



February 2009

Meet Kristi Miller



Kristi Miller, MA, CAPI, and Solutions in Parenting Founder, is a [Certified Aware Parenting Instructor](#) and Parenting Consultant who offers a distinctive form of parent education coupled with hands-on training for parents and their families. For more than a decade, Kristi has been dedicated to a specialized form of parent education she developed, [Bond Strengthening Parenting®](#), which honors and encourages parents and helps them define and maintain their own personal styles. This, in turn, allows children to thrive in a loving and collaborative environment.  
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## Parenting Center

Speaking of Parenting...

**A true Gift of Love.** Not sure what to get that special mom, dad, step-parent or grandparent for Valentine's Day? How about a Solutions in Parenting Gift Certificate? [Contact us](#) today for the perfect parenting gift any time of year.  
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## The Gift of Love

February, as we are all aware, is a time when we hear a lot about the word love. Our children may receive Valentine cards from their friends or classmates, we may arrange for flowers for our partners, or perhaps even a special date with the ones we love.

Whatever you choose to do to express your love, please remember one of the most important gifts you can give to anyone, big or little, is the gift of your loving attention. Read on, for one really important way to give to someone this Valentine's Day.  
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At Solutions in Parenting, we receive many calls, emails and questions from our clients about the best ways to handle different situations which may arise during your parenting journeys. We have also had requests from our readers to post some of these questions for you all to experience. As a result, we have decided to share with you some of those questions, as well as our answers to them. We will make this a regular feature on our newsletter, so keep those questions coming. (Pssst. Check the sidebar for a fun incentive for you to submit a question for us to post!)  
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## "I'm Sorry"

Two little words. One powerful message. Learning how to give a heart-felt apology to someone you love is one of the best skills you can learn to foster trust, intimacy, and connection whether you say it to your children, partner, best friend or parent (or to yourself!).

Apologizing does not always come easy to everyone, yet we find ourselves in the position of needing to say "I'm sorry" surprisingly often. Perhaps we have offended our partner unintentionally, or have yelled at our children, or dropped our friend's latte on the way to the table. Sometimes apologies are even grander in scale. Have we betrayed our partner's trust? Have we deeply hurt our dear friends with careless words or actions? Have we damaged familial bonds in some way? Whatever the reason, big or small, an apology is usually in order when we have done something to hurt someone else.

Giving a proper apology may be difficult for us at times. Perhaps this is because we may feel that when we apologize, we are admitting we have done something wrong. For example, yelling at our kids to get ready for school after asking them nicely five times may not seem worth apologizing for. After all, you were really nice the five times before the yelling, and they did choose to ignore your requests, right? However, when your children react in a way that shows they have been hurt by something you have done, that is a perfect time for an unconditional apology. Does apologizing mean they don't have to listen to you next time? Are they off the hook for lagging in the mornings? Are they right and you are wrong? Absolutely not. Those are all issues to be addressed at another time and have nothing to do with your apology.

A really good apology is important because that means you have chosen to take responsibility for your own behavior because you recognize it has affected someone

We can bring a Parenting Expert to you! We can speak to your parent groups, schools, daycares, preschools, churches, or other gatherings, about:

- Sibling rivalry
- Discipline
- Co-parenting
- Effective Conflict-resolution
- Or any other parenting issues

Please [contact us](#) with questions or to schedule your event.

[Visit useful parenting links and resources](#)

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### Monthly Parenting Challenge

Practice giving heart-felt apologies this month. First start small, then work your way up. Try to incorporate all five steps to the perfect apology. Then try to notice which steps were easier for you? Which were more challenging? Did you get through a whole apology or did you get off track? Was it easier to apologize to your child than to your partner? We are curious...let us know how it goes.

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### What is Parenting Consultation?

We are offering personal parenting education and consultation for committed parents who want to raise confident, compassionate and responsible children.

It is now possible to bring an experienced consultant into your family life on a regular basis. Either by phone or in person, your consultant can help you create solutions to your daily parenting challenges with loving and effective lifelong parenting techniques. Start being the very best parent you can be **today**.

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### We want to hear from YOU

Are you struggling through some parenting "rough spots" right now and need a bit of advice? We are always here for you. Whether you are in the middle of a divorce, potty training your toddler or screaming at your teen, we can help. Send us an [email](#) and we will respond with some helpful guidance to get you through.

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adversely. Here are the steps to an effective apology:

1. **Name it.** Be specific about what you are apologizing for. "I am really sorry I yelled at you this morning", or "I am sorry I stepped on your foot", or "I am sorry I didn't tell you the truth when you asked for it", etc.

2. **Take Responsibility.** This is a tough part because we may be tempted to share the responsibility with someone else, because "owning" our mistake can be extremely painful. Try to resist this temptation by saying something like this, "I'm sorry I yelled at you this morning, I should not have done that and you did not deserve it". Period. Never follow your apology with "but". This places conditions on your apology and shifts responsibility from you, to blame on them. For example, "I am sorry I stepped on your foot", is really different than, "I am sorry I stepped on your foot, *but* if you hadn't been standing so close to me, I wouldn't have done it". All of a sudden your action is the other person's fault and not yours. If you have the uncontrollable urge to place some of the blame on the person, just try to tell yourself you can address whatever the issue is at another time. You will get your turn to talk about it, just not right now.

