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EASY WAYS TO CONNECT WITH YOUR KID

(EVEN WHEN YOUR KID IS MAKING YOU CRAZY)



BY ERIN
MACPHERSON





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When everything is sunshine and roses, it's easy to connect with your kid. But what about those times when things are a bit more stormy? Here are some ideas to build that heart-to-heart connection with your kid even when discipline (and discipleship!) feel impossible.

1. WAKE HIM UP EARLY FOR A COFFEE DATE.


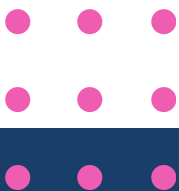
A few months ago, my 11-year-old son had gotten mouthy with me right before bed. His disrespect had really set me off and in the end, he had fallen asleep upset and I had tossed and turned all night even more upset. I prayed that God would show me how to re-connect with him and I had an idea: Coffee. I set my alarm for 5:30 am and woke him up and we drove to Starbucks where we had cocoa, talked and reconciled before anyone else was even awake.

2. TRY EXERCISING.

Sometimes some good old-fashioned sweat can calm down even the hottest tempers. Toss on some shoes and grab your kid for a long, sweaty, side-by-side walk where you can talk and process together.

3. PICK UP A GREAT BOOK.

Kids learn a lot from literature—so if your kid is, say, being dishonest, then pick up a book about lying. Read it together and discuss as you read.





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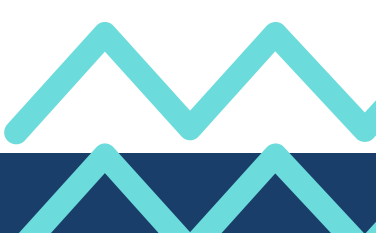
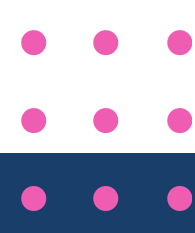
This is some of the best parenting advice my mom ever gave me: In the midst of a heated discussion, when you are angry or your kid is upset, just pause. Take a deep breath. Then say something like, "I don't think either of us wants to do this. Let's start over and try to have this conversation in a kinder, more loving way." Then pull her into a big hug and smile and start again.

5. JOIN IN ON THE PUNISHMENT.

My youngest son Will earned an afternoon of scrubbing our bathroom wall after he "forgot" that Sharpie markers are only to be used on paper. I watched him scrub with tears streaming down his face and after a few minutes, I grabbed my own rag and started to scrub alongside him. As we worked, he started to talk about how sorry he was and we had a great conversation about respecting property and taking care of our things.

6. TELL HER HOW YOU'RE PRAYING FOR HER.

Write your kid a text message or a hand-written letter, telling her specifically how you are praying for her.





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Even if your kid deserves to eat only boiled chicken mushy peas for the rest of her life, take her out for a big ice cream sundae. Just like Jesus forgives us and offers us amazing, undeserved grace, offer your child the same by giving her an unexpected, underserved treat.

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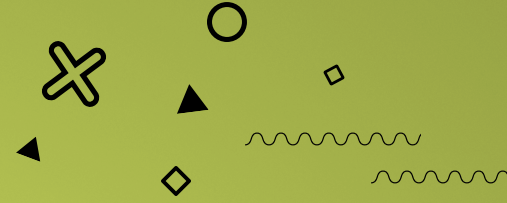
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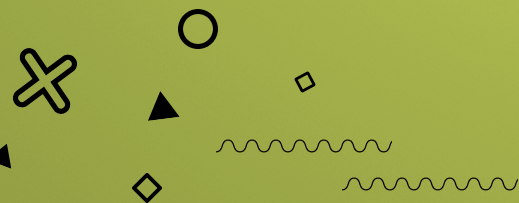
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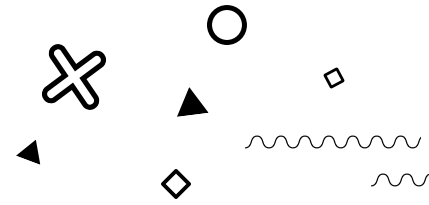
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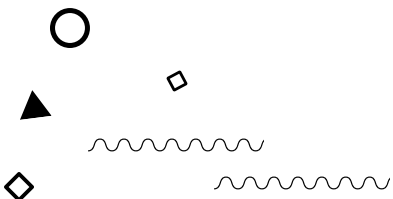
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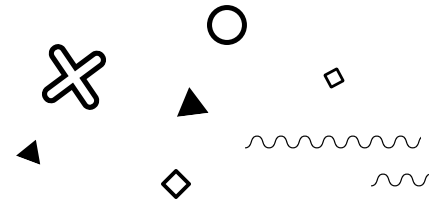
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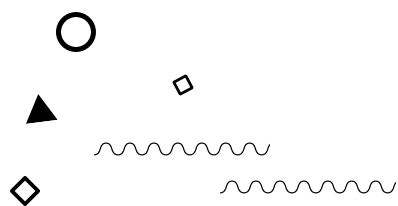
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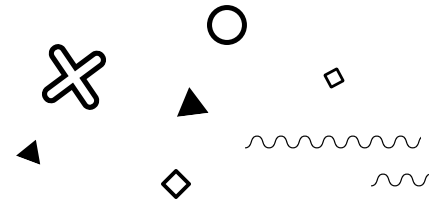
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