

# Monkey See, Monkey Do

Being a role model for your children



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# Do as I Do: Modeling Respectful Behavior for Children

We've all heard the expression "Do as I say, not as I do." But with kids, especially younger children, just the opposite is true.

While words are important, actions and example are a far more powerful force for good--and ill--when it comes to helping children learn to be respectful and considerate of others.

"Modeling" is a very simple concept with big implications for raising kids.

Put very simply, it means **showing** rather than telling your child the behavior you want him or her to develop.

For example if you hope to raise children who are polite, respectful, and kind to others, let actions speak louder than words. When you treat people respectfully they will notice. More importantly, be respectful to your child. Instead of telling them to do something, phrase it as a question and remember to say thank you. Your child will treat others respectfully, but you must show them how.

## Compelling Data for Modeling

Did you know that children whose parents smoke are [twice as likely to become smokers themselves](#), as compared to children whose parents don't smoke?

Karl Hill, director of the University of Washington's Seattle Social Development Project says of the study, "Some parents say they disapprove of teenage smoking, but continue to smoke themselves.

The evidence is clear from this study that if parents don't want their children to start smoking, it is important for them to stop or reduce their own smoking."

The same principle applies to other behaviors and words kids see parents use regularly.

Telling children to "use their words"—but losing your cool every time someone cuts you off in traffic--sets the stage for children who hear one thing but see another, and that example will usually win!

## Be A Role Model

Modeling positive, respectful behavior isn't enough if it's modeled to everyone--except your kids.

While it's important to model kind, considerate behavior toward others, it's just as important to show your kids the same respect and kindness you encourage them to show others. Modeling is

proven to be the most effective method of teaching behaviors- good and bad.

If you encourage your kids to say "please" and "thank you," model this behavior by thanking your children and asking them to do things by saying "please."

Are you concerned about the tone your children use when speaking to you, their siblings, or others?

Carefully examine and monitor the tone you use with your children--especially when you're frustrated or feeling overwhelmed. Hearing a parent direct positive, constructive speech and actions toward them empowers children to internalize and model these patterns and behaviors themselves, in addition to feeling respected and valued.

Modeling good behavior isn't always easy, and nobody is perfect. But taking a close look at the behaviors and attitudes that you are modeling for your children, and making a renewed effort to model kind, respectful words and actions, can make all the difference in helping your children learn how to navigate life and relationships well.

