

## The 'friend technique'

### Trigger

Thursday 10th April. 6.30 p.m. I had been on at my daughter all day long to tidy her room, and she kept saying she would do it 'in a minute', or a bit later. Then, at about half past six I found her sitting in the bath just washing her hair - and deliberately provoking me, saying, 'What are you going to do about that, then?'

### Response

I really let rip. I shouted and screamed at her for - it must have been ten minutes. She went really pale, and looking back at it, I was over the top.

This is where you say to yourself If I had an all-knowing, all-wise friend, someone who had only my interests at heart, how would they appraise this situation so that it worked out best for me?

In this instance the friend might say something like 'Come on, Amy, just leave the girl alone. She's a good girl, and at least she's keeping herself clean and tidy, which is a step ahead of a lot of kids. Anyway, how many kids do you know who tidy their rooms when their mums ask them to?'

This can be a powerful technique if you practice it regularly and if you can build up a good image of this all-knowing, all-wise friend. It does not have to be anybody real — perhaps it's helpful if it isn't — just so long as it is a very wise person who has your interests at heart, someone who is always on your side.

Incidentally, some people prefer to do it the other way around: in other words, ask themselves: 'What would you say to a friend in this situation, a really good friend to whom you wanted to offer constructive support?'