

Gopal's Fun School (GFS)

CO-OPERATION

Improving Parent Child Relationship



ISKCON
CHOWPATTY

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How to Cooperate with Children ?



Chapter 1

How To Cooperate With Children

To help them deal with their feelings

What Happens to Children when we Deny their Feelings?

Do we listen to the conversations with our children? If we listen to our conversations carefully, with our children, we will find that we often deny their feelings. Following are some situations in which the children feelings have been denied:-

Situation 1: You are on a hill station, your child who is wearing a sweater wants to remove it since he is feeling hot but you think otherwise.

Child: Mummy, it's hot in here.

Me: It's cold. Keep your sweater on.

Child: No. I am hot.

Me: I said, "Keep your sweater on!"

Child: No, I am hot.

Situation 2: You have to go out with your child who doesn't want to go because he is tired.

Child: Mommy, I am tired.

Me: You couldn't be tired. You just napped.

Child: (*louder*) But I am tired.

Me: You are not tired. You are just a little sleepy. Let's get dressed.

Child: (*wailing*) No, I am tired.

Situation 3: You have to take your child to the temple for a spiritual program and he says it is boring.

Child: That temple visit was boring.

Me: No, it wasn't and the class was very interesting.

Child: It didn't make any sense to me.

Me: It was inspiring.

When parents steadily deny the feelings of children, it can potentially confuse or even at times enrage them.

Conclusions: (for the above situations)

1. All conversations are turning into arguments.
2. Children were being given the message not to trust their own perceptions.
3. Children were instead pressed to rely on the perception of the parent.

Please read each statement and jot down what you think a parent might say if he were denying his child's feelings or choose from one of the options mentioned below:-

1. Child: I don't like the new baby.

Parent: (denying the feeling) _____

Option: _____



2. Child: I had a dumb birthday party.

Parent: (denying the feeling) _____

Option: _____

3. Child: I am so mad! Just because I was two minutes late for gym, the teacher kicked me off the team.

Parent: (denying the feeling) _____

Option: _____

4. Child: I am not wearing my bite-plate anymore. It hurts. I don't care what the dentist says!

Parent: (denying the feeling) _____

Option: _____

Did you find yourself writing things like: (options)

1. Your bite-plate can't hurt that much. After all the money we've invested in your mouth, you'll wear that thing whether you like it or not.
2. You have no right to be mad at the teacher. It's your fault. You should have been on time.
3. What are you talking about? You had a wonderful party – ice cream, birthday cake, balloons. Well that's the last party you'll ever have.
4. That's not so. I know in your heart you really love the baby.

Somehow this kind of talk comes easily to many of us. But how do you think the children react when they hear it?

Many parents have shared some of their personal reactions, "When I am upset or hurting, the last thing I want to hear is advice, philosophy, psychology, or the others fellow's point of view. That kind of talk only makes me feel worse than before"

"Pity leaves me feeling pitiful; questions put me on the defensive; and most infuriating of all is to hear that I have no reason to feel what I'm feeling. My overriding reaction to most of these responses is, "Oh forget it... What's the point of going on?"

The process is no different for our children. They too can help themselves if they have a listening ear and an empathic response. But the language of empathy does not come naturally to us. It's not part of our "mother tongue". Most of us grew up having our feelings denied. To become fluent in this new language of acceptance, we have to learn and practice its methods.

What are the problems that children face due to steady denial ? (ETC)

Steady denial of the children's feelings can:-

- Enrage them.



- **T**eaches them not to trust their own feelings and not to know what their feelings are.
- **C**onfuse the kids.

What are the advantages of accepting the feelings of a child ? (CCU)

The children feel, “When someone really listens, someone acknowledges my inner pain and gives me a chance to talk more about what’s troubling me, I feel:-

- Less **C**onfused.
- More able to **C**ope with my feelings and problems.
- Less **U**pset.

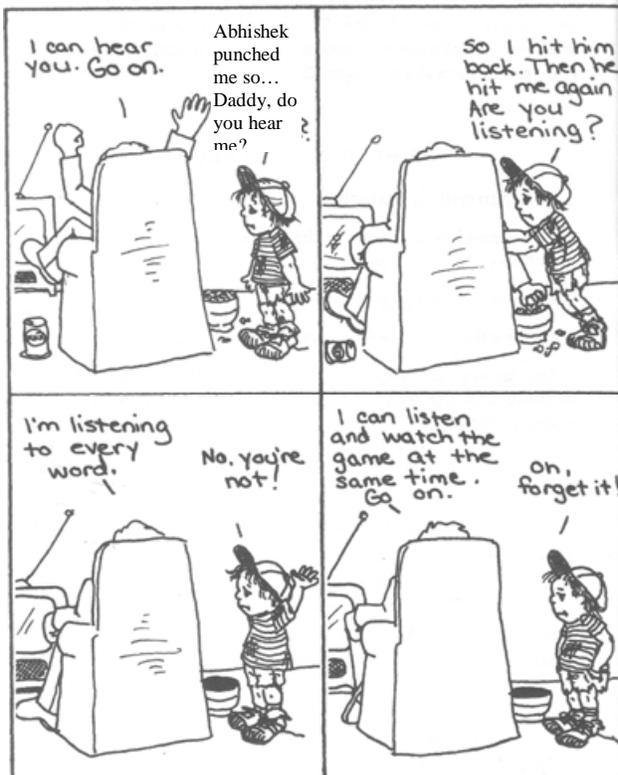
In the following section there are some ways to help children deal with their feelings.

Tips for Helping Children Deal with their Feelings

1. **L**isten with full attention.
2. **A**cknowledge their feelings with a word— “Oh”...”Mmm”...“I see.”
3. **W**ishes in fantasy...Grant Them.
4. **N**ame their feelings.

