

# Segment Ideas / Interview Topics

For Bonnie Harris, M.S.Ed.

Author, *When Your Kids Push Your Buttons* (2003) and *Confident Parents, Remarkable Kids: 8 Principles for Raising Kids You'll Love to Live With* (2008)

## **When Your Kids Push Your Buttons**

*And what you can do about it.*

A certain look, a defiant act, your child "pushes your buttons", and you say and do things you swore you never would. Blame, regret, shame spins the best of parents out of control and into the action/reaction cycle. Learn:

- What buttons are and why children push them
- Why our reactions have less to do with our child and all to do with us
- How our agendas take over and why our kids hate it
- How we unintentionally set our kids up with messages we never intended
- The meaning of behavior and how to understand it so we can connect instead of fight

## **Why Punishing Children Doesn't Work**

*Learn what to do instead.*

Punishing a child for misbehaving does nothing to teach responsibility. It's simply a quick-fix solution that uses fear to motivate and only offers short-term results. Harris proposes a new way to discipline children that's proven highly effective. Learn:

- Five reasons punishment fails
- How chronic punishment can lead to bullying and aggressive behavior
- How to walk your child through the eleven steps of problem solving
- How to stop arguing with your child and begin negotiating
- How to get your child to write a contract committing to a future plan

## **Connective Communication**

*Discover how to use "the most important skill in parenting."*

Harris developed connective communication as a way to communicate with children that encourages listening, talking, and feeling important to one another. Although simple and commonsensical, it's one of the hardest skills for most parents to accomplish because, like learning a foreign language, it doesn't come naturally for most of us. She discusses:

- The eight steps of connective communication
- How to get a child to view you as an ally and sounding board
- Top ten communication mistakes parents make
- How to keep your problems and your child's separate
- How to use connective communication with a preverbal child
- Connective communication activities to practice together
- How to open up a non-communicative child

## **Why Praise Is Overrated**

*Why too much praise and too many rewards are bad for kids.*

Self-esteem was the parenting buzzword of the nineties. Now, says Harris, we have an epidemic of entitled twenty-somethings, many of whom require so much praise in the workplace that companies are hiring “praise consultants.” Learn:

- How praise can undermine a child’s initiative
- Why praising normally expected behavior can backfire
- How to offer useful praise that’s specific and descriptive
- How to encourage a child without praise

## **Managing Sibling Rivalry**

*How to bring peace to your household—for good.*

Every parent with two or more children has to cope with sibling rivalry, from arguing and hoarding toys to mean-spirited competition and physical fights. Harris offers proven success strategies for parents at their wit’s end. Learn:

- How to avoid getting sucked into “the triangle game”
- How to learn the “no-blame solution”
- What the behavior of each of your children signals
- How to use sibling conflict to spur greater connection
- How to help siblings negotiate a solution and agree on a contract

## **Setting Children Up for Success**

*Learn to set realistic, achievable expectations for your child.*

So many parents still feel bad because they didn’t measure up to *their* parents’ expectations.

Harris says when parents have expectations that are *appropriate* for their child’s character, capabilities, and age, it sets the child up for success. She discusses:

- How expectations that are too high can hinder a child’s ability to solve problems and think independently
- How to nurture a child’s self-confidence
- How misbehaviors signal the need to adjust your expectations
- How to help a child with too-high expectations of herself
- How to role play with your child to help him identify strengths and weaknesses