

# Would You Argue With a Three-Year-Old?

## The Emotional Age Mental Model

One of the most useful mental tricks I ever got came from a girlfriend. She told me: sometimes, in the middle of a Wave, you have to look at him like a three-year-old toddler.

I know how ridiculous that sounds. It also changed everything for me.

I am not saying he is literally three years old, and I am not trying to diagnose his emotional age. This is simply a mental model for those moments when adult logic has clearly left the building and you are still trying to have a perfectly reasonable adult conversation.

Think about a three-year-old who is exhausted, embarrassed, hurt, hungry, or completely overwhelmed. You do not expect perfect emotional regulation. You do not expect a calm explanation of what is hurting. You definitely do not pull out evidence and expect the child to say, "You know what? Excellent point. I was wrong."

You look at the behavior and think: something underneath this is hurting.



A different perspective brings a softer you.



*Poor little thing. You are hurt.  
What hurt you?*



That shift helped me stop taking every reaction so personally. It does not excuse cruelty. It does not mean you accept everything. It simply changes what you expect from the conversation while the Wave is high.



Different  
perspective.  
Softer  
expectations.  
A calmer me.

## The Toddler Check

This is the question I want you to keep coming back to. Not because you are talking down to him. Because it tells you whether logic is even useful right now.

### WOULD YOU HAVE THIS ARGUMENT WITH A THREE-YEAR-OLD RIGHT NOW?

- ♥ Would you expect perfect logic?
- ♥ Would you expect him to admit fault because you showed proof?
- ♥ Would you expect a mature apology in the middle of the meltdown?
- ♥ Would you keep explaining the same point seventeen different ways?



*If the answer is no, stop trying to force adult logic into that moment.*



# You've Explained It 17 Times. Stop.

This is the trap: you think the problem is that he did not understand. So you explain it again. Better. Softer. With more context. Then you add the screenshot. Then the timeline. Then you explain your intention. Then you explain why your intention should matter.

At some point, explanation is no longer the problem.

If you said it clearly once, clarified it once, and the conversation is still twisting in circles, another paragraph is probably not going to save you. It is just another paragraph he can argue with.

At some point, shut the PowerPoint down.

Communication is saying what you mean clearly. Overexplaining is saying it again and again because you need him to agree with your intention, your memory, your character, or your version of reality.



*You are allowed to communicate.  
You are not required to keep defending yourself  
until he finally gives you permission to know what you meant.*



# Stop Turning the Fight Into a Courtroom

This is where so many of us lose hours. The fight turns into a courtroom and suddenly you are the lawyer for your own sanity. Exhibit A: the screenshot. Exhibit B: the text. Exhibit C: “You said this at 4:17 on Tuesday.”

Then you prove that point and the charge changes. Now it is your tone. You explain the tone and now the problem is that you never support him. You answer that and suddenly you are discussing something from three years ago. Notice what just happened: you are nowhere near the original problem anymore.



*You can win the fact  
and still lose the next  
two hours.*



The scratched-rim example is perfect. Maybe you literally have video proof. Fine. The rim is still scratched. The useful conversation may simply be: "The rim is scratched. We will deal with fixing it." You do not need a full trial to establish reality every single time.

The same thing happens when he attacks your character. He says, "You are selfish," and your instinct is to list everything you have ever done for everybody. Stop. "You are selfish" is a sentence said by an upset person in a moment. It is not a final report on who you are.

You do not need his approval to know who you are. And you do not need to submit evidence for your entire life every time he throws a label at you.



*The rim is scratched.  
We will deal  
with fixing it.*



*I do  
not need  
his approval  
to know  
who I am.*



# The Rule

Keep this incredibly simple: say it once. Say it clearly. Clarify once if there is a genuine misunderstanding. If the conversation is now looping, twisting, changing topics, or turning into a character trial, stop explaining.

Stopping does not mean he won. Silence is not surrender. It means you recognized that more words are not producing more understanding, so you are not donating another hour of your life to the same loop.

If something important still needs to be addressed, bring it back later when things are calm. One issue. Not the original problem plus every similar fight from the last five years.

One important exception: facts absolutely still matter when they protect money, parenting, property, legal agreements, health, safety, or another major decision. Keep the records. Keep the documents. A clean logistics message like "The appointment is Tuesday at 3" is completely different from sending seven emotional paragraphs because you hope enough proof will finally create accountability.



*You can step out of the loop.*



# The One Thing I Want You to Remember

In the middle of a Wave, when you feel yourself reaching for the screenshot, the receipt, the timeline, the fifth explanation, or the perfect sentence that is finally going to make him understand, stop and ask yourself one question:



***WOULD I HAVE THIS ARGUMENT WITH A THREE-YEAR-OLD RIGHT NOW?***

If the answer is no, stop trying to force adult logic into a moment where adult logic is clearly not running the show. You already know what you meant. You already know what happened. Keep your reality. Protect your peace. Get out of the loop.



*Your goal is peace, not winning.*



*Your goal is peace, not winning.* ♥

Peace Looks Good On Me ♥

A Calmer Brighter Me ♥

