

SAY THIS, NOT THAT:

Words to Celebrate a Melancholic's Strengths

Words are powerful. The right ones at the right time can change a child's life for good. The trouble is that the wrong words can too.

As a parent, teacher, coach, or other grown-up, every word you say to a child will build them up or tear them down. The choice is yours... after all, every word you use is a word you choose.

Let's look at what to say (and what not to say) to a Melancholic child.

SAY THIS

1 *That was nice of you to notice. Your **sensitivity** makes you such a good friend.*

2 *I love seeing what you think up. You're so **creative!***

3 *Thank you for taking this situation **seriously**.*

4 *I trust you. You have always been **honest** with me.*

5 *I believe you could do this project solo since you **work so well independently**.*

6 *I'm impressed! What a **thorough** plan! You've considered all the details.*

7 *Thank you for hearing my concerns. You are a **great listener**.*

8 *I can tell you put a lot of time and effort into making it **excellent**.*

9 *You've been so **focused** during the study sessions for this exam. You're definitely prepared.*

10 *You have an **eye for accuracy**. Would you review this for me?*

11 *I can always count on you to be **on time**.*

12 *Do you want some extra **time to think** about that?*

13 *That was a big project. You tackled it **methodically** and it turned out great!*

14 *I want to be sensitive to your **schedule** this weekend before I make plans for us.*

15 *I admire how **committed** you are. Nothing seems to distract you from your goal.*

16 *How you approach your schoolwork is so **organized and well thought out**.*

17 *If anyone can **solve this problem**, you can.*

18 *I love how you're always trying to **make things better**.*

19 *You've proven yourself **trustworthy**, so you have my permission to go.*

20 *You two are such **great friends**. It's awesome that you've grown so close this year.*

There is no magic in the sample words and phrases I've provided. Look closely and you may notice that they coincide directly with the list of Melancholic strengths. Building up a child with your words is as easy as affirming the strengths they are wired with.

So, if you ever get stuck coming up with the right thing to say, simply tell a child, "I believe that you are so **(insert strength)**."

NOT THAT

Here are the kinds of words to avoid when speaking to a Melancholic child:

1 *Why are you crying? You can be overly sensitive sometimes.*

2 *Didn't you see that coming? You're usually more prepared than this.*

3 *Why do you always have to be so serious? Lighten up. I was only kidding.*

4 *I'm having a hard time trusting you.*

5 *This is a group effort, not a one-man show. You need to collaborate.*

6 *How much more time are you going to waste before you get started?*

7 *I'm surprised you would make such a careless comment. That hurt my feelings.*

8 *It's good enough. Let's just move on.*

9 *Chill out. How hard can the exam be?*

10 *Of course you had to find the one mistake in the whole document.*

11 *It's not a big deal if we're late.*

12 *I need an answer right now.*

13 *You made that harder than it had to be. You could have finished in half the time.*

14 *I know we were supposed to _____ today, but instead we are _____.*

15 *You're obsessed with that. Dial down the intensity.*

16 *Relax! You're supposed to be having fun.*

17 *Let's just pick something and try it—even if it might not work.*

18 *Enough is enough! You've been tinkering with that forever.*

19 *Rules are meant to be broken sometimes. Loosen up!*

20 *I don't see what's so hard about making friends. Don't you like any of the other kids in your class?*

You don't have to say something intentionally to tear down a child with your words. Anything that undermines or devalues the strengths they are wired with is likely to have a negative emotional impact.

Be on guard for words that may be twisting their strengths or criticizing (rather than coaching them through) their weaknesses.

SAY THIS, NOT THAT:

Words to Celebrate a Phlegmatic's Strengths

Words are powerful. The right ones at the right time can change a child's life for good. The trouble is that the wrong words can too.

As a parent, teacher, coach, or other grown-up, every word you say to a child will build them up or tear them down. The choice is yours... after all, *every word you use is a word you choose.*

Let's look at what to say (and what not to say) to a Phlegmatic child.

SAY THIS

- 1 You are such a **kind and caring** classmate.
- 2 Thanks for always being so **accommodating**.
- 3 Your **quiet humor** and **quick wit** is one of my favorite things about you.
- 4 Your friends are lucky to know such a **great listener**.
- 5 Thank you for being **friendly** to our new student. You made her feel welcome today.
- 6 I'm impressed that you stayed so **calm**.
- 7 Traveling with someone as **happy** and **easygoing** as you is the best!
- 8 You're the kind of **caring leader** our team needs.
- 9 Would you help them **resolve** this?

