

### What Does “I Can’t Do It” Really Mean?

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Sarah here. We hope that you enjoyed last week’s blog on the words we use versus the words we mean. This week, we’re again focusing on communication and language. This time, we’re talking about a particular phrase: “I can’t do it.”

As a parent, you may cringe or feel saddened when your child says “I can’t do it” before they even get started. After all, as parents, we encourage our children to try new things, to persevere and finish things, even when they’re difficult.

But, what about *you*? Take a moment to think about it. Do *you* ever say “I can’t do it” before you even try something? If you’re like most of us, you probably say this phrase at least some of the time. But, when you say, “I can’t do it,” what do you really mean? Do you mean you literally are incapable of doing the thing? Or do you mean you don’t want to do it, don’t enjoy it, aren’t good at it, don’t feel confident about doing it, haven’t done it in a while, it isn’t a convenient time to do it, you’d rather do something else, etc.? My guess is there are probably times that you say “I can’t do it” and that’s exactly what you mean. There are probably more times that you say “I can’t do it” but you really mean something else.



Why does this matter? Remember that how we *talk* about ourselves can reflect how we *think* about ourselves and vice versa. If we *say* we can’t do something, we’re likely to believe it’s true. How we talk about ourselves also impacts our actions. If we *say* we can’t do something, we’re

less likely to give it a shot. And remember that as a parent, you're constantly modeling behaviors and self-talk for your family. Kids pick up on what we say and how we act- even when we don't think they're watching and even when we aren't intending to be a role model.

Bottom line: what we say and how we say it matters. Be mindful of the words you use. Avoid saying "I can't" unless it's what you truly mean. And don't be afraid to get out of your comfort zone and try something new or different! You'll show your family that it's okay to try new and different things.

