

Why Won't My Kids Listen to Anything I Say?

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SUMMARY

The video introduces the Good Inside Membership, a community-driven platform designed to provide parents with expert guidance and resources for modern parenting challenges. Dr. Becky, a clinical psychologist and mother, emphasizes the importance of understanding children's behavior, particularly around listening and cooperation, and offers practical strategies for fostering better communication and connection with kids.

- The Good Inside Membership offers a library of resources, including videos, articles, and workshops on parenting topics.*
- Listening struggles with children often stem from issues of cooperation rather than actual listening.*
- Parents should connect with their children before asking them to do something they may not want to do.*
- Providing choices to children can empower them and increase their willingness to cooperate.*
- Transitioning between activities can be challenging for kids; practicing these transitions in advance can help ease the process.*
- The "close your eyes trick" is a playful method to encourage children to comply with requests by giving them a sense of control.*
- Setting clear boundaries is crucial; parents should focus on what they will do rather than what they want their children to stop doing.*
- Parenting requires patience and understanding, recognizing that children are often struggling with their own feelings and transitions.*

why is it so hard to find reliable answers to parenting questions how is it in 2022 parents still search on google for answers from strangers well now there's a better way introducing the good inside membership an expert guided community-powered platform redefining modern parenting in our library you'll find hundreds of bite-sized videos articles scripts and workshops tackling the trickiest parenting topics and it doesn't stop

here we've created a private community guided by me dr becky and coaches trained in the good inside parenting method here you can ask questions connect with other parents or attend a live event on a topic that matters to you this is the parenting handbook that doesn't exist this is parenting advice at your fingertips where you need it when you need it the most this is good inside membership hi i'm dr becky and this is good inside

i'm a clinical psychologist and mom of three on a mission to rethink the way we raise our children [Music] i love translating deep thoughts about parenting into practical actionable strategies that you can use in your home right away one of my core beliefs is that we are all doing the best we can with the resources we have available to us in that moment so even as we struggle and even as we are having a hard time on

the outside we remain good inside [Music] today we'll be talking all about listening together we'll rethink what's really happening when our kids aren't listening to us and i will be giving you a ton of different strategies that you can start using in your home right away let's start with a question from dava who has a five-year-old and a two-year-old

hi dr becky i've locked up my children to listen to anything i say i have to practically beg them to go outside sledding and then once they're outside they're having a great time but to get them to get their clothes on and my patience just is so so low recently so little patience and i just feel like all i do is repeat myself and get angry and then you know threaten to take things away from them

it doesn't feel good and i don't know what to do thanks dr becky bye dava first of all i totally feel for you i have had so many difficult stages of not listening with my kids and it is exhausting and i've been there how i want to kind of begin is with a framework around listening right because to me we can never come up with successful interventions if those interventions aren't based on an

understanding of the situation that actually makes sense and i think listening is one of the most misunderstood struggles with kids so here's how i'd like to frame it when we talk about listening we're not really talking about listening because i don't know any kid who wouldn't listen if we say extra ice cream sundae on the table or come to the couch right away and you can watch five hours of tv right they'd all listen so what are we really talking

about we're really talking about cooperation or even compliance we're really talking about what happens when i ask my child to do something i want her to do that she doesn't want to do and for me i always come back to myself thinking well what's it like for me when someone asks me to do something that that person wants me to do but i don't want to do and i think about how so much of how i

respond is based on how close i feel to the person in that moment right if i was sitting on the couch in a free moment and i was finally reading a novel or even just scrolling on my phone or drinking a cup of tea and if my partner who was also on the couch said hey becky can you unload the dishwasher and then bring me a glass of water and i said uh no i'm thinking about how i'd feel if he

said to me becky you have a listening problem you're really disrespectful this is a big issue and you cannot have your ipad for a week right i think we all know i would have really strong choice words to say to him that i will not say on air and i would be livid i would feel disrespected right and then further it makes me think what would have had to happen in that moment or even earlier in the day for me to say

sure sweetie i'll get that from you you know sure sweetie i can do that for you well a couple things first of all i would need him to see what was happening for me before he asked right my oldest kid always says this to me he goes parents are always asking kids to stop doing something fun to do something less fun and i think that's true so if my husband had said to me oh i see you're reading

that book that probably feels really good i know can you get me a glass of water from the kitchen the chances just skyrocketed that i would say yes why we need to generate a feeling of feeling seen before we ask someone to do something for us we have to say to someone essentially i see you as a real person doing something you enjoy i am connecting to you before i ask you to do something that's a priority in my world

