



**“Good” communication involves our ability to be authentic, take responsibility for our experiences in life and stay in our frontal lobe AND to communicate in such a way that increases the odds that the receiver will be able to be more authentic, take responsibility for their experiences in life and stay in their frontal lobe.**

**Tips on how to keep children from falling back into their reptilian brain (and yourself):**

1. “I” messages. Take responsibility for your own experience.
2. Remember that most communication is non-verbal (kids and adults)- what is their behavior saying?
3. Children set us up to feel how they feel.
4. Be authentic. When you say something that is not congruent with your actions or body language, children get really confused and learn not to trust themselves.
5. Separate out personhood from behavior. “Johnny, you are a great kid and it is not ok to talk to me that way” (imp to use the word AND instead of BUT)
6. No labels. Name calling/labels is a way to not take responsibility and deal with your own feelings.
7. No sarcasm- sarcasm always has hidden messages.
8. Get curious about their experiences. Don’t deny their experience. Staying in a state of curiosity activates our prefrontal lobe and helps us not get stuck in reptilian brain.
9. Empathy- put yourself in their shoes.
10. Ask permission. Do not just launch into communicating with them about hard stuff.

When your child is telling you something that is emotionally important to them, make sure to listen with your full attention. Listen and then let them know what their story was. Once a child’s experience is heard and they are allowed to experience it, the behavior often changes. If you do not get it, they will often turn it up a notch.

1. Reflect back their experience. What you actually heard. Not your opinion about it or what to do about it.
  2. Did I get it?
  3. Can I share with you how I feel about that?
11. Speak in terms of what is most meaningful/inspiring to them.
  12. Don’t emotionally or physically overwhelm them. Learn the art of self-regulating.