

Positive+Parent™ Newsletter

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TEACHING OUR KIDS TO BE NON-JUDGMENTAL

"It takes a good deal of character to judge a person by his future instead of his past" - Ralph Waldo Emerson(?)

You have most probably heard the story of the man who gets onto a subway in New York City at a very late hour with many of his kids in tow. The kids are being very boisterous, to put it mildly, and the man is distracted and not controlling them at all. A fellow passenger is getting more and more annoyed until she finally says something to him about controlling his kids. He looks up, still distracted and when he understands what the lady is saying he apologizes. "I'm sorry. I am just coming from the hospital where my wife just passed away and I am thinking about how things are going to be different."

While most of us never verbalize our judgments about others to them, that doesn't stop us from thinking them. And often, we tell our judgments to others – also known as gossip. This really is a scourge in our society.

If we look at it from the perspective of evolution, it makes sense that we have a negative bias, always seeing the worst possible outcome. If you were a hunter walking in the meadow and the grass started rustling, you had to decide if it was the wind moving the grass or if it was a lion getting ready to pounce on you. If you has a positive bias and thought it was the wind but it was really a lion, you were in really big trouble. On the other hand, if you had a negative bias and you thought it was a lion and it was really the

wind, you would run and nothing would happen. You would get to laugh about it the next day. From this perspective, a negative bias is a good thing. But, like so many things that served our species well 10,000 years ago, we have to change with the new reality that faces us.

Today, having a negative bias about people distances us from them. As Mother Theresa tells us, it prevents

us from loving one another. And it certainly does not help to create good relationships.

Even most adults don't realize this, so how could we expect that our kids will know it intuitively? We have to teach them to minimize their judgment of others. How do we do this?

First, our kids have to be aware of it. We could do this by telling them how we ourselves are

sometimes judgmental of someone. How we realize we were doing it and how we stop ourselves. Also, if our kids are ever being judgmental, we can gently tell them that it is not such a good idea.

The next step is to accept people just the way they are. We know that we really cannot change others, heck, we can barely change ourselves. So instead of "knocking our head against the wall", just accept people as they are.

Finally, love them. Love the people that we are judging. I know it is difficult, but if your kids practice this, they will be loving to everyone – to strangers, to friends, to you, and most importantly, to themselves! And wouldn't that be nice!

**"If you judge people, you have no time to love them."
Mother Teresa**

You can reach me by email at DrShaya@PositiveParentPlus.com I love to hear reader comments.

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