

# Leading By Example To Overcome Parenting Pressure

Carolina shares powerful ways to inspire our kids by setting examples and making parenting joyful at the same time.

By Carolina Herrera

We've all heard that kids are like sponges. Whatever they see and hear, they absorb easily. I remember feeling horrified by this when I had my first son. Thinking I'd never be able to say and do the right thing constantly.

Twelve years on, I still think it's impossible. But now I realize that it's not about trying to be perfect. Instead, it's about being mindful of the many opportunities we have in a day to inspire our kids and share helpful messages.

Once I started looking at my parenting journey this way, a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders.

I realized that even those awful parenting moments, when I thought 'oh my god, what did I just say/do!' had the potential of being great 'teaching moments.' I could use them to model the behavior that I so often asked for from my kids (say sorry, mean it, talk it through, express feelings in a healthy way, and so on).

I also understood that if 'I walked the walk' and not just preached, we could all benefit. My kids would grow up feeling encouraged and inspired by my words or actions, and I could grow old feeling content knowing that I had evolved alongside them.

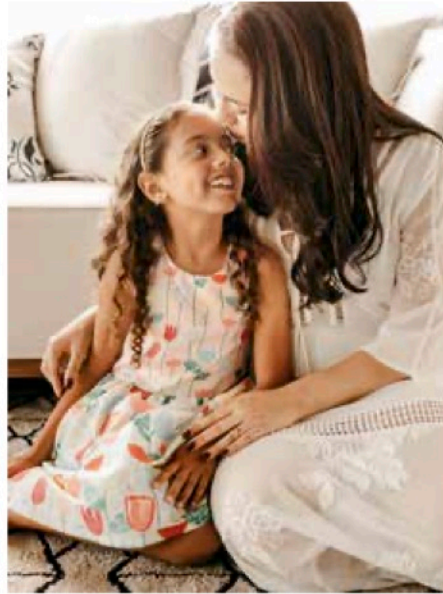
Now, I want to share with you what this looks like in practice, so you can use everyday moments to 'be the change you want to see.'

## 1. Self-talk.

When you make a mistake, what do you do?

As parents, we are always telling our kids that it's okay to make mistakes and that we learn from everything. But I also know we seem to forget our 'filter' when it comes to us and we walk around calling ourselves names, judging and beating ourselves up about all our wrongdoings.

Doing this might feel natural but unfortunately, it contradicts all those nice



messages we've been trying to instill in our kids. The same goes for when we look in the mirror and comment on the 'fact' that 'nothing looks good because we are so fat!'

The more we forget to be nice to ourselves, the less our kids will believe us when we tell them they should love and accept themselves just the way they are.

Let's start by using kinder words and looking at our reflection with love and compassion.

## 2. Opinions, not facts.

Become aware of how you define 'big life concepts' like happiness, relationships, success, love, work, money, life, etc.

Our opinions are likely to be perceived as fact by our kids. And our words are painting a picture of what is possible and acceptable in their lives.

If we repeatedly say that 'life is hard' or 'money is hard to come by,' our kids will probably grow up to feel this way.

Let's use this realization as an opportunity to reflect on our beliefs. Question what we think about these 'big life concepts' and then choose new empower-

ing definitions that serve us all better.

## 3. Your morning and evening routines.

What do you do first thing in the morning and last thing at night?

Our morning and evening routines are a powerful way to inspire our kids and show them how they can have a great start and a good finish to the day. And when we start to apply what we preach, for example, fewer electronics in the evenings, early bedtimes, more exercise, etc.. the benefits really show! And the kids love it.

The kids love seeing mummy being more energetic, less irritable and more patient. And the fact that we feel it and they can see it makes the message that much more poignant.

Leading (parenting) by example is not easy because it requires us to be 'doers,' taking consistent positive action. But it's definitely worth it because by the end of it we all benefit.

When we parent this way we no longer have to wait until the kids are all grown up and out of the house to reclaim our identities as parents or individuals. We can work on that alongside raising curious, courageous, empowered and emotionally intelligent children.

Photo by Jonathan Borba on Unsplash

### About the Author

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