

Slow-Low-Listen James 1:19, 20

Our brains are designed to protect us from anything threatening, especially if it is large and comes at us fast and loudly. (Picture a large, roaring animal running at you.) It is important for our survival that we quickly a) aggressively defend ourselves or, b) run away when we are threatened (fight/flight response).

This self-protective mechanism works against us in discipline situations. Parents try to regain control by rushing in (fast), towering over kids (large), with strong commands to “Stop it, right now!” (loud). This sends our kids into fight/flight responses, and shuts down their frontal lobe. If we want our kids to learn anything helpful when they’ve misbehaved, we must approach them in a manner that is the *opposite* of fast, large, and loud: Slow, Low and Listen.

SLOW		Buy time! Stop the charge and wait or slow down (if safety allows).
	“Let’s talk later when we’re calmer.”	Go to a different room for a while
	Take a step back	Count to 10 – out loud
	Take a bathroom break	“Hmm. Let me think about this.”
	Talk slowly, with pauses	Take a break to get insight from the Discipline that Connects appendix.
LOW		Calm your body. Do the opposite of intimidating postures/gestures.
	Get lower than your child	Sit down, even put your feet up
	Change facial expression, smile	Five deep “Dragon Breaths”
	Do push-ups; Take a walk	Put on music
	Rub hand lotion in before responding	Put hands in pockets or behind back
	Draw with your child or play catch while discussing the problem together	
LISTEN		Listen – to God, your child... instead of commanding, lecturing or threatening.
	“Lord, what’s the opportunity here?”	Post a key scripture. Repeat it.
	“Lord, give me your heart for my child.”	“What’s the need driving this challenge?”
	Repeat your prepared “truth phrase.” (See “What’s going on – in me?”)	“What’s it like to be my child right now?”
	Pray silently or out loud for wisdom and grace.	Instead of blaming, say emotion out loud briefly, (“I’m angry!”) then go calm down.