

Identifying Your Triggers

Understanding what triggers your outbursts is a crucial step in breaking the cycle of yelling at your kids. Yelling can often be sparked by various triggers—situations, events, or thoughts that lead to frustration or impatience. These triggers might be external, like stressful situations or conflicts, or internal, such as feelings of overwhelm, guilt, or past experiences.

Recognizing what prompts you to yell means paying attention to the moments when you feel your frustration building, along with the thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations that come with it. By becoming aware of these triggers, you can catch them early and manage them in healthier ways, reducing the chances of yelling and helping you maintain a calmer, more constructive approach with your kids.

PART 1: Identify Triggers

List a situation where you find yourself yelling at your child and describe the related physical sensations, thoughts, and emotions. (Example page.)

Situation Description	Location	People Involved
<i>Example: Sammy refuses to do his homework despite multiple reminders.</i>	Home	Myself and Sammy

Before

1 What were you feeling physically?

Tension in my chest, clenched jaw, tightness in my stomach.

2 What were you thinking about?

- "Why doesn't Sammy ever listen to me?"
- "I've asked him so many times, and he still not doing it!"

3 How did you feel emotionally?

Frustration, impatience, feeling overwhelmed and powerless.

After

1 What were you feeling physically?

My head is pounding, shoulders feel tense, and there's a knot in my stomach.

2 What thoughts did you have?

- "I shouldn't have yelled; I'm a terrible parent."
- "I keep messing this up; Sammy is going to hate me."

3 How did you feel emotionally?

I feel guilt, regret, and sadness for losing my temper.



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Situation Description	Location	People Involved
Before	After	
1 What were you feeling physically?	1 What were you feeling physically?	
2 What were you thinking about?	2 What thoughts did you have?	
3 How did you feel emotionally?	3 How did you feel emotionally?	

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PART 2: Identify Patterns

Identifying patterns in the situations that lead to yelling at your kids can help you recognize these triggers more easily in the future. When you know what tends to set off your yelling, you can prepare yourself with different strategies to manage your reactions.

What situations or events most often lead to yelling at your kid(s)?

Example: I tend to yell when my kids are not listening after I've asked them multiple times to do something, like cleaning up their toys. It also happens when we're running late in the morning, and they are moving slowly. I'm usually at home, either in the kitchen or living room, especially during stressful times like getting ready in the morning or before bedtime. It's usually just me and the kids.

How do you feel physically and emotionally right before you start yelling?

Physically, I feel my heart racing, my face gets hot, and my muscles tense up. Emotionally, I feel overwhelmed, frustrated, and like I'm about to lose control,

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What types of thoughts do you often find yourself having right before you yell?

I think things like, 'Why don't they ever listen to me?' or 'I can't handle this anymore.' I also think, 'They are doing this on purpose just to make things harder for me.'

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What beliefs about yourself come up when you yell at your kid(s)?

I believe that I'm failing as a parent because I can't keep calm. I also feel like I should be able to handle this better and that other parents must not struggle like I do.

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What types of thoughts do you often find yourself having right before you yell?

What beliefs about yourself come up when you yell at your kid(s)?



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What would you like to say to yourself when you notice you're about to yell?

I'd like to remind myself that my kids aren't trying to make me angry; they're just being kids. I could say, 'Take a deep breath; this isn't an emergency,' or 'It's okay to feel frustrated, but I can choose a different way to respond.'

How could understanding your yelling triggers help you respond differently in the future?

By understanding what triggers my yelling, I can try to prepare for those situations with calming strategies, like counting to ten or walking away briefly. I can also remind myself that yelling often makes the situation worse and look for ways to connect with my kids instead of reacting in anger.

PART 3: Develop Coping Strategies

Identify coping strategies that can help you stop your negative self-talk in these situations. To learn more about coping skills you can use, scan the QR code below.

- When you feel the urge to yell, pause and ask yourself if your reaction is based on the present situation or if it's influenced by past frustrations or assumptions. Consider if yelling will help or harm the situation and think about a calmer, more effective way to communicate.
- Treat yourself with the same compassion you would offer a friend who is struggling. Remind yourself that parenting is hard, and it's okay to make mistakes.
- Replace the urge to yell with positive affirmations, like "I am capable of handling this calmly," or "I am learning and growing as a parent every day."
- Avoid comparing your parenting style or your children's behavior to others, especially on social media. Focus on your unique journey and the positive aspects of your relationship with your kids.

- Make a list of your parenting strengths, such as patience, creativity, or the ability to connect with your kids. Review this list when you feel frustrated to remind yourself that you have the skills to handle difficult moments without yelling.
- Keep a journal to write down the situations that trigger your yelling and analyze what led up to those moments. This practice can help you identify patterns and develop alternative strategies for managing these triggers in the future.
- Regularly reflect on the things you are grateful for in your parenting experience, like small moments of connection or the things you love about your kids. Focusing on gratitude can help shift your mindset from frustration to appreciation.
- Engage in self-care activities or hobbies you enjoy to help reduce stress and recharge. Taking care of yourself can help you stay calm and patient when challenges arise.



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Scan to learn more about how to stop yelling at your kids.