

Not perfect
BETTER



 **White Ribbon**
Australia

Better with your Kids

Tips and advice for better men

Why ‘Not Perfect, Better’?

In November of 2024, we began our #welisten campaign where we spoke to men and boys in a series of focus groups and interviews. The focus groups were made up of men from all different cultures, ages, classes and experiences, yet they had a common thread: many **men couldn't tell us what a “good man” or a “good relationship” looked like.**



A lot of them felt disconnected from the issue of violence against women – not because they didn't want to be part of the solution, but because they felt like they couldn't be. They questioned whether they could speak up if they knew they still had room to be better.

The answer to that is **yes** and it's why we started **Not Perfect, Better.**

Better with your Kids

Let's be the dad we wish we were.

There's nothing better than being a dad. To your kids, you're their hero (well, until the teenage years, when you become more of an embarrassment. But they tend to come back around).

While you might think your kids never listen to you, they rarely fail to imitate you. **So when it comes to respecting women, you are the difference.**



Kids are sponges that soak up as much information around them as possible. If you don't talk to them about respect, they'll pick up ideas from their mates, the internet, TV, or porn. And if there's one thing more powerful than talking, it's teaching.

Whether they're little ones, teenagers, or everything in between, you can set the example and help shape your kids' understanding of respect and healthy relationships.

What's more important than best?

Being better.

Level up your dad game with these top parenting tips. And it's not just the boys we're talking about. It's important to teach respect to both your sons and your daughters, so they know what they should expect from the boys and men in their lives.



Be consistent and credible

It's human to mess up – nobody's perfect. Being a better Dad means owning up to your mistakes and doing what's needed to improve - a great thing to demonstrate to your kids.



Focus on how they act, not how they look

Compliment your kids on what they do and for giving things a go, rather than for their pure success. Reward them for opening up about their feelings, and try to really listen to them without judgement (hey, nobody said being a better parent was easy!)



Be aware of what they're learning from mates

If you're not teaching values and beliefs to your kids, they'll learn them from somewhere else. Have an open, honest conversation about the importance of respect in all areas of life.



Build up their self-esteem

Make sure your kids know that they are worthy of respect. This will reduce their risk of being victims of other people's violence or abuse.

Different Ages. Different Approaches.

When it comes to teaching respect to your kids, there's no one-size-fits-all approach. Different age groups will need different approaches.

While your younger kids may not understand words like consent or self-esteem, there are still plenty of ways you can help them develop healthy attitudes and behaviours around these concepts.

Respect talk for Under 5s

I love you

The first is the most important.

It's human to mess up – nobody's perfect. Being a better Dad means owning up to your mistakes and doing what's needed to improve – a great thing to demonstrate to your kids.

Be you

Encourage them to be themselves.

Treat your sons and daughters the same. Help your kids speak up for what they want and express their feelings. Check your advice to them about how boys and girls should act – are you just following bad patterns from your own upbringing?

Talk about respect

Even without using the word respect.

Help them understand respect by asking them how it feels when they're treated with kindness, and how it feels when they aren't.

Respect talk at 5-10

How do you feel?

Help your kids identify their emotions and manage them in healthy ways.

Expressing big feelings is not easy. Bonus: this can actually help you process your own feelings as much as them!

Behave respectfully

Show them the meaning with examples.

Treat your sons and daughters the same. Help your kids speak up for what they want and express their feelings. Check your advice to them about how boys and girls should act – are you just following bad patterns from your own upbringing?

You decide

Let them make decisions.

Give them options that have safe consequences and respect their decisions, even if they're different from what you would do.

Respect talk at 10-15

Talk about respect

Highlight respect in relationships.

Talk to them about what's acceptable in new relationships, even before you know they've started to date. Ask them how their friends show respect, and how they want to be treated by a boyfriend or girlfriend.

I get it

Empathise with them.

Let your teens and pre-teens know that you understand being a teenager can be intense, that emotions are all over the place, and that it's hard. Give them words and ways to express themselves.

Uniquely you

Appreciate exactly who they are.

Help them to explore what makes people different, and to appreciate others' strengths. Encourage them to explore who they want to be. Talk about managing peer pressure.

Respect talk at 15-18

Who are you?

Reinforce their uniqueness.

Reinforce your teenager's individuality, flexibility and tolerance for other people's views. Help them develop strategies to navigate peer pressure.

Nice one

Appreciate the good.

Recognise when they show good decision making, self-awareness, empathy for others and when they respectfully work through relationship problems. Encourage them when they show respect for others.

Got your back

Support them through challenges.

If they have friends who act disrespectfully, be direct about what you see and support them to decide for themselves. Reinforce that you're worried and they're worthy of respect.

Getting clear on consent.

Teaching consent starts by showing your kids that it's ok to say 'no'. And that doesn't just apply to sex; you can say no to hugs or any form of touch. You may be uncomfortable with the idea of talking to your kids about things like sex or porn, but it's perfectly normal. Remember, if you don't teach them, then they'll learn from somewhere else that isn't going to be as respectful, useful or accurate.

When it comes to sex, IF IT'S NOT A STRONG YES, IT'S A NO.

Keep reinforcing that sex has to have enthusiastic consent. It's also okay to change your mind, and for your partner to change theirs.



Be an equal and active parent.

Your kids don't want you to be perfect, but they do want you to be there for them. Take an active role in their development. Show an interest in their interests.

When kids see their parents sharing roles and being equal partners, then that's the relationship they'll look for.

Even if you're separated it's important to show your kids that you're a team when it comes to co-parenting.

Role model men and women being equal with how you treat your sons and daughters too. Make sure your daughter is getting the same messaging as your son.

Better you

Being better is not about aiming for perfection, just progress. It's about being the man you want to be, feeling all your feels, and taking responsibility when you mess up. Learn how to level up with some easy, effective things you can put in practice at home, work and out in public.

Want more Better Guides? Head back to [Not Perfect, Better](#) or stay up to date with upcoming resources by following us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

