



Voice Lessons for Parents: What to Say, How to Say it, and When to Listen

Wendy Mogel

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Renowned speaker, parenting expert, and *New York Times* bestselling author Dr. Wendy Mogel offers an essential guide to the new art of talking to children, showing how a change in tone and demeanor can transform the relationship between parent and child.

Most parents are perfectly fine communicators—unless they’re talking to their children. Then, too often, their pitch rises and they come across as pleading, indignant, wounded, outraged. In tone and body language they signal, *I can’t handle it when you act like a child*.

Dr. Wendy Mogel saw this pattern time and again in her clinical practice. In response, she developed a remarkably effective series of “voice lessons,” which she shared with parents who were struggling with their kids. The results were immediate: a shift in vocal style led to children who were calmer, listened more attentively, and communicated with more warmth, respect, and sincerity.

In *Voice Lessons for Parents*, Mogel elaborates on her novel clinical approach, revealing how each age and stage of a child’s life brings new opportunities to connect through language. Drawing from sources as diverse as neuroscience, fairy tales, and anthropology, Mogel offers specific guidance for talking to children across the expanse of childhood and adolescence. She also explains the best ways to talk *about* your child to partners, exes, and grandparents, as well as to teachers, coaches, and caretakers. Throughout the book, Mogel addresses an obstacle that bedevils even the most seasoned and confident parent: the distraction of digital devices, how they impact our connection with our families, and what we can do about it.

Mogel’s now classic book, *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee*, is a beloved resource for a generation of parents. *Voice Lessons for Parents* brings her unique brand of practical wisdom to harried parents eager to deepen their relationships with their kids. “Children will lead you on an incredible journey,” writes Mogel, “if they trust you, if you take the time, and if you’re willing to follow.”

Voice Lessons for Parents: What to Say, How to Say it, and When to Listen Details

Date : Published April 17th 2018 by Scribner

ISBN :

Author : Wendy Mogel

Format : Kindle Edition 321 pages

Genre : Parenting, Nonfiction, Self Help, Education

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Jayson says

This was really good! I highly recommend it to any parent of both young and teenage children. I loved it... it was a touch long, but there is a likelihood you can skip some parts that aren't totally relatable to you at the current moment. I found this author through the Armchair Experts podcast with Dax Shepard... and I am glad I read this book!

Ietrio says

Like any witch doctor, Mogel has no answers. Only dropping smart remarks from which the reader should interpret whatever. And the game is quite rigged: if you hit the right answer, Mogel told you do. If you don't, than you should listen more to your inner self or whatever.

And as with any respectable witch doctor, Mogel is not content with the rigged game. From time to time the reader will get some god impersonation about how it was "in all eras".

jeanmarie says

I really wanted to like this book as it started out well—pay attention to how you speak to your children and not just what you say. However, it quickly descended into what felt like gender caricatures (boys are rambunctious and need opportunities to be heroes). I would have found it easier I think if there were citations to sources as I apparently have a less average boy? Neither the advice in the 'boy' or 'girl' chapters seemed to be the right fit. I don't know if I'm too much of a hippy or what but the delivery of the message just didn't resonate with me and I found the book challenging to plow through.

Admittedly, I gave up because it felt like the return on time slogging was so low.

Sarah says

This is a helpful parenting book with practical advice. It covers general communication with children and also how to talk about specific topics. It is a book I will return to as my children age and different topics come up.

I received an ARC from NetGalley.

Marti says

I didn't read the teen chapters because we're so far from that. But I did like the practical advice and the

connection to neurology. Sometimes it's just nice to read something that confirms that you're not the only one struggling with, say, a five-year-old boy who doesn't listen at first and a very strong-willed three-year-old.

Book was a little heavy on "boys do this and girls do that" at times, but they were usually accompanied with an acknowledgement that such statements are not universally true.

Jesica DeHart says

Few books on parenting offer such abundant, hands on and practical learning opportunities. With each of Mogel's books, she touches upon so many areas where I have so much potential to grow as a parent. Voice Lessons is immediately impacting how I talk and has thoroughly remedied some challenges.

I will be posting my review to Instagram and Facebook during the week this book releases.

