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Two-Year Olds: The Original Freedom Fighters

By Skye Thomas

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We call him the Buddha Napoleon. Anyone who's ever lived with a two year old knows exactly what I'm talking about. He's this amazing blend of cosmic beauty, love, and peace while simultaneously making it crystal clear that he's the grand dictator of the known universe. His little size never deters him from anything he sets his mind to. I'd forgotten so much since raising my first two children. The ten and twelve year age difference allows for that. Lucky for the Buddha Napoleon, I've had practice and am therefore a lot more knowledgeable and patient this time around.

I believe this is probably the most important year for his social development. During the first year of a baby's life, we're supposed to set a solid foundation of love and trust. That first year puts in place a basic belief that the world is a wonderful place full of love and light, or it's not. The second year, we teach them to believe in themselves. Get up and walk, learn to speak, learn to manipulate toys, learn that ever important can-do attitude. After the second birthday, it's all about personal power and boundaries. How do we get what we want from others? How do we stay out of trouble? Why do all of these stupid rules exist anyway? Do I have a right to tell you "No" since you say it to me all of the time? What are the consequences if I give in all of the time? And if I don't give in, then what? Am I in charge of my life or are you? I think it's a miniature version of the same dynamics we go through with our teenagers. They're just revisiting these same questions from a taller and more hormonal perspective. Handle the two year old stage well, and I think you'll find the teenage years aren't nearly so difficult.

Remember back to when you were thirteen... did your folks answer your questions with, "Because I said so" or did they actually give you real reasons for their decisions? Which had a bigger impact on your ability to honor and respect their view point? It's no different with two year olds. Find the vocabulary that they understand and explain to them why they can't scream at the top of their lungs just to hear the echo throughout the grocery store. It hurts my ears. It hurts everyone in the stores ears, and that's not okay. Explain why they can't kick and pound on you while you are buckling them into the car seat. That hurts me, and I don't like it. Quite often they'll quit. You'll still have days when they'll do it anyway, but they'll completely understand why they're getting busted. They'll know that it's because they made a choice not because you're just being mean for the heck of it. Over and over, you have to keep telling them why. They also need to see you enforce the rules on others too. Role model for them

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that everyone in the house is being held by the same standards of behavior. Conduct yourself accordingly. Eventually, they'll come to agree with the rules if they understand the reasoning behind them. "Because I said so" isn't a reason that any self-respecting two year old will ever embrace.

Self-respect is a very important aspect that I think too many parents downplay in raising their children. How is someone supposed to come away with any kind of self-respect if they've been raised to never ever disagree or question authority? My favorite is when I hear people say, "Don't say no to me, I'm your mother!" The fact that people are capable of breeding doesn't make them right! If you want your child to respect you and to speak to you with respect, then earn it. Children are very observant. Do you practice what you preach? Do you scream and yell at them and then bust them for doing the same thing back to you? They mimic your behaviors because you represent what it is to be a grown up in society. Do you spank first and ask questions second? Then they will too. Do you want a child who

grows up to be a follower or a leader? If you punish them every time they try to take the lead, then they will either avoid leadership, or they will punish anyone who gets in their way.

Give your child the right to say "No." Tell your two year old it's okay to say "No, I don't want Uncle Johnny to pick me up and tickle me right now." Then, make Uncle Johnny respect your toddler's personal space. Later, when the child is in someone else's space, you can remind them of how it feels as you explain why they need to back off.

The key to this is to teach your child about presentation and about listening skills. It's okay to disagree with me, but you can't scream and yell and kick. It's okay to tell me no, but you also have to listen to my side of the argument too. You then have to role model what it is you want from them. You have to listen to their reasons and then they have to listen to yours. Teach them negotiation skills. Teach them how to say no so that it's not offensive. Sure it's a lot easier to just deny them the right to disagree, but it'll come back on you when they're teenagers. Almost everyone disagreed with me when I gave my older two kids permission to question authority and to openly argue their point. I just made sure they were polite and respectful while doing so. Their teachers and babysitters weren't always thrilled, but communications were always open and honest and understandings were always reached. My older two have a solid belief in setting personal boundaries and not allowing others to take advantage. And so does the Buddha Napoleon.

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Skye Thomas began writing books and articles with an everyday practical approach to life in 1999 after twenty years of studying spirituality, metaphysics, astrology, personal growth, motivation, and parenting. After years of high heels and business clothes, she is currently enjoying working from home in her pajamas. Go to www.TomorrowsEdge.net to read more of her articles and to get a free preview of one of her books.

Are We Losing the Desire to Write Well?

By Tim North

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British polling company ICM Research recently conducted a survey that found that around two-thirds of the two thousand 18–24 year olds surveyed cared "NOT AT ALL" about punctuation, spelling and grammar when composing e-mail.

This overly casual attitude to e-mail seems to be quite widespread -- and not just among 18–24 year olds. Much of the e-mail I receive (from both friends and business colleagues) is poorly written. Now this may be defensible in personal correspondence, but sloppy writing has no place in business.

Remember, you are JUDGED on the way you write.

In a face-to-face meeting, you will be judged on your looks, height, clothing, perceived wealth, accent, class and a whole host of other features. While we tell our children not to judge a book by its cover, the reality is that we do exactly that every day of our lives.

When reading a piece of correspondence from someone you have not met face-to-face, though, none of these factors are present. You have only one thing with which to form an impression of them -- their WRITING.

So, in this twenty-first century world of increasingly faceless communication, your writing is more important than ever. I say again: you are judged by the way you write, so write well.

End of rant.

Tim North <http://www.BetterWritingSkills.com> info@betterwritingskills.com You'll find over 200 tips like this in Tim North's new e-book BETTER WRITING SKILLS.



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