The PO Toolset (Problem behavior that's On purpose)

The PO Toolset addresses the other major type of misbehavior: intentional misbehavior that serves a purpose --- and there are only four purposes or "goals."

These "Four Goals of Misbehavior" are based on Rudolf Dreikurs' teachings, which were inspired when he was a student of Alfred Adler, whose teachings are included in almost all proven-effective, research-based programs with long-term outcome studies, like The Parent's Toolshop®.

In a nutshell, Dreikurs' theory goes like this: All intentional behavior is purpose-driven. The four goals everyone wants are to:

- Feel like we are important and belong,
- Have some autonomy and control in our lives,
- Experience fairness and justice, and
- Withdraw from conflict when it's healthy to do so.



When people try to meet these goals through positive behavior and it doesn't work, they get discouraged and often resort to negative behavior to reach the goal. That negative, intentional behavior serves one of four related goals: attention, power, revenge or giving up.

It's hard to believe, but Dreikurs' theory has been tested and shown to be valid through hundreds of scientific research studies over the past seventy years, as well as millions of parents' direct experience upon learning about them. Even more amazing is that this applies to children *and* adults. (We are just focusing on parenting for now.)



That's it! **There are only 5 types of misbehavior: PU behavior, which is unintentional, due to lack of skills, and PO behavior that serves one of those four goals.** Parents Toolshop® programs can teach you *how* to identify each one *and* how to respond.

The key to *responding* effectively is to *intentional* misbehavior is to *identify what benefit or goal the behavior serves* for the child. Then *redirect* the child by *showing how to meet that goal through positive behavior*.

It really is simple, but unfortunately, things can get a bit confusing or seemingly complicated, because **one behavior can serve more than one goal.** (Think about tantrums, running away, or not talking.) **So you need to have a reliable system for finding the clues that will help you correctly identify the goal.** If you don't, you won't give the most effective response and the misbehavior *will* continue or get worse.

This leads to the final step of the Universal Blueprint® decision-making system: three questions that help you identify the clues to correctly identifying the child's goal. The first and more important clue is *your* feelings when the child behaves that way! The problem is that all PO behavior will usually leave you feeling P.O.'d! That's "Peeved Off" (to stay G-rated), angry, or ticked off!

Unless you keep your cool and consciously choose to stick to your mission:

1. If you stop and think for 1-10 seconds and take a deep breath during that time, you may not get angry. Instead, you'll be in touch with your *primary* feeling. (See Key 5.)



2. That primary feeling is a clue to the purpose behind the child's intentional misbehavior.
3. Then you can plan a helpful response and deliver it effectively, which will show the child how to meet that purpose through positive behavior instead.

For that response, **you simply use the same tools you use to *prevent* misbehavior --- the five five-star tools --- which are also the best tools for *redirecting* misbehavior.** Thankfully, the Misbehavior Toolbox matches them up *for you!* This is truly a feature that sets Parents Toolshop® apart from all the other parenting programs *in the world.*

Once you complete the “misbehavior matching game,” you’ll see how everything comes together. Instead of you getting P.O.’d, yelling, or **reacting --- which will *always* escalate the situation or give the child a payoff** --- you can respond in a way that actually *redirects* the misbehavior. Because the child now knows how to reach their goal in a positive way, **they don’t need to resort to misbehavior anymore!**

You may think this all sounds too complicated...well it can be, *if* you don’t have a system for quickly identifying the goal of PO behavior. The behavior goal can change from one second to the next or a reaction can cause the problem to mutate into another goal or type of problem altogether!

Once you have the Universal Blueprint® system, however, you can adjust *in the moment, in nanoseconds*, as you feel the situation shifting, and always know *which* tool to use. With the misbehavior matching key, that’s as simple as knowing a hammer is best to use with a nail, a saw to cut wood, a screwdriver for a screw and a wrench for a bolt!



