

# Teaching Kids to Handle Difficult Situations

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Whether at school, at home or out in the community we are faced with a variety of difficult situations. We don't have control of what others do but we do have control about how we react to these situations. Even though we can't control others we can respond to the situation so that the other person understands our point of view regarding what happened. Our first impulse during these situations might be to yell back or say words that are unkind. Remember that we didn't appreciate what happened so we should respond in a way that we would want people to respond to us. We have to remember the golden rule. If we don't follow this rule the problem gets bigger instead of smaller which is the goal.

When working with students we talk often about thought bubbles. We have a lot of thoughts that go through our mind each and every day. These thoughts may be nice positive thoughts but can also be negative and hurtful. We have to choose which thoughts should leave our mind and be sent out through our speaking bubble so others can hear it. Choosing wisely on our part regarding the things we have control over (what we say and do) can help us make a difficult situation easier. We have to remember that sometimes a difficult situation can simply be a miscommunication between two people. We may infer the wrong thing about what the person did, said or how they said it.

A great way to teach kids to respond using their words is to have them express themselves using an "I" statement. The thought you are expressing should start by using the word "I" that way you are explaining how you feel about the situation and doesn't sound like you are blaming others, which would make the problem larger. A general format to follow when using an "I" statement is as follows:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ (use a feeling word)

When \_\_\_\_\_ (explain what happened)

So please \_\_\_\_\_ (what would you like to see happen next)

If we change how we think about the situation maybe we can get to know or understand the other person better. Often times people lash out at others because of something that happened in their lives that made them feel hurt. If the situation lends well to helping the other person it is worth a try. Ultimately we want to keep ourselves safe in every situation and sometimes the best response is none at all. If someone is trying to get a rise out of us we shouldn't feel as if we need to respond we can, walk away, shrug it off and/or go do something we enjoy with people that make us feel good about ourselves. There are going to be difficult situations no matter what stage of life we are in, we should make choices that make us proud of ourselves and that help resolve the problem.

["Peace is not absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means."](#)

[Ronald Reagan](#)