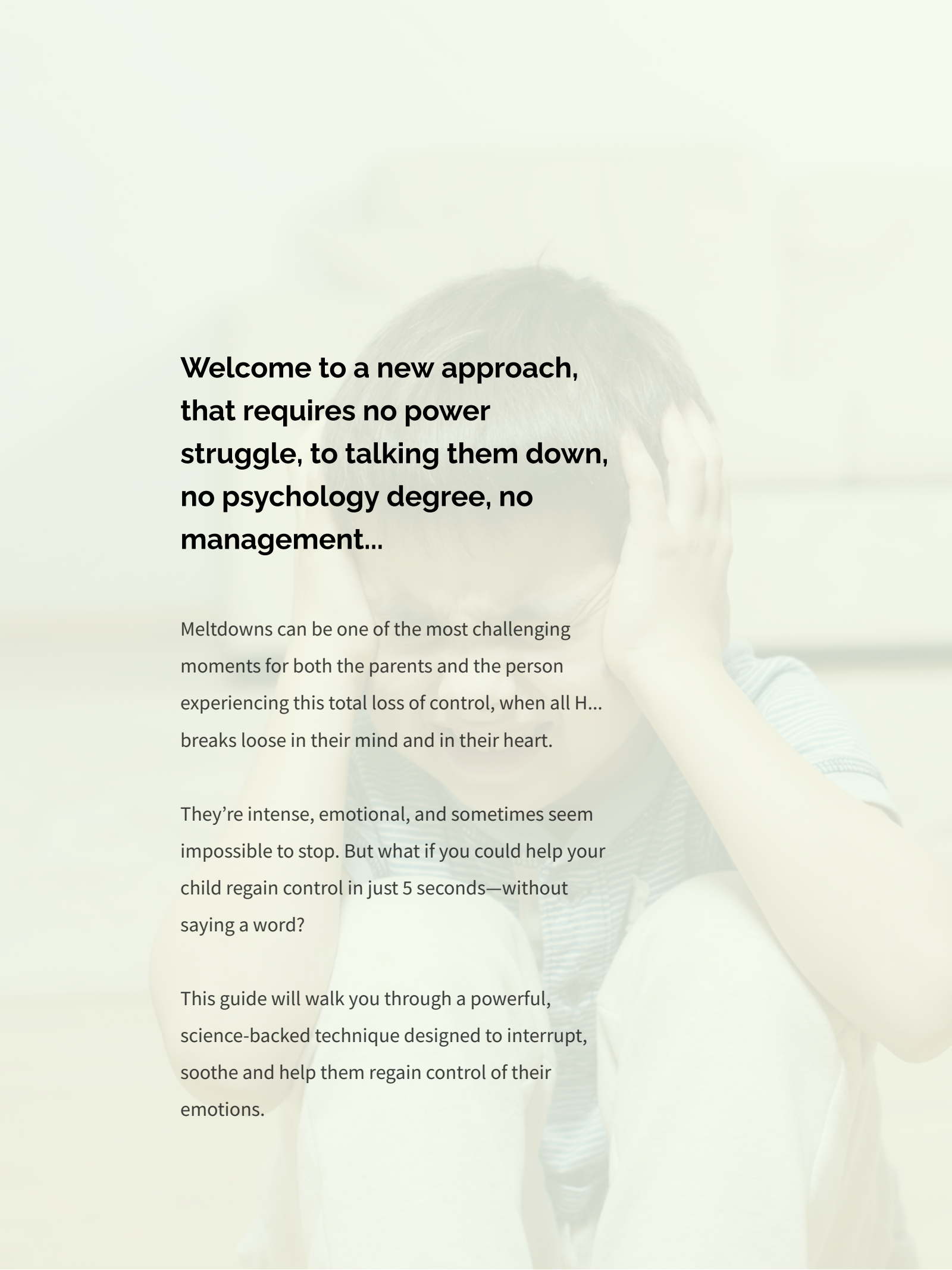


How to De-Escalate a Meltdown in Seconds without Saying a Word



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A young boy with dark hair is sitting on the ground, wearing a blue and white striped shirt. He has his hands pressed against his eyes and forehead, appearing to be in a state of distress or a meltdown. The background is a bright, out-of-focus outdoor setting.

**Welcome to a new approach,
that requires no power
struggle, to talking them down,
no psychology degree, no
management...**

Meltdowns can be one of the most challenging moments for both the parents and the person experiencing this total loss of control, when all H... breaks loose in their mind and in their heart.

They're intense, emotional, and sometimes seem impossible to stop. But what if you could help your child regain control in just 5 seconds—without saying a word?

This guide will walk you through a powerful, science-backed technique designed to interrupt, soothe and help them regain control of their emotions.



Step 1: Understand

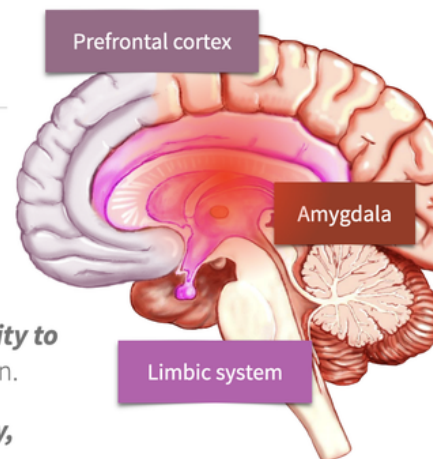
What is a meltdown?

