

# Chicago Tribune

## Words of Wisdom for a New Year of Parenting Experts list the resolutions they'd like parents to make in the new year

By **Heidi Stevens**, Tribune Newspapers  
*December 27, 2011*

Q: What should parents resolve to do in the New Year? These parenting experts offer a few suggestions:

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"Before I say something in front of my children I will ask myself three questions:

Is it true? To this I can usually, though not always, tell myself, with a sense of righteousness, a firm 'yes.'

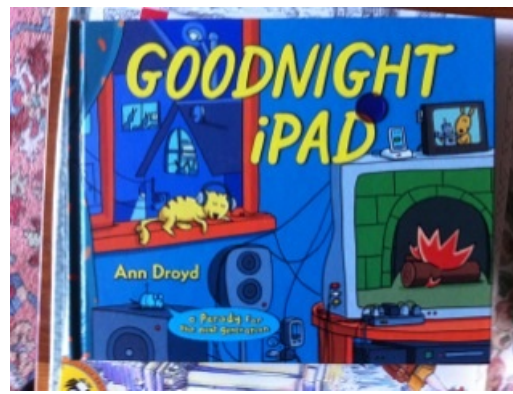
Is it necessary? Now I pause. Do my children really need to hear this? They will know soon enough the world is flawed; for now a good world will do just fine.

Is it kind? This is altogether harder. Is it kind to this person to say this? Am I modeling being accusative rather than inquisitive, dehumanizing or humanizing?"

I am going to sweat the small stuff by paying attention to the everyday comments I make in front of my children rather than give them long winded lectures about being kind when sibling relationships have gotten heated. And if I fail and a zinger passes my lips (after all election season is coming up) I will try to smile and say to my intolerance

"Hello old friend, I'm afraid we won't be seeing so much of you around the house this year."

— Kim John Payne, author of "Simplicity Parenting" (Ballantine Books)



"Put down the smartphone/tablet, even for just a couple hours a day, and talk to your kids. Studies show that the greatest predictor of kids' school success is their having a rich vocabulary; that the greatest predictor of a child obtaining a rich vocabulary is parent/child interaction and immersion with ample and varied language; that parents provide this key developmental support less when watching TV than when engaged in almost any other activity; and that parents provide this key developmental support even less when attending to their mobile devices."

— Brett Berk, early childhood expert and author of "The Gay Uncle's Guide to Parenting" (Three Rivers Press)

"Acknowledge, accommodate and accept. Acknowledge the things that our kids do. Even if these are things we expect, such as completing chores or doing well in school — a little validation goes a long way. Accommodate our views, our words and our actions to fit the needs of our children, who rely on us for support and guidance throughout their lives, no matter how old they are. Accept who our children are, and not who we wish them to be."

— Jennifer Powell-Lunder, clinical psychologist and author of "Teenage as a Second Language: A Parent's Guide to Becoming Bilingual" (Adams Media)

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"For parents near and far, I want you to take care of yourselves. Just like it is dangerous to let your car gas tank get close to empty, so is it dangerous for you to get that depleted. Do whatever it is to replenish yourself on a regular basis: exercise or lunch with friends or a good novel. No one runs well on empty. And remember, you are the most important thing in your children's lives."

— Betsy Brown Braun, author of "You're Not the Boss of Me: Brat-Proofing Your 4- to 12-Year-Old Child" (HarperCollins)

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"I would like parents to resolve the following: 'I resolve that I will do my best not to doubt that I am the best person to be making decisions in the life of my child. Who but me should be making these decisions? I care about my child more than anybody else in the world. And if I make a mistake — which I will — I'll try not to do it again. But I will not question my qualifications as to being the best person to be making the decisions.'"

— Anthony E. Wolf, author of "I'd Listen To My Parents If They'd Just Shut Up: What to Say and Not Say When Parenting Teens" (William Morrow)

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"Let children do their own homework. Could it be that the plethora of young adults who are moving home after college and can't figure out how to earn a living or function without their parents' intervention are those whose parents have solved all their problems all along?"

— Liz Perelstein, president and CEO of School Choice International education consultants

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