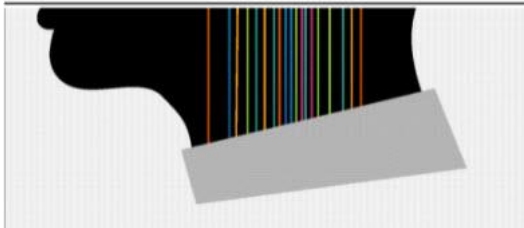




HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD
DEVELOP NEW EMPOWERING
LEARNING SKILLS TO FLOURISH IN
SCHOOL

*Includes communication skills and fun learning
activities. For in-class and at-home remote learning.*

By Mike Aguilera



A Resource for Parents and Teachers.

This book helps students of all ages adapt and excel with in-
class schooling and at-home remote learning.

By Mike Aguilera

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Introduction:

Learning does not have to happen only by reading a book, in a classroom setting, or during a video session. Your child (student of any age) can naturally and playfully learn beyond classroom and homework. With the proper mindset and creative learning skills, we learn when we are curious, playful and hungry for knowledge.

I've used this technique for many years to help me with creative ideas, solutions, and learning.

Enhance your child's critical thinking skills. You and your child will discover different ways of thinking and learning, which builds confidence and self-esteem.

Natural learning also develops an open mind by thinking of ideas and challenges with different perspectives towards a solution.

When a child has a sense of curiosity and playfulness like when wanting to walk, talk, ride a bike, play an instrument, play a sport, or anything that is of emotional interest to the child, this induces natural learning.

Have fun and experiment with different ways of learning and different ways to think about learning.

Chapter 1

Mindset and Language for Natural Learning

Thoughts are Things

-Napoleon Hill

As a parent, you naturally have the mindset to encourage, support, and motivate your child.

Keep in mind that your child can be under stress. Stress, not just from the pressure of learning or wanting to do their best, but also the stress and anxiety because of uncertainty.

This is also about mental health.

As you may have discovered from the 2020 Olympics, mental health is also a key factor towards success. It is not just about skill or talent.

Renowned super-star gymnast Simone Biles removed herself from a portion of the 2020 Olympic competition because of mental health. She was aware her mindset was not focused and she made major errors, impacting the team's group success and her own safety and well-being. There are many mindset life examples from various fields (top performers, athletes, professionals).

The words, conversations, and exercises in this book are all designed to help your child (and you) mentally and emotionally.

Let's begin with some words...

**There are words that will impact your child's
mindset and confidence.**

It is important to understand the negative impact certain words have on your child's motivation and confidence.

**The first word I want you to be cautious
with is Hope.**

Hope can be a word of doubt.

To give you an example of doubt, imagine your doctor saying, '*I hope* I can find what's wrong with you.'

There's doubt in that message and you'll probably say, 'I hope you can find another patient because I'm leaving.'

If you tell your child 'I hope you do well on that test,' Or 'I hope you do well with that subject,' you are in essence saying 'I don't think you will, but I hope you do.'

There is doubt in that statement. The same thing applies if your child says, ‘I hope I do well on the test.’ Or ‘I hope I do well with the subject.’ They are expressing doubt in their abilities.

Instead of using the word hope say or make a positive suggestion. You can say *‘you are going to do well on that test. I’m confident.’*

Also keep in mind, when your child says statements with hope (out loud or to themselves) like, ‘I hope I do well’, what is being expressed is concern and doubt. They are in a state of survival. Fight or flight. They are anxious, concerned, fearful.

Negative statements create a mindset of survival, doubt, fear, rather than a mindset of confidence, calmness, wanting to explore possibilities of new learnings, new ideas.

You need to shift your child into a positive emotional state of possibilities so they are in a learning zone.

What to say instead of Hope...

Either say a positive outcome/suggestion like ‘you are going to do great.’ Or, say something as direct as ‘Do your best.’ Just eliminate the word *hope* and make a positive statement.

The next word to be cautious with is Don't.

Don't is in the category of words referred to as a negation. You are asked not to think about something (negate it), however,

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you have to think about it in order to understand the communication. If I say *don't* think of a blue elephant. You must think of a blue elephant to process it, and then supposedly erase it out of your mind. Yes, at that point it's too late, you thought about a blue elephant.