so let's bring this back to your house and to your kids before we ask our kids to get dressed and leave the house we have to do something that connects to them in that moment here's a variety of things oh i see you playing with blocks so fun to play with blocks isn't it it is time to get dressed so different than saying it's time to get dressed right what else could we say to kind of

connect and help that person feel seen we might say something like this it's going to be time to turn off the tv soon i know turning off the tv is so hard in a minute we're going to turn off the tv and it's going to be time to get dressed again i'm generating this feeling inside my kid that i see him i see him as a real person i acknowledge him after that we are all more likely to cooperate

because we feel closer to someone so dave we have this first idea that kids need to feel seen first this pairs really nicely with another idea which is giving a child a choice giving a child a choice is a powerful way to engage cooperation because a child feels in control as opposed to a child feeling like they are being controlled and we all are looking to have agency in the things that are going to happen in our life so

after you've said something to your child like oh i see you're playing with blocks it is time to get dressed give a child a choice that is something you don't actually care about the outcome too but again gives that control to your child so it might be bringing two different shirts do you want to wear the blue shirt or the red shirt or sometimes i also like to infuse playfulness into that choice do you want mom to jump up

and down on one foot while you're getting dressed or do you want me to spin around in circles until i get so dizzy i fall down oh you want me to spin around okay i'm gonna start spinning while you start getting dressed and all of a sudden now i've helped my child feel seen i've added connection i've given my child agency through giving my child the choice and we are having a much higher likelihood of engaging

cooperation [Music] let's hear from remy who's calling with a question about her four-year-old son hi dr becky my name is remy i have a four-year-old son and we live in new york um sometimes we encounter tricky situations where i need my son to do things and listen to me in a certain amount of time for example when it's bath time getting in the bath and then when it's time to get out of the bath

getting him out and even sometimes getting in the car to go to school and then it's hard to get out of the car when we're at school so i would love to hear your thoughts on the best tools and methods to use in those situations when you're asking your child to do something and you really need their um their cooperation in a timely manner um what some of the best tips and tricks are to you thank you so much

hi remy thank you so much for calling in and you're talking about so many transitions here and it's so important to talk about this because listening is often a struggle around transitions and here's why transitions are really hard for kids i mean frankly transitions can be hard for me too but transitions mean something to kids right it means losing one thing and having to move to the next thing or go on to some next stage so a transition to

bath means night time's coming transition to putting your coat on and putting your shoes on to leave means i'm about to say goodbye to my mom and go to school keeping that in mind softens us a little bit that when my kid is struggling in a transition my kid is really struggling with making the shift and kind of moving from one thing to the next so there's two strategies i want to talk about here first prep and practice to me those go

together so let's talk about bath time if getting to bath is always challenging prep and practice with dry runs earlier in the day kids love this type of practice it's always a little silly to practice something at a different time of day so if you do bath usually at 6 pm practice a dry run at 8 in the morning right and you can say something like this oh getting to bath has been really tricky there's something that feels

really really hard about it you know what i'm thinking about when something's hard for me one of the things i do is practice in advance let's practice bath time right now hopefully your kid is fully dressed right and it's clearly not bath time and this makes it silly when we add playfulness and connection to moments that when they come often feel stressful we actually change that moment because we're layering in connectivity to something that often is

only encoded with frustration and aloneness so it actually starts to change the transition when we practice in this way so let's say it's 8 a.m and your son zach is in his pajamas on a weekend it's clearly not bath time oh let's do that practice thing okay zach it's bath time right and kind of be silly and kind of exaggerate it now let's say zach says because a lot of kids love this they'll say okay let's do bath

because again they think it's play i might whisper and say oh remember sometimes you don't love doing bath why don't you say back to me no i don't want to go to the bath and now you can practice a skill right you could practice your remembering to give your child a choice to empower him to feel more in control so now in the practice you can say okay zach i know you don't want to do bath

you can either run to the bath or i can zoom you to the bath so now we're kind of shifting the moment by adding playfulness and we're also infusing this other strategy where we're giving a choice now let's say night time comes right now what you can do around bath time is say oh remember when we zoomed to the bath right you can even pull on a strategy that helped or even if you don't bring it back to that you've

already made it more likely that your child will cooperate because they've had some successful moments earlier on cooperation is much more likely when everyone feels more comfortable so practicing it with kind of this dry run approach helps you do that the same thing would happen with putting your jacket on pretend to be leaving when your kid's in pajamas pretend to go out of the door then you have your jacket on you get out of the door you could laugh