With the Parents Toolshop®, you have a system for identifying and redirecting intentional misbehavior, so you:

- Avoid reactions that will escalate the situation or give an accidental payoff, which will cause the misbehavior to repeat.
- Easily know --- *in seconds* --- exactly *why* the child is misbehaving and what to say and do, using skills you are already using every day (because they are the Top Five Five-Star Tools).



- Recognize when the purpose changes in the middle of a situation and follow the flow, maintaining the most effective response second-by-second.
- Follow-through, skillfully and consistently, often *completely eliminating* the problem behavior, because you resolved the core issue of it!

We have had six years of opposition to going to bed with every excuse known to man and usually some sort of outburst/misbehavior. After learning about PO behavior, the next night was completely different. I did what you said and he looked at me and said, 'OK.' Then he walked himself to bed quietly as if he had been waiting his whole life for me to say those words. He not come out of his room and was asleep within 5 minutes! I am still a little freaked out about it, but it has been working and we are so relieved! --- Mary Mancuso

Basically, if misbehavior is involved and you *skip* this step (identifying whether misbehavior is PU or PO and skillfully redirect it using the Five Star Tool that is best for each type) it will render your discipline ineffective or turn it into punishment, which brings on new problems!

Consider what could happen if you don't know *why* your child is misbehaving, redirect it using the best five-star tool for that type of behavior, and instead jump right to punishing the child:

- If children don't know better and you don't teach them skills, they won't learn better and will likely misbehave again.
- If you treat children like they are *intentionally* misbehaving when they really don't know any better, the child will become more discouraged. Since Dreikurs says discouragement is the root of intentional misbehavior, this approach is sure to cause Unintentional behavior to turn into On purpose misbehavior!
- If you don't redirect on-purpose behavior, you can easily accidentally reinforce it.
- If you don't redirect attention-seeking behavior, your reaction will actually give the behavior a payoff, because "negative attention is better than no attention at all"!
- If you don't break power or revenges cycles before you discipline, it turns the discipline into a power play or revenge tactic, which is punishment instead.

If you avoid redirecting misbehavior and rush immediately to discipline, just for the sake of responding quickly, it can make matters *much* worse. Instead of skipping steps, just move through them quickly.



Now do you see why it was important for you to learn the Top Five Five-Star Tools, Keep Your Cool, Clear Communication, and how to identify and skillfully redirect misbehavior *before* you got to the Discipline Toolset?

Most parents, when there's a problem say, "If you don't stop doing [that]," with "that" being a gazillion different problem behaviors, "I'm going to do [this] to you," with "this" being some form of punishment. Now, after learning all you have so far, do you see:

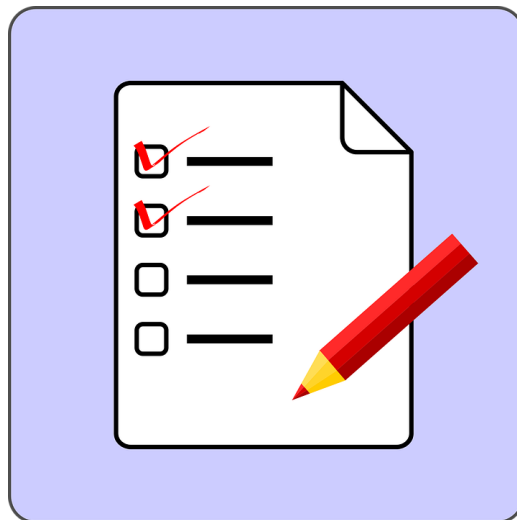
- How ineffective that is?
- How much information is missing?
- How that approach could escalate the situation?
- How the child likely won't *learn* anything about how *to* behave?
- How many steps the parent is skipping that could prevent or stop the problem sooner?

That's why you've learned all you have before now...and Hallelujah, it's finally time to get to the toolset you probably wanted to know about first. Aren't you grateful you trusted the process and learned the system first?