If you say **don't worry** about the test, your child thinks and experiences worrying to make sense of what you said. Same as when you say, 'don't get upset.'

So, if you are making statements like these your child is evoking those negative emotions as part of the process to understand.

These type of statements are subtle; yet, they still create a negative train of thought.

Also consider the same thing if your child says statements to themselves, or to you, like: I don't want to mess up on this test, I don't want to flunk, I don't want to look dumb. They process and experience those negative thoughts which impacts their confidence and ability to learn.

What to say instead of Don't...

State what you want them to positively experience. Instead of saying don't worry, say I want you to relax and feel confident. State the desired outcome with different words.

Use positive statements of encouragement; words that can create a resourceful state.

You want him/her to feel confident. You want them to be centered, focused, and let those answers flow out naturally.

The next word to be careful using is Try.

“There is no try.”

-Yoda, Star Wars

You have probably heard this before. As a Yodaism. Yes, Yoda from Star Wars.

Try you mustn't, do you must. There is no try. To ‘try’, in essence, is to attempt and not commit to do.

If your child says I'm going to **try** to do my best or I'm going to try to do my homework today. They are saying I'm going to attempt and more likely not do.

If you say try to do your best, you are saying, just attempt but I don't expect you to do your best.

Be aware that if you say try to do your best or try to study tonight or try to do your homework by a certain time, you are saying to attempt.

What to say instead of Try...

Instead of saying ‘try to do your best’ say, ‘do your best.’

Instead of try to do your homework, say ‘finish your homework by this time...’

Use words of accomplishment. State as a sense of commitment and certainty. Replace try with words like; do, finish, accomplish, complete. Again, avoid saying try.

Two additional words for parents. The words you use to give feedback can influence the reception of your feedback or suggestion. There are two words I want you to be cautious of using...

These two words are **‘but’** and **‘should.’**

The word *but* negates everything before it.

BUT



Saying, 'It's a great day outside but I see a few clouds,' sends the message that it's not really a great day outside because of a few clouds.

The word *but* negates 'it's a great day outside....' The person will hear 'but I see a few clouds'

Use positive encouraging feedback or suggestions.

If your child says, 'I'm having a problem with this.' And you say okay, but are you doing your homework? Or, but are you paying attention? The word *but* in that reply is telling your child what they just said is not important or valid. His/her fears or concerns are not relevant. By not acknowledging the concern, you can create resentment.

Replace the word *but* with 'and' or 'on the other hand.'

Replacing *but* with 'and' implies acknowledgement and open to talking about suggestions to get past the concern.

You can say, 'I understand, and (rather than saying I understand, but...) what can you do to improve or to get better?'

On the other hand, implies that two ideas can exist at the same time.

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Replacing but with ‘on the other hand’ or ‘and’ reduces the abrasiveness and potential conflict. You want your child to be open to having a positive conversation with you.

For example, if your child says, I’m having a challenge with this.

Respond, “On the other hand (again, not but), you’re doing very good with other subjects. And you are focused and determined to excel.”

The other word to be careful with is **Should**.

The word should can create a negative reaction because it can imply being told what to do. And, if you point your finger at the same time you double the negative impact.

Should



And, don’t say “You should do...” (and, point at the same time)

Your child will probably get defensive and say, or think, that you're talking down to me and trying to control me. It will be considered an oppressive command, not a positive supportive suggestion.

Only if your child asks, what *should* I do? Then you can respond with should. You should do...

However, if your child says I'm having a problem or challenge with this. Don't say, this is what you should do. And, to avoid compounding the optional push back, do not point at the same time.

Have conversations to discover the challenge, not to only be right.

If your child says, I'm having challenges with this subject. And they show you what they are doing. **Ask discovery questions to understand** what the learning roadblock might be.

Before you give a suggestion, first start by asking your child discovery questions like these:

- What's going on?
- Tell me more.
- What have you done so far that's working?
- What do you think might help?
- Have you asked your teacher for help?
- Have you asked any of your friends for help?