oh we're not going anywhere we're in our pajamas and it's a cold day outside we don't even have sneakers let's go back inside and then maybe give your kid a high five great job putting on your jacket that was awesome now the next thing i want to talk about is one of my favorite hacks right i'm not a big fan of kind of hacks and tricks in general because so many of them feel like they kind of prioritize a

short-term gain but don't work on some larger more important skill but this hack the one i'm about to share that i call the close your eyes trick is so powerful because what actually is happening is actually really important in kind of gaining your kids cooperation right so i want to zoom out and then i'll go zoom back in to go over this listening hack what helps us cooperate any of us adults and children we like to

feel respected we like to feel seen we like to feel in control nobody likes to feel done to not a child and not an adult right picture yourself working on a project at work and your boss comes up to you and says while looking over you and your computer you are doing this report all wrong you need to change the font and you need to add more to this paragraph and you need to totally restructure this now pause

and now imagine your boss standing next to you watching you type and just imagine how that would feel versus your boss saying something like that and then saying okay i'm gonna leave your office kind of let me know when you're finished think about how much better it feels to have a little more distance right so keeping all that in mind let me go into this close your eyes trick so let's say it's time for zach to put on his jacket

and it's not happening here's how it would go okay zach it's time to put on that jacket okay you know what i'm gonna do i'm gonna close my eyes and i'd put my hands over my eyes say and all i'm saying all i'm saying is when i open my eyes if there if there's a kid with a jacket on oh my goodness i do not know what i'm gonna do i'm gonna i don't even know i'd have to jump on one foot for

like 20 jumps i'd have to do a really silly dance i might have to roll on the floor i'm going to be so confused if this kid in front of me has a jacket on i don't even know what i'm going to do now you can do this with your hands over your eyes and kind of peer through a little bit and maintain this position until you notice your child likely actually going to do this thing you've

asked and then when you open your eyes do the thing you said oh no oh i have to do that silly dance what kind of silly dance do i have to do please don't make me do the silly dance where i wiggle my whole body up and down 10 different times and of course your kid will ask you to do that and all of a sudden this moment feels silly and connected instead of frustrating why does this help

we are giving our kids so much in that moment we are actually giving them control and independence by closing our eyes because we're essentially saying i trust you i trust you to figure this out we're giving our kid that same space we would want to redo a project without someone looking over us and we're adding that element a fun of silliness of playfulness our kids love to be in control kids love to feel like they're tricking us and our kids love when we're

willing to be silly and funny and i think this listening hack is so impactful and works so many times over and over because we're infusing all of those key ideas at once remy i hope this was helpful let me know how it goes now our last caller asena so my daughter's name is eliana and she's three years old and a tricky situation and my household looks like

her throwing food or you know just pouring juice water and milk on the floor you know knowing it's gonna stop me and i tell her you know we don't pour we i try to use positive language i tell her you know we drink our water or when you're finished please give it to me or leave it on the table um or you know throw them in the garbage but you know she uh kind of does it on purpose i feel

and just runs away from me and just pours on the you know on her mat or on the floor um she helps me clean up afterwards you know i i asked her to help me clean up afterwards um but i don't know how to kind of stop or fade that behavior away i don't believe in punishment i don't really believe in you know timeouts or anything like that because it goes along with your philosophy as well

so i don't know how to handle that situation thank you so much okay so first of all acena let me just say that as a mom myself i feel how frustrating it is when your child is doing something over and over and over and you're not sure how to kind of shift this so i've been in those situations myself and i know how challenging that is i actually want to start by reframing this because the framework

with which we kind of view a situation with our child is going to determine how we intervene so i know for me the first thing i always ask myself is well how do i want to frame what's really happening and to me what's key is that this actually is not a listening struggle i think this is more of an issue of boundaries so let me explain because i think that distinction is really really important and comes up a lot

when our child repeatedly does something that we ask her to stop this is not a listening problem rather this is something where we as a parent need to assert our authority to stop that behavior from happening again we can't ask our kids to be responsible for stopping a behavior that they continually show us they're not capable of stopping this doesn't mean we can't be frustrated by this of course we can

but we have to realize this is a time i have to step in not a time i can ask my child to have a skill that she clearly doesn't have in that moment and then as a first strategy i want to talk about the phrase i won't let you there's a huge difference between saying to our kids i won't let you versus we don't or please stop and the biggest difference is whether we're focusing on what we are doing as a parent or what we

