

**POSITIVE PARENTING:
HOW TO RAISE A RESPONSIBLE CHILD**

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THE THREE PARENTING STYLES

AUTHORITARIAN

The main feature of this parenting type is that the parent has the final say regarding the parenting plan. This style features firmness and consistency, with the parent setting the agenda.

Authoritarian parenting is not automatically harsh and controlling. If the parent keeps in mind the importance of showing kindness and respect, this style can be applied with confidence.

THE THREE PARENTING STYLES

DEMOCRATIC

This parenting style involves negotiation with your child. You and your child work together to set the parenting plan. Unlike the authoritarian style, you give your child a partial say. Parent and child engage in a mutual exchange of ideas.

THE THREE PARENTING STYLES

LAISSEZ-FAIRE

This parenting style abandons the traditional methods of parenting and allows children to set their own agendas. Children are allowed to parent themselves, in the hope that they will find their own ways in life through the positive and negative experiences they will have. This has worked with older children and for parents who think that trial and error is the best way for a child to learn.

This technique is likely to be counterproductive with children who need direction and guidance.

PARENTING STYLES

Issue	Autocratic	Permissive	Democratic
Respect	Disrespects children, criticizes, blames	Disrespects self	Respects children and accepts them as they are; encourages mutual respect.
Rights	Ignores children's rights	Ignores own rights	Respect all rights.
Responsibility	Take responsibility for all problems	Serves; takes on children's problems	Allows children to be responsible for their own problems

PARENTING STYLES

Issue	Autocratic	Permissive	Democratic
Methods to influence	Lectures, orders, threatens	Pleads	Gives choices within limits
Decisions	Makes all decisions, gives advice	Lets children do what they want	Involves children in decisions that affect them: explores alternative solutions
Response to misbehavior	Punishes; withdraws privileges, spansks	Reasons	Permits children to experience consequences of their decisions

HOW DO WE RAISE RESPONSIBLE CHILDREN?

- *Understanding their behavior and misbehavior. If we don't understand what motivates our children, we cannot be in a position to help them become responsible human beings.*
- *Building their self-esteem through encouragement helping them feel good about themselves and other people. Responsible people have high self-esteem and care about others.*

- ***Giving them responsibility.*** To become mature adults, children must learn to assume age-appropriate responsibilities as they grow up. You can't expect a child to act responsibly at age eighteen if you haven't trained him from day one. But it's never too late.
- ***Determining "problem ownership."*** Some problems you "own" and some your children "own". It's important to learn the difference. We can't help our kids become responsible if we assume ownership of the problems they can solve.

- *Using natural and logical consequences;* a disciplinary method that holds the child responsible for his or her behavior, not the parent.
- *Listening to our children.* We can learn a skill - reflective listening - that will help us really hear, and respect, kids' feelings and opinions.
- *Sending "I-messages".* We can learn how to communicate our feelings and opinions to our children and expect them to respect us.

- ***Exploring alternatives:* We can help our children generate solutions to their challenges and thereby develop decision-making skills. Kids who learn to make good decisions become responsible.**

We can involve them in decisions that affect their lives. We can't, however, let them control the family, but we can permit them to share in those rules that affect it.

ACCEPTING CHILDREN AS THEY ARE

The first step in establishing a healthy atmosphere is to accept the child. This does not mean condoning all behavior. It's possible to disapprove of certain conduct without rejecting the child as a person.

Tone of voice and manner must imply that the person is valued even though the present act isn't. It's essential to separate the deed from the doer.

Consequences, for example, must be applied in the spirit of friendliness.

ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENCE

Permitting the child to make his own decisions is difficult for the parent who tends to be overprotective.

When a controlling parent proves her worth through service to her child, she resists allowing him to become independent.

The more self-sufficient he becomes, the less he will need her, and the less essential and worthwhile she'll feel.

AVOIDING PITY

One of the most damaging of all human emotions is pity. Feeling sorry for the child, regardless of the circumstances, implies that he's weak and robs him of the courage needed to face life.

