

How to Navigate Saying the "Wrong" Thing:



- 1) Acknowledge What was Said & Why it's Unhelpful (no matter how much later you notice!)
- 2) Examine What You Truly Intended to Communicate
- 3) Remove Associations Stemming from Judgement, Morality, or Weight/Health Stigma (hint: say what you *don't* mean)
- 4) Apologize Concisely & Invite Feedback

Example A: "I gotta work off these cookies."

"I just realized I said 'I gotta work off these cookies,' without even thinking. We never need to earn or compensate for food. I guess what I mean is that I'm craving movement. Which totally makes sense cause the cookies gave me an energy boost! Nothing wrong with that. I'm sorry this type of language is so ingrained, I am trying to learn and grow from this. Do you have any suggestions for me?"

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Example B: "It's better if you have more vegetables with that."

"I know I told you earlier more veggies are better, but I thought about how that might feel for you to hear. I wanted to make sure there was variety and balance in your meal, because it's one of our goals and seems to help you feel good. No one food choice could make you better or worse. I'm sorry if it comes off that way sometimes. How can I support you when I see we're missing a food group? What phrases are most helpful when you need a reminder?"

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Bonus was the statement valuable/necessary? There's an example of each here. A lot of times we don't need to comment much at all. Which is nice because if there's no helpful way to reframe the thought, it may be one you can start to move away from. It's not a restriction of speech, but freedom to explore more meaningful topics. When you're not sure what to say, say that! ("I don't know how best to discuss this. I am worried about making a mistake or saying something I don't mean. Can you help me? What language feels safe to you around this topic?")

Kids respond to that vulnerability in parents, and it teaches them subtly how to be courageous in their own vulnerability, too. Yay emotional intelligence!

(written by [Kymber Stephenson](#) RD (she/her) at Side By Side Nutrition)