Four Do’s & Don’ts to Help the children with their feelings. (LAWN)

Don’t: Instead of half-listening



It can be discouraging to try to get through to someone who gives only lip service to listening.

Do: **L**isten with Full attention



It's much easier to tell your troubles to a parent who is really listening. He doesn't even have to say anything. Often a sympathetic silence is all a child needs.



Don't: Instead of Questions and Advice



It's hard for a child to think clearly or constructively when someone is questioning, blaming or advising her.

Do: Acknowledge their feelings with a word



Words like "Oh", "Mmm", "I see" coupled with a caring attitude, are invitations to a child to explore her own thoughts and feelings and possibly come up with her own

Don't: Instead of explanation or logic



When children want something they can't have, adults usually respond with logical explanations of why they can't have it. Often the harder we explain, the harder they protest.

Do: Wishes in fantasy...Grant Them.



Sometimes just having someone understand how much you want something makes reality easier to bear.



Don't: Instead of denying the feeling



It's strange. When we urge a child to push a bad feeling away however kindly - the child only seems to get more upset.

Do: Name their feelings



Parents don't usually give this kind of response, because they fear that by giving a name to the feeling, they'll make it worse. Just the opposite is true. The child who hears the words for what he is experiencing is deeply comforted. Someone has acknowledged his inner experience.

So there you have it— four possible ways to give first aid to a child in distress: by listening with full attention, by acknowledging his feelings with a word, by giving a name to his feelings with a word, by granting him his wishes in fantasy.

But more important than any words we use is our attitude. If our attitude is not one of compassion, then whatever we say will be experienced by the child as phony or manipulative. It is when our words are infused with our feelings of empathy that they speak directly to a child's heart.

Of the four skills, perhaps the most difficult is to have to listen to a child's emotional outpourings and then "give a name to the feeling." It takes practice and concentration to be able to look into and beyond what a child says, in order to identify what he or she might be feeling. Yet it's important that we give our children a vocabulary for their inner reality. Once they have the words for what they're experiencing, they can begin to help themselves.

This next exercise has a list of six statements that a child might make to her parents. Please read each statement and figure out:-

1. A word or two which describes what the child might be feeling.
2. A statement you might make to the child to show you understand the feeling.



Name the feeling

What the child says	Feeling Word	What the parent can say
The bus driver yelled at me and everybody laughed.	Embarrassment	That must have been embarrassing. Or Sounds as if that was embarrassing.
Mom, I'm not going to clean up my dumb room!	Angry	You're angry that I want you to clean up your room.
I missed the foul shot, and we lost the game.	Disappointed	Sounds like you're disappointed about missing the shot.
I hate the way I look in this hat.	Embarrassed	You're embarrassed to wear that hat.

Feeling Words

Although the English language has hundreds of words that describe specific feelings, most people do not have many in their daily vocabulary. As you practice looking for the right "feeling words", you will find your feeling word vocabulary increases and the job gets easier. To help with this process, we have included a list of 100 feeling words for you to keep in mind.

Words That Describe Pleasant Feelings		Words That Describe Unpleasant Feelings	
Accepted	Hopeful	Afraid	Jealous
Adequate	Honored	Angry	Let down
Adventurous	Important	Anxious	Lonely
Bold	Joyful	Ashamed	Miserable
Brilliant	Lovely	Bashful	Nervous
Calm	Loving	Bored	Overwhelmed
Caring	Overjoyed	Cautious	Pained
Cheerful	Peaceful	Cheated	Possessive
Comfortable	Peppy	Concerned	Provoked
Confident	Playful	Defeated	Pushed
Content	Pleased	Defiant	Rejected
Daring	Proud	Disappointed	Remorseful
Eager	Refreshed	Discouraged	Resentful
Elated	Relieved	Down	Shy
Encouraged	Satisfied	Embarrassed	Stupid
Energetic	Secure	Envious	Suspicious
Excited	Snappy	Foolish	Tired
Fascinated	Successful	Frustrated	Trapped
Free	Surprised	Guilty	Uncomfortable
Full	Sympathetic	Hateful	Uneasy
Glad	Tranquil	Hesitant	Unhappy
Great	Understood	Hopeless	Unloved
Gutsy	Warm	Hurt	Unsure
Happy	Wonderful	Impatient	Weary
High	Zany	Irritated	Worried



Exercise

What the child says	Feeling Word	What the parent can say
1. I'd like to punch that Ankit in the nose!
2. Just because of a little rain my teacher said we couldn't go on our field trip. She's dumb.
3. Vandana invited me to her party, but I don't know...
4. I don't know why teachers have to load you down with so much homework over the weekend!
5. We had basketball practice today and I couldn't sink that ball once.
6. Jaya is moving away and she's my best friend.

Did you notice how much thought and effort it takes to let the child know you have a sense of what it is he or she might be feeling? For most of us it doesn't come naturally to say things like:-

1. "Boy, you sound angry!"
2. "To have a dear friend move away can be pretty upsetting."
3. "Sounds as if you really resent all that homework,"
4. "Oh, that must have been so frustrating!"
5. "That must have been a disappointment for you,"



A Quick Reminder....

Helping Children Deal with Their Feelings

Children Need to Have Their Feelings Accepted and Respected

1. **L**isten with full attention.
2. **A**cknowledge their feelings with a word— “Oh”...”Mmm”...”I see.”
3. **W**ishes in fantasy...Grant Them.
“I wish I could make the banana ripe for you right now!”
4. **N**ame their feelings.
“That sounds frustrating!”

All feelings can be accepted.

Certain actions must be limited.

“I can see how angry you are at your brother. Tell him what you want with words, not fists.”

Case Studies

Case Study 1

Son: I'd like to punch that Uday in the nose!

