

BOOK GROUP GUIDE

FOR

PEACEFUL PARENT, HAPPY KIDS

How to Stop Yelling and Start Connecting

by Dr. Laura Markham



WELCOME to the Book Group Guide for
Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids:
How to Stop Yelling and Start Connecting

How wonderful that your book club has decided to read this book! You're in for a treat, and an inspiring journey. This guide will take you through Dr. Laura's book, asking thought-provoking questions for your group to discuss.

You'll have questions as you read the book and begin applying the ideas to your own life. You'll probably want to subscribe to Dr. Laura's daily emails, which land in your In Box Mondays through Thursdays. This book is much more in-depth; the emails are designed to inspire you, keep you on track, and answer questions. You can get them at no charge by signing up on the Home page of the Aha! Parenting website: (<http://AhaParenting.com>)

You can also participate in the active parenting community on Dr. Laura's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/AhaParenting>

About Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids: How To Stop Yelling and Start Connecting

Based on the latest research on brain development and clinical experience with parents, Dr. Laura Markham's approach is as simple as it is effective. Her message: Fostering emotional connection with your child creates real and lasting change. When you have that vital connection, you don't need to threaten, nag, plead, bribe—or ever punish.

This remarkable guide will help parents better understand their own emotions—and get them in check—so they can parent with healthy limits, empathy, and clear communication to raise a self-disciplined child. Step-by-step examples give solutions and kid-tested phrasing for parents of toddlers right through the elementary years.

If you're tired of power struggles, tantrums, and searching for the right “consequence,” look no further. You're about to discover the practical tools you need to transform your parenting in a positive, proven way.

Getting Started

1. Take a few minutes to breathe and become aware of your own emotions. What are your hopes as you begin reading this book?
2. Begin a journal to make notes. This can be a document on your computer, notes on your phone, or a notebook and pen that you keep near you throughout the day. Keep notes not only of your responses while you read, but also of your experiences throughout the day with your child.
3. What are the most challenging parts of life with your child or children?
4. What are the most rewarding parts of life with your child or children?

Part I : Regulating Yourself

1. What do you think is the most important step of a parent learning to manage him or herself?
2. What do you think is the most challenging?
3. What is the most rewarding?
4. Can you imagine some scenarios in which it would be most important to “put on our own oxygen mask first” as Dr. Laura says?
5. Can you imagine a situation in which it would be most difficult?
6. If you’re trying to stop yelling, what are some alternatives to use in the moment to manage yourself?
7. How would you explain your plan to stop yelling to your child?
8. What do you think of the idea of a star chart for parents to stop yelling?
9. Do you have a mindfulness practice? Have you ever meditated? Can you imagine a plan to begin?
10. What additional questions would you like your group to discuss?

Part II: Fostering Connection

1. When are you most connected with your child?
2. What strategies can you think of for connecting with your child?
3. What daily rituals could you establish?
4. Special Time isn't just quality time. It's following your child's direction to establish trust and really "fill his cup." And, on alternate days, it's using games that get your child giggling to help him process any stored-up anxiety, frustration and sadness. Have you tried Special Time?
5. How did it work? What difficulties have you run into?
6. What games have really gotten your child giggling? Do you understand why Dr. Laura suggests that you stay away from tickling?
7. Some parents worry when they read the "Baby" and "Toddler" sections of this book that they did not adequately respond to their child's needs. Dr. Laura says that it is never too late to connect and heal. What can you do to help your child heal any past hurts?
8. What specific strategies can you imagine to foster a strong connection in the elementary age?
9. How do you think that will help you through the pre-teen and teen years?
10. What additional questions would you like your group to discuss?

