

Encouraging Yourself

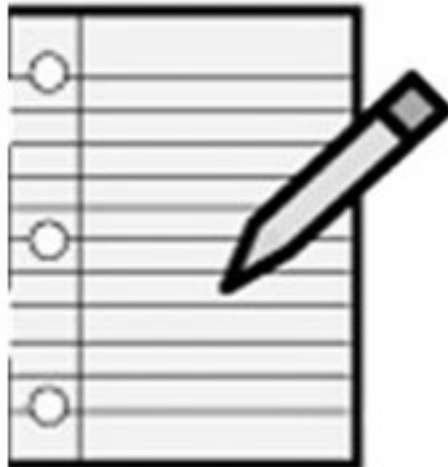
Tip – When you get a good grasp on how to treat yourself, you are better able to treat your children well.

When we're working on changing some aspect of our parenting – maybe trying to scold less, or to do a better job of teaching our children new skills – it's easy to get discouraged. Change doesn't always come quickly or easily.

"Remember that everyone makes mistakes," say Barbara Carlson, Margaret Healy, and Glo Wellman, educators and authors of *Taking Care of Me (So I Can Take Care of My Children)*. "You continue to love your children when they make mistakes, continue to love yourself, too."

Tools – There are many things you can do to encourage yourself and your children. The following ideas are drawn from *Taking Care of Me*.

- **Notice what you (or your partner or children) do well.** Write down at least one good thing about every day. For example, "I got everyone to school and work on time today" or, "Benjamin did his homework without being told" or, "Great! We had one solid hour with everyone using kind voices." Then post this on the refrigerator where everyone can see it.
- **Acknowledge your efforts toward making effective changes,** even if you aren't all the way there yet. Remember that change takes time. Compliment yourself for continuing to try.



- **Take time to have fun with (or sometimes without) your children.** Schedule some time for this every day.
- **Give yourself affirmations.** Affirmations are encouraging statements about yourself or others. The idea of an affirmation is to replace negative thoughts about yourself or others with positive ones. It takes practice and it may feel awkward at first if you are not accustomed to accepting compliments. But if you give yourself compliments often enough, you will start to believe them. Some affirmations you might give yourself are:



"I am proud of myself. I tried something new."

"I am a loving parent. The kids and I had a good day."

"I know I can do this. I'll be patient with myself."

"I solved that problem!"

You'll find more practical tips you can use right now in *Taking Care of Me (So I Can Take Care of My Children)* by Barbara Carlson, Margaret Healy, and Glo Wellman.

