



What To Do When You Blow It



This is a fact—you will blow it! It's not something we're proud of, but if you're a parent, you've probably blown it on numerous occasions. Children will test your resolve. They will yell, scream, wake you up in the middle of the night, lock you out of the house, refuse to sleep, and refuse to eat (sometimes all in one day!). So what should we do when we lose our cool?

Apologize. Say "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have _____. Will you forgive me?" I'm always amazed at how quickly and willing children are to forgive.

For next time...

Don't punish in anger. Parents are human and it's hard not to take your children's sassiness, disobedience, or rebellion personally. Even though these characteristics can make you crazy with anger, don't punish your child in anger because you will say or do things you regret. Tell your child you need a minute and go to another room or send them to their room so you can calm down. Pray. Take some deep breaths. Call a friend.

Make a plan of action. What will you do when they are sassy, disobey, or rebel? It's easy to be driven by our emotions, but as we all know, that usually makes things worse. When you have already set a consequence or loss of privilege in place for the offense, immediately point to the sign (if it's posted) or ask, "What happens now?" (Take a lesson from the police officer who with no emotions—no yelling or cursing—writes you a ticket for \$200 and sends you on your way.) None of us change without consequences. Let consequences be the bad guy. (It's even better if they are old enough to let them help set the consequences.) If you hit your sibling, you must do their chore for the day. If you don't do your homework, you can't go out to play. If you scream at Mom, you must sit in the chair until you are ready to apologize. Set consequences and then follow through.

Take care of yourself. You may think that sounds selfish (or even impossible at times), but it is essential. Remember what the flight attendant says: *In case of emergency, oxygen masks will drop down in front of you. Please pull the mask down toward your face and place the mask over your mouth and nose. If you are traveling with a small child, please attend to yourself first, then the child.* Find the help and resources you need. Do it for your child.