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### **Sample Parenting Soundbites for Covid-19 and Beyond**

“Yes, you are right, I’m yelling right now. That’s not going help either of us. I apologize. I’m going to collect myself and let’s try to discuss this calmly in a few minutes.”

“I hear that’s how you see it. I see it differently. It may help us to move on if we agree to disagree instead of continuing to fight.”

“I can see that you’re very frustrated. Just know I’m here for you if you’d like to talk.”

“I hope that once we calm down, we will be able to have a constructive conversation about this.”

“I can’t control the way you choose to speak to me [or your sibling, other parent, relative] when you are upset. I think you will feel better by being more respectful.”

“It’ll work better for both of us if you can say what you mean without saying it meanly.”

“There’s a reactive side of me, as your parent, that now wants to yell and get controlling. Just being aware and expressing this is helping me stay calmer. How about we talk this out so we can understand each other better?”

“Can I throw out a few ideas about what I think is upsetting you and you can tell me whether I’m getting warmer or colder?”

“You know what you are doing right now is a really good example of you calming down even though I know you feel strongly about this. I really admire how you are able to keep your cool.”

“The way you’re being flexible right now really impresses me.”

“I appreciate how cooperative you are being during this difficult time.”

### **Reference Books by Jeffrey Bernstein, Ph.D.**

- [\*The Stress Survival Guide for Teens\*](#)
- [\*10 Days to a Less Defiant Child 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.\*](#)
- [\*The Anxiety, Depression, & Anger Toolbox for Teens\*](#)
- [\*The Letting Go of Anger Card Deck\*](#)
- [\*Mindfulness for Teen Worry\*](#)

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### Tips for Helping Your Child Emotionally & Academically in a Virtual World

- **It is easy to overlook your child’s underlying emotions.** Children’s and teens’ frustrations, negative behaviors, and avoidance patterns may be driven or exacerbated by their unspoken inner angst. Stay tuned in to the anxiety (often reflected by, “What if’s?”) over the changing unknowns facing you and your child.
- **Remember that your kids are, well—kids.** The human brain does not fully mature until the mid-twenties. We tend to sometimes forget this, especially in times of stress!
- **Take the position of parent/coach over reactive parent.** When you and listen, truly listen, you will promote Constructive Conversations. The more you can talk things out, the less you will need “time out” and over-the-top consequences leading to fruitless power struggles! By seeing yourself as your child’s emotion coach, you’ll feel more effective as a parent. Switching into coach mode helps you not take things too personally. The less rattled you get about how your kids SHOULD show you respect—the more likely they will do so.
- **Focus your coaching mindset to help your child/teen gain two crucial skills:** Calming Down and Problem Solving. Showing understanding and then gently offering ideas to overcome challenges.
- **Limit all or nothing, pressuring, negative/judgmental language.** A big culprit here is “Shoulding” on your children (e.g. “You should get your schoolwork now!). While your frustrations as a parent are understandable, speaking in pressuring ways will likely invite push back and resistance—or shut downs!
- **Don’t confuse discipline and harsh consequences to promote accountability.** Delivering consequences when your child is emotionally dysregulated, or when you are, creates an adversarial dynamic. *Dependable Discipline* is about teaching not provoking negative emotions.
- **Foster grit by reinforcing strengths.** First explore what’s going well and then what could be working better. This leads to more openness than starting with problems.
- **Practice and model gratitude.** You’ll feel less stressed out by valuing the positives in your life. Start a gratitude jar and put little notes inside about things to be thankful for. Encourage your child to create a gratitude journal or use a gratitude App are great options too.

References: [\*The Stress Survival Guide for Teens, 10 Days to a Less Defiant Child 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.\*](#)

[\*The Anxiety, Depression, & Anger Toolbox for Teens, The Letting Go of Anger Card Deck\*](#)

[\*Mindfulness for Teen Worry\*](#)