A meltdown is different than a learned behavior—it's a moment when your child's brain is overwhelmed by a flood of emotions, leaving them unable to process or control what they're feeling. It's as if their brain has hit a breaking point, caught in a loop of stress and panic. In these moments, your child is trapped in a cycle that they can't escape without help, making it nearly impossible for them to calm down on their own.

A *true* meltdown will persist, whether you're watching or not—it's an intense, uncontrollable reaction. In contrast, learned behaviors often stop when the audience disappears. Use this method when your child is truly overwhelmed, and it can help soothe them and regain control.

It's all in the brain!

- Overwhelm and disrupts **logic, reason and emotional awareness**.
- **Defects in the amygdala** linked to increase in anxiety and emotional distress.
- Deficits in prefrontal cortex connectivity **limit ability to be reasoned with** during an emotional breakdown.
- Serotonin dysfunction linked to **increased anxiety, reduced capacity to control emotions, sensory overloads**.





Step 1: Understand

How can 5 seconds can make all the difference?

The brain is incredibly fast—faster than we often realize. It only takes 15 milliseconds for the brain to process a new sensory input, which is why a quick, powerful interruption can have such a profound effect.

In contrast, when a meltdown begins, it's as if the brain gets stuck in a loop, overwhelmed by stress and unable to break free. The brain's typical lightning-fast processing becomes bogged down by a flood of emotions and a chemical imbalance.

But here's the key: despite this overwhelming cycle, the brain still retains its incredible speed. By introducing a new, powerful sensory input—like a new pleasant scent or a sudden burst of cold—you can reset the brain, giving it a chance to break the meltdown cycle and regain control.





Step 2: Smell

Harness smell to stop and soothe

No matter how intense the meltdown, a pleasant, unexpected smell—like strawberry or vanilla—can instantly catch the brain’s attention, and stop it in its tracks for a split second.

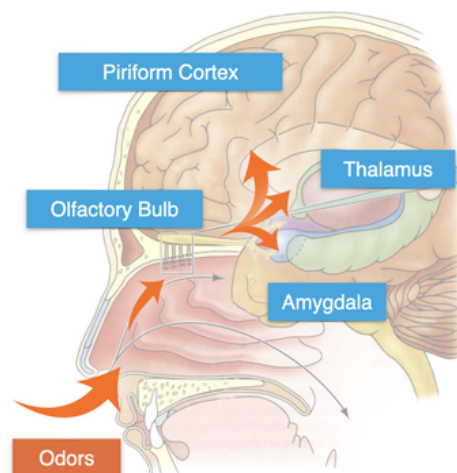
Unlike other senses, smell bypasses several processing centers and goes straight to the limbic system—the brain’s emotional hub. Once the scent is processed, the limbic system releases dopamine (up to 100% more!) and serotonin—chemicals that promote calm and well-being.

This combination of interruption and soothing helps your child begin calming down within seconds.

Simply bring the scent close to them; their brain will do the rest. We prefer strawberry for its quick and intense processing, but any pleasant scent should work.

The power of smell

- Unlike other senses, olfactory signals go directly to the cortex, the highest level of the brain.
- Other senses have to be processed first in the thalamus.
- **Smell** goes directly to the piriform cortex, which is intricately linked with the **emotion** and **memory** system, the **limbic** system.
- Dopamine boost





Step 3: Cold

When ice is needed

While scent is often enough to stop and soothe a meltdown, there are times when a stronger intervention is needed. This is where the power of cold comes in.

Cold is a potent signal that the brain cannot ignore. It has been used in various contexts to interrupt intense neurological activity. For example, ice has been used to stop seizures in dogs and can also help decrease seizure intensity, duration, recovery time, and even frequency in humans.

You don't need to touch them with the ice. You can simply ask them to hold an ice pack or a bag of frozen vegetables for you.

However, more often than not, smell alone is sufficient to achieve this effect. Ice is simply an additional tool that can be used when needed, providing that extra push to help your child calm down.

The power of ice

- Clean, urgent threat signal
- Powerful interrupt effect
- Demonstrated to reduce severity of seizures in animals





Tips

Using the 5-second method anywhere

At home, keep a bottle of scent nearby and an ice pack in the freezer. At the restaurant or park, a discreet scent-infused wristband can be a life-saver.

Even if your child is too upset to notice or respond, simply having the scent nearby can make a difference. With the ice, you can place it on their lap or hand it to them as if asking for help.

Be prepared to act swiftly and gently at the first signs of anxiety build-up.

You can also use this technique to help prevent meltdowns and help children who have a tough time with anxiety and stress. Consider giving them a boost of pleasure and calm every few hours. Instead of ice, pair the scent with a gentle touch, like a back tickle or a soft hand massage, for a dose of serotonin—the serenity hormone.





By Jeremy Gonzalez

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Let's Make This Guide Work Even Better for You and Your Child

We would like to offer a free consultation to help you get even more out of this guide. Meltdowns can be overwhelming, but you don't have to face them alone.

We'll work together to customize the meltdown de-escalation techniques to suit your child's unique needs, and we can also discuss any other challenges your child might be facing—whether it's sleep issues, anxiety, speech development, or something else.

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