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## Parenting Tips

### Not Just Behavior Change

Joey's preschool teacher told him to sit down. He said, "No." The teacher, not wanting to be outdone, leaned over Joey and said sternly, "You sit down!" Joey sat down, looked up at the teacher, and replied, "I'm sitting on the outside, but I'm standing on the inside."

Too many children are like Joey, changing their behavior in response to discipline but continuing to disobey in their hearts. As parents we must look for ways to help children make lasting changes, not simply adjust their behavior to get by. How do we do it?

First, we must pray. God is the one who ultimately changes hearts. We can force behavior change but we can't force a change of heart. Secondly, we want to talk about character and genuine heart change with our children to show them that we too are more interested in what's going on inside.

Then we look for strategic ways to make progress. It may be reflecting sorrow instead of anger in the correction process or requiring that a child sit for a while to think about an offense before returning. We may choose a consequence that helps a child realize that the present problem is a serious one and that we aren't going to allow it to go unchecked.

Whatever you do, talk about the heart and the importance of changing on a deeper level. You will help your children make significant changes. After all we don't want to be content with looking good on the outside. It's the internal change that is most important.

This parenting tip is taken from the book, [\*Say Goodbye to Whining, Complaining, and Bad Attitudes, In You and Your Kids\*](#) by Dr Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller RN, BSN.