

EVERYTHING YOUR KID DOES
MAKES PERFECT SENSE

Presented by Dick Watson LCSW



INTRODUCTION HANDOUT 1

Dialectical Parenting

Dialectical means that two things, which may be **opposites** of each other, can **both** be **true** at the same time.

Dialectical Parenting recognizes that:

- You and your child may have different ways of seeing situations – and both views can be ok.
- There is no “right way” to parent and each parenting problem may have many possible solutions.
- Parents need to be both nurturing and firm.
- Parents need to be both consistent and flexible.
- Parents need to be both able to hold on to and let go of their child.

INTRODUCTION HANDOUT 2

Dialectical Parenting

- Parenting involves investing all your energy in another person so that they can successfully leave you.
- Parenting requires you to protect your child from pain while seeing the necessity and benefits of his/her pain.
- Parenting requires you to love your child more than anything else in the world, while not letting that love take over your world.
- Parenting requires that you attach in the most profound way while remaining detached enough to let your child be their own person.
- Parenting requires that you be very intentional in all your decisions while maintaining some degree of detachment from the outcome of those decisions.
- Parenting involves making every decision for an infant knowing that one day they may make every decision for you.

PARENTING WITHOUT JUDGMENT (aka)

EVERYTHING YOUR KID DOES

MAKES PERFECT SENSE

Judgments are whenever a parent thinks, “Life should be different than it is”, when in fact; life is exactly the way it is.

Parents have to be willing to raise the child they have vs. the one they wish they had.

Clues to judgments: “should”, swears, stupidfatugly words, tone of voice, volume, sarcasm.

MINDFULNESS – BEING IN CHARGE OF HOW YOU THINK ABOUT PARENTING HANDOUT 4

HOW TO NEUTRALIZE JUDGMENTAL THOUGHTS

Remember to keep you mind “CLEAR”

Categorize your thoughts.

Leave behind any that have a “good vs bad” judgmental quality.

Evaluate the consequences or benefits of your actions or your child’s actions.

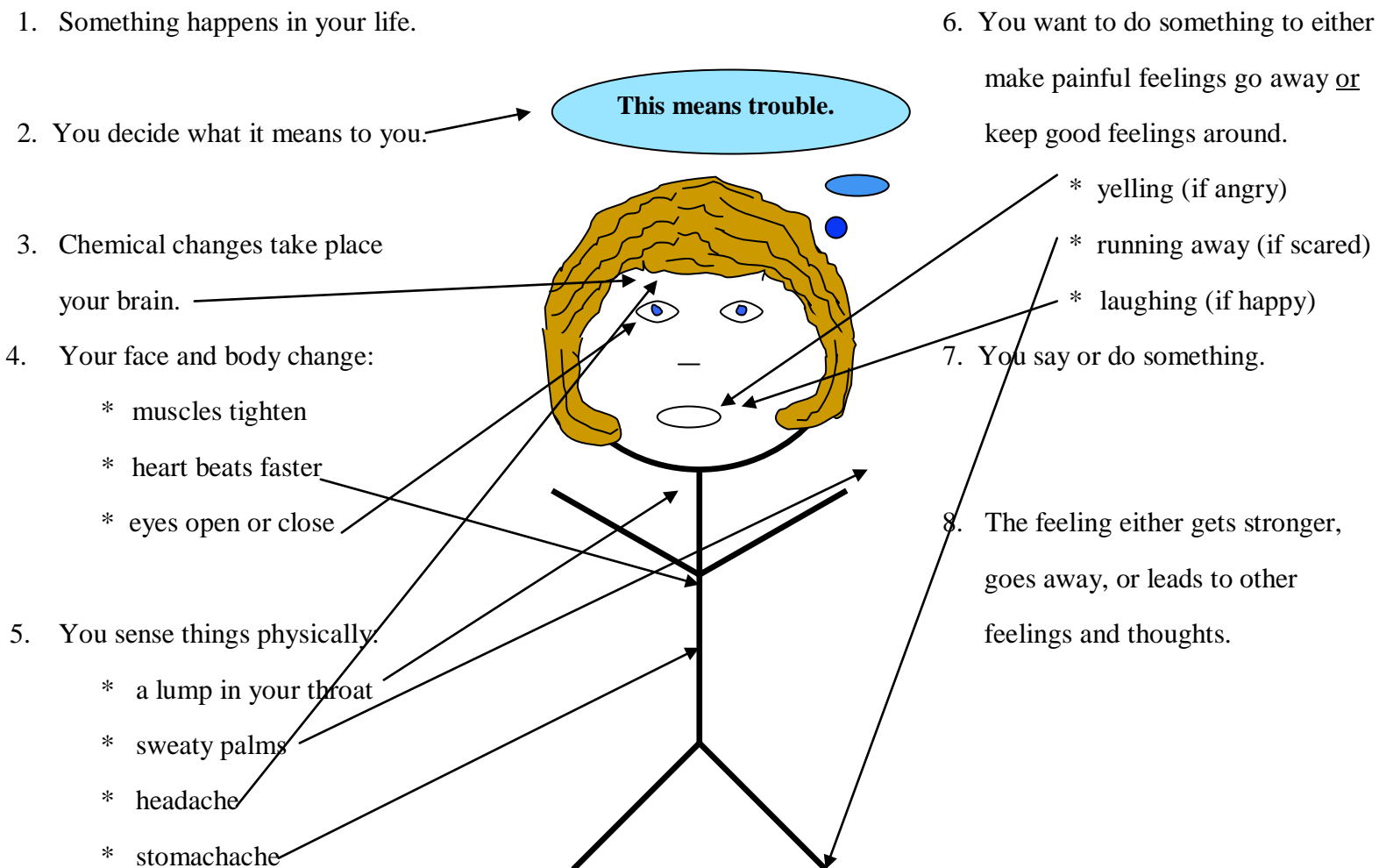
Accept reality as it is for your family.