The Discipline Toolset

Truthfully, most parents arrive at Parents Toolshop® classes with a list (mental or written) of the problems they are dealing with, wanting solutions. Week by week, as they apply what they learn, they check off items on that list.

By the time we get to the Discipline Toolset, most parents' lists are *gone*, because they've learned how to prevent and redirect misbehavior! So we focus first on clarifying inaccurate information and unhealthy beliefs about discipline and punishment, then the tools you can use and how to use them.



“An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure”

Whenever possible, you want children to know *how* to behave properly, the *value* of proper behavior, and the problems misbehavior can bring. Discipline is *not* about what the parent will do *to* the child if the child misbehaves — there is *always* a better reason to behave properly than the threat of punishment.

If children know *what* their behavior choices are and *why* proper behavior is important, then discipline simply becomes a matter of holding children accountable for their behavior choices by allowing them to experience those outcomes.

The Difference between Discipline and Punishment

Most people use these two terms interchangeably, but they are quite different.

- “**Discipline**” helps children learn a positive lesson from their poor behavior choices.
- “**Punishment**” imposes extra suffering (emotional or physical) that shifts the focus from the child’s poor choice and the natural outcome to who is in power doing this *to* them.



Discipline teaches children *self*-discipline. Punishment tends to create children who only behave when the parent or threat of punishment is present. But “when the cat’s away, the mice will play.” *Self*-disciplined children behave even when the “cat” is away.

Even *if* punishment *did* get the same results as discipline, it has more potential for negative side effects, where discipline has *no* risks, if you use it skillfully and effectively. Your best chance of success is to use what gets the best results with the least risk.

I like The Parent's Toolshop® because it focuses more on the positive aspects of parent-child interaction as opposed to discipline and punishment; also because it is practical in its approach rather than theoretical. In addition, there are a lot of devices for remember the proper steps to take, so parents can really make the method "theirs." --- Bryelle Broome, LSW, LPC



The Discipline Toolset has 8 practical tools you can use instead of the ineffective punishment tactics many parents use. There is never any one tool that will work in all situations, such as time-outs, grounding, or restrictions. You need a variety of tools because the situation at hand will determine which tools would work best.

Amazingly, **the five best discipline tools match the five types of misbehavior**, so once you know which type of misbehavior it is, you know exactly what to say and do. Then all you need to do is follow through!

For each discipline tool to be effective, it must be *reasonable, logically related and respectful*. Whenever possible, you want to *reveal* discipline before acting on it. Otherwise, children will think you are just making something up on the spot, just to be mean. They will react to *that*, rather than learning from the discipline.



If it is missing any one of these “4 R’s, it turns into punishment and won’t be as effective. This then brings on the 4 R’s of punishment (Jane Nelsen, *Positive Discipline*) Resentment, Rebellion, Revenge and Retreat (sneaking to do it).

Surprisingly, the most used discipline tools are the ones that are the easiest to turn into punishment. And some tools parents use for discipline aren’t even discipline tools at all! (Time-outs are one.)

When you use less-effective tools to discipline, they quickly become power-and-control weapons and children think you are using them just to make them do what you want them to do. This can start or escalate power struggles. It can also cause children to feel manipulated and hurt, which can then lead to resentment and revenge.

*My relationship with my 12-year old has improved tremendously after learning and applying the communication and discipline skills learned in this class. Last week I asked her if she thought her discipline was fair and that I treated her fairly. She said yes, but that I was not before. She is learning that she is responsible for her own actions and decisions. Therefore, she is also responsible for the consequences. ---
Donna Armand*



Discipline is quite a can of worms and it's hard to open it without raising more issues than we can explore here. There are issues like the long term outcomes of punishment and discipline, the pros and cons of specific punishment tools like spanking and threats, why using timeouts as a discipline tool won't work and why using them as a calming-down tool will *not* reinforce the behavior. And, of course, the fine details of using the top five discipline tools to their highest potential. Depending on how much information you want, you can learn more.

