

JOURNAL PROMPTS

What were my biggest take-aways from this week's audio on emotions?

1.

2.

3.

In what ways do I currently support my child to develop emotional intelligence?

What is a realistic action step for me to take to get even better at this?

GOING DEEPER

Emotion Coaching – What Will You Say and Do?

Read the situations below. Under each scenario, write what you could say and do that would help your child with their big feelings—without necessarily doing what your child is asking.

You always begin with empathy, and sometimes that is enough. Certainly, the mistake we most often make as parents is to try to “fix” the child or the feeling, rather than just being with the emotions. But once your child has had a chance to feel the emotion, you will sometimes want to go further, using play or problem-solving to empower your child.

There are no right answer to these scenarios, but you’ll find examples of answers that support your child to work through her feelings with empathy, respect, and connection on the Week 4 Course Page under the Homework section. Please wait to download and read the "Example" answers until after you give yourself a chance to complete them on your own first. When you do read them, consider how you might adapt them to work with your own family.

1. Your child is disappointed that it’s raining.

What you say:

What you do:

2. Your child says she can’t sleep because she’s afraid of the dark.

What you say:

What you do:

3. Your child is angry at his sister.

What you say:

What you do:

4. Your child doesn't like the dinner you've fixed.

What you say:

What you do:

5. Your child misses her Daddy, who is on a business trip.

What you say:

What you do:

6. Your child begs for a toy at the store.

What you say:

What you do:

7. Your child shouts at you in anger.

What you say:

What you do:

8. Your child doesn't want to go to school in the morning.

What you say:

What you do:

9. Your child is jealous of his brother staying up late.

What you say:

What you do:

10. Your child loses the game and has a tantrum.

What you say:

What you do:

PRACTICE WITH YOUR CHILD

Emotion Coaching Practice

PRINT OUT AND TAPE TO YOUR REFRIGERATOR!

At some time in the next few days, your child will get upset about something. Instead of getting annoyed or upset yourself, seize the opportunity to practice your emotion coaching. Here are the steps. Print them out and post them so you have them handy.

Calm yourself. Take a few deep breaths. Remind yourself to see the situation from your child's point of view. Use a mantra, like *"Kids need love most when they 'deserve' it least."*

Create Safety with your calm, warm caring. Lower your voice and if your child will let you, touch him reassuringly.

Acknowledge his perspective and empathize. Don't say much. Just state what you see and commiserate: *"You wanted to go to the playground....You're mad at me that I'm saying we don't have time...I'm sorry it won't work today, Honey....I know you're disappointed."* Remember that kids often show you their upset more intensely when they feel your understanding, so there might be a momentary increase in your child's anger before they soften into sadness.

Accept the feelings. Your child has a right to be angry, or to cry. That's not misbehaving. Don't talk much. The more attentively you listen, the less he has to shout to feel heard. Keep everyone safe ("I won't let you hit me") but don't try to teach appropriate behavior while your child is upset. If you can stay warm and understanding, your child will be able to tell or show you how upset she is. That allows her to move through those big emotions and let them go.

Later, when everyone is calm, tell the story. *"We had a hard time, didn't we? You were so disappointed when I said we didn't have time to go to the playground today...You were sad and mad...You yelled at me....Then you cried...I hugged you and told you I understood...Then you felt a little better...It's hard when you want something very much and then it doesn't happen....I feel that way too, sometimes...It helps to tell someone how you feel....Let's have another big hug, and later we can talk about what to do next time you feel so mad you want to yell at someone."*

REFLECTION AFTER PRACTICE

What was your child upset about?

Were you able to calm yourself? What helped and what didn't help?

Did you feel you were able to "create safety"? What helped and what didn't help?

Were you able to find the words to acknowledge your child's perspective and empathize? What did you say?

How did your child react?

What “story” did you tell your child after he or she was more calm?

How did your child respond to the story?

How did you feel throughout this interaction?

What did you feel good about in this interaction?

What would you like to change in your next emotion-coaching interaction with your child?