

The Power of Pause: Choosing Over Impulse

We live in a world that encourages instant reactions. A message arrives, we reply. Someone says something hurtful, we answer back. A child makes a mistake, a parent reacts. An emotion rises, and before we have had time to understand it, our words or actions have already followed. In such moments, one of the most valuable skills we can develop and teach our children is the ability to **pause**.

A pause may last only a few seconds, but it creates a powerful space between **what happens and what we choose to do next**. It allows us to breathe, recognise what we are feeling, think about the consequences and then respond with intention. The aim is not to suppress emotions. Anger, disappointment, frustration, excitement and fear are natural. The real skill is learning that **we can feel an emotion without allowing it to make every decision for us**.

Children experience this every day. A disappointing result can quickly become, "I am not good at this." An argument with a friend can lead to an angry message. A correction from a parent can trigger a defensive response. In such moments, the feeling is real, but the first reaction does not have to become the final action. A simple pause can help a child ask, **"What am I feeling? What am I about to do? What might happen next?"** A few seconds of reflection can prevent a temporary emotion from creating a lasting consequence.

Parents need the power of pause too. Parenting comes with love, responsibility, expectations, worry and, sometimes, exhaustion. When a child refuses to study, spends too much time on a device or responds disrespectfully, anger may be the first response. But children learn emotional regulation not only from what parents say, but from what they see parents practise. When a parent says, **"I am upset right now. Let me take a moment, and then we will talk,"** the child learns that strong emotions do not have to control our behaviour. A calm response does not mean a weak response. Boundaries can remain firm without words becoming hurtful.

The power of pause is especially important in today's digital world. A message or comment can be sent in seconds, but its impact may last much longer. Before replying in anger, posting something hurtful or making an assumption, we can teach ourselves and our children a simple rule: **Pause before you post. Pause before you reply. Pause before you decide.** Ask, **"Will I still want to say or do this when I am calm?"** Often, the answer changes.



some space. Then return with the intention to understand rather than to win. A parent can say, "I was worried, and my worry came out as anger." A child can say, "I was hurt, and I reacted without thinking." Such conversations teach children that disagreements do not have to damage relationships and that mistakes in our responses can be repaired.

Perhaps the most powerful question we can ask ourselves is: **"Will my next action solve the problem, or simply release my emotion?"** That question creates awareness and gives us back our choice. We cannot always control what happens, nor can we always control the first emotion we feel. But we can learn to choose what happens next.

The next time emotions run high, **pause before you answer, pause before you send, pause before you judge and pause before you speak.** Sometimes, the difference between a reaction and a response, a conflict and a conversation, or regret and wisdom is only a few seconds.

Pause. Breathe. Think. Choose. Because we may not always control what we feel, but we can learn to choose what we do next.

With best wishes,

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