

Why Correcting Backtalk Actually Makes It Worse

18 MIN · YOUTUBE · [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=P5-U0Wdz07G](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5-U0Wdz07G)

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SUMMARY

The discussion focuses on the counterproductive nature of correcting back talk in children, emphasizing that such responses can exacerbate the issue rather than resolve it. The speaker encourages parents to view back talk as feedback indicating a child's emotional state and to adopt a more empathetic approach that fosters better communication.

- *Correcting back talk often worsens the behavior over time, despite immediate compliance.*
- *Parents should view back talk as feedback about a child's emotional regulation rather than outright disrespect.*
- *Common times for back talk include mornings, after school, and before bedtime due to stress and fatigue.*
- *Slowing down and acknowledging a child's feelings can help reduce back talk and improve cooperation.*
- *Effective communication involves reflecting back what the child expresses and problem-solving together.*
- *Teaching children respectful language and communication skills is essential for reducing back talk.*
- *Parents should shift from being authoritative to being collaborative problem solvers in communication.*
- *Maintaining curiosity rather than criticism can soften a child's defenses and promote accountability.*

So, every time you correct back talk, you're actually making back talk worse. So, I was recently talking to a mom. She had a seven-year-old daughter. She was talking about how her daughter's back talk feels like it's just getting worse and worse and worse no matter what she does and says. [Music] And she was talking about how mornings are especially challenging for them. And she's commonly falling into this negative interaction where her daughter back talks her whenever she's, you know, giving her an instruction. And this mom admitted when, you know, we kind of talked a little bit more. She admitted that her response is, "Well, do you like it when I talk to you like that? Well, don't talk to me like that." and she admitted to kind of getting a little loud, getting a little sassy back, which first let me pause and say that as a mom of three, I completely understand where this mom is coming from. I have been this mom, right? Where you're like, "Excuse me, ma'am. What what's going on here?" Right? And it can catch us off guard, especially in the morning when we're just trying to get everything done and get out of the door. So, I just want to say that I can relate to this mom and I'm sure a lot of us can relate to like feeling very triggered around back talk and not always responding with our highest self. Okay, that's why you're here though. That's why we're learning.

That's why we're talking about these things because it's really important. And what this mom shared is it seems to be getting worse and worse. Like nothing is helping. But in the moment when she kind of challenges her daughter and says, "Don't talk to me like that." It actually feels like it's working because her daughter stops. She kind of shuts down. She, you know, lose, you know, starts to kind of back down off of her mom and listen a little bit better. And that is the trap. And that's the trap of yelling, spanking, punishing, whatever it is. Because in the

moment, it feels very effective. It's like, "Okay, look, I got your attention. I got through to you. You're listening to me now. There you go. Right. Don't talk to me like that. And it feels like it's working, but then you come to find later it just happens more and more. You're seeing these moments replay throughout the day.

Didn't mean to rhyme there, but you're seeing it over and over. Nothing is really working in the grand scheme of things, even though you're getting immediate payoff in the moment. And that is what's tricky because our brain sees the reward in the moment. And it's hard to rewire our brain to another response pattern which we're going to talk about. But though it's hard, it's very simple and it just takes a lot of practice. And so I'm going to kind of break it down step by step. But what I first need us to understand is the more that you correct back talk, the more you're making it worse. And this is very counterintuitive. And like we were talking about in the last episode, yes, we need to set boundaries and consequences around behavior, around how we treat each other, whether that's verbally or physically. Yes. And as the parent, we have to guide our child through these conversations. It's not enough to say, "You can't talk to me like that. Don't talk to me like that."

We have to guide them, right? Discipline and boundaries and consequences. It's all about teaching. So, if all we're trying to do is shut down the behavior, we're missing the whole point and we're going to see the we're going to see the misbehavior play out again and again and again. Not that our child is ever going to be perfect, but we're going to see these common negative cycles again and again if all we're doing is shutting down the back talk. I like to call this the correction trap where we focus so much on how our child is speaking to us that we forget that our main job is to teach them how to communicate in better ways. So we're focusing on how the message is communicated without really seeing the message and the emotions underneath the message. So here's where we kind of flip the script. As I say, the big flip is that we start to view back talk not as disrespect but as feedback. And feedback really from our child's brain saying they are dysregulated, they are overwhelmed, and something is not working. And there are four common backtalk windows, if you will. and not just back talk, but just more these windows of time during the day where we're more likely to see behavioral challenges and tantrums and aggression. The first being the morning.

And why? It's actually because the cortisol level, so the stress hormones are highest about 30 minutes um after we wake up. And then we're also more likely to see challenging behaviors like back talk after school. Why? because our child has been keeping it in all day and now it's time to kind of release these big emotions. And then there's that witching hour which is like 5 to 7. It's like right before bedtime. Their executive functioning is completely depleted after a long day of making choices and being on their hopefully as best behavior as they possibly can. They might not look tired, but they're oftentimes overtired. And we just see a lot of challenging behaviors at bedtime. So morning, bedtime, after school, common common times for back talk. And when we can kind of expect it and see it more from a developmental scientific perspective, if you will, then we're less likely to take it personal. Not that we don't set boundaries. Don't mishandle me. We always set boundaries around disrespectful language and we always teach our child how to treat us. But if we can kind of, okay, mornings are a little bit stressful. We got that cortisol spike.

