

***BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR  
LUTHERAN SCHOOL  
PRESENTS:  
PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC***

***Special Thoughts on Raising Kids***

**“And I Mean It!”  
Making Your Word Gold**

How many times have you heard a parent give an order to a child and then add, “Do you understand me?” Children can’t wait to hear a parent talk like this because it means they have reached the end of their rope. The parent has once again reduced his or her authority through hollow, meaningless words.

This happens each time we make statements that can’t be enforced—when we tell a child what to do or not do, rather than what we will do.

In cases where parents frequently make unenforceable statements, children learn they do not have to do whatever the parent says or asks. Parental authority is undermined as children test limits, act out and feel a general lack of control.

Some parents do not have these problems because their word is gold. They understand that they actually have control over themselves and no one else. The art of making enforceable statements involves talking about ourselves and what we will allow, what we will do, or what we will provide. For example:

**Unenforceable:** “Don’t talk to me like that!”  
**Enforceable:** “I’ll be glad to listen when your voice is as soft as mine.”

**Unenforceable:** “Study NOW, young man!”  
**Enforceable:** “Feel free to join us for some TV when you are finished studying.”

**Unenforceable:** “Be nice to each other. Don’t fight.”  
**Enforceable:** “You’re both welcome to be around me when you’re not fighting.”

**Unenforceable:** “As long as you live in this house, you won’t be drinking any alcoholic beverages.”  
**Enforceable:** “When I no longer have to worry about alcohol use, I’ll let you use my car.”

Parents who make only those statements which they can and do enforce, raise children who believe their parents mean what they say. Their children seldom test limits.

This technique needs practice. You might try, “Hey, kids, from now on you need to know that I will be giving you dessert when you protect your teeth by brushing.” It’s much easier to withhold treats than to cram a toothbrush in a child’s mouth!

***Talk about what you allow - not what  
your child can or can’t do***