Part III: Coaching, Not Controlling

Chapter 4: Raising a Child Who Can Manage Himself: Emotion Coaching

1. What do you think the importance of EQ is?
2. How do you see that in your own life?
3. How can you help your child develop a high EQ?
4. What fears do you have about “allowing” your child to express emotions?
5. Have you had an experience when you empathized with your misbehaving child? How did your child respond?
6. Have you had an experience where your child was angry and you were able to stay compassionate? Did your child “soften” and cry?
7. Have you had an experience where you were able to use play to help you child move from “bad” behavior into connection, or into crying?
8. Imagine you had a friend whose toddler regularly acted out. Your friend usually grew very frustrated with this behavior that was becoming increasingly extreme. What advice would you give her?
9. What is the most difficult part of emotion-coaching for you?
10. What additional questions would you like your group to discuss?

**Chapter 5: Raising a Child Who Wants To Behave:
Dare Not To Discipline**

1. What do you think of the idea that all “bad” behavior from children is an expression of unmet needs or big feelings they need your help to process?
2. When does your child “behave” best?
3. When do they behave the worst?
4. Can you imagine Dr. Laura’s assertion that kids behave better without punishment being possible for your child?
5. What punishments or threats do you most rely on right now?
6. What tactics can you come up with to move your family beyond discipline?
7. What would your first step be?
8. What fears do you have about parenting without punishment?
9. If you parent with a partner, how would you discuss this issue with your partner?
10. What additional questions would you like your group to discuss?

**Chapter 6: Raising a Child Who Achieves with Joy and Self Esteem:
Mastery Coaching**

1. What do you think of the concept of “scaffolding”?
2. In what ways situations might your child benefit from scaffolding?
What would you need to do to provide it?
3. What reactions do you have as you consider giving your child scaffolding in the areas where he or she is challenged? Do you find yourself feeling your child should just do these things without your help? Do you think that attitude helps your child or not?
4. What is the difference between scaffolding and helicopter parenting?
5. Dr Laura defines helicopter parenting as someone who hovers “more than you do.” Everybody has a different line. What is your line?
6. What advice would you give to a friend who you notice is helicopter parenting?
7. When is your child most motivated? Least motivated?
8. What do you think of Dr. Laura’s assertion that praise can sabotage children? Do you feel comfortable warmly encouraging without traditional praise?
9. Can you imagine your home as a no-blame household? What would change? What would be the challenges?
10. What additional questions would you like your group to discuss?

Final questions

1. While it's preferable to build an emotionally intelligent brain right from the start, the brain is very plastic and renovation is always possible. That means it's never too late to transform your relationship with your child and their behavior. If there were one issue you could change with your child, what would it be?
2. Given all of the strategies Dr. Laura has laid out, what do you think you would have to do to create that change? What would be your first step?
3. Parenting, as Dr. Laura says, is "the toughest thing we do" and we can only give our child "what we have inside" so our first parenting responsibility is to take care of ourselves and regulate our own emotions. What could you do to take better care of yourself?
4. What could you do to regulate your own emotions better?
5. Do you use a mantra to keep yourself calm and on track when the going gets tough? What is it? If not, what small saying might help you in those moments?
6. If you parent with a partner, what is your plan to discuss these ideas with your partner?
7. Has your opinion on parenting changed since finishing this book?
8. Are there areas where you disagree with the ideas expressed in this book?
9. If you have one "take-away" from this book that will support you in being the parent you want to be, what is it?
10. What additional questions would you like your group to discuss?

Continue the Discussion!

Please leave a short “review” on Amazon or Barnes and Noble, or wherever you bought the book!

<http://www.amazon.com/Peaceful-Parent-Happy-Kids-Connecting/dp/0399160280>

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/peaceful-parent-happy-kids-laura-markham/1111344548?ean=9781101613627>

“Having Dr. Laura Markham on your bedside table is like having an angel on your shoulder, whispering useful secrets in your ear...[She] shows us how to replenish our spirits so we can give our kids the best of ourselves, not what’s left of ourselves.” -- Jack Canfield, cocreator of the Chicken Soup for the Soul books, from the foreword.