All right, let me slow down. Okay, let me take a little bit more time. And that's really what your child needs, especially in the morning time and really throughout routines. And what happens is if we can help to lower our

child's stress, kind of get on their side, see what's underneath the message, slow down a little bit, then their stress goes down and they're actually more likely to cooperate with us. And so I think what's happening, especially when we're triggered and it's the morning and we're just trying to get out the door, it's like, "How dare you, right? Why are you talking to me like that? I'm your mother. I'm your father."

I'm trying to help you. I'm trying to get you ready for school. Like, it's so easy to take the back talk personal and like lash out. But if we can see it, oh, oh, this isn't about me. This is about your stress levels. This is about you being exhausted. This is also about you being overwhelmed. This is a communication breakdown between us. Now, I know where where I can intervene to be the most helpful. My mom always said, "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem. And I like to remind myself that as a parent, it's like, okay, I need to help with problem solving and communication. So, you know, getting on the same page communication wise. That's how I can be the most helpful in this situation. All right, let's get really practical here. I'm going to kind of share two scenarios.

One being kind of the old script and then the second one being a new script. So, old script, you know, mom says, "It's time to get dressed." And she and the child says, "I don't want to. You can't make me." No, whatever kind of back talk looks and sounds like. And this mom goes, "Don't be rude. Do you like it when I talk to you like that? Don't talk to me like that." And the child looks stops and she shuts down out of shame because now she's kind of internalized the criticism and she's like, "Okay, I better stop." Um, and so on the outside it looks like, "Wow, okay, this kind of worked. She's listening to me. She's respecting me."

But on the inside, we've kind of accidentally, why we don't mean to do this, but we've filled our child up with shame, which causes them to shut down, which then makes it more likely that in another stressful situation, she's just back to her old ways of backtalking, right? And meeting us with disrespect, and the cycle just continues. Okay, so how do we break out of the cycle? Mom says, "Okay, it's time to get dressed." Child says, "No, I don't want to. You can't make me." Okay. Okay. I see something about this is not working for you. Can you help me understand what's going on?

No, I don't want to. I'm tired. Okay. Yeah, I know you're tired. I'm tired, too. All right. What's the first best step we can take right now? Maybe you can say, "Mommy, can I have five more minutes to lay in my bed?" Mommy, can I have five more minutes to lay in my bed? Okay, just letting you know in five minutes we are going to need to get started getting dressed for school, but I'll give you some space.

Thank you for telling me what you need. Woo! Okay, now I'm not saying every situation is going to be like this. But in the second scenario, what did I do? I slowed down. I reflected back what she told me. This is such classic therapist move, but essentially we are we have to kind of be our child's therapist. And this works with romantic relationships, friendships. It's a communication skill. What did I do? Somebody told me something and I just reflected it back to show that I was listening, that I understood. And I think we take this for granted as parents and we are easily like just trying to hurry them along, right? We are panicked. We are stressed.

But I validated and I and I reflected back, oh yeah, yeah, you're really tired. You don't want to. Okay. All right.

So, something about this isn't working for you. What did I do? I labeled the problem. I labeled the situation. Now, we can problem solve a little bit better because I can see it. And I'm I'm kind of just stepping outside of you and me and looking at this situation a little bit more objectively. Something isn't working.

It's not about you. It's not about me. It's about this situation. Something's not working. There's a breakdown here. Okay. Right there. I'm softening her defenses. All right, mom is slowing down. She's not taking this personal. She's not mad at me. This is not about meeting her child with anger. Okay, it sounds like you need a little bit more time. You can say, "Mommy, can I have two more minutes to stay in bed? What am I doing there? I'm identifying a need and I'm teaching her how to ask me respectfully." That right there is going to automatically reduce back talk because I am teaching her what she needs to tell me in the moment. And then I respect it. I say, "Okay, 2 minutes, 5 minutes. Fine, you got it." Okay, what what is that teacher? Oh, wow. My words are powerful. Oh, wow. Mom is trying to work with me at as a team here. Oh, wow.