3. **Show willingness to change.** People who have been hurt by something you have done or said will need to know that you understand what it means to not do that again. For example, your apology may look like this so far: "I'm sorry I yelled at you this morning (naming it). You didn't deserve to be spoken to like that (taking responsibility), and I am working on other ways to express my frustration without yelling at you (willingness to change). This shows the hurt person that you know you need to do more than say I'm sorry- you need to try to not do it again.

4. **Make amends.** Making amends is essentially asking what you can do for the hurt person to make it better. Building on our example, your apology would sound something like this: "I'm sorry I yelled at you this morning (naming it). You didn't deserve to be spoken to like that (taking responsibility), and I am working on other ways to express my frustration without yelling at you (willingness to change). Is there anything I can do for you right now? (making amends). This can be a difficult step, because you may be opening yourself up to be yelled at, cried at, and have to re-live the offense you would rather forget. Regardless, it is your job as "apologizer" to let this happen, and try to keep your own reactions in check. If you start to have really strong feelings during this phase, tell yourself you will get your chance to talk about it. You can talk to friends, partners, or a professional about it at a different time, if you need.

5. **Ask for forgiveness.** This is where you get to put a cherry on top of the apology. Asking for forgiveness helps to put more power back to the offended party and gives them a choice in the matter. Your apology would now sound like this: "I'm sorry I yelled at you this morning (naming it). You didn't deserve to be spoken to like that (taking responsibility), and I am working on other ways to express my frustration without yelling at you (willingness to change). Is there anything I can do for you right now? (making amends). Can you forgive me?" (asking for forgiveness).

If you have given a really honest, heart-felt apology, chances are good that they will accept your apology with open arms. If you have placed conditions on your apology, or have not been sincere, they may not be willing to accept it. Either way, let them make their decision. It's their feelings that were hurt, not yours. You can always repeat the process until they feel ready to accept your apology.

A really good apology has the power to restore trust, improve intimacy and strengthen relationship bonds (not to mention modeling deep compassion!). When you allow yourself to give loving attention in the form of an apology to someone you have hurt, you are giving them an incredible gift of love.

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## We Hear You!

Check out the "we hear you" section every month to find out answers to your most pressing parenting questions.

**Q: *When and how much allowance should we be giving our children?***

**A:** Allowance is considered to be money given to children for performing household tasks.

## Our Gift to You!

If you send us a parenting question or comment and we use it in our newsletter (confidentially, of course!) you will receive a free 45-minute telephone consultation session! Send your questions/comments to [kristi@solutionsinparenting.com](mailto:kristi@solutionsinparenting.com).

Usually the money is given on a weekly to monthly basis and ranges from small amounts to rather large amounts, based on the child's age and the family's resources.

Allowance tends to be a contested topic in the parenting community, and it is our belief that allowance should not be given to any child for performing basic household duties. Each person in a family needs to be expected to take care of his or her environment, and it is up to the parents to instill these values by modeling this behavior and by teaching their children how to do these jobs without external rewards, such as money. This way, the satisfaction of contributing to the household is the reward, and therefore will be repeated in the future without conditions. If a child is given money for performing required daily tasks, the money becomes the focus, instead of learning and completing the task for the internal satisfaction of it.

However, if a child expresses a desire to earn an allowance, or if you would like to give your child allowance, we recommend all of those involved, come up with a list of tasks, which are not considered daily household work, and providing allowance for those tasks upon completion. Some of these tasks can include: mowing the lawn, washing your car, cleaning the outside of the house's windows, or raking the leaves. Of course, the tasks agreed upon will need to be age-specific for each child (very young children should not be offered allowance). Make sure you and your child have agreed on the parameters before the task (s) have been completed. We recommend having the family create a list of these "extra" jobs before hand so all members involved will be clear on the agreements. Figure out how much money will be given for each task, and encourage your kids to be the ones to come up with the tasks.

As always, the ultimate purpose of household tasks is to teach children how to become responsible, motivated, and helpful people. Set them up for success by having clear expectations, agreements and instructions. They will appreciate this, as well as enjoy a bit of spending (or saving!) money.

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***My 12-year-old son and I are constantly fighting about money. He wants to throw away his money on ridiculous things and I want him to learn the value of saving his money. What should I do to show him the value of saving money?***

[Click here for more on the basics of kids and money](#)

***We are interested in having our 3 y/o and 5 y/o do chores around the house, but my mother tells me they are too young. Any advice?***

[Click here for a detailed list of age appropriate tasks](#)

***I use time out to discipline my four-year old. It doesn't seem to be working anymore. Not only is she still doing the same things that got her in trouble (writing on her table instead of her paper!) but also she seems even more defiant when she is through. Am I doing something wrong?***

[Click here to read our answer](#)

***What is a parenting consultant and how do I know if I need one or not? What's the best way to choose one?***

[Click here to read our answer](#)