The child who is pitied eventually learns to rely on self-pity as a way of avoiding difficult situations. He may even attempt to get others to feel sorry for him, hoping that they'll solve his problems for him.

Pity communicates "You poor helpless child"; empathy, however, communicates "I understand."

DISCOURAGEMENT

The discouraged child believes there is little possibility of solving problems or even of moving toward a solution.

The child lacks confidence and approached each challenge with the anticipation of either a poor performance or failure.

Recognize that the convictions underlying discouragement are based on over-concern with status and prestige.

DISCOURAGEMENT (cont'd.)

If the child is preoccupied with a need to be in a superior position, then obviously he or she will regularly be discouraged and dissatisfied.

The antidote for discouragement begins with the courage to be imperfect, the acceptance of your limitations and failures.

APPLYING NATURAL AND LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES; ACTING - NOT REACTING; AND SELECTING THE APPROPRIATE APPROACH

- 1. Parents' typical reactions often reinforce the children's goals of attention, power, revenge, or display of inadequacy. To remedy this, do the unexpected; practice the principle of "Acting - Not Reacting."**
- 2. When using natural or logical consequences, remember to remain calm, show good will, give choices, and be willing to accept the child's decision.**

3. Three effective approaches to problems in parent-child relations are:

- a. Reflective listening and exploring alternatives.**
- b. I-messages.**
- c. Natural and logical consequences.**

4. The approach you select will primarily depend upon who owns the problem.

5. Your choice of approach will also depend upon your estimate of the effectiveness of each approach with your own children.

6. Children will sometimes use and repeat problems to gain your attention or sympathy. If this occurs, discontinue reflective listening and exploring alternatives.

7. Overuse of I-messages may cause children to become tired of hearing about your feelings. They may stop listening or “trap” you into using I-messages to give them attention, or to engage you in a power struggle.

8. Some things children do should be ignored. Ignoring is a form of a logical consequence.

9. As mutual respect is established and the relationship improves, you may not have to use consequences as frequently.

10. Encouragement is implicit in all three approaches. Each approach expresses acceptance of the child, faith in his or her ability to solve problems, and respect for the child.

PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL AND LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

- 1. Reward and punishment deny children the opportunity to make their own decisions and to be responsible for their own behavior.**
- 2. Natural and logical consequences require children to be responsible for their own behavior.**
- 3. Natural consequences are those which permit children to learn from the natural order of the physical world - for example, that not eating is followed by hunger.**

- 4. Logical consequences are those which permit children to learn from the reality of the social order - for example, children who do not get up on time may be late to school and have to make up work.**

- 5. For consequences to be effective, the children involved must see them as logical.**

- 6. The purpose of using natural and logical consequences is to motivate children to make responsible decisions, not to force their submission. Consequences are effective only if you avoid having hidden motives of winning and controlling.**

7. Be both firm and kind. Firmness refers to your follow-through behavior. Kindness refers to the manner in which you present the choice.

8. Talk less; act more.

9. When you do things for children that they can do for themselves, you are robbing them of self-respect and responsibility.

10. Avoid fights; they indicate lack of respect for the other person. Do not give in; that indicates lack of respect for yourself.

11. Steps in applying logical consequences

- a. Provide choices and accept the child's decision.
Use a friendly tone of voice that communicates your good will.**
- b. As you follow through with a consequence, assure children that they may try again later.**
- c. If the misbehavior is repeated, extend the time that must elapse before the child tries again.**

12. Be patient, it will take time for natural and logical consequences to be effective.

THE MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PUNISHMENT AND LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

PUNISHMENT

LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Character- istics	Underling		Character- istics	Underlying	
	Message to Child	Likely Results		Message to Child	Likely Results
1. Empha- sis on power of authority	“Do what I say be- cause I say so.”	Rebellion. Desire for revenge. Lack of self- discipline. Sneakiness. Irresponsibility	1. Empha- sis on reality of the social order	“I trust you to learn to respect the rights of others”	Cooperation. Respect for self and others. Self-discipline. Reliability./

