Book Review – April 2020 by Stevie-Jayne Farrell TA/HLTA Literacy Support at QUEST Academy

**Title: How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids will Talk**

**Author: Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish**

**Publisher: Piccadilly Press**

**Accessed Via University of East London Library**

“How to talk so kids will listen and listen so kids will talk”, is what I can describe as a down to earth, “how to” guide on developing congruent communication between adults and children/young people. Faber and Mazlish are very open about their journey and where it started throughout the book. They start by explaining how they attended parenting workshops ran by Dr. Haim Ginnott. They say these taught them the skills to treat both themselves and their children in a more positive way. This, for me is what makes this book an easier read than most. I read this book initially from an educator’s point of view in a specialist provision with the aim of getting my degree essay written. However the book uses “real life” experiences from parents, scenarios, comic strip images of schools and parenting in a hard hitting and to the point form, which to me made it easier to see all relationships, teacher, parent and child/young person.

This said, it was a hard hitting read for myself. I can relate to some of the less congruent communication tools used by parents/teachers and also relate to how easy it is as a parent and practitioner to “slip” in to non-productive ways of communicating. Highlighting how this can severely impact on self-esteem and positive self-reliance.

Chapter 1 opens with, “I was a wonderful parent before I had children..”. This resonated with me. This can go for any parents and any situation and helps me to remember that all our learners and parents are unique. Faber and Mazlish go on to argue that there is a, “Direct connection between how kids feel and how they behave. When kids feel right, they’ll behave right.” They believe that in order to allow them to feel right then they must accept their feelings. However, the book goes on to explain that we are not born with the tools to accept and recognise feelings and that it is the relationships around us that support with this. As a practitioner, I believe I help my learners with this daily and it was reassuring to see that some of the techniques of labelling a feeling for them, even if it ends up being wrong, labelling my own and being honest (whilst being professional) is an important technique and something I use often. I have however from this book, which I started reading over a couple of months put some of the skills in to practice further as it has made me more aware. This book has helped fill some gaps.