

Enforceable Statements: A highly effective tool that I teach to parents

Myrna Lapres
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Based on 7 Gifts to Give Your Child--Parenting That Will Touch Their Future

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Enforceable Statements

A highly effective tool that I teach to parents is the *Enforceable Statement*, also known as *Turning Your Words to Gold*. If you are like most parents, you find yourself telling your child things like, "Sit down," "Be Quiet," "Hurry up," or "Brush your teeth right now." The problem with these statements is that you are telling them to do something that you cannot

control. Children quickly learn to test, push our buttons, and even win battles. Every time we tell our child to do something that we cannot enforce, we give away some of our power and a lot of our credibility.

Using an enforceable statement is describing what I as the parent will or can do. An enforceable statement might sound like this:

- “Breakfast will be on the table for the next 15 minutes.” (Or until the timer rings for a young child.)
- “I listen to people who do not yell at me.”
- “I give dessert/treats to children who protect their teeth by brushing.”
- “We will leave for school/the park/your friend’s as soon as you have your coat and shoes on. Would you like to do it by yourself or would you like help?”
- “Feel free to go out back and play as soon as your homework is finished.”
- “You may join us on the couch as long as you keep your hands to yourself.”

Another way to think about the effectiveness of enforceable statements is that we are using words that help our child think about what is being communicated; we are using thinking words instead of fighting words. Some examples are:

- **Fighting words:** “Don’t talk to me like that!”
- **Thinking words:** “You sound upset. I’ll be glad to listen when your voice sounds like mine.”
- **Fighting words:** “Quit fighting and treat each other nicely.”
- **Thinking words:** “You are welcome to come back as soon as the two of you work out the issue.”
- **Fighting words:** “I want that lawn cut now.”
- **Thinking words:** “I’ll be happy to take you to your soccer game as soon as the lawn mowing is finished.”

Enforceable statements partner with sharing control as I discussed in a previous blog post: [gifts-we-can-give-our-children-sharing-control.html](https://www.coachmyrna.org/gifts-we-can-give-our-children-sharing-control.html). Control is a basic human need. All of us fight to gain power and feel in control of our lives.

Parenting is one of the most rewarding and yet challenging roles that one can have. And it is a responsibility that we take on with very little preparation. Using my recently published book, ***7 Gifts to Give Your Child--Parenting That Will Touch Their Future***, as the foundation for discussion, I will be holding a 7 week series where you can find tools and support for you on your parenting journey. The target audience for this 7-week series is for parents of all age children although the discussion groups will be assigned by stages in life (new parents, parents of elementary age, parents of teens, parents of adult children.)

Each weekly session will focus on one chapter: The Gifts of **Belonging, Connection, Resilience, Wisdom, Accountability, Experience** and **Being the Best Parent You Can Be**. The weekly session will include **Education, Small Group Discussion, and Application**. For more information and to register: www.coachmyrna.org/7gifts.html

If you would like to know more about what I offer as a coach, please visit my website: www.coachmyrna.org/ Find out more about Safe Conversations www.coachmyrna.org/safe-conversations.html.