



Do they need a lecture or a hug?

When someone makes a mistake, do you give him or her a piece of your mind? Maybe you do it to yourself too. *“How could you have done that?”* or *“How could I be so stupid?”* Fear for safety, or anger about the consequences of someone’s actions, can bypass logic and trigger an *“I told you so!”* response. To keep relationships respectful, it’s helpful to check, *“Does this situation require a lecture or a hug?”*

Focus on the best outcome for NEXT time

Logical consequences, when allowed to occur, are usually the best teacher. Touch something hot...you learn to be careful around hot things. Arrive late for your flight check-in... learn to be on time. Don’t come to dinner when you’re called...learn that dinner goes on anyway so get your own or go without. The key is letting the **logical** consequences do the work. Things go haywire when people are constantly saved from the consequences of their actions or if the consequences imposed aren’t logical.

At other times, a well-developed conscience comes to the rescue. If someone knows they’ve made a mistake, it won’t help matters to lecture them about what they’ve done wrong. What they really need is a message that says you trust them to do the right thing NEXT time. A hug puts you on the same team and says, *“I love you anyway.”*

Is there a gap in their knowledge?

When someone doesn’t understand that what they’re doing is dangerous, undesirable or unhelpful, they may need some knowledge gaps filled in. Don’t assume that others know what you know, because it often isn’t so. Check, *“Do you understand that when you do ____ that it causes ____?”* Identifying what’s lacking is the first step to accessing what’s needed.

Compassion is the key to open communication

If someone comes to you and admits a mistake, see it as a **bid for connection**. Yes, a mistake was made, but they’re doing the right thing by telling you. **A hug will let them know, “It’s okay and I make mistakes too.”** *What will we do about it?* A lecture, on the other hand, will push them away and they may not come to you next time. Want open communication when they’re teenagers and adults? Encourage it now.

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- ✓ Beware of responses that bypass logic. They’re often rooted in fear or anger.
- ✓ Everyone makes mistakes. Most times logical consequences and good conscience will provide the correction.
- ✓ A hug says, “You’re okay. Let’s work this out.”

“With age, you get to a place where you don’t want to knock people out. You just want to give people a hug.”

Vin Diesel

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