

## Chapter 9 Let's get practical

Because a positive approach is essential with palm trees, here are a few exercises in positive words. First, indicate with the right letter which kind of statement each of the sentences below are and then "translate" them into friendly, positive instructions:

Kinds of statements:

**A:** Accusations

**P:** Personal attacks

**C:** Criticism

**N:** Negative instructions

**T:** Threats

"If you are not in the bathroom in five seconds, you are sure to get a spanking!"

"What is wrong with you? By this time one would think you would remember to flush the toilet!"

"Look at this mess! You have once again not tidied your room."

"Don't pick your nose. You won't find any diamonds there."

"As usual you are late for school. You are too slow to catch a snail."

"You are not allowed to sit on my couch when your feet are dirty."

"If you only listened when I warned you, Grandma's expensive vase would not be broken now!"

"This crying is nonsense. Stop it now, before I give you a reason to cry."

**It is usually very simple to put negative instructions in a positive way. Look at the examples of common instructions below and then replace the rest. (Once you get into the habit of starting your instructions with something other than "Don't," it will have a huge impact on your parenting style!)**

Don't eat with your mouth open.

Please close your mouth while you're chewing.

Don't vandalise your books.

Please put your books safely on the shelf.

Don't splash water all over the bathroom floor.

Keep the bathroom floor dry, please.

Don't drag your bookcase.

Don't pull at your jersey.

Don't take such big bites.

Don't throw your toys on the floor.

Don't stay out late.  
Don't stand so close to the fire.

**In the space provided, make a list of five things you want to stop saying to your young palm tree and then write down five things that you want to say more often:**

For example:

I will stop saying "What is wrong with you? How many times must I tell you? If you do that again, I will slap you! Watch out! I wish you were ..."

Things I will say often are "I enjoy you. I like you. I am sorry. You are fantastic at ... It is so nice when you ..."

**I will stop saying ...**

**I will often say ...**