Father: Boy, you're angry!

Son: I'd like to push his fat face in!

Father: You're *that* mad at him!

Son: You know what that bully did? He grabbed my notebook at the bus stop and threw it in the dirt. And for no reason!

Father: Hmmm!

Son: I bet he thought I was the one who broke his dumb clay bird in the art room.

Father: You think so.

Son: Yeah, he kept looking at me all the time he was crying.

Father: Oh.

Son: But I didn't break it. I didn't!

Father: You *know* you didn't.

Son: Well I didn't do it on purpose! I couldn't help it if that stupid Pawan pushed me in the table.

Father: So Pawan pushed you.

Son: Yeah. A lot of things got knocked down, but the only thing that broke was the bird. I didn't mean to break it. His bird was good.

Father: You really didn't mean to break it.

Son: No, but he wouldn't believe me.

Father: You don't think he'd believed you if you told him the truth.

Son: I dunno... I'm gonna tell him anyway – whether he believes me or not. And I think he should tell me he's sorry for throwing my notebook in the dirt!



Lesson: Hold off on giving advice. It is tempting to try to solve a child's problem with an immediate solution. For eg.

- "Ma I'm tired", "Then lie down and rest";
- "I'm hungry", "Then eat something";
- "I'm not hungry", "Then don't eat."

Resist the temptation to "make better" instantly. Instead of giving advice, continue to accept and reflect your child's feelings.

In the above case study, the father hadn't asked him any questions, yet the child had told him the whole story. He hadn't given one word of advice and yet the child had worked out his own solution. It seems unbelievable that one can be helpful to the child, if he just listens and acknowledges the child's feelings.

Case Study 2

Child: My teacher says she's calling off the class play. She's mean.

Parent: That must be a big disappointment for you. You were looking forward to it.

Child: Yeah. Just because some kids fool around at rehearsal. It's their fault.

Parent: (*listens silently*)

Child: She's mad because nobody knows their parts, too.

Parent: I see.

Child: She said if we "shaped up", she might give us one more chance ... I better go over my lines again. Would you cue me tonight?

Lesson: What people of all ages can use in a moment of distress is not agreement or disagreement; they need someone to recognize what it is they're experiencing.

Case Study 3

Child: Dad, our test is postponed till next week.

Father: That must have been a relief for you.

Child: No, I am mad! Now I'll have to study the same stuff again next week.

Father: I see. You were hoping to get it over with.

Child: Yeah!

Lesson: Even if your understanding of the child's feelings is wrong, the child will set you right.

Case Study 4

A mother comes back and sees that her three-year old child lying on the floor and throwing tantrums. And her husband was standing disgusted at the behavior of the child.

The Mother grabbed a pencil and pad and told the child,

Mother: Here, show me how angry you are? Draw a picture of the way you feel.

(*The child takes the pencil and pad and draws angry circles.*)

Child: This is how I feel!

Mother: You are really angry! Here is another piece of paper, show me more how angry you are.

(*He scribbled more furiously on the page.*)

Mother: Boy, you are that angry!



When she handed him a third piece of paper, he was definitely calmer. He looked at it for a long time. Then he said,

Child: Now I will show my happy feelings.

(He drew a circle with two eyes and a smiling mouth. It was unbelievable.)

Lesson: Parents have found that when the child is extremely upset, sometimes a physical activity can help to relieve some painful feelings. There are children who feel calmer after punching a pillows, grocery cartons, etc. But one activity which seems most comfortable for parents to watch and most satisfying for children to do is to draw their feelings. In the above case study, in two minutes the child had changed from being hysterical to smiling – just because the mother let him show how he felt.

Case Study 5

Nishant, age eight, came back from school and said,

Nishant: I'd like to punch Sachin.

Mother: You're *really* mad at Sachin!

Nishant: Yeah! Whenever we play football and I get the ball, he says, "Give it to me, Nishant, I'm better than you are." Wouldn't that make *anybody* mad?

Mother: Yes.

Nishant: But Sachin's not really like that. In first grade he was always nice. But I think when Kunal came in the second grade, Sachin picked up the habit of boasting from him.

Mother: I see.

Nishant: Let's call Sachin and invite him to the park.

Lesson: Here the mother realized how little she had actually spoken, and when guided the ability of the child to come to wise conclusions on his own. The mother realized that when she refrained from giving advice, the child really did start to toward his own solution. What actually makes the difference is the parent's basic willingness to listen and their attitude of acceptance is what makes the difference.

Case Study 6

Amrita came in from school in a fit of rage.

Amrita: Mrs. Subarmanium really yelled at me in gym today.

Father: Oh!

Amrita: She screamed at me.

Father: She was really mad.

Amrita: She yelled. "You don't hit the ball that way in volley ball. You do it this way!" How should I know? She never told us how to hit it."

Father: You were angry at her for yelling.

Amrita: She made me so mad.

Father: It can be frustrating to be yelled at for no good reason.

Amrita: She had no right!

Father: You feel she shouldn't have yelled at you.

Amrita: No. I'm so mad at her. I could step on her... I'd like to stick pins in a doll of her and make her suffer.



At this point Amrita smiled. I smiled. She began to laugh and so did I. She then remarked that it was really silly the way Mrs. Subarmanium, yelled.

Amrita: I sure know now how to hit the volleyball to satisfy her.

Lesson: The “accepting” statements of parents have a calming effect on the child.

Case Study 7

Father was going shopping and four year old Deepak wanted to go along with him.

Daddy: All right, you can come along, but you may have to stand in the cold for a long time.

Deepak: (*Confusion is spread across his face and he answers with great hesitation*) I changed my mind and I want to stay home.

