

Helping You Navigate Your Journey Through Parenting Messages We Give Children



BY KIM DeMARCHI

When children are young, they are full of confidence. They believe they can do anything, be anyone. They are fearless and they have unlimited

potential. If I were to ask a group of Kindergarteners, “How many of you think you can be a great doctor, an important scientist, the President of the United States?” most hands would shoot up into the air. Unfortunately, if I were to ask that same question to a group of teenagers, probably only a handful of hands would go up tentatively. As parents we have an amazing opportunity to honor our children and to make sure we send messages that will help our children to become all that they can become.

“Be careful”, “Hurry up”, “We can’t afford it”... statements that come out of parents’ mouths and into their children’s ears and heads and hearts. Without realizing it, many of the messages we

give our children every day can be very discouraging. Over time, these discouraging messages have a cumulative, disheartening effect on our children.

Believe me, I too say the above statements to my children, but I try to find a more encouraging way to phrase the below commonly used phrases. Examples include:

Common Statement	Discouraging Message	Encouraging Message
Be nice or good.	You aren’t usually a nice or good person.	Have fun! Use your teamwork skills.
Don’t get into trouble.	You get into trouble if I don’t watch you.	Respect yourself and others.
Not so fast, not so high.	Live life at only 60%.	Hold on tight to be safe.
Hurry up.	Give up your desires for mine.	I need to leave in ten minutes.
Don’t cry/don’t be a baby.	Don’t express your emotions.	I like how you show your emotions.
Stop whining.	Don’t ask for what you want.	Use your words or use your inside voice.
Here, let me do that.	I don’t have faith in your ability.	You can do it! Would you like some help?
You are not old enough yet.	You are not trustworthy yet.	I’m not ready for you to do that yet.
We can’t afford it.	Creates scarcity thinking	I am unwilling to spend my money on that. I would be glad to help you figure out a way to earn money for it.
Be careful.	The world is a scary place.	What do you need to remember when you cross the street?
Be quiet.	Don’t express yourself.	I love your energy. Would you please move into another room because I’m trying to concentrate.
I don’t care.	If said often enough, it could be interpreted as though you really don’t care.	If you want to, that’s fine. I don’t have a preference.

Most of the time parents blurt out these common statements without even thinking about it. I challenge you to think about what the indirect message could be saying to your child. Then, think of a new way you could say what you really want to say, all the while encouraging your unique child to stay positively encouraged and be that next great artist, teacher, movie star, engineer or President!

Kim DeMarchi, M.Ed., Certified Parent Educator and Certified Family Coach, is a Tualatin resident, married with 13 year old boy/girl twins, and has been an educator for more than two decades. Kim is trained and certified through the International Network for Children and Families in a program called Redirecting Children’s Behavior, as well as in Positive Discipline by Jane Nelsen. Kim is active in supporting her local parenting community by providing monthly workshops at the community center. Kim is a weekly radio show host of parenting podcasts at Passport To Parenting: Helping Parents Navigate their Parenting Journey.



Kim’s goal for you is to help reduce conflict, foster mutual respect, and create deeper communication and connections with your loved ones. She can be reached through www.EmpoweredParenting.com or www.PassportToParenting.com.