

The Three E's: Example, Experience and Empathy

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The Three E's

Do you have a child who has become truthfulness-challenged? If so, there is hope. As a conscientious parent, you can turn the tide on truth-bending behavior by applying the Three E's: Example, Experience, and Empathy. These three techniques can be applied to a variety of parenting experiences whether our child is two or twenty.

The First "E": Example

Obviously, parents who act truthfully around their child are far more likely to have a truthful child. A not-so-obvious application of good modeling involves discussing our moral dilemmas with others when our child is within earshot. This can even be accomplished by having a "conversation" on the telephone recounting a recent situation. When our child overhears us talking about temptations, and how we've chosen truthfulness instead of deceit, powerful lessons get locked in.

The Second "E": Experience

When a child lies, they need to experience logical consequences. One of the most practical involves expecting them to replace any energy they've drained from us because of their fibbing. Does lying drain your parental energy? This is a wonderful time to introduce the Energy Drain. www.coachmyrna.org/blog/energy-drain

The Third "E": Empathy

Consequences preceded with empathy are far more effective than consequences delivered with anger, guilt, or sarcasm. An added benefit of responding to our child's mistakes with empathy is that they'll be far more likely to admit making them. Do we want our child to be afraid of us when they blunder? Do we want them to hide their mistakes rather than bringing them to our attention? Of course not. That's why it's so important to discipline with love rather than lectures. Approaching with empathy, curiosity, and the desire to understand will keep the connection between parent and child thriving.

Using the Three E's—example, experience, and empathy—we can guide our child to gain understanding and wisdom about the impact of their behavior and choices on the quality of their life and their relationships with others. Naturally, the Three E's are adaptable to many other areas of parenting besides lying. Think about situations with your own children where you could apply the Three E's.

Understanding that we are most effective as parents when we teach by example, we can see how important it is that our daily life resembles being courteous, grateful, appreciative, and being responsible. Modeling is one of the most powerful ways that we can parent. Developing manners, respect, consideration, and appreciation towards ourselves and others are habits that need to be practiced and cultivated within our family. The things that we focus on the most are the things that we will do the best. Focusing on positive habits develops habits that contribute to present and future wisdom about healthy relationships. Doing all of this is also the best assurance that we are not raising entitled individuals.

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