Pulling It All Together

When you use the Toolboxes and Toolsets you've learned *in order*, you will fulfill:

YOUR MISSION

STOP AND THINK for 1-10 seconds

PLAN a helpful response that:

- Prevents the problem.

If/When the problem does occur or recur:

SAY

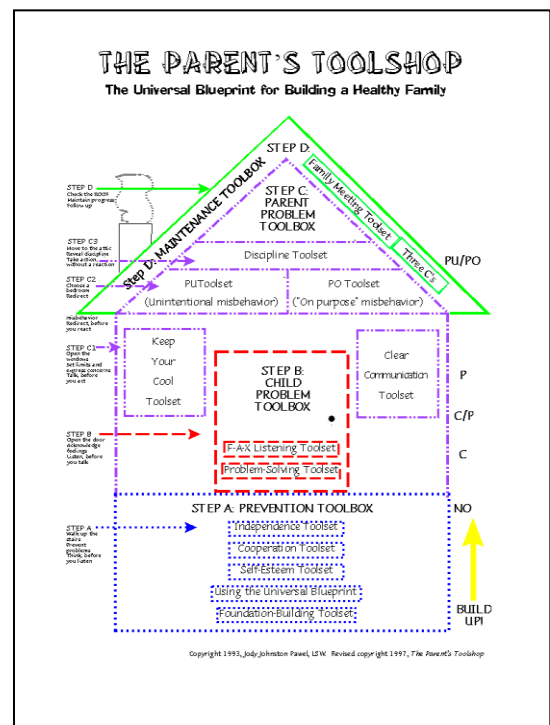
- Acknowledge the child's feelings or perspective.
- Set limits or assertively and respectfully express concerns

DO

- Redirect the misbehavior
- Reveal discipline

DELIVER it effectively

FOLLOW THROUGH



This response can easily be *three sentences* total. You can say all of them at once or on three different occasions, picking up where you left off each time.

Saying three strategically-different statements is completely different from repeating yourself three times or counting 1-2-3! It is also likely fewer words than you would need to say if punishment causes a blow-up, meltdown, or simply doesn't work and needs to be done over and over again.



"I don't need to discipline as often as I thought I did. Before, I used discipline this much (holding his arms wide apart) and the rest of the skills only this much (holding his hands in front of his chest). Now, I only need to use discipline this much (his hands in front of his chest) and I use the rest of the tools this much (holding his arms wide apart)." --- Bryan Belden

Whew! This is a packed Toolbox! Given that this is just a quick, free preview, we obviously couldn't dive in as deeply as you can surely see we can in our workshops. Do you see, though, why jumping right to discipline causes you to miss out on all kinds of important opportunities to:

- Prevent the problem from starting or worsening?
- Prevent the situation from escalating?
- Keep you and the child calm, cool and collected?
- Clearly, respectfully and assertively communicate your concerns?
- Teach skills or show children how to meet their goals through positive behavior?
- Hold children *more* accountable without imposing suffering or having to be the bad guy?

Good. Well done...in the last key Toolbox, you'll look at maintaining progress and how you can use these tools to improve *all* your relationships!

Action Steps:

Take the 1-3 problems you identified earlier. If any involve misbehavior, answer the following questions for each:



1. Is the misbehavior unintentional or on purpose?
2. If it is on purpose:
 - a. What purpose could it be serving?
 - b. How could the child meet that purpose through positive behavior?
 - c. Now tell or show the child how to do that.
3. What discipline would be logically related and reasonable and help the child learn to make a better behavior choice next time?
4. How can you present that in a respectful way that doesn't impose any extra suffering, which would detract from the lesson?



Key 7:

Release The Limitations on Your Confidence & Competence

Over the years, Fred and Tammy have dealt with a lot of challenges with their three children, ages 3, 8 and 13. Sometimes it takes a while to figure out what works with each of them and they aren't sure if their solutions will last.