(*Two minutes later after Daddy left the tears began.*)

Mommy: (*Preoccupied at the time and not in the mood to cope*) Deepak, we both know that you decided to stay home. Your crying is distracting and I don't want to listen, so if you're going to cry, go to your room.

(*He turns to his room wailing. Minutes later mother tries the new method.*)

Mommy: (*Going to Deepak's room and sitting on his bed*) You really wanted to be with Daddy, didn't you?

(*Deepak stopped crying and nodded his head.*)

Mommy: You felt confused when daddy mentioned how cold it would be. You couldn't make up your mind.

(*Relief showed in his eyes. Nodding again, he dried his eyes.*)

Mommy: You felt that you didn't have enough time to make up your mind.

Deepak: No, I didn't.

(*At this point his mother hugged him. He bounced off the bed and ran to play.*)

Lesson: A few words of acknowledgement often soothe the most savage feelings, and change the mood dramatically. Words like “calm down” and “cut it out”, only seems to agitate the children further.

Case Study 8

Ramit came with muddied overalls and a downcast face.

Father: I see a lot of mud on your pants.

Ramit: Yeah, I am bad at football.

Father: You had a hard game.

Ramit: Yeah, I can't play. I'm too weak. Even Aman knocks me down.

Father: It's so frustrating to get knocked down.

Ramit: Yeah I wish I was stronger.

Father: You wish you were built like Arnold.

Ramit: Yeah, then I could knock them down.

Father: You could run right over those tacklers.

Ramit: I could find plenty of running room. I can pass too. I'm good at short pass, but I can't throw a bomb (long pass).

Father: You can run and pass.

Ramit: Yeah, I can play better.



Father: You feel you could play better.

Ramit: Next time I can play better.

Father: I am sure you'll play better.

Lesson: The more you try to push a child's unhappy feeling away, the more he becomes stuck in them. The more comfortably you can accept the bad feelings, the easier it is for kids to let go of them. You could reword the above as, if you want to have a happy family, you'd better be prepared to permit the expression of a lot of unhappiness.

Case Study 9

Ankur: I need a new telescope.

Father: A new telescope? Why? There's nothing wrong with the one that you already have.

Ankur: (*heartedly*) It's a kid's telescope!

Father: It's perfectly adequate for a boy your age.

Ankur: No, it isn't. I need a 200 power telescope.

Father: (I could see we were headed for a big fight. I decided to shift gears.) So you'd really like a 200 power telescope.

Ankur: Yeah, cause then I could see into the craters.

Father: You want to really get a closer look at them.

Ankur: That's right!

Father: You know what I wish? I wish I had enough money to buy you that telescope. No, with your interest in astronomy, I wish I had enough money to buy you a 400 power telescope.

Ankur: A 600 power telescope.

Father: An 800 power telescope.

Ankur: (*getting enthusiastic*) A 1000 power telescope!

Father: Great.

Ankur: (*excitedly*) I know ... if you could, you'd buy me the one a Mount Palomar!

Lesson: Some parents were very comfortable with the idea of granting their children in fantasy what they couldn't have given them in reality. It was so much easier for parents to say, "You wish you had ..." than to have an all out battle over who was right and why. One of the keys to giving in fantasy is to really let yourself go, to be "far out" fantastic. The child recognizes your desire to take his longing seriously.

Case Study 10

Child: I don't like Sumit anymore.

Parent: You don't like Sumit anymore.

Child: (*with annoyance*) That's what I just said.

Lesson: This child might have preferred a less parrot like response, such as:
"Something about Sumit bothers you."
Or
"Sounds as if you're really annoyed with him."
Children usually object when their exact words are repeated back to them.



How to get Cooperation from Children ?



Chapter 2

How to Get Cooperation from Children

To help fulfill our needs and feelings

Until now we've been concentrating upon how parents can help children deal with their negative feelings. Now we would like to focus on helping parents deal with some of their own negative feelings.

One of the built-in frustrations of parenthood is the daily struggle to get our children to behave in ways that are acceptable to us and to society. This can be maddening, uphill work. Part of problem lies in the conflict of needs. The adult need is for some semblance of cleanliness, order, courtesy, and routine. The children couldn't care less.

We have heard many times parents shouting at their children to do the following things:-

- "Wash your hands."
- "Keep you voices down."
- "Did you do your homework."
- "Come back and flush the toilet."
- "Get into bed."
- "Use your napkin."
- "Hang up your coats."
- "Are you sure you brushed your teeth."
- "Get into pajamas."
- "Go to sleep."

We have heard many times parents shouting at their children to not do the following things:-

- "Don't kick the table"
- "Don't throw dirt."
- "Don't jump on the sofa."
- "Don't put beans up your nose."
- "Don't touch the wire."

The children attitude becomes, "I'll do what I want." Parents' attitude becomes, "You'll do as I say," and fight goes on. It gets to a point where parents' insides churn every time they ask child to do the simplest thing.

Take a few minutes to think and list about what it is that you insist your children to do, or not do, during a typical day:-

In a single day I see to it that my children (or Child) do the following:-

In the Morning	In the Afternoon	In the Evening
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____

I also make sure that my children (or Child) don't do the following:-

In the Morning	In the Afternoon	In the Evening
1. _____	_____	_____



2. _____
3. _____

Whether your list is long or short, whether your expectations are realistic or unrealistic, each item on that list represents your time, your energy, and contains all the ingredients necessary for a battle of wills.

