

# Yelling at your children - is it effective?



'My kids call it yelling when I raise my voice. I call it motivational speaking for the selective hearing.'

[www.facebook.com/ShutUplmStillTalking](http://www.facebook.com/ShutUplmStillTalking)

I read this quote on Facebook today and just laughed as it described exactly how I was feeling to a tee. I have been ranting at my children and much of it has fallen on deaf ears. Not a great way to end the school holidays.

To be honest, my boys are not used to me yelling, raising my voice, nagging or putting them down. This is not my regular style of parenting, but I have fallen into a trap - proving that it is ineffective and rarely produces good results - something I learnt long ago before becoming a mother, in two very distinct ways.

Firstly, I spent a year in Australia as

an exchange student at the age of 18, where one of my host mums was a preschool teacher. I shadowed her a few times and watched with awe how she managed 18 children all at once in the most quiet and gentle manner. She was a softly spoken person who never raised her voice and she always had total and utter control. I have rarely seen anything like it.

The second lesson came after getting married and before having children of our own. My husband and I got puppies and took them to socialisation classes. One of the first things we learnt was not to shout but rather to drop our voices and speak firmly. You have a much better effect that way.

## Safe and secure

The same trick works like a charm on children as they feel safe and secure precisely because you sound like you are calm and in control (even if it is only smoke and mirrors!).

My current entrapment with being confrontational rather than conversational with my children has its roots in my own stress levels and lack of presence. I am implementing changes in my business

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21st Century Parenting

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while also completing a new book, and I am not getting enough sleep.

I am emotionally absent even though I am physically present in their space. It is having a telling effect on my ability to set clear boundaries and expectations for my children, something that is usually pretty easy for me. The result is that we are all feeling frustrated and resentful of each other and I am trying to 'control them'. I want things done, and done my way, and done now!

Needless to say, not many of my requests have been granted! As I said, it's all counter-productive.

## No negotiating

Don't get me wrong, I am in no way suggesting negotiating with children or giving them carte blanche, but there's only one person who can change this state of affairs, and it's me.

When we feel that our children have se-

lective attention or hearing, we need to take a step back and ask ourselves why. Perhaps our inattentiveness and lack of emotional presence is part of the cause.

When we are not present, we lose control of our children little by little, every day. Subconsciously, in trying to regain control, we risk over-correcting by being more controlling or overly attentive, which can shut our children down in an instant.

One thing I really have learnt this week is that yelling is not motivational or effective, and we are often the very people who cause our children to tune us out.

We all wobble from time-to-time, maybe from financial stress, work pressure, health or relationship issues.

Be conscious of the wobble and then you can return to more calm and conscious parenting which is actually easier on your time, energy, sanity and relationships in the long run.