

1 IT'S ALWAYS FINE TO SAY, "I DON'T KNOW."
When your kid asks a question you don't know the answer to, don't bluff and bluster. Say, "What a great question! I'm not sure, but I'll try to find out." Or "Let's look it up together!" Let your kid see your own efforts to educate yourself – reading, taking adult-ed classes, asking other adults to explain things to you. Your kid will see that there's no shame in not knowing everything, and they'll be less likely to grow up cheating and taking shortcuts to seem more informed than they really are.

2 PICK YOUR BATTLES.
The Talmud (core collection of rabbinic writings) says, "Do not threaten a child. Either punish him or forgive him." Good advice! There are things to dig in about and things to let slide. If you tell your kid, "We're leaving in five minutes," leave in five minutes. (Pro tip: Giving warnings always helps kids with transitions.) If you say, "Don't hit," and your kid hits, whisk them out of the situation and explain why hitting's a no-go. But if your tween rolls their eyes while starting the task you just told them to do, focus on the good stuff rather than barking about the facial expression. They're doing the thing! That's what's important. Remember you can't control everything, so focus on what really matters.

3 LAUGH.
Find the humor in parenting. Encourage jokes; watch comedies and read silly books. Kids are funny. This is an evolutionary strategy so we don't kill them.

4 TELL STORIES.
Share your family history. Show kids photos of relatives they never knew and comment on the fashions and cars. Offer up stories from your own childhood. (Kids love hearing about the best friend you rode bikes with, how you were afraid of the dark, and how you were vicious at kickball.) It's a bonding opportunity, a chance to share your values, and a way to teach a kid where they came from.

5 MODEL TIKKUN OLAM.
Tikkun olam means "repairing the world." Talk about how we all have to do our part to make this planet a better place, and then walk the walk. Volunteer for a park cleanup as a family. Let your kid see you giving charity, explain why, and have your kid donate part of their allowance to a cause they care about. Talk about how you vote your values at election time. As the foundational Jewish text *Pirkei Avot* puts it, "You're not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you allowed to desist from it."

6 ENCOURAGE GEEKINESS.
Help your kid figure out what their passions are; then encourage those passions. If your kid loves spaceships or princesses or horses, provide whatever books and field trips you can. Talk about the problematic aspects – space travel is expensive, so why should we pay for it? Why is it troubling that movie princesses all tend to look a specific, narrow way? Why can't we have a horse in our Manhattan apartment?

THE TOP 7 THINGS EVERY JEWISH PARENT SHOULD KNOW

with Marjorie Ingall

7 SELF-ESTEEM IS OVERRATED.
Don't praise kids for doing the minimum expected. Ask questions about their work rather than offering empty compliments. Let your kid see that self-esteem comes not from being showered with compliments and told how smart they are, but from working hard, being encouraged in their interests, and being kind to others.

Author of PJ Library's Parent Book Choice selection *Mamaleh Knows Best: What Jewish Mothers Do to Raise Successful, Creative, Empathetic, Independent Children*. Marjorie writes about children's books for *Tablet Magazine* and the *New York Times Book Review*.