- 10 That took longer than expected. Thank you for being **patient**.
- 11 You're always thinking about others. You have such a **generous** spirit.
- 12 Great job being **polite and well-mannered**. Talking to adults can be intimidating.
- 13 I admire you for showing **common sense** and leaving when you did.
- 14 I love that you're **willing to share** with your sister.
- 15 Thanks for being so **agreeable** about the plan for today.
- 16 You stayed busy all that time **by yourself**? That's fantastic!
- 17 You're always there when I need you. Thanks for being so **supportive**.
- 18 You're an **important part of the team**. We couldn't succeed without you.
- 19 Our family is grateful to have a babysitter as **reliable** as you.
- 20 You've been the most **consistent** player all season. It's great to know I can count on you.

There is no magic in the sample words and phrases I've provided. Look closely and you may notice that they coincide directly with the list of Phlegmatic strengths. Building up a child with your words is as easy as affirming the strengths they are wired with.

So, if you ever get stuck coming up with the right thing to say, simply tell a child, "I believe that you are so **(insert strength)**."

NOT THAT

Here are the kinds of words to avoid when speaking to a Phlegmatic child:

- 1 *You never participate in class discussions. I can't even tell if you're awake.*
- 2 *Why don't you ever have an opinion of your own?*
- 3 *This is not the time for wisecracks. Stay on task.*
- 4 *I wish you cared as much about schoolwork as you do that video game.*
- 5 *You can't seem to finish anything on time.*
- 6 *Do you even care? Show some energy and emotion, please.*
- 7 *I'm tired of making all the decisions. You lead the way for once.*
- 8 *If you're going to be a team leader, you need to be more assertive.*
- 9 *We don't have all day to talk it over.*
- 10 *Come on! Keep up. You've gotta move faster.*
- 11 *If you don't watch out, people will take advantage of your kindness.*

12 *Speak up next time. Don't let them run all over you.*

13 *It's nothing to be worried about. Get out of your own head.*

14 *Share at your own risk. If your sister breaks it, you're not getting another one.*

15 *We should be out the door by now, and you're not even ready. Hurry up!*

16 *What have you been doing all this time? You haven't gotten anything accomplished!*

17 *Maybe you should worry less about others and take care of your own stuff.*

18 *If you don't choose, I'm just going to sign you up.*

19 *Don't you have anything planned for today?*

20 *You don't seem very motivated. Let's see some hustle!*

You don't have to say something mean to tear down a child with your words. Anything that undermines or devalues the strengths they are wired with is likely to have a negative emotional impact.

Be on guard for words that may be twisting their strengths or criticizing (rather than coaching them through) their weaknesses.

SAY THIS, NOT THAT:

Words to Celebrate a Choleric's Strengths

Words are powerful. The right ones at the right time can change a child's life for good. The trouble is that the wrong words can too.

As a parent, teacher, coach, or other grown-up, every word you say to a child will build them up or tear them down. The choice is yours... after all, *every word you use is a word you choose.*

Let's look at what to say (and what not to say) to a Choleric child.

SAY THIS

- 1 You're so **good at delegating** during group projects.
- 2 You answered Mrs. Smith so **confidently**. You're great at talking to adults.
- 3 Most third graders don't know that word. You're so **articulate**.
- 4 Shopping with you is the best! I love how **decisive** you are.
- 5 That job would have taken me twenty minutes and you finished in five. You're **efficient**.
- 6 You did that all by yourself. I'm impressed by how **independent** you are.
- 7 Wow! What a clever idea. You're so **resourceful**.
- 8 Not everyone your age is **responsible** enough to start babysitting, but you are.

- 9 You're the most **logical** person I know. How would you tackle this problem?
- 10 There aren't many people as **driven to achieve their goals** as you.
- 11 Other people might buckle under that kind of pressure, but not you! You are **always up for a challenge**.
- 12 Your class presentation was impressive. How **persuasive** for a fifth grader!
- 13 Can I get your perspective? You **see things so clearly**.
- 14 The way you handled homework and practice all semester showed such **discipline**.
- 15 You **know what to do**. Tell me what the plan could be.
- 16 The team needs a **leader** like you right now.
- 17 The way you stood up for your friend was so **courageous**.
- 18 You cleaned your room, emptied the dishwasher, and did your laundry. You're so **productive!**
- 19 Picking up all those toys was a big job. Thanks for **taking charge** and helping your little brother.
- 20 I can't believe you did that! You're so **adventurous!**

There is no magic in the sample words and phrases I've provided. Look closely and you may notice that they coincide directly with the list of Choleric strengths. Building up a child with your words is as easy as affirming the strengths they are wired with.

So, if you ever get stuck coming up with the right thing to say, simply tell a child, "I believe in your ability to be **(insert strength)**."