Gretchen says

I appreciated the insights and read through the teen years as well even though I'm far from it still—she continued to reference points that are applicable to younger kids throughout. I appreciated the advice and still fear the teen years but what I took away from this book the most was the importance of listening. Not only that, but being mindful of my tendency to worry about efforts being taken now and how it will affect their futures (college, adult life). The “goodwill” bank examples of the types of interactions that the kids will remember fondly reminded me of my own memories. Mogel highlights the importance of just being there and not rushing to solve everything. Sometimes not saying the first thing that comes to mind is the toughest part. Waiting is usually wise in non-emergency scenarios. Informative, helpful read for anyone looking to grow in the realm of thoughtful listening, while being effective without alienating or causing the child to become defensive while trying to help.

Book Him Danno says

As a mother of a soon to be teenager and more to come I have been searching books that would help me guide my teen as well as my little's I have in my own home.

This book is practical hands on lessons that even teens could use as a reference when talk to adults and their friends. I learned so much from this book on how words can effect someone from when they are growing as young child to adulthood. Just the difference between the use of a term as well as the sound of your voice can change who a child will interpret you.

I am sharing this book with all the moms I know.

Thank you Netgalley and the publisher for the advance copy of Wendy Mogel Voice Lessons for Parents

Kiri says

3.5 stars. I liked the message behind this book, which encourages parents to consciously shape the way they communicate with their children, down to the physical attributes of pitch, tone, and body language. The writing has a relaxed, conversational tone, unlike many parenting books that can be preachy or dogmatic and

leave you feeling anxious and despairing of how to implement their advice. This book covers how to communicate with children at different ages, plus excellent chapters on difficult subjects (specifically, sex, death, and money) and how to co-parent effectively despite differences of opinion (that chapter seems valuable for any couple, whether or not kids are in the picture!).

A particular bit of advice that stood out to me was Mogel's suggestion that you treat your child (especially as he/she becomes a teen) as an "exchange student" coming from a different culture. Obviously, your child came from your culture, but as I see it, this metaphor allows you to deal with teen behaviors from a point of detached curiosity (and respect), rather than kneejerk judgment. These behaviors could include what the teen chooses to wear (e.g., sexualized clothing), eat (e.g., unhealthy stuff), say (e.g., swearing/yelling), do (e.g., "waste" time), etc. As a grownup you already have opinions about all of this, but the teen is still developing his/her judgment and exploring options. While obviously you don't want your teen to be unsafe or hurt, perhaps approaching with an attitude of open curiosity can be more effective than issuing dictates. Maybe.

Another powerful idea here is Mogel's statement that your child's behavior today is "not permanent and not predictive" of how they will be in the future. She is talking about weird choices in clothing, verbal tics, etc. and reminding us to take a step back and not get bogged down in constant corrections (while still being aware of any problematic trends that do persist). That seems freeing.

The main downside is that the book seems to be mired in gender stereotypes - in assumptions about kids (boy/girl) *and* in assumptions about parenting roles (mother/father). The most relevant and believable parts are discussions about developmental differences between boys and girls and how being sensitive to this can improve your parenting of a son or daughter. But the book strongly and consistently assumes that the reader is a mother, and this could be offputting to fathers, who also need to talk to their children. The book does mention fathers, but it's consistently stereotypical - mom takes the kid to piano lessons while dad takes him/her fishing or camping. Mom manages the logistics and dad does the fun stuff (which is almost always a physical activity). The book is even AWARE of its own stereotyping, and Mogel peppers the text occasionally with disclaimers like "of course, this statement applies to either parent." She makes an effort to address the issue up front in the prologue/introduction, which I found very respectable. But it reads as if these parts were pasted in during a later editing pass, without effort devoted to making the whole text equally welcoming and applicable to all parents.

Darcysmom says

I received an ARC of this book from Netgalley for free in exchange for an honest review.

Wendy Mogel has written an accessible and straightforward guide for parents who want to communicate more effectively with their children. The book is organized by age and then a chapter with specific suggestions for boys and another for girls. I really liked the honesty and lack of condescension in this book. As the mother of a third grade daughter, I admit that I gave the chapters focusing on girls a much closer read than those that focused on boys.

I appreciate the very specific advice in Voice Lessons for Parents and know that I will be referring to it frequently.
