Twitter Thread by Janne (■■)



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@jannejanne

Fair warning, this might get long:

The most obvious aspect is that the time drawn out supposedly "teaching" was really not worth it in proportion to the simplicity of the task.

The first thing I noticed reading that thread was that she was already hungry at the beginning.

@danielpunkass That would have been my first clue to go, okay, hm, maybe another time. You could always demonstrate the use of the can opener (observation is one really great way to learn, after all!) for the child, and then get into the mechanics once tummies were filled.

@danielpunkass Let's say we missed that chance, though, and were deep into the question-and-answer session. At that point there's a good chance I would think 'Well, there's no going back now' and let my stubbornness see this through, as OP did in his thread.

@danielpunkass But that's very much based on *my* reactions and urges as an adult, not what is best for the child. This might be a cultural difference, but in New Zealand (where I live) we try to put the child first.

The OP's daughter clearly communicated her needs (and her frustration) -

@danielpunkass sighs, asking politely, rolling her eyes, removing herself from the situation to avoid esclation... When those were ignored, she had to resort to yelling and tears (fair enough, if you ask me!). It really sucks that the adult in the situation decided to steamroll ahead,

@danielpunkass without proper concern for the emotions she was quite compentently communicating. That's not healthy, period, much less conducive to a learning environment. ■

As adults we focus a lot on hard skills - which are absolutely necessary to life and learning, yes.

@danielpunkass But I'm of the belief that hard skills should always be seen in the context of learning dispositions ("soft" skills). Being curious, being a problem-solver, working as a team, being confident - these are all examples of learning dispositions, and every single life experience

@danielpunkass shapes and stretches our dispositions - in other words, our likeliness to repeat those behaviours. These dispositions can be stretched either way, positive or negative.

I don't know if you've ever been forced to do something while crying and hating every second of it,

@danielpunkass but it doesn't exactly inspire you to go 'Wow, that was fun, I can't wait to do that again!'

I understand and empathise that OP was probably hoping to encourage his child's sense of curiosity, analytical thinking skills, and ability to apply prior knowledge to new situations

@danielpunkass (ie by telling her about other cans he's opened in the past).

But actually, by turning something as simple as learning to use a can opener into a huge deal - an ordeal ending in frustration and tears - you might actually be discouraging her from being curious in the future,

@danielpunkass and from asking for help when she needs it. Not to mention respecting people's emotions and boundaries. Worst case scenario, if similar situations are repeated, she might grow up thinking that this is what *all* learning is like and develop resistance to being taught.

@danielpunkass In that thread, I see an adult's good intentions conflicting with badly applied judgements. I see a child who was confident and brave enough to communicate (both verbally and non-verbally) and attempting to be heard. I see a learner who did persevere, despite being hungry and

@danielpunkass frustrated and disrespected. She got there in the end but it really didn't have to be like that. That learning experience could have been much less stressful (and just much more fun!) for everyone involved, had OP actually tuned into what his daughter was telling him, and applied

@danielpunkass good judgement at any of the multiple chances that were presented to him. There's so much more I could talk about, - I haven't even mentioned the context of the pandemic and the impacts that this is having on children!

OP should have known better. I don't mean this in a snarky,

@danielpunkass let's-judge-someone's-parenting way. I genuinely mean that, as grown-ups, it's our responsibility to assess interactions and situations with more common sense, tact, reasoning; know when to push, and when to let up and be caring. I would encourage anyone interacting with children

@danielpunkass on a regular basis, if they can, to use such moments to reflect on the approach they took, the dynamics that were at play, and what other possibilities there were. This helps us to interact more consciously going forward, and shows children how *we* are also always learning.

@danielpunkass One last thing I'll say to close this thread: Apologies mean a lot to kids, especially if they're genuine, and name/acknowledge their experiences and emotions. Something like:

"Hey, I'm sorry about earlier. I've been thinking, and I realise now that I kept pushing you even when

@danielpunkass you were hungry and frustrated, and even after you told me you wanted to stop. I was being stubborn, and not much fun. Thank you for being patient with me. I'm really proud of you for learning this new skill and I hope you'll still come to me the next time you need help w/ sth."