Conventional Cooperation Methods (Communication Blocks)

These are some of the methods most commonly used by adults to get children to cooperate:-

Communication Block	Parent's intention	Why it's disrespectful	Examples
Commanding	To control the situation and provide the child with quick solutions.	It says to the child, "You don't have the right to decide how to handle your own problems."	"What you should do is..." "Stop complaining."
Giving Advice	To influence the child with arguments or opinions.	It says to the child, "You don't have the good sense to come up with your own solutions."	"I've got a good idea..." "Why don't you..."
Placating	To take away the child's pain; to make her feel better.	It says to the child, "You don't have a right to your feelings; you can't handle discomfort."	"It isn't as bad as it seems." "Everything will be okay."
Interrogating	To get to the bottom of the problem and find out what the child did wrong.	It says to the child, "You must have messed up somewhere."	"What did you do to him..."
Distracting	To protect the child from the problem by changing the subject.	It says to the child, "I don't think you can stand the discomfort long enough to find a real solution."	"Let's not worry about that, let's ..."



Psychologizing	To help prevent future problems by analyzing the child's behavior and explaining his motives.	It says to the child, "I know more about you than you know about yourself. Therefore, I'm superior to you."	"Do you know why you said that?" "You're just insecure."
Sarcasm	To show the child how wrong her attitudes or behavior are by making her feel ridiculous.	It says to the child, "You are ridiculous."	"Well, I guess that's just about the end of the world."
Moralizing	To show the child the proper way to deal with the problem.	It says to the child, "Don't you dare choose your own values."	"The right thing to do would be to ..." "Oh, how awful."
Know-it-All	To show the child that he has a resource for handling any problem; namely, the parent.	It says to the child, "Since I know it all, you must know nothing."	"The solution is really very simple."



Skills to Get Children's Cooperation (TWIST)

Find below a list of alternate ways to engage children's cooperation without doing violence to their self-esteem or leaving them with such a backwash of bad feelings. Find below listed five skills which help deal with children. Note that not every one of them will work with every child. Not every skill will suit your personality. And there isn't any one which is effective at all times. What these five skills do, however, is create a climate of respect in which the spirit of cooperation can begin to grow.

1. **T**ell or Describe. Describe what you see, or describe the problem.
2. **W**rite a note.
3. **I**nformation to be given.
4. **S**ay it with a word.
5. **T**alk about your feelings.

1. **T**ell or Describe. Describe what you see, or describe the problem.



It's hard to do what needs to be done when people are telling you what's wrong with you. It's easier to concentrate on the problem when someone just describes it to you. When grownups describe the problem, it gives children a chance to tell themselves what to do.



2. **Write a note.**

The note below was written by a father who was tired of cleaning his daughter's long hairs from the sink drain.



This was written by a working mother who taped it to the family TV set



This father got tired of yelling and finally decided to let a note do the talking for him.



Mother flew in a paper airplane with words on it to her son and his friend - neither of whom could read. They ran in to ask what the words said, and when they found out, they ran back to put away their toys.

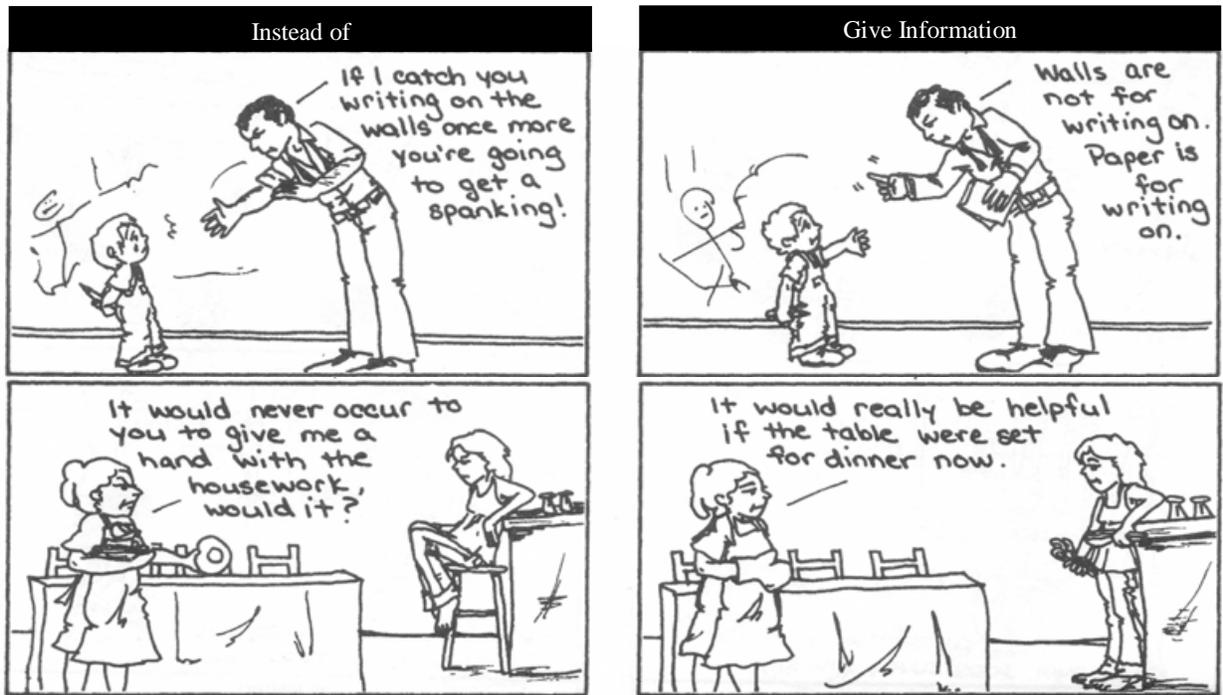


3. **Information to be given.**



Information is lot easier to take than accusation.