Remind yourself that all things in your time as a parent will pass.



EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 2

What Happens When You Or Your Child Have A Feeling



EMOTION REGULATION HOMEWORK SHEET 1

Observing And Describing Emotions You Had As A Parent

Select a current or recent emotional reaction and fill out as much of this sheet as you can. If the prompting event for the emotion you are working on is another emotion that occurred first (for example, feeling afraid prompted getting angry at yourself), the fill out a second homework sheet for that first emotion. Write on back of page if you need more room.

EMOTION NAMES: _____ **INTENSITY (0-100)** _____

PROMPTING EVENT for my emotion: (who, what, when, where) What started the emotion?

INTERPRETATIONS (beliefs, assumptions, appraisals) of the situation?

BODY CHANGES and SENSING: What am I feeling in my body?

BODY LANGUAGE: What is my facial expression? Posture? Gestures? How did my child “read” me?

ACTION URGES: What do I feel like doing? What do I want to say?

What **I SAID OR DID** in the situation: (Be specific)

What **AFTER EFFECT** does the emotion have on me (my state of mind, other emotions, behavior, thoughts, memory, body, etc.)?

PURPOSE OF EMOTION: _____

EMOTIONS REGULATION HOMEWORK SHEET 2

Observing And Describing Your Child's Emotions

Select a recent situation in which your child had an emotional reaction and fill out as much of this sheet as you can.

EMOTION NAMES: _____ **INTENSITY (0-100)** _____

PROMPTING EVENT - What happened to your child?

MEANING - Knowing your child, what meaning do you think it had for him/her?

BODY CHANGES AND SENSING - How, would you guess, did your child's body react and what did he/she sense in his/her body?

BODY LANGUAGE - What facial expressions, posture, and gestures did you see from your child?

ACTION URGES - Knowing your child, what do you think he/she felt like doing? Saying?

ACTION - What did your child actually do or say?

AFTER EFFECTS - How did your child think, feel, behave after experiencing this emotion?

PURPOSE - What was the purpose of your child's emotion?

EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 8

Letting Go Of Emotional Suffering: What To Do When You Have A Painful Emotion

Remember To “WAIT”

Watch your emotion. Step back from it in your mind.

Action is not necessary – even if you have an urge to do something, you don't necessarily need to do anything.

Internally experience your emotion. Think of it as a wave, coming and going. Don't try to ignore it. Don't try to pay any extra attention to it.

Think of your painful emotions as “Helpers” who inform you about your world and help to motivate you to do things you need to do.

EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 10

Protecting You Child From Suffering: What To Do When Your Child Has A Painful Emotion Remember – Watch As Your Child “LEARNS”

Let your child experience the unavoidable pain of life.

Empathically notice what you see them experiencing.

Ask them what they may be able to learn from the emotion.

Remind your child he/she is your child and is loved, even when in pain.

Name the emotion with/for your child.

Separate your own feelings from that of your child.



DIALECTICAL PARENTING HANDOUT 4

Validation

What is validation?

- Validation means letting your child know that his/her thoughts, feelings and behaviors make sense to you as you think about life from his/her view point
- Validation does not mean you agree with your child or that you like their choices, just that you understand them.