They still encounter resistance from or, at the least, complaining from their older children when they tell them about decisions they've made regarding family issues or new rules the children must follow and chores the children must do.

They know their family and friends do things differently than them, because they sometimes criticize their parenting and offer advice --- and they don't like a lot of the advice they are given.

Fred's mom is particularly challenging. She's critical and condescending towards Tammy. Fred won't speak up or support Tammy; he says, "She'll never change. You just have to get used to her."



Fred and Tammy want to parent more as a team and more consistently, but when they are out in public Tammy often caves in, to appear nice in front of others, and Fred yells more, so his family doesn't accuse him of being too soft.

Would you like your parenting progress to stick? Are you tired of having to be the one who makes decisions for the family only to get flack for it? Are you still dealing with criticism from others, getting bad advice or finding yourself being inconsistent with your partner or in high-pressure situations? Then this final key is for you.

The Maintenance Toolbox

The purpose of the Maintenance Toolbox is to maintain progress. So it contains the following two Toolsets:

- Family Council Toolset
- Three C's: Consistency, handling Criticism, Confidence





Family Council Toolset

Family Councils use *all* the tools in the Universal Blueprint®. Children learn how to use the skills in group settings, with the family. This gives them the skills they need to be a team player and leader, instead of a follower, in other relationships or group settings, like school or work.

There are 16 suggestions for having productive family councils, such as how to involve each member, make consensus decisions and solve problems, and which topics are appropriate to discuss. There are also tips for avoiding common problems and pitfalls that can easily happen.



When you **set aside a *regular time*** for family councils:

- Your family members develop deeper relationships than they would have otherwise. Parents and children talk about more than what's for dinner, what happened that day and who is driving to practice. The issue really isn't whether you think you talk *often* enough without family councils. Chances are, you aren't talking about the same issues and developing the same depth of relationships unless you are setting aside time regularly to build your relationships.
- When your family meets regularly, you can discuss rules and issues *before* there's a problem. If you only meet when there's a problem, children will associate family councils with being in trouble.
- If each family member has a role in the meeting, they can learn how to manage time, make decisions, be accountable, listen and communicate effectively, plan activities, and learn the tools you have just learned, to improve their relationships with other family members and outside the family.



I learned how to integrate love, kindness and caring with healthy discipline, active communication and the skills of pause and acknowledging the child's feelings. Life and raising children is a process. Now it's time to have a life-changing and rewarding process. Thank you for The Parents Toolshop®. --- Deborah Carmichael

3 C's: Consistency, handling Criticism, maintaining Confidence

Last, but not least, we close out our preview of The Parent's Toolshop® with the final Toolset that shows you how to maintain *your* progress.



Be Consistent

Being consistent does *not* mean doing whatever you said you were going to do. If you overreact and say you are going to do something outrageous that goes against your overall parenting plan you don't want to follow through! You want to get back on the "path" of your parenting plan. By apologizing and admitting you overreacted, you model for children how to admit their own mistakes and fix them.



When you *are* consistent, it's easier to follow through. You aren't giving empty threats that your children learn to ignore. You can enforce what you say you are going to do. (Ever try to actually *make* a child go to sleep?) If you get off track, you can get back on.

It's important to follow the same parenting plan away from home that we use at home. If you use one method of parenting at home and another outside the home, children learn there are times when they can get away with misbehavior and will test you more often. If you use the same parenting plan wherever you go, your children always know the limits and are better behaved.

It is also important for parenting partners to be consistent. They don't need to say and do things in identical ways, but it is important that they both operate in the Balanced Parenting Style follow the same parenting plan (Universal Blueprint®).