want our kid to be doing we can't control our kids behavior we can control what we do when we watch our child be out of control as an example i always think let's think about our kids on the sidewalk we're walking with a kid on a sidewalk and our kid starts running toward the street i don't think any of us would ever say please stop running into the street or sweetie we don't run into streets we

would never say that we would run and we would hold our child and whether we would say it in words or just with our bodies we'd really be communicating i won't let you run into the street right this is really really critical because our number one job as a parent is to help our kids stay safe and make good decisions and sometimes this means us making that safety happen by making those decisions when they can't we have to realize as parents we need to

at times embolden ourselves to embody our authority and set a boundary not because we have a bad kid not because we have a rebellious kid or a kid who's trying to give us a hard time we have a kid who's out of control and when we notice that it's our job to step in our boundaries are not what we tell our kids not to do our boundaries are what we tell our kids we will do i want to say that again because it's so

critical our boundaries aren't telling our kids what not to do stop pressing the elevator buttons we don't throw food on the floor our boundaries are telling our kids what we will do i won't let you throw the food on the floor right so what would this actually look like in practice first before we even get to the high chair if i know my child tends to throw food i want to kind of get in there before we get to the eating moment and i

would do this with a boundary and with compassion i think we often forget we can do both at the same time so you and eliana are in her room before dinner and i'd say this hey sweetie you know what i've noticed it's been really hard to keep your food on the tray i know it's so fun to throw things and see where they go i won't let you throw food so before we go to dinner let's take

whatever you have let's take these soft stuffed animals let's take these um tissues anything you have and throw throw throw throw we can throw these stuffed animals we can throw these softballs let's get all of the throwing energy out of your hands because it's so fun to throw and watch things go to the ground and then i'd actually do that i'm giving my child an opportunity to express the urge in a way that works rather than in a way that doesn't work

then after that i would bring my child to the table and i would say something like this here's the thing food stays on the tray or it can go in your mouth those are the only options and then i'd also say something like this if i anticipated that the throwing of the food might still happen i'd say if it's too hard to keep your food on the tray i'll take away the tray and will keep practicing eating just one

piece of food at a time until you're able to eat your food without throwing i'm not saying this to be punitive i'm not saying this to be harsh i'm saying this because i am setting the boundary for my child now let's say i do this i do the throwing the stuffed animals i set this boundary in a compassionate loving way does that mean my child's going to quote cooperate no maybe not in fact if it was one of my kids they might

still do the throwing this doesn't mean you did anything wrong it's just time for a different version of the boundary because my child is struggling to make a good decision so your child will throw and at that point i'd take away the tray i'd feed my kid a piece of food at a time with a fork or maybe i'd just put one piece of food at a time on the tray and even if my child protests

i would hold that boundary and say something like this i know i know you want to have all the food at once i know that so hard we will keep working on this what's key is to remind yourself i know what i'm doing i'm the parent i need to show my child i can be a sturdy leader not a punitive one not a harsh one i can be a leader who can help her make good decisions

when she cannot do it my child is still allowed to be upset so frustrating we feel like we crush this parenting intervention and my kid still is crying that's okay remind yourself my job is those boundaries and the validation my child's job is to feel and express her feelings we're actually both doing our jobs it's kind of messy it's definitely depleting and exhausting but we're both doing exactly what we need to be doing i hope this resonated this idea of kind

of shifting the focus away from listening and toward the idea of boundaries if this is new for you the language of i won't let you or here is what will happen if you have a hard time that's something i would without a doubt encourage you to practice to say out loud to say in front of a mirror to say in front of a voice recorder and have it play it back to you new things always feel uncomfortable in

our bodies so if it feels a little awkward remind yourself you're doing something new and new is always a sign of change so those are all the questions we have this week and dava remy and asena thank you so much for sharing your stories with us let's bring it all together here are three key takeaways from this episode number one listening is rarely really about listening we're really talking about what happens when we ask our kid to do something we want our kid

to do that our child does not want to do number two embrace and experiment with that close your eyes trick i think you'll all be surprised at how effective it is and number three when you're in a listening struggle ask yourself might this be less about listening and more about my needing to own my authority and set firmer boundaries [Music] thanks for listening to good inside let's stay connected at goodinside.com you can sign up for workshops and

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so please know that your feedback is meaningful to me let's end by placing our hands on our hearts and reminding ourselves even as i struggle and even as i have a hard time on the outside i remain good inside

you