

ACTIVE LISTENING

A typical interchange when a child has a problem:

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JOHNNY: Tommy won't play with me today. He won't ever do what I want to do.

MOTHER: Well, why don't you offer to do what he wants to do? You've got to learn to get along with your little friends. (ADVISING, MORALIZING)

JOHNNY: I don't like to do things he wants to do and besides I don't want to get along with that dope.

MOTHER: Well, do find someone else to play with then if you're going to be a spoilsport. (OFFERING A SOLUTION, NAME-CALLING)

JOHNNY: He's the spoilsport, not me. And there isn't anyone else to play with.

MOTHER: You're just upset because you're tired. You'll feel better about this tomorrow. (INTERPRETING, REASSURING)

JOHNNY: I'm not tired, and I won't feel different tomorrow. You just don't understand how much I hate the little squirt.

MOTHER: Now stop talking like that! If I ever hear you talk about one of your friends like that again, you'll be sorry... (ORDERING, THREATENING)

JOHNNY: (walking away and sulking) I hate this neighborhood. I wish we would move.

An attempt to help child solve his own problem through active listening of parent:

JOHNNY: Tommy won't play with me today. He won't ever do what I want to do.

MOTHER: You're kinda angry with Tommy. (ACTIVE LISTENING)

JOHNNY: I sure am. I never want to play with him again. I don't want him for a friend.

MOTHER: You're so angry you feel like never seeing him again. (ACTIVE LISTENING)

JOHNNY: That's right. But if I don't have him for a friend, I won't have anyone to play with then.