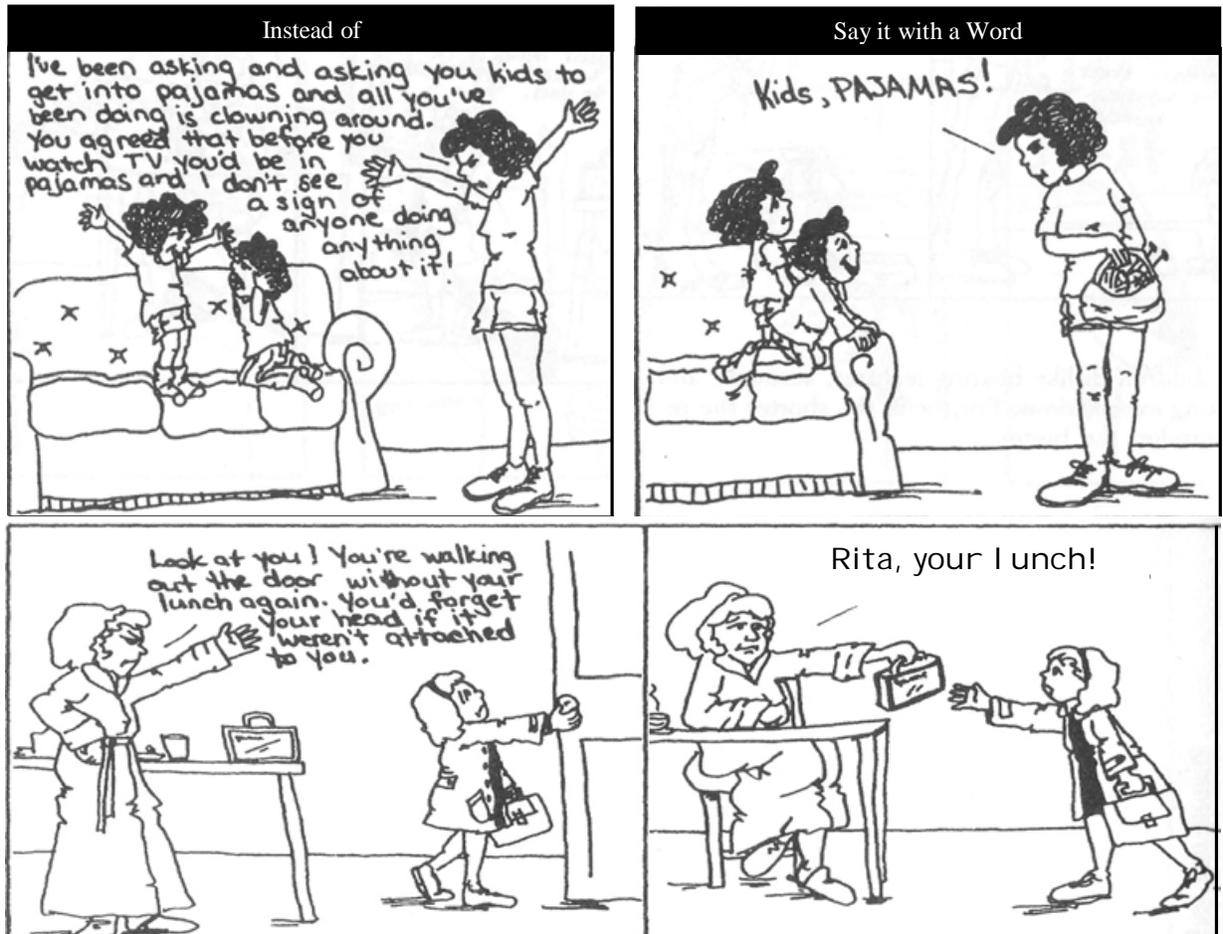




When children are given information, they can usually figure out for themselves what needs to be done.

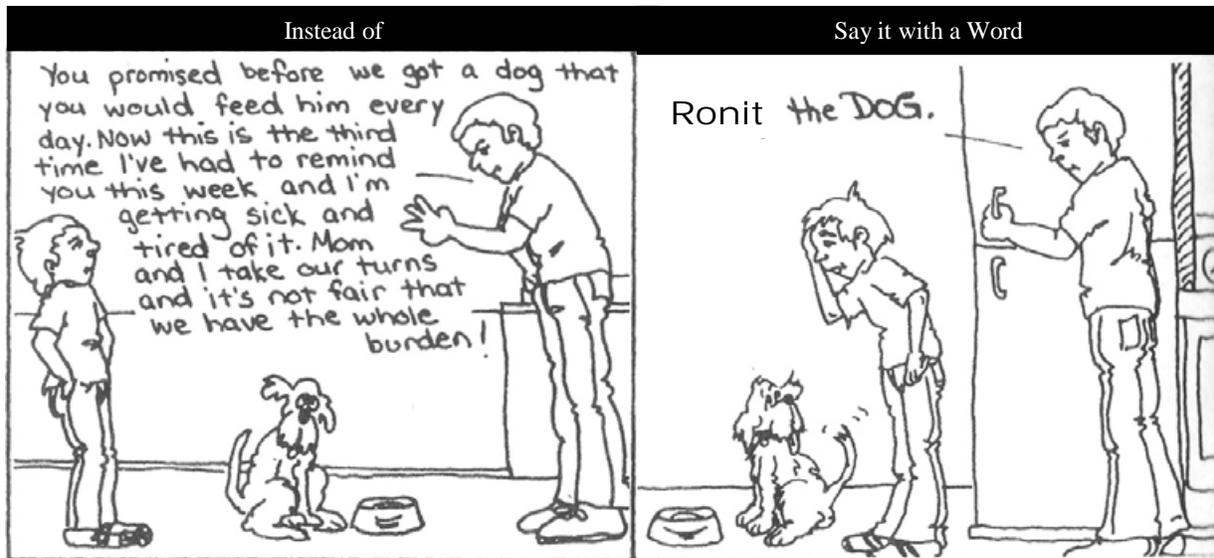
4. **Say it with a word**

Feel the contrast between the effect of the long paragraph and the effect of a single word.