Give positive acknowledgment to create a sense of possibilities and positive self-esteem.

Begin with asking, what have you done so far? When they answer, reply with a positive acknowledgment.

For example, after you say ‘what have you done so far’, and you look at the homework, you can say something positive like...

‘I like your answer to that question, good grammar.’
Acknowledge with a compliment to create positive emotions and possibilities.

The purpose for the positive statements is to shift your child’s emotions away from negative concerns and instead towards positive accomplishments and possibilities.

Make it their idea

Ask, ‘what do you think?’

When you ask, what do you think? they will say what their thought is and now it’s become their idea. Once it's their idea they are more likely to take action. If it's your suggestion or idea, they may challenge it.

Create empathy and acknowledgment by using this statement...

“I understand.”

Other phrases that you may hear can be ‘I’m not good at this’, ‘I’m not good at math, I’m not smart enough.’

When you hear their negative emotional statements, acknowledge them to make them feel heard. Honor their emotions.

Do not respond with ‘no, you’re going to do well.’ When you respond like that you are saying their feelings and emotions are wrong or not important.

One effective way to respond is by empathetically acknowledging their negative emotion by saying one simple phrase. The phrase is ‘**I understand.**’ It is important to make them feel that their emotions and fears are acknowledged.

After you acknowledge with ‘I understand’ you shift to a positive statement like, ‘I understand ...*you are concerned, do your best, you are smart.*’ Or, ‘I understand. What are your questions, maybe I can help?’

Positive words and statements of understanding can impact your child’s mindset, confidence, and influence them to think about solutions instead of being frozen in fear or concern.

Chapter 2

Storytelling for Learning Lessons

How to use storytelling to eliminate resistance and create understanding.

Storytelling can also help your child improve critical thinking. By guiding your child through a story (analogy or metaphor), they will experience complex subject learning with a different perspective and ultimately new understanding.

Can I tell you a story?

When I think of storytelling, I think back to when I was around the ages of 4, 5, 6 and being with my brothers and sisters huddled in bed with our mom. Our mom would read stories to us and we would listen to every word wanting to know what's going to happen next.

I also remember times at school sitting on the floor for story time with the teacher reading a story. We all sat quietly listening to the animated voices that changed with each character in the story. After listening to the complete story we would think about the learning lesson or message like; be friendly, be kind, do your best, be curious.

A story can create a magical learning lesson.

You can have your child experience a lesson by sharing a story with them rather than you being blunt, direct, saying ‘this is what you should do.’

I just shared with you a few of my experiences with storytelling. My fond memories with my mom, brothers and sisters, and with a schoolteacher.

You were probably reflecting on storytelling yourself when you were in that situation and experiencing it.

Within that story, I was telling you how there were messages and lessons that were being conveyed.

Just by my telling you how storytelling influenced me, you probably thought about your own personal childhood storytelling experience and what you learned from it.

To influence your child with stories, say these six magical words. Yes, six magical words.

These six words are ...**Can I tell you a story?**

At that point, your child will think, okay, it's a story not a criticism or demand. I'll sit down and listen to the story. Your child is now open to a conversation and not feeling defensive because now they're hearing a lesson through a story.

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You can then begin by saying, well, (if you are a mom), when I was a little girl, or I know a little girl. If you are a dad, you can say something similar like, when I was a little boy or I know a little boy like you, and tell the story.

Begin the story based on the lesson you want to convey.

You can naturally reference to your own learning lessons. For example, you can begin your story with, when I was a child or at your age, I would say, ‘I hope I don't mess up on this test, I hope I don't flunk. Or, I'm not good at this. I realized those words impact my energy, my thoughts, my mindset. I doubted myself because I was in an emotional state of fear and anxiety that caused me to struggle for answers.’

‘I realized I should be telling myself positive suggestions like ‘do your best. I realized when I focus on solutions instead of doubt I would remember more, have more fun learning and do better on tests.’

There are different ways to start a story. Use a story to begin opening their mind to hear the lesson.

Additional ways to begin a story:

- Can I share something?
- I heard about...
- I saw a movie that...
- I read a book...
- I just remembered...
- That reminds me of...

Pages 19-59 are not included in this sample