

Making Changes

Tip – As parents, we can recognize problem areas in our behavior and make positive changes.

I know I yell at my kids too much. I remember my parents yelling at me. I didn't like it and after a while, I didn't pay attention. Now I yell, too. But I'm not sure how to stop.

Barbara Carlson, Margaret Healy, and Glo Wellman, parent educators and authors of *Taking Care of Me (So I Can Take Care of My Children)*, say that when you know yourself well, you often begin to notice things in your family life you'd like to change.

Tools – *Taking Care of Me* offers the following steps to change.

- **Acceptance.** Accept who you are now. Accept that you can't control all the influences in your life. Recognize that you have the power to grow and change. For example,

I accept that I have a tendency to yell when I'm tense. But I know I can learn to control it so I don't hurt my kids.



- **Choice.** Choose to do things in new ways. Stop making excuses or blaming others. For example,

From now on, I am going to take three deep breaths before I speak to my kids. This will help calm me before I act. I will stop blaming my yelling on the kids.

- **Commitment.** Set reachable goals. Start with something easy. Stick with your goals long enough to reach them. Congratulate yourself at every gain, no matter how small. For example,

First, I'm going to work on evenings, since that's the least stressful time for me. My goal is to reduce my yelling by half in the evenings for one week. When I make it to that point, we will all go out for milkshakes.

- **Responsibility.** Say, "This is my life. I'm in charge of it." Accept mistakes and go on. Feel good that you can take responsibility for your own actions. For example,

When I lose my resolve and yell, I will apologize to my kids once I'm calm. I'll tell them I'm trying to do better with my yelling. Then I'll do better next time.

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.