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PRESENTS:

PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

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Reasoning with Children

"I don't know what's wrong with those kids. They never listen to a thing I tell them. I might as well be talking to the wall for all they care!"

Does this sound familiar? How do we get kids to listen and benefit from our experience and knowledge? Maybe it's just asking too much. Or is it?

We could blame this problem on the belief that youngsters are just headstrong and determined to learn the hard way. It's also possible that many parents try to reason with their children at the wrong time. This greatly reduces their chances for success.

We've all watched parents give their children a "good talking to" with little or no positive results. This is unfortunate because the adult not only had good intentions but good advice to share. The only trouble was that the child was not in an emotional state that would allow listening and use of the adult's wisdom.

The words we use with our kids during emotional times are wasted – They are either never heard or are turned against us. We all have difficulty listening during emotional times. It's natural, at times like these, to focus most of our thoughts upon the emotions rather than the words being spoken. As a result, we remember the other person's anger better than we remember the words.

A child at the dinner table who is not eating and who is complaining about the food provides a good example. Reminders in this case seem to do little good.

One parent might handle it by using angry-sounding words like, "What's wrong with you? Don't you come to the table with that attitude. You quit that complaining", or "I'll really give you something to complain about!" My guess here is that the child is thinking a lot about the adult's anger and little about the wisdom of eating a good meal.

Use soft words with actions - Another parent might replace these angry words with soft words and action: "I'll be picking up the food and dishes in five minutes. I hope by then you will have eaten all you need to hold you until breakfast." Nothing is said if the youngster does not eat. The words are saved for a time when the child will be better able to listen.

It is obvious that the child will be hungry later and say, "I'm hungry. What can I have?"

This wise parent knows that the youngster will learn more when few words are used: "I bet you are. That's what happens to me when I miss my dinner. I bet you'll be anxious for breakfast. Don't worry. We'll cook a good one."

This parent chose to save the words for a time when the child was in the **thinking state** rather than in the **emotional state**. The best time for reason is when both the child and the adult are happy. This is the time when the best thinking and learning can take place.



Save the Words for Happy Times