

# *iBlankie*

*every parent's security blanket*



***2 HOURS TO A BETTER PARENT  
CHILD RELATIONSHIP***

## *INTRODUCTION*

Every parent-child relationship can be strengthened. Every parent-child relationship hits snags, low-points, and negative patches. This 6-page article *2 Hours to a Better Parent-Child Relationship* describes an exercise called The Bread and Butter Technique, a proven strategy to use for everyday interactions and for challenging times. You CAN strengthen your positive bond with your child in just 2 hours.

When my children were young, there were days when I would feel like one of my children and I were in an impossible negative spiral. Every interaction and every discussion seemed to end in a quarrel, a disappointment, or hurt or angry feelings. When things would get so low that I felt that they could not get any lower, I would use The Bread and Butter Technique (a strategy I created out of desperation) to get to a better place. Since I was the assumed adult in the relationship—although you couldn't always tell that in terms of our interactions—I felt that it was my place to turn things around, change the energy from negative to positive, and re-capture the wonderful feeling that I wanted with my child.

## *CONTENTS*

<i>THE BREAD &amp; BUTTER TECHNIQUE</i>	<b>3</b>
The Bread And Butter Technique Guideline #1	
The Bread and Butter Technique Guideline #2	
The Bread and Butter Technique Guideline #3	
<u>Examples</u> : Encouraging affirmative statements	
<u>Examples</u> : Non-directive statements	
 <i>WHAT IS LEARNED</i>	 <b>5</b>
What I Learn about Myself	
What I Learn about My Child	
What I Learn about our Parent-child Relationship	
 <i>FAQ</i>	 <b>6</b>

## *THE BREAD & BUTTER TECHNIQUE*

Picture a tasty slice of bread. Now picture yourself with a butter knife and a thick slab of butter and think about how you are going to spread that thick slab of butter all over that bread. You are creating a delicious piece of bread and butter. That is what The Bread and Butter Technique is all about.

You want to get to a better place with your child. You start by spreading on the positive energy, think thick and rich. You want to feel better about yourself and you want your child to feel better about themselves. Even if you are at your wits' end with your child, you can come up with something positive to create positive energy.

### *The Bread And Butter Technique Guideline #1*

You can only say positive, encouraging, affirmative statements to your child. No criticism or negative judgments allowed. Hold your tongue! Describe how they look, describe their process, describe how they make you feel. One positive statement every five minutes is a good goal. That comes to 24 statements in 2 hours—yes, you can do this!

### *The Bread and Butter Technique Guideline #2*

You can not tell your child what to do. No directive statements are allowed. You will have to be creative in enlisting your child's cooperation. You can do this!

### *The Bread and Butter Technique Guideline #3*

Continue for 2 hours, or longer if you can!

***Examples:*** *Your encouraging, affirmative statements describe your child or their process.*

*"Your eyes are so blue."*

*"You are trying very, very hard."*

*"I feel proud of how you are working at that."*

*"It's not easy growing up, but you are doing your best."*

*"You handled that frustration."*

*"Your feelings are important to me."*

*"You can \_\_\_\_\_ ! (tie your shoes, feed yourself, do that math problem)"*

*"You are a master at throwing temper tantrums—you put your heart and soul into voicing your issues."*

*"You really know what you want and you have a strong voice in telling me."*

*"Your shouting is so powerful."*

*"You have a mind of your own and don't want anyone to change it."*

*"Your friends are very important to you."*

*"Your hands are so capable."*

*"Your drawing makes me smile!"*

**Examples: Your non-directive statements help move things along.**

*"Most children wear clothes to school."*

*"I wonder if today is a good day to play the Nothing-Matches-What-I'm-Wearing Game"*

*"I think I hear your teeth whispering—listen carefully—'Please brush me! Please brush me!'"*

*"Show me how a T-Rex would stomp all the way to the car."*

*"Is your backpack too heavy for you to carry?"*

*"Can you do a ballet dance to the dinner table?"*

## *WHAT IS LEARNED*

### *What I Learn about Myself*

1. I am always shocked at how many times I have to restrain myself from saying critical, judgmental or controlling statements. During the two hours, I am constantly opening my mouth to talk and then shutting it without saying anything in order to follow the guidelines.
2. At first, I am surprised at how hard it is to come up with positive statements. Amidst the hubbub of life, I ask, "Where has my appreciation for my child gone?" Then I find it easier and easier to make positive statements: "Your smile makes me smile." "You tied your shoes." "You are so tall." "I can see that you are thinking really hard."
3. There are very creative, non-directive ways to have my child get dressed, do homework, and brush teeth that are not bossy or controlling—it's hard to think of them at first, but then my creative juices get flowing and this becomes a positive, creative communication experience for me.
4. AFTER TWO HOURS, I FEEL SO MUCH BETTER ABOUT MYSELF AS A PARENT AND AS A PERSON.
5. This is hard work for me. I need to think about the ratio of positive to negative statements coming from my mouth to my child. In the future, I want to aim for a 10-to-1 ratio of positive to negative statements. This is often a goal in couple's therapy, why not have it be a goal in the couple's relationship between me and my child?
6. My own parents were very critical, judgmental and controlling when I was growing up. I need to think hard and work hard to change this parent-child way of relating in order to create a new parenting road map for myself and my child.

### *What I Learn about My Child*

1. My child GLOWS with every positive comment and seems to melt like butter as I keep spreading on the good stuff.
2. My child becomes more and more cooperative as the positive statements and positive attention-getting increases.

### *What I Learn about our Parent-child Relationship*

1. A little appreciation goes a LONG way.
2. I CAN turn our relationship around to a more positive place if I change my behavior.

## *FAQ*

### **Q. Can my child feel too good about themselves after hearing so many positive statements?**

Real life provides plenty of hard knocks to bang against any person's self-esteem. The better we feel about ourselves to start with, the easier it will be when life challenges us on so many levels. A strong positive parent-child bond is important to every child's self-esteem.

### **Q. How can I do this technique and actually get my child to school, to do homework, etc.?**

Sometimes it is best to start this on a Saturday morning when there is usually not time pressure to leave for school or another specific activity. With practice, many parents find The Bread and Butter Technique a helpful way to start a weekday, especially if they wake up ten minutes earlier to allow extra time. They say it provides an opportunity to get a child to cooperate in a creative way and that it is a wonderfully positive way to start the day.

Copyright 2023 Blue Wildfire, LLC