PUNISHMENT

LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Underling Character- istics	Message to Child	Likely Results	Underlying Character- istics	Message to Child	Likely Results
2. Rarely related to act; arbitrary	“I’ll show you.” “You deserve what you’re getting!”	Resentment Desire for revenge. Fear Confusion Rebellion	2. Logically related to the mis- behavior; sensible	“I trust you to make re- sponsible choices”	Learning from experience.
3. Implies moral judgment	“You’re bad! You’re not acceptable”	Feelings of hurt, guilt Desire to get even	3. Treats person with dignity; separates deed from doer.	“You are a worthwhile person”	Senses he or she is accept- able even though behavior is not

PUNISHMENT

LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Underling			Underlying		
Character- istics	Message to Child	Likely Results	Character- istics	Message to Child	Likely Results
4. Emphasis on past behavior	“You’ll never learn. I can never count on you”	Feels unacceptable. Feels can’t make good decisions.	4. Concerned with present and future behavior	“You are able to take care of yourself.”	Becomes self-evaluating, self-directing
5. Threats of disrespect, violence, or loss of love, either open or concealed	“You’d better shape up!” “No child of mine would do a thing like that!”	Fear Rebellion Guilt feelings Desire to “get back”	5. Voice communicates respect and good will	“I don’t like what you’re doing, but I still love you”	Feels secure about parent’s love and support.

PUNISHMENT

LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Underling Character- istics	Message to Child	Likely Results	Underlying Character- istics	Message to Child	Likely Results
6. Demands compli- ance	“Your prefer- ences don’t matter” “You can’t be trusted to make wise decisions”	Rebellion “Defiant com- pliance”	Concerned with present and future behavior	“You are able to take care of yourself”	Becomes self-evaluating, self-directing.

MORE CONSEQUENCES FOR TYPICAL CHALLENGES

CHALLENGE

CONSEQUENCE

Spending allowance before next allowance day.

Provide an adequate allowance and let child experience consequences of not budgeting money.

Not doing chores.

Discuss sharing chores at family meeting. General consequences for not doing chores is not going out or not engaging in fun activities until chores are done.

MORE CONSEQUENCES FOR TYPICAL CHALLENGES

CHALLENGE	CONSEQUENCE
Tattling	Tell child that what she's telling you is really none of your business. From that point on, ignore the tattling. (Children know the difference between tattling and telling you when something dangerous is happening.)
Misbehavior in the car	Pull over to the side of the road. Tell the children that their behavior is distracting. You'll continue when they settle down.

MORE CONSEQUENCES FOR TYPICAL CHALLENGES

CHALLENGE	CONSEQUENCE
Whining.	Ignore. Attend to child when he's speaking in a normal voice.
Not feeding pets.	Establish rule. Pets fed before child fed. Consequence: child's meal delayed.

MORE CONSEQUENCES FOR TYPICAL CHALLENGES

CHALLENGE

CONSEQUENCE

Teen doesn't put gas in family car after she uses it.

Assuming you've discussed "gassing up," teen doesn't use car next time.

Insults.

Acknowledge feelings; state your feelings in I-message. "I understand you're angry, but I won't tolerate being talked to like that." Then ignore further outbursts. Leave room if need be. Discuss feelings later when both have calmed down.

METHODS OF TRAINING

The following principles help the child become independent and responsible:

- 1. The parent understands the child and the purpose of his misbehavior.**
- 2. The relationship between parent and child is one of mutual respect.**
- 3. Parents are both firm and kind - the firmness indicating respect for themselves and the kindness showing respect for the child.**

4. **The child should be valued as he or she is. Assets and strengths are discovered, valued, and emphasized. Parents spend more time encouraging than correcting. One Positive Statement a Day is a good motto.**

5. **Parents learn to have the courage to live with their own inadequacies. They accept themselves as well as their child.**

- 6. Parents learn to act more and talk less. Natural and logical consequences that teach a respect for order replace reward and punishment.**
- 7. If a poor or ineffectual relationship exists, parents must have the patience and take the time to make corrective efforts. Developing human relationships that are mutually satisfying requires awareness but is worth the effort.**

DEVELOPING RESPONSIBILITY IN CHILDREN

1. *Avoid performing tasks a child can do.*

This rule is often violated by parents who have high standards and see the child as incapable of meeting them.

