

忍住批评的四步法：从考卷到手里的试卷

第一步，物理隔离。假设孩子把一张六十八分的数学卷子递到你面前，你喉咙里已经顶上来一句「怎么又考这么差」。这时候别说话，把卷子放到一边，人走到窗边或者去倒杯水。三十秒就够。皱眉和批评往往是连着的，中间隔着的那点时间，就是忍住的存放处。你走开的这几步不是逃避，是给脸上换表情的时间。

第二步，把批评降级成提问。忍住不等于憋着不说，而是换一种说。假设你原本要说「你这计算题怎么全错了」，换成「这几道计算题，你是先做的还是最后做的」。问题指向过程，不指向人。孩子的防御会立刻降一半，因为他知道你不是来定罪的。注意提问要真问，语气里别夹着答案，孩子听得出「你是先做的吗」后面跟着的下一句其实是「我就知道你最后做」。

第三步，给一个具体的台阶。假设孩子站在原地没动，手指抠着衣角。你可以说「先把错题抄到本子上，抄完我们再对」。台阶要小、要具体，「以后要努力」不是台阶，是墙。具体的动作能让孩子从挨训的处境里出来，进入做事的处境。做事的时候，他的脸是放松的，你也终于有机会看见他正常的表情。

第四步，等他自己开口。假设晚上他忽然说「我其实知道错在哪，应用题我读太快了」。这句话是忍出来的成果。你批评他的时候，他只会点头；你忍住之后，他才会复盘。这时候你只需要接一句「那明天应用题先读两遍再动笔」，别补「你看我早说过」，一句回马枪能把前面三十秒全部清零。

四步连着做，一晚上用不了十分钟。坚持几次之后你会发现，孩子拿着差卷子走向你的脚步会变轻，因为他知道迎接他的不是皱眉。教育反思不在大道理里，在你接过那张卷子之后的第一个动作里。

Four Steps to Holding Back Criticism: From the Test Paper in Your Hand

Step one, physical separation. Suppose your child hands you a math paper marked sixty-eight, and a sentence like "how did you do so badly again" is already pushing up your throat. Do not speak. Set the paper aside, walk to the window or go pour a glass of water. Thirty seconds is enough. A frown and a criticism usually come as a pair; the small gap between them is where restraint lives. Walking away is not escape, it is time for your face to change its expression.

Step two, downgrade criticism into a question. Holding back does not mean swallowing everything; it means saying it differently. Suppose you were about to say "why are all these calculation questions wrong", change it to "these calculation questions, did you do them first or last". The question points at the process, not at the person. The child's defenses drop by half immediately, because he knows you are not here to pass a verdict. Ask the question for real, with no answer hidden in your

tone; children can hear that "did you do them last?" is really followed by "I knew you did them last".

Step three, offer one concrete step down. Suppose the child stands frozen, picking at his sleeve. You can say "first copy the wrong questions into your notebook, then we will check them together". A step must be small and concrete; "work harder from now on" is not a step, it is a wall. A concrete action moves the child out of the being-scowled situation into the doing-something situation. While doing, his face relaxes, and you finally get to see his normal expression.

Step four, wait for him to speak first. Suppose that evening he suddenly says "I actually know where I went wrong, I read the word problems too fast". That sentence is the harvest of restraint. When you criticize, he only nods; when you hold back, he reviews. Then just reply "so tomorrow read the word problems twice before writing", and do not add "I told you so". One backhand strike can wipe out all those thirty seconds.

Running the four steps takes under ten minutes one evening. After a few times you will notice the child walks to you more lightly with a bad paper, because he knows what awaits him is not a frown. The educational reflection is not in grand principles; it is in your very first move after taking that paper.