Why is validation important?

- Through validation, your child will learn to regulate feelings.
- Through validation, your child will increase self-esteem and self-knowledge.
- Through validation, your relationship with your child will remain strong.
- Through validation, you will reduce the likelihood and intensity of conflicts.

How to Validate your Child.

- Listen and observe. Mindfully focus on your child by attending to what they say and do.
- Be curious. Ask questions about what has happened and how your child has experienced what happened.
- Reflect. Talk with your child about how you understand their experiences, thoughts, and feelings.
- Put your own stuff on the shelf for now. When validating, validate. Save your thoughts and feelings for another moment.
- Read between the lines. Help your child understand what he/she can't figure out on their own.
- Validate the validatable. Even if you disagree, find the kernel of truth from your child's perspective.
- Validate from the perspective of your own childhood.
- Validate in terms of common sense.

DIALECTICAL PARENTING HOMEWORK SHEET 3

Validation

Fill out this sheet after validating your child in a situation where he/she was upset or in emotional pain.

Prompting Event – What happened that was difficult for your child?

What did you observe or hear in your child's behavior?

What meaning do you think the event had for your child?

What feelings and thoughts do you think your child had about the event?

What did you do or say to validate your child?

What did you observe in your child's response to your validation?

How did you feel after validating your child? How did that impact your relationship?

DIALECTICAL PARENTING HANDOUT 8

Acceptance And Change

Most all parenting interventions can be thought of as either an acceptance strategy or a change strategy. The key to dialectical parenting is to effectively balance the two. Most problematic parenting is a result of using too much of one or the other.

Acceptance Strategies

- Validating your child's thoughts, feelings.
- Being interested in your child's experiences.
- Asking for your child's opinions.
- Letting your child learn from his/her mistakes and choices.
- Encouragement when your child makes good choices.
- Giving your child what he/she wants.
- Facial expressions / body language that convey acceptance.

Change Strategies

- Telling your child "NO"
- Consequences for misbehavior
- Lectures
- Ignoring misbehavior
- Defending your point of view or arguing
- Telling your child what you think/feel
- Facial expressions / body language that convey a desire for change.
- Telling him/her why they should think differently.



DIALECTICAL PARENTING HANDOUT 9

Factors To Consider In Balancing Acceptance & Change

1. Ownership:
Who owns the problem?
If something is a problem for you, increase change strategies.
If something is a problem for your child, increase acceptance strategies.
2. Emotions:
Is your child emotionally open and calm enough to respond effectively?
If your child is emotionally dysregulated, increase acceptance strategies.
If your child is emotionally open and calm, increase change strategies.
3. Relationship:
Is your relationship with your child balanced and strong?
If the relationship is strong, increase change strategies as needed.
If the relationship is not going well, increase acceptance strategies.
4. Risk:
What is the level of risk to your child?
If the risk is high, increase change strategies.
If the risk is low, increase acceptance strategies.
5. Age/Maturity:
How old and mature is your child?
If you have an older, mature child, increase acceptance strategies.
If you have a younger, less mature child, increase change strategies.

DIALECTICAL PARENTING HANDOUT 10

Balancing Acceptance & Change

Intensity & Balance Scale

Acceptance

Situation / Example

Use only strong acceptance strategies.

A child of any age is sad because his/her father has just moved out of the family. "I know how hard this must be for you. You have every right to be sad and you may feel a lot of other things too. I love you. What is the worst part of it for you?"

Use mostly and begin with moderate acceptance strategies, then balance out with change strategies.

A teenager is crying because her boyfriend had an argument with her. "I'm sorry sweetheart. It is hard to fight with someone you care about. Come help me make supper and take your mind off it."

Begin with mild acceptance strategies then balance out with change strategies.

A fourteen year old is going to dye her hair purple and wants to know if it is okay with you. "The most important thing is if you feel comfortable with it. How will you feel? For my taste, I think it would look better with blonde highlights."

Begin with mild change strategies, then balance out with acceptance strategies.

Two twelve year olds are rough housing and could get hurt. "Hey knock it off you two. What do you guys think you could do other than ruin the house?"

Use mostly and begin with moderate change strategies, follow up with acceptance strategies.

Two six year olds are hitting and kicking each other. "Stop fighting. You sit here. You sit there. Now tell me what happened."

Use only strong change strategies.

A very young child is running into the road. "Stop!" Pick up child and remove from danger.

