

2. Parenting Clip Transcript - Empathy

Today we are going to talk about empathy.

In the last video we said that empathy was your ace card.

So what is empathy? Empathy is a tough one to grasp. You might think, "Oh I know what that is. I remember saying such and such to my child and saying how are you feeling?" But that's not what empathy is. Empathy is about tuning into our own feelings but also tuning into other people's feelings and validating their feelings. All feelings are valid. So if I get into the habit of negative over positive feelings I will get very cross with myself, but we're all human and I will endeavour to validate all feelings.

So an example of empathy – my child is playing on the ground and is struggling with a brick – going, "Grrr I hate this thing I hate this thing". I would say, "Oh gosh you seem really frustrated" and I just leave it at that. This is true empathy – "I can see you're frustrated", and then you say "Okey dokey", and then he just plays around and then you say, "Oh my gosh, you're so good you got that brick; you solved that and managed to put the green brick on the red brick – well done you, I'm so proud of you". So there I'm tuning into 'it's OK to be frustrated', but not to go into fixer mode; just validate the feeling and that's an example of true empathy – validating the feeling.

For us as parents we can model that for our children – we can model "Oh I'm feeling frustrated; I'm going to take time to calm down". So I'm modelling how I deal with my frustration.

I say we use kind hands and kind words in this. So rather than saying, "Don't hit and don't shout" when we're feeling angry we say we use kind words and kind hands in this house when we're feeling angry. It's never right to hit or shout at anybody but it's OK to be frustrated and angry; it's OK to be happy and excited but it's how we manage those feelings that's really important.

In these surreal times we are all feeling - well I don't know how people are feeling but I'm feeling anxious and scared about what's going to happen. You know it's about - I don't have control over what the government are going to do or what the virus is going to do. I do know that we need to follow Public Health advice.

We need to stay at home as we know this virus travels but staying at home can be difficult. Oh my gosh! How am I going to cope with being home all the time? I'm going to latch onto the positives. This is the time to build relationships with who I live with at home. This is the time to be bored, but it's OK to be bored because when we're bored we can be much more creative. So it's OK to be anxious, it's OK to be scared but it's how we deal with those feelings.

It's allowing our children to be anxious; it's OK for them to be scared. It's OK actually for them to be excited about it because sometimes they can be very excitable about it. So validation is all the feelings and then building coping mechanisms to manage those feelings.

Keep tuning in because we will be adding some more videos with tips to add tools in your box. Thank you very much.