In this case less is more

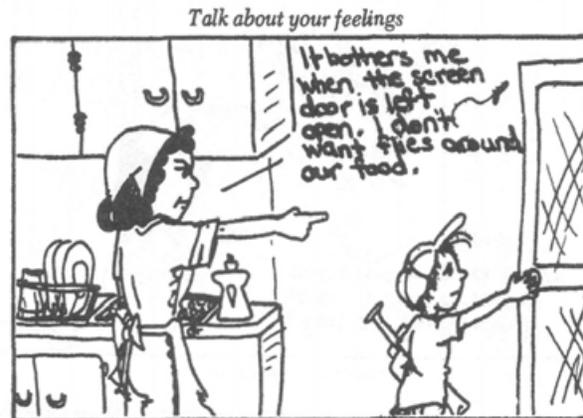




Children dislike hearing lectures, sermons, and long explanations. For them, the shorter the reminder, the better.

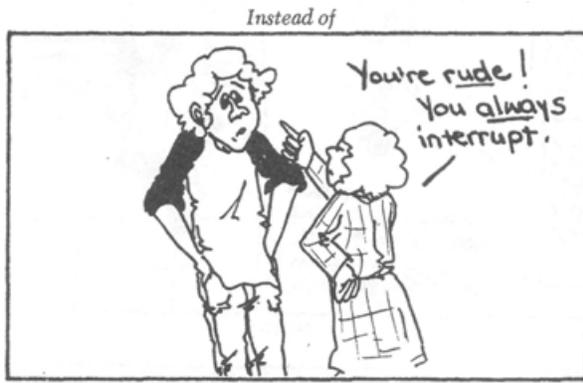
5. **Talk about your feelings.**

Make no comments about the child's character or personality.



Children are entitled to hear their parents honest feelings. By describing what we feel, we can be genuine without being hurtful. Notice when parents are being helpful they talk about their feelings only. They use the word "I" or "I feel".





It's possible to cooperate with someone who is expressing irritation or anger as long as you are not being attacked.

Apply Skills to Get Your Child's Cooperation (TWIST)

You walk into your bedroom and find that your freshly bathed child has just thrown a wet towel on your bed.

A. Write a typical statement that might be made to the child that would not be helpful.

B. In the same situation show how each of the skills listed below could be used to invite your child's cooperation.

1. Tell or Describe what you see, or describe the problem:

2. Write a note: _____



3. Information to be given:

4. Say it with a word:

5. Talk about your feelings:

Apply appropriate skills to get your child's cooperation

In the following given situations, choose the one skill that you think would be most effective with your own child.

Situation 1: You are about to wrap a package and can't find your scissors. Your child has a pair of scissors, but is constantly borrowing yours and not returning them.

Unhelpful statement:

Skilled response:

Skill used:

Situation 2: Your youngsters keep leaving his sneakers in the kitchen doorway.

Unhelpful statement:

Skilled response:

Skill used:

Situation 3: Your child has just hung his wet raincoat in the closet.

Unhelpful statement:

Skilled response:



Skill used:

Situation 4: You realize your child has not been brushing his teeth lately.

Unhelpful statement:

Skilled response:

Skill used:

Note:

Parent: One day when I came home, I tripped over my daughter's skates in the hall, and sweetly told her, "Skates belong in the closet." I thought I was wonderful. When she looked up at me blankly, and then she went back to reading her book, I hit her.

The parent shared the two things which he learned from this experience:-

Lesson 1: It's important to be authentic. Sounding patient when I am feeling angry can only work against me. Not only do I fail to communicate honestly; but because I have been "too nice" I wind up letting it out on my child later on. It would have been more helpful had I bellowed "Skates belong in the closet." For that my daughter might have bestirred herself.

Lesson 2: Just because I don't "get through" the first time, doesn't mean I should revert to the old ways. I have more than one skill at my disposal. I can use them in combination, and if necessary, in increasing intensity. For example, in the case of the wet towel I might start by calmly pointing out to my daughter, "The towel there is getting my blanket wet." I could combine that with, "Wet towels belong in the bathroom."

If she's off in one of her daydreams and I really want to penetrate her thoughts, I can increase the volume. "Pooja, the towel!"

Suppose she doesn't budge and my gorge begins to rise. I can get louder still: "Pooja I don't want to have to sleep in a cold, wet bed all night!"

I might want to save my voice. I could conceivably drop a note onto her ever-present book: "Wet towels on my bed make me see red!"

I could even imagine myself getting mad enough to tell her, "I don't like being ignored. I'm putting away your wet towel, and now you have a resentful father!"



Home Play

1. One unhelpful thing I did not say this week: (Sometimes what we don't say can be as helpful as what we do say.)

Situation: _____

I didn't say: _____

2. Two new skills I put to use this week:

Situation 1: _____

Skill used: _____

Child's reaction: _____

My reaction: _____

Situation 2: _____

Skill used: _____

Child's reaction: _____

My reaction: _____

3. Some notes that I wrote:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____



A Quick Reminder....

How to Get Cooperation from Children

1. **T**ell or Describe. Describe what you see, or describe the problem.
“There’s a wet towel on the bed.”
2. **W**rite a note. (above towel rack)

PLEASE PUT ME BACK SO I CAN DRY.
Thanks!
Your Towel
3. **I**nformation to be given.
“The towel is getting my blanket wet.”
4. **S**ay it with a word.
“The Towel.”
5. **T**alk about your feelings.
“I don’t like sleeping in a wet bed.”

Case Studies

Case Study1

The attitude that children thrive upon is the one that is communicated by the parent:-

Parent: “You’re basically a lovable, capable person. Right now there’s a problem that needs attention. Once you’re aware of it, you’ll probably respond responsibly.”