I have read dozens of parenting resources and The Parents Toolshop® is the very best. Since consistently using its techniques (tools) a lot of stress has been taken out of both mine and my four year old son's life. He is much more cooperative and behaves much better now. The Parent's Toolshop® takes the advice from the best parenting books and puts them together into one practical, easy-to-remember-and-apply approach (blueprint). I considered myself an above average parent before, but since reading this book my parenting skills have greatly improved. --- Gloria Turner



Handling Criticism

The cool thing about all the tools, and especially the tools in this toolbox, is that **YOU CAN USE THESE EFFECTIVE SKILLS IN ALL YOUR RELATIONSHIPS**

That's right! In all your relationships, you can prevent problems and create healthy relationships by using all the Toolboxes and Toolsets you've learned about in this book, with only a few exceptions:

- **Foundation-Building Toolset:** maintain a balanced style at work and at home. Mutual respect is appreciated everywhere!
- **Use the Universal Blueprint®:** The way you answer the three questions in adult relationships is almost identical to parenting, except you can change "Child problems" to "The Other Person's problem."
- **Self-Esteem Toolset:** Using descriptive encouragement in business and intimate relationships, acknowledging the other person's strengths, and showing appreciation are some of the most powerful tools you have for building and improving *all* your relationships.
- **Cooperation Toolset:** Find win/win solutions to your problems, instead of getting into power struggles about who is right or wrong.
- **Independence Toolset:** Allow others to be independent, instead of micro-managing. Model effective skills. Most people will pick them up if done in a helpful, non-condescending way.
- **F-A-X Listening Toolset:** Even in adult relationships, you want to allow other people to be responsible for resolving their own issues. Identify when a problem is the other person's, listen without interrupting or judging. Be supportive, without giving advice or trying to fix the problem or other person.
- **Keep Your Cool Toolset:** Remember that *all* your relationships are a mirror into *you* and *your* issues. Be consciously aware of how you are interpreting events, *choose* your beliefs, and continue working on self-improvement.
- **Clear Communication Toolset:** When you feel like your boundaries are being violated by others, speak up in respectful, assertive ways. Say what you see, feel, want or expect. Don't try to *make* others do what you want or give ultimatums; simply say what you want or intend to do.



- **PU and PO Misbehavior Toolsets:** Adults can “misbehave” too. Sometimes people have personality traits that are difficult to be around. They aren’t deliberately being difficult, but they may be unaware or unskilled. Negative toxic people usually don’t know how they come off; they genuinely believe they are positive. Don’t expect them to change. If an adult behaves in a way that is troublesome and seems deliberate, identify the goal and redirect it the same as the directions you’ve received.
- **Discipline Toolset:** You can use this toolset exactly the same in adult relationships as with children *only if* you are in a leadership position in which disciplining an adult would be appropriate (i.e. supervisor). Make sure your discipline still meets the 4 R’s. If the adult is a peer (partner, friend, relative), then you can either use F-A-X Listening to find a solution or, if they aren’t willing to be part of the solution, you can try to:
 - **Change it:** “It” being yourself, your perceptions, your responses, etc. Anything but trying to change *the other person*.
 - **Accept it:** Accept this is the way things are, or that person is. It doesn’t mean you accept abusive treatment or find it *agreeable*. Simply that you surrender resisting and fighting it and accept it as-it-is.
 - **Remove Yourself from It:** If nothing changes and becomes unacceptable (as in abusive), then remove yourself from “it” --- that could be emotionally removing yourself or physically removing yourself.

Last but not least...

Maintain Your Confidence

You’ve received a lot of information in a short free E-book! It’s practically impossible to take it all in. And this was just the tip of the iceberg! So here are some tips:

- **Set realistic goals.** While some of these tools have the potential for overnight miraculous miracles, remember that you only learned the basics of a few tools and not the entire system or how to use the tools to their maximum potential. If many of the tools were new to you, don’t expect to master them all at once.
- **Take it one step at a time.** If you try to absorb or implement everything all at once, you and your children will feel more discouraged. If you take small steps, you will move forward and you’ll all feel more confident.



