

## PARENTING TIP

### Listening



As Jesus said, “out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.” Parents can use this principle to understand into a child’s heart. Listening becomes key.

It’s surprising how many times we ask kids why they don’t talk to their parents and hear the answer: “Because they don’t listen to me.” Yes, it’s true some children confuse listening with agreeing. On the other hand, we find some parents really don’t listen to their children, whether they agree or not. They’re irritated by the illogic, different viewpoints, or naïve opinions of their children.

Listening can feel like torture as a child goes on and on about things that don’t make sense to the parent. It’s in these moments, however, that parents can learn a lot about a child’s heart. Children may be wrong, but they’re usually following some kind of internal logic. Listening allows you to figure out what’s going on and offer correction where helpful.

As you listen to your kids talk, try to discern what may be distracting them from understanding the truth. Don’t feel like you have to point out on the spot. Take time to listen and make mental notes of errors in their thinking. Look for creative ways to help them understand truth more fully.

An accepting, safe, listening ear, often opens the heart in ways that nothing else can. As you listen to your child, you’ll learn about dreams, goals, and commitments. Good or bad, time spent listening to your children gives you a greater sense of what’s going on inside, offering you ideas and direction about heart change that’s needed.

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This tip comes from the book *Parenting is Heart Work* by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN