



API -

Attachment Parenting Inter

January 2006 Newsletter

Handling Attachment Parenting Criticism

The uncertainty that so many parents feel can lead to criticism of others and/or defensiveness.

Promoting Attachment Parenting Without Threatening Others

1. Be positive and confident vs defensive and critical.
2. Provide resources -- to those who are interested.
3. Invite others to explore API.

Preventing Conflicts Over Parenting Style

1. Be positive and confident.
2. Prepare in advance. Thinking ahead can make you feel less vulnerable to comments from others.
3. Focus on common ground.
4. Be discrete and discuss choices on a 'need to know' basis.
5. Avoid the issues by ignoring the speaker or changing the subject.
6. Offer explanations (positively and confidently vs defensively) before being asked.
7. Give permission to disagree or do things differently.
8. Don't set yourself up for a discussion you don't really want to have: don't confuse setting a boundary with convincing the other person you are right.

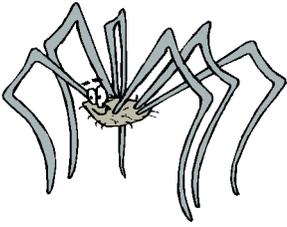
How we respond depends on the source of the comments (who), the underlying reason for the criticism (why), the topic (what) and the place it happens (where).

Ways To Respond

1. Ignore. Pretend you didn't hear or smile and keep on movin'.
2. Inform. Have some facts handy, but realize that this constitutes an engagement and possible discussion.
3. Humor. Works best when used gently with a genuine smile!
4. Acknowledge (then move on!).
5. Empathize. Reflective listening requires setting aside our defensiveness and listening with the intent of understanding the other person. See NVC in the additional resources.

It always helps to look for 'the question behind the question' - the motivating factor.

(con't on p.3)



Websites Related To This Month's Topic

La Leche League:

<http://www.lalecheleague.org/NB/NBJulAug99p116.html>

A wonderful article called "Responding to Criticism" from La Leche League's magazine for families, NEW BEGINNINGS. The chart at the end of the article summarizes five methods for responding.

Kellymom:

www.kellymom.com/bf/criticism.html

Cnvc.org:

Non violent communication guides us to reframe how we express ourselves, how we hear others and resolve conflicts by focusing our consciousness on what we are observing, feeling, needing, and requesting

Responding to Criticism

<http://www.myntoddler.com/comments/>



Attachment parenting, or as I call it, Instinctive Parenting, means following both your heart and your baby's cues. It means doing things as they come naturally, without the interference of often well-intentioned but misinformed friends, relatives, noseys and of course, the so-called "experts".

-from Lonnit,

www.geocities.com/Heartland/Plains/7503/ATTACH.HTML



API-Canton meets the second Tuesday of every month. We are currently meeting at the Stark County District Library - North Branch on 25th St. NW in the basement meeting room.

Specific Responses (from LLL FAQ)

Your attitude and tone of voice can make a world of difference in how people accept your responses. The approaches and phrases listed below are helpful for dealing with criticism. Review them and choose the ones that are most comfortable for you.

1. Use "I" messages instead of "YOU" messages. (Rather than "You always criticize me" try "I really don't like to be criticized.")
2. I'd like to discuss something. Is this a good time for you?
3. I feel (angry, hurt, etc.) when...
4. Having your support means so much to me.
5. It's amazing how much research has been done over the years. It must surprise you to see me doing _____. I hope I'll be able to handle it well when Abbey starts her own family.
6. Everyone has to make the decision they feel is best for their situation.
7. I'm glad that you care so much about the baby. I've thoroughly researched the topic and feel comfortable with my decision. I'd be glad to share my info with you.
8. I realize that this is an individual decision, and I'd really appreciate your giving me a chance at this.
9. My doctor has stated...
10. The American Academy of Pediatrics feels...
11. That gives me a lot to think about!
12. Your love and concern for the baby really shows.
13. That's certainly another way of approaching it.
14. I'm glad that _____ worked well for you and your baby.
15. We're really at odds here. Let's just agree to disagree and still stay friends, OK?
16. I think we're losing sight of our goal here, which is the baby's well-being. Let's back up a little.
17. This is a topic that has been debated and argued for generations. Let's not fall into that trap, OK?

(con't on p.4)

(con't from p.3)

18. There are some valid points to both sides here.
19. You could be right.
20. I'd like some time to think about what you just said.
21. Let's remember that we're both on the same side here.
22. Can we save the arguments for truly vital topics?
23. It's a very individual decision, and I'd never try to impose my viewpoints on someone else.
24. Maybe the topic of _____ should go along with religion and politics: Not a good conversation topic for us.
25. Discussing _____ can really get me worked up. I'm sorry if I said anything out of line. Let's change the subject.
26. How about a compromise? You don't mention _____ and I won't criticize your driving anymore.
27. We're Abbey's parents and this is the decision we've made.
28. You feel very strongly about this, I can see.
29. This works for our family in our situation, but it might not work for you.
30. Just Smile. :-)

It is possible that a mother invites criticism (and/or engages in criticism) when she is uncertain about a parenting decision, perhaps because what she has been trying hasn't worked as well as she would have liked.

Join API

Attachment Parenting International (API) is a tax exempt, 501(c)(3), nonprofit, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan organization. API membership is not required to attend API group meetings but is encouraged to sustain the activities of the group and support the work of API. All donations to API are gratefully accepted and are tax deductible.

Individual/Family Membership , \$35.00 (one-year membership includes four complimentary quarterly issues of the Attachment Parenting: The Journal of Attachment Parenting International).

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