



# Be Who You Want Them to Be

*How can I avoid screaming matches with my child, or end them if they do start?*

by Solomon Brenner

**Y**

You can be easily drawn into a screaming match if you become frustrated when reprimanding

your child. Sometimes we don't know how to handle a child's misbehavior or become so emotional about it that we lose control. Parents are supposed to have control of the situation. They are the ones who set limits, follow through and deliver the consequences with authority. When a screaming match begins between you and your child, this authority begins to crumble.

When you scream at your child you are brought down to their emotional level. You are no longer seen as the authority figure, but as a peer. Your behavior in this situation is just as bad as, if not worse than, the child's misbehavior. Though it takes an unbelievable amount of patience and self-control, you must keep your cool. Count to ten or sixty, whatever it takes for you to regain your composure. Instead of calling your child hurtful names to "get back at them" for their misbehavior, think about what you want to say before you say it. It may help to write it down first so that you don't end up saying something you will regret.

When you yell at your child, you end up defending your own behavior instead of punishing theirs. If you do slip up and lose control, as everyone does sometimes, simply apologize and keep going. Remember, this is about correcting your child's misbehavior, not yours.

Parents are human. They lose their tempers just like anyone else. Screaming is usually an overreaction to the child's offense. Even if you do regret the way you handled a situation, do not give in to the child simply out of remorse. This may seem like the easy way out, but it is sending the wrong message to your child. What your child sees is a parent that has no control. All they have to do is start a screaming match and then they can get away with whatever they want. Instead, follow through with the usual consequence you would enforce in that certain situation and then you can apologize for your actions if necessary. Explain to your child that the way you acted was wrong, but that it does not make up for the child's offense.

If you find that anytime you and your child disagree you end up screaming at each other, come up with a prepared defense in case that happens. Give yourself and your child some time to calm down before you address the

situation. This allows them to think about what they have done and what the consequence should be. Once you know what you want to say and what the punishment will be, talk about it calmly with your child. If they start yelling and throwing a fit, leave the room until they calm down again. Let them know that every time they throw a temper tantrum their punishment will only worsen.

Do not let your child walk all over you. Let them know that screaming is unacceptable behavior, but also remember to practice what you preach. If your child sees you yelling at your spouse or another family member, then they will copy what you do and not what you say. As long as you remain calm, even if your child does not, you are in control of the situation. Maintaining this control is vital to keeping your children in line and not stooping down to their emotional level.



Contributed by Solomon Brenner author of Black Belt Parenting. Master Instructor of Action Karate. Contact [SolomonBrenner@phillyfit-magazine.com](mailto:SolomonBrenner@phillyfit-magazine.com)