Change

DIALECTICAL PARENTING HOMEWORK SHEET 5

Acceptance And Change

Fill out this sheet after any significant parenting intervention such as disciplining your child, a time when either or both of you were upset, a time when you wanted to influence their values or choices.

Prompting Event – What happened that lead you to intervene with your child?

What was the goal(s) of your intervention – what did you hope to accomplish?

Describe what you did by checking what CHANGE STRATEGIES and ACCEPTANCE STRATEGIES you used.

Acceptance Strategies

- Validated child
- Interested in child's experience
- Asked child's opinion
- Let child learn from his/her mistakes
- Encouraged good choices
- Facial expressions/body language that conveyed acceptance

Change Strategies

- Told child "No"
- Gave consequences
- Lectured
- Ignored
- Defended
- Told my thoughts/feelings
- Facial expressions/body language that conveyed desire for change.

Were you effective in achieving your goal(s)?

- Effective Somewhat effective Not effective

What factors did you consider in balancing change and acceptance strategies?

- Problem ownership Emotions Risk
- Relationship Age / Maturity

If you were not as effective as you would like, how might you rebalance the strategies in a similar situation next time?

DIALECTICAL PARENTING HANDOUT 11

Influence vs. Control

As your child grows older, he/she will need to become increasingly independent and able to make decisions. As a parent you will need to increasingly let go of your child. This transition requires a shift from control strategies to influence strategies.

Controlling	Influencing
Parent seen as the authority who knows best.	Parent seen as a teacher and guide who also learns from the child.
Emphasis on telling child what is right and wrong and getting child to agree	Emphasis on helping child develop their own values while making it clear what parent's values are.
Emphasis on change by way of telling child what parent thinks is correct, best, true.	Emphasis on change by way of asking questions to help child explore his/her own views.
With young children, more control is helpful as they learn about life through their parents.	As child becomes older, parent sees self as a consultant who offers information, while allowing child to decide for self. Older children are better able to learn life through their own experiences.



DIALECTICAL PARENTING HANDOUT 12

Influence vs. Control

Control Strategies

Deciding for your Child

- Say “Yes” or “No” to requests.
- Choose for your child – clothes, activities, TV shows, Bedtime.

No Negotiating

- Have rules with no flexibility.
- Have the final word.
- Refuse to discuss.

Defining The Situation

- Do not explore your child’s thoughts or feelings about the situation in any depth.

Posture / Tone

- Use body language and tone of voice that convey certainty and of being in charge.

DIALECTICAL PARENTING HANDOUT 12 (continued)

Influence vs. Control

Influencing Strategies

Role Modeling

- Behave in ways you would want your child to behave, as they get older.

Consulting

- Offer suggestions based on your experience and knowledge.
- Help your child explore options.
- Leave final decisions up to your child.

Curious Questioning

- Be curious about your child's thoughts, feelings and opinions. Ask about them without then trying to change them. Just be curious about them.

Negotiate

- Give a little to get a little.

Devil's Advocate

- Pose questions that can challenge your child's view to help him/her explore all possibilities.

DIALECTICAL PARENTING HOMEWORK SHEET 6

Influence Vs. Control

Over the next week, notice times that you try to control your child and times when you try to influence your child.

Control

Prompting Event – what happened that lead you to try and control your child?

What you did – how did you try to control your child? Check all that apply:

- Decided for child.
 - No negotiations.
 - Defined the situation.
 - Body Language / Tone of voice
-

Were you effective - were you able to control your child?

Was it a good choice to control rather than influence? Yes ___ No ___ Explain:

Influence

Prompting Event – what happened that lead you to try to influence your child?

What you did – how did you try to influence your child? Check all that apply:

- Role modeled
 - Consulted
 - Curiously questioned
 - Devil's advocate
-

Were you effective – were you able to influence your child?

In hindsight was it a good choice to influence rather than control? Yes ___ No ___ Explain:





You Own Everything Your Kid Wants (t+b=p e-m=pibk)

Focus is on the child earning privileges hour after hour with less reliance on punishment, rewards and charts.

Every directive you give should be structured along lines of, "Here is what you will earn or fail to earn based on your behavior."

Use time to your advantage. Avoid, "do it now" when possible. Make boredom work for you.

Ignore attitude, focus on the desired behavior.

Figure out how much leverage you will need and what objects, activities will give you what you need. Then, take complete control over those items.

When child is not doing the desired behavior, detach. Once child begins to do the desired behavior, attach and support.

Make it your child's problem more than it is your problem. You are communicating to them that, "This is life, it is at times annoying, but it can also be fulfilling and challenging. "

You probably talk too much.