When a child is first learning to assume responsibility, she may not conform to adult standards.

DEVELOPING RESPONSIBILITY IN CHILDREN

2. *Allow time for training.*

Many attempts to develop responsibility fail because of poor timing. The worst time to train a child is when there are definite time limits involved, that is, in the middle of a power struggle or right before leaving for a meeting.

A relaxed time, perhaps early in the evening or on the weekend, is the best time to help the child learn. The parent is under no pressure and can be patient and encouraging.

DEVELOPING RESPONSIBILITY IN CHILDREN

3. Ask - don't demand.

Making demands on children usually decreases their desire to help out.

On the other hand, requesting cooperation by emphasizing the parents' need for assistance and believing the child is able to do it are appealing to many children. The child feels grown up as she discovers she is of real help to her parents.

DEVELOPING RESPONSIBILITY IN CHILDREN

3. Ask - don't demand. cont'd.

“Mary, this job is difficult, and I sure need your help. Will you help me, please?” if the child refuses, this may be a clue that the relationship is not effective.

Therefore, it is best to accept the child's denial and continue to work on improving the relationship. At those times when the child does help, show appreciation. “Thanks, Mary, you made my job much easier.”

DEVELOPING RESPONSIBILITY IN CHILDREN

4. *Use natural and logical consequences.*

When a child refuses to perform those tasks that are his or her sole responsibility, the parent needs to stop talking, withdraw from conflict, and let the child experience the consequences of being irresponsible.

HAVING FUN

- ♥ A positive attitude makes you a better parent.**
- ♥ Re-order your priorities to allow more time to have fun with your child. Instead of coming home and going right to the evening paper, sit down and visit with your child.**
- ♥ Make your child a part of your daily life. Each day, spend at least 15 minutes in an activity with your child.**

HAVING FUN

- ♥ **Parent without pressure. Sometimes, it is okay to bend a rule. If your child has an appointed bedtime, maybe an extra half-hour won't hurt. If you are flexible, parenting will be less stressful.**
- ♥ **In order to become a better parent, be ready to take step backward to make that leap forward.**

EMOTIONS

- ♈ You will experience many emotions during parenting.**
- ♈ Don't let your emotions take over or block your thinking.**
- ♈ Listen to your internal feelings and control them.
Avoid inappropriate verbal and physical behavior with your child.**
- ♈ Emotions are part of us and need to be acknowledged.**

EMOTIONS

♈ Emotions are part of us and need to be acknowledged.

♈ You cannot block out feelings.

♈ Avoiding or denying feelings causes stress.

♈ Emotions increase self-awareness, if you listen to them and think about what they may be telling you.

♈ “Negative” emotions are telling you that something is wrong and you need to make a change in your parenting.

RESOLVING CONFLICTS

1. *Mutual respect.* Each person must respect the rights of others. Without mutual respect there can be little willingness to cooperate.
2. *Pinpointing the true issue.* The issue at hand is rarely the true issue. The true issue is usually of a personal nature, such as prestige, winning and losing, unfair treatment, and rights. Conflicts with children always involve the child's mistaken goals: attention, power, revenge, or assumed inability. They also involve your goals of control, being right, or being superior: "I'm older, so I know what's best."

RESOLVING CONFLICTS

- 3. *Reaching agreement.*** In any human interaction there is always agreement. In a conflict, the parent and the child have agreed to fight!
- 4. *Participation in decision making.*** Parents must involve children in the decisions that affect their lives if they wish to achieve cooperation. There must be full participation and shared responsibility.

***Do unto your children as you
would have other people do
unto your children.***