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How to Teach Your Kids to Value Personal Accountability



Teaching personal accountability is hard but important. What is the point in raising our kids to achieve great levels of success if they won't hold themselves accountable to their actions? (Think of the embezzlement case by Tyco CEO Dennis Kozlowski and the Gulf oil spill debacle – we don't want our kids to be responsible for something like that!)

Important things to remember before getting started:

- **It's an all or nothing proposition.** If you let them get away once, they will learn to look for loop holes every time in the future.
- **It's not going to be easy, at least not at first.** Expect pushback, negotiation, meltdowns, blame etc. until it is recognized that each child is personally accountable for his/her own actions.
- **It has to be a case of "lead by example".** You have to walk the walk, not just talk the talk.
- **It has to be explained in a way that they can relate.** The best option: find an instance where your child suffered from someone else's lack of taking responsibility and use it to drive the point home.

How to teach them to value personal accountability

- Set consequences ahead of time
- Make rules/consequences very clear
- Discuss what they can do and not just what they are not allowed to do
- Remind or cue them about expectation and actions to be accountable
- Be consistent

REMINDER FOR THE WEEK:

There are many ways that a parent can cut themselves a break, like ordering take out for dinner, extending bedtime occasionally or outsourcing some of the chores. Cutting corners on important lessons regarding your child's character is NOT one of them. Don't surrender because it is easier!

You are accountable for your children learning accountability.