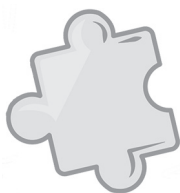


Making the Pennies Drop



Gail Hugman

MAKING THE PENNIES DROP

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Paperback ISBN: 978-1-917061-61-2

Ebook ISBN: 978-1-917061-60-5

Republished in 2025 by The Endless Bookcase Ltd, Suite 14, STANTA Business Centre, 3 Soothouse Spring, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 6PF

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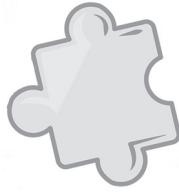
Book design by Sarah E. Holroyd (<https://sleepingcatbooks.com>)

In memory of my mother, Tess, who gave each of us a list of little jobs each day and, as we did them, she took the time to do the all-important tick I loved so much! Such is the ingenuity of mothers.

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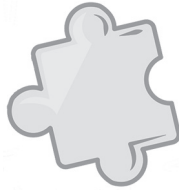
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Branded games named in this publication are resources the author has personally used and found effective. The author has no affiliation with any company, nor any incentive for naming particular retail games.

This publication is meant as a source of valuable information for the reader; however, it is not meant as a substitute for direct expert assistance. If such level of assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.



‘Why should I?’

This, of all questions, must be the one that defeats even the most resilient of parents – and teachers – at times! Certainly, even very young children learn quickly to ‘push your buttons’ and can drive you to the depths of despair at times. As one mother once cried, having slammed the door so hard it broke one of its hinges, ‘I used to run six countries and I’m being controlled by a six-year-old! What is *wrong* with me?’

Take a breath...there is absolutely nothing wrong with you.

You are the best parent there could ever possibly be for your child. The reason you – and your child – get so frustrated is because you’re pulling in different directions.

Your child is doing ‘what comes naturally’; you’re trying to teach them to behave properly and do well in life when you yourself have little or no guidance, other than your own upbringing and everyone else’s opinions.

Take another breath...this book is going to give you a different way to look at things and, hopefully, an easier way forward.

You, as a parent, are perfect for the job – you need to know this so that your self-belief encourages your child to believe in your guidance and leadership. And now, more than ever in this contradictory world, your child needs you.

To begin...

Have you ever stopped to look at *how much* has changed since you were a child? Not only our use of technology (did your classmates have mobile phones? iPad?), but also our expectations, diet, working habits, and environment.

Thinking about it, we must also include the pressures on society in general, added by the ever-increasing population: levels of anxiety (which has increased since the pandemic), across all socio-economic groups, cost-of-living crises, environmental extremism, hostilities, and migration around the globe.

Today's world is different in so many ways from the one you grew up in; there are more challenges to consider – and it feels as though there is less time to just 'be'. Many parents share anxieties about this.

You also share anxieties about your child's education. Should they learn a musical instrument – especially if they won't practise? What should you do if they don't like reading? What happens if they don't have a mobile phone, like 'all their friends'? How much screen time is *safe*? Should you read with them every day? What about discipline, and what exactly *are* consequences?

These worries crop up throughout the primary years and beyond, and so parents often find themselves in a position where they need to think on their weary feet.

Periodically, against your better nature, you resort to cajoling, pleading, 'because I said so', and even bribery to get things done, and then feel disappointed with yourself as if you're somehow letting down your child.

When it comes to helping your children, there are things you *feel* you should know (but kind of don't really, which is not your fault) and there are things that you are told you should do, but there's also too much conflicting information that can be mind boggling.

This book aims to explain the reasoning behind what your child needs to learn so that *your* confidence grows because you'll know what your child is developing, what you can do about it at home, and why.

There are also things children get confused about at school and in life, but they haven't got the verbal skills to explain, or don't know who to ask. It can start to make everything seem so complicated to them, so they shut down.

This book is intended to work for *both* parents and children:

- Parents can read it by themselves and then dip in and out, working on it with their child.

AND

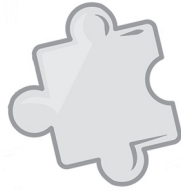
- The magic can start to happen when parent and child work together on this book as a team.

This book aims to help support you so you feel more confident about your child's learning, and you can pass that confidence on to them, so you help them grow to reach their potential as well-rounded human beings who know what they want in life.

The book is full of insights and information, drawn from my fifty years of teaching experience, that work to help satisfy your child's natural drive to learn and become independent and successful in a difficult world.

You will find easy-to-use assessment tools and the way to interpret your child's performance, and then what to do to

make progress. A range of activities, along with the instructions that make them effective, are also included. They are not one-off activities – variations are given, so you can use them repeatedly, until you feel your child is confident with the skill they are aiming to achieve.



‘You can’t make me!’

These words, and others like them such as, ‘I hate you!’, ‘No!’, ‘won’t’, and ‘can’t’, may be where you’re starting from. If it is, don’t panic; take a slight shift in approach.

Although these words have the power to induce fury and indignation in even the most patient of us, in the heat of the moment, you may say something you’ll regret – because you don’t *really* want to take away the play station, or stop them going on the school trip, or ban TV for a week – because you know deep down it’s not *actually* going to solve anything.

If a situation has escalated to this point, there is only one action you can safely take, and that is to stop.

Remember, your child is reacting (unconsciously) to a feeling – and it isn’t a positive feeling.

You, however, have developed the ability to consciously *respond* to what you're feeling. You have more choice than they do because they have not yet developed that level of self-control.

Yes, you may be seething because of the way they've spoken to you. Yes, you feel like you want to yell and slam doors. But don't. Resist the urge to storm off or bang doors. Above all, don't ignore. Just stop.

Give yourself time to think.

Give your brain fresh oxygen with a nice deep breath.

Regain your own balance.

Let your instinct come into play. The actions and activities in this book have been used successfully with neurodiverse children as well as neurotypical children. If you suspect your child is neurodiverse, speak to their school and your G.P. to arrange an assessment. Further specialised assistance may be needed from a psychologist or specialist teacher.

This is a child you care more about than anyone, and they are obviously struggling. Who else can they yell at? You're their safety valve.

Whatever triggered the behaviour, they know they shouldn't talk to you that way, but now isn't the time to remind them.

Let them know you're sorry they feel the need to react like this and you don't really understand why. Tell them that when they've calmed themselves down, you'll be ready to listen to what their problem is and help them work out how to solve it, because no one is feeling happy right now. Whether they are neurotypical or neurodiverse, you may need to help them by quietly talking them through calming techniques.

This will give you a starting point.

It's a big ask, I know, but they need your leadership. They need to feel they can talk to you without fear of judgement or 'lecturing'.

It isn't necessarily a reflection of your parenting skills; it isn't necessarily anything to do with you personally at all. It is to do with the conflict we all face at some point between what we intuitively feel and know to be 'right', and the contradictions we meet in life, including the pressure to work at speeds that are uncomfortable for us at times. The important thing now is that you create the space for communication with your child, human to human.