- **Give yourself credit for your efforts and improvement.** No one is perfect, nor will you ever be perfect. Be gentle with yourself (and others) when there are mistakes.
- **Trust your intuition.** When logic fails you, get in touch with your heart. Intuition is often confused with emotions or “gut feelings,” which can lead to “gut reactions.” Emotions can cause you to react with blame and judgment, but intuitive ideas result in inner peace and responses that leave you and your children feeling better about yourselves.
- **Continue to educate yourself.** Periodically read this book again, taking one toolset or toolbox at a time and working with it at a slower pace. Better yet, attend training programs and support groups that teach healthy, effective parenting skills, like The Parent’s Toolshop®. As you learn and practice the skills, you will be more consistent and feel more confident.
- **Get support.** Surround yourself with supportive people who think like you do about parenting. Parents Toolshop® offers ways to get live, ongoing support, to ask questions, clarify the concepts, get personalized problem-solving around applying what you’ve learned to *your* life --- so get involved!
- **Stay involved.** If you don’t keep *using* what you’ve learned or reinforcing it by re-reading the lessons or moving to the next step in your training process, you’ll likely forget a lot of what you learned.

There’s so much to effective parenting and when there is an intention to serve, it’s possible to over-give, which can cause overwhelm.

I feel like I have learned and used more skills from this workshop than any other. I am a bit overwhelmed but look forward to really digging in deeper into the material and learning more. I now have a whole new way to look at things and am excited to see the changes in my family. --- Cheryl A. Neff

Action Steps:

1. Think about some of the relationships you have with other adults. Did you get any ideas for how you might be able to use these tools to improve that relationship? Jot them down now.
2. Identify how you want to continue your growth as a parent and take action on your intentions.



Using all 7 Keys

In this E-book, you learned about the following 7 Keys to parenting success:



1. Becoming an intentional, conscious parent who is committed to responding effectively, instead of reacting out of past conditioning or habit.
2. **The Foundation-Building Toolbox**, so you can set and maintain a stable foundation using a **Balanced Parenting Style** and build or re-build your family with a proven plan, the **Universal Blueprint®** for Parenting Success.
3. **The Prevention Toolbox**, which helps you prevent problems from starting or worsening, by building **Self-Esteem**, engaging **Cooperation**, and fostering **Independence**.
4. **The Child Problem Toolbox**, which empowers children and others to think for themselves and find their own solutions to problems that affect them, by guiding them through the F-A-X Listening process.
5. **The Parent Problem Toolbox**, which helps you **Keep Your Cool** and use **Clear Communication** to address problems that affect you or that you are ultimately responsible for resolving.
6. **The Misbehavior Toolbox**, which shows you *why* children are misbehaving, how to *redirect* the misbehavior, whether it's **Unintentional or On-purpose Misbehavior**, and how to hold them accountable and teach *self-discipline* using the **Discipline Toolset**.
7. **The Maintenance Toolbox**, which can help you maintain the progress you make by using the previous Toolboxes, Toolsets and tools.

Together these provide a *process* for preventing and responding helpfully to challenges that arise.

The order you use these “keys” or take these steps is very specific. If you skip any steps or use them out of order, you won’t get consistently positive results. By learning the *entire system* and the details of the concepts and tools within it, you can *always rely* on The Universal Blueprint® to guide you to the most effective way to prevent or respond to *any* challenge in *any* relationship. It’s like a GPS system (Guide to Parenting Success).





This book was designed for busy parents like you, who don't have a lot of time, but really are committed to being the best parent you can be. It's designed as a preview.

The biggest results come, of course, when you get the entire system and its special language and action tools; from basic to advanced; at your own pace, or with the support of a Certified Parents Toolshop® coach or trainer, and other parents. You can find those at www.ParentsToolshop.com/programs.

I look forward to connecting with you again and getting to know you and about your children better. Remember that there's a whole worldwide community of like-minded parents here at Parents Toolshop® who join me in being here to support you in preventing common problems and finding *personalized* solutions to the parenting challenges you face.

Until we meet again, I am truly...Yours in Service to Families (especially *yours*),