Okay, my needs are important. My needs are valid. They are respected. And that is key because if our child meets us with communication and asks us what for what they need and we consistently shut it down. No, you can't have five minutes. No, you can't have two minutes. And maybe we can't do five minutes. Let's say we can't do five minutes. Can we do 30 seconds? Can we do 60 seconds? Like where can we negotiate and be a little bit flexible? And that is like one of the best things we can do with our children is sure we might not be able to give them everything they're asking for, but where can we kind of meet them halfway? And I think we can so easily get stuck in our agenda. No, we got to go. We got to go. We got to go now. We got to go now. And it's like, well, chill, Jasmine. Do we need to go now? I'm always asking myself like, is this boundary acceptable? Is this boundary appropriate? where can I soften up a little bit? And I'm so glad that I followed up last week's episode with this week, which if you haven't watched, very, very important, watch it because I just want to kind of share there's levels to this. It's not to say, okay, our child needs boundaries and consequences, and that is the law. It's like, yes, our child absolutely needs structure, predictability, and order that keeps them safe. That makes them feel safe. and where can we meet our child where they're at in that moment?

Where can we be a little bit more flexible? Where can we try to problem solve with them? That doesn't always include our agenda, our original agenda, but still gets the task done eventually. Okay. So, now I want to give you even more scripts that you can kind of take with you, write them down, whatever you need to do to remember them because in the moment, again, we're going to get triggered. So, we need to have some ready to go scripts. So, let's imagine your child says, "I don't want to."

You're going to say, "It sounds like it isn't working for you right now. What do you need? It sounds like it's not working for you right now. Something isn't working. What do you need? Let's slow down. You're telling me something. Let's Can you tell me a little bit more?" Right. Number two, you can't make me. Oh, you're right. I can't make you. Let's find a way that we can do this as a team. Three, you're not my best friend. I hear you saying you're really upset with me right now. You can say, I feel upset when I'm always teaching my daughter I statements. I feel blank when you do blank. I need blank. What a wonderful communication tool, right? So, you're not my best friend or whatever it is.

See underneath it. Sounds like you're upset. You can say, "I'm upset." Right? And that that right there, that's the boundary. That's the consequence. I'm slowing down to teach you how to treat me. That is teaching your child respectful language. Not don't talk to me like that. How dare you? Do you're being rude. Do you like when I talk to you like that? Well, there. Right. No, no, no. What do we want our child to say? Teach it to them and prompt them to redo the moment. So, line feed them better words. So, what you're trying to tell me is this feels hard, right? What you're I think what you're trying to tell me is blank. And then that's where your child can repeat what you say.

Okay? I even do this with my toddler all the time, right? He's now talking more and more and more. So, as their communication skills get better, you want to teach them how to talk, right? They're going to naturally pick up language, but how do we talk in certain situations? That's the skill. That's the social skill mixed in with the emotional regulation skill mixed in with problem solving skills mixed in with conflict resolution skills. I have to teach him this right line by line. So the key shift here is to switch from almighty all knowing authority figure.

So a little critical, a little sassy, a little you know snap. We we want to make that shift from that person to problem solver. And remember, we can't teach our child without becoming the person that we want them to become. Meaning, if we want our child to talk more respectfully to us and cut back on back talk, we have to model it for them in the moment, which I know is a lot easier said than done. Believe me, trust and believe. I do not always get these moments right, but I always circle back. Man, that was a really hard moment.

I didn't show up the way I wanted to show up and you know, we had a hard time working as a team. Let's go back to that moment. I think what you were trying to say was this. What I was trying to say was this. You see where I'm going with this? We want to model and circle back to these moments. Um, if we want to kind of teach them, and remember, it's an ongoing process. It takes a lot of redoss, lots of practice, lots of messing up. But we want to shift from being this, you know, all- knowing authority figure to a problem solver who comes alongside them and helps them to communicate when they're upset. So here's a reflection question to take with you this week and that is when my child back talks me or you know meets with meets me with a level of disrespect that I perceive in that moment am I more likely to try to shut it down and kind of be critical of them and the way they're talking to me or do I slow down and stay a little bit curious and that's the goal is to slow down and stay curious instead of critical because when we can maintain maintain a state of curiosity.

It actually softens our child's defenses and makes it more likely that they can self-reflect and meet us with accountability and actually redo the moment and try things a little bit different. So, the mantra to take with you uh is if I'm not a part of the solution, I'm part of the problem. That that's my life mantra there. Shout out to my mom. I hope this episode was helpful for you. If you are listening over on podcast, hey, I would love if you could shoot me a DM. Let me know your thoughts, questions, and if you are on YouTube, drop them down below in the comments. Let me know if you have any other questions. We can keep this ongoing. Make keep the conversation going. If you need more help with discipline, if you need a concrete plan, if you have questions that you want to ask me and get more of my feedback and vibe with other parents, I just want to let you know that I am teaching a live discipline master class. It's perfect for parents of kids between the ages of 0 and 10. Discipline really starts in the 9 month 12 month range. Um, so we're going to be talking about discipline.

I'm going to be giving you your plan. So you walk out of the class with a plan, knowing what to do and say in difficult moments and get all your questions answered. We always have such a fun time. So I hope to see you there. You can go ahead and check the link. It'll be in the description and the comment section. I'll pin a comment with the link. There will be a recording available to everyone who registers. So I hope to see you there. I will see you in the next episode. Bye.