NOT THAT

Here are the kinds of words to avoid when speaking to a Choleric child:

1 Stop telling other people what to do. You don't always have to be in charge.

2 Please don't interrupt. Your thoughts are not welcome right now.

3 Calm down. There's no need to lose your temper.

4 Did you think about ____ before making that choice?

5 If you don't slow down, you're going to make a mistake.

6 You're not ready to do that by yourself yet. Ask for help next time.

7 Your way isn't the only way.

8 Loosen up! Live a little! You're supposed to be having fun.

9 I've made my decision. You aren't going to change my mind.

10 You can be so stubborn sometimes.

11 Fine! You win. I don't want to talk about it anymore.

12 Did you consider anyone else's ideas or opinions?

13 Don't question me. I just need you to do what I say.

14 Keeping up with you is exhausting.

15 Here is the plan for today.

16 Give someone else a chance.

17 Why does everything turn into an argument? Can't you chill out?

18 I don't care whose mess it is. Clean it up!

19 You are not in charge. I'm the grown-up.

20 Did you think that through first?

You don't have to say something intentionally to tear down a child with your words. Anything that undermines or devalues the strengths they are wired with is likely to have a negative emotional impact.

Be on guard for words that may be twisting their strengths or criticizing (rather than coaching them through) their weaknesses.

SAY THIS, NOT THAT:

Words to Celebrate a Sanguine's Strengths

Words are powerful. The right ones at the right time will land like a confetti cannon over a Sanguine child. The trouble is that the opposite is true too. Certain words and phrases are guaranteed to dull their sparkle.

As a parent, teacher, coach, or other grown-up, every word you say to a child will build them up or tear them down. The choice is yours... after all, *every word you use is a word you choose.*

Let's look at what to say (and what not to say) to a Sanguine child.

SAY THIS

- 1 I love your **energy**! Practice wouldn't be the same without you.
- 2 What a smart question. Thanks for being **curious**.
- 3 That project is so **creative**. I'm impressed!
- 4 Your **spontaneity** makes you so much fun to be around.
- 5 You give the best hugs. I love how **affectionate** you are!
- 6 You're right! We can make it work. You always **see the bright side**.
- 7 I know he hurt your feelings last week. It's inspiring of you to **not hold a grudge**.
- 8 You tell it. Your **stories are always the best**.

- 9 Thanks for coming to lunch with me. You're so **easy to talk to**.
- 10 You are an absolute **joy to be around**.
- 11 You **look amazing** today. That outfit is awesome!
- 12 Want to come with me? It will be an **adventure**!
- 13 People just love being around you. You're **magnetic**.
- 14 I could use some of your **optimism**.
- 15 I saw you **include** everyone in the game at recess. That was really kind.
- 16 It can be hard to admit when you're sad. How brave of you to **show your true emotions**.
- 17 It's always better when we're **together**.
- 18 How **friendly** of you to talk to the cashier!
- 19 You can walk into a room of strangers and come out with a **new friend**. How do you do it?
- 20 Your **cheerfulness** is just what I needed today.

There is no magic in the sample words and phrases I've provided. Look closely and you may notice that they coincide directly with the list of Sanguine strengths. Building up a child with your words is as easy as affirming the strengths they are wired with.

So, if you ever get stuck coming up with the right thing to say, simply tell a child, "I believe that you are so **(insert strength)**."

NOT THAT

Here are the kinds of words to avoid when speaking to a Sanguine child:

1 *Can you stop distracting others and just focus for a minute?*

2 *Please don't interrupt me with questions right now.*

3 *Whoa! You've made a huge mess on the table.*

4 *I'm not in the mood for your antics today.*

5 *Can you please respect my personal space? I'm really not a hugger.*

6 *I think we should give up. This just isn't going well.*

7 *Not everyone needs to be your friend.*

8 *I think you're exaggerating the story a little bit.*

9 *Get to the point, please. I don't have all day.*

10 *You can be a lot to handle sometimes.*

11 *You look awful today. Is something wrong?*

12 *Let's just go eat at the usual place. It will be easier than somewhere new.*

13 *Now you're just showing off.*

14 *That's not how the world works. Trust me—someday you'll see.*

15 *He doesn't want to be around you right now. You hurt his feelings.*

16 *Everything is always so dramatic with you.*

17 *Would it kill you to be alone for a little while?*

18 *Shhhh. Please just stand next to me and be quiet.*

19 *Must you always be the center of attention?*

20 *You need to calm down.*

You don't have to say something mean to tear down a child with your words. Anything that undermines or devalues the strengths they are wired with is likely to have a negative emotional impact.

Be on guard for words that may be twisting their strengths or criticizing (rather than coaching them through) their weaknesses.