The attitude that defeats children is one that communicates to the child:-

Parent: “You’re basically irritating and inept. You’re always doing something wrong, and this latest incident is one more proof of your wrongness.”

A parent’s look of disgust or tone of contempt can hurt deeply. But if in addition, a child is subjected to words like “stupid”... “careless”... “irresponsible”... “you’ll never learn,” he’s doubly wounded. Somehow words have a way of lingering long and poisonously. The worst part is that children sometimes pull out these words at a later date and use them as weapons against themselves.

Lesson: “How” you say something to a child is as important as “what” you say. The attitude behind your words is as important as the words themselves.

Case Study 2

The word “please” is common amenity- a way of taking the sting out of the otherwise crude commands i.e. use: “Please pass the salt” or “Please hold the door,” as against “pass the salt” or “hold the door.” We say “please” to our children to model a socially acceptable way to make a small request.



But “please” lends itself best to our more relaxed moments. When we’re really upset, a gentle please can lead to trouble.

Consider the following dialogue:-

Mother: (*trying to be nice*) Please don’t jump on the sofa.

Child: (*continues jumping*)

Mother: (*louder*) Please don’t do that!

Child: (*jumps again*)

Mother: (*suddenly slaps child hard*) I said “Please,” didn’t I?

What happened? Why did mother go from politeness to violence in a few seconds? The fact is that when you’ve extended yourself and have been ignored, anger follows swiftly. You tend to think, “How dare the kid defy me after I’ve been so nice? I’ll show him! Wham!

Lesson: Use “Please” for requesting small favors. But when you want something done immediately, it’s a good idea to speak forcefully rather than to plead.

A loud, firm, “Sofas are not for jumping on!” would probably stop the jumping a lot sooner. (If youngster persists, he can always be removed –swiftly, with sternly repeated, “Sofas are not for jumping on!”)

Case Study 3

Often what makes us repeat ourselves is a child who acts as if he hasn’t heard us. When you are tempted to remind the child about something for second or third time, stop yourself. Instead find out from him if you’ve been heard. For example:-

Mother: Rahul, we’re leaving in five minutes.

(*Rahul doesn’t answer and continues to read the comics*)

Mother: Would you tell me what I just said?

Rahul: You said were leaving in five minutes.

Mother: Okay, now that I know you know, I won’t mention again.

Lesson: Don’t unnecessarily repeat, instead find out from the child if you have been heard.

Case Study 4

Parent: The milk spilled. We need a sponge.

Parent: The jar broke. We need a broom.

Parent: These pajamas are torn. We need a needle and thread.

You might want to try each of the above statements on yourself, only this time start each sentence with a “you.” For example, “You spilled the milk...You broke the jar...You tore your pajamas...” Notice the difference? Many people claim the “you” makes them feel accused and then defensive. When we describe the event (instead of talking about what “you did”), we seem to make it easier for the child to hear what the problem is and deal with it.

For example:-

Father is furious when his two young sons came to dinner covered with green water color paint, but is determined not to lose temper and scream at them:-

Father: I see two boys with green paint on their hands and faces!

(*Children looked at each other, and ran into the bathroom to wash up*)



Father: *(A few minutes later walks into the bathroom ready to scream again, seeing tiles covered with paint)* I see green paint on the bathroom walls!

Older Child: *(runs to get a rag)* To the rescue!

Older Child: *(five minutes later)* Come here Dad, have a look!

Father: *(sticking with the description)* I see someone helpful clean all the green paint off the bathroom walls.

Younger Child: And now I'm going to clean off the sink.

Lesson: Describe what you see or describe the problem. The best part of using descriptive language is that it takes out the finger pointing and accusation, and helps everyone focus on what needs to be done.

Caution:

It is possible to use this skill in a way that can be irritating. For example one father told that he was standing near the front door on a cold day and said to his son who had just entered, "The door is open. The boy countered with "So why don't you close it."

The descriptive statements work best when the child feels that his help is genuinely needed. In this example boy experienced his father descriptive statement as, "I'm trying to get you to do the right thing-hint, hint"

Case Study 5

Example 1:

Manish came home from his school meet and was wearing his uniform. He started to play in the garden. Mother yelled at him three or four times to wear a pair of slacks instead. He kept saying, "Why?" mother kept saying, "You'll rip your uniform." Finally mother said, "Slacks are for playing in the garden, uniforms are for wearing to school." To her amazement, he stopped what he was doing, and immediately went to change.

Example 2:

A father and his newly adopted five-year-old Chinese son Kim were walking down the block to visit a neighbor and return his ladder. As they were about to ring the bell:-

Neighboring Kids: *(who were playing in the street pointed to Kim)* He's a Chink! He's a Chink!
(Kim looked confused and upset, even though he didn't know what the words mean)

Father: *(thought to himself, they haven't even got the right country, the little stinkers ...I'd like to give them a firing and call their parents, but then they'd wind up taking it out on Kim. But for better or worse, this is his neighborhood, and he's got to find a way to live in it. So he walked to kids and very quietly said,)* Name calling can hurt feelings.

(Kids seemed taken aback, as they might have thought that they were going to be yelled at. Father went inside neighbor's house though not insisting Kim come in. Five minutes later he looks out the window and sees Kim playing with other Kids.)

What we like about giving information is that in a sense you're giving the child a gift he can use forever. For the rest of his life he needs to know that "milk turns sour when it's not refrigerated," that "open cuts need to be kept clean," that "fruit needs to be washed before eating," that "cookies gets stale when the box is left open," and so on. Skill of giving information isn't hard, what's hard is leaving off the insult at



the end, such as “Dirty clothes belong in the laundry basket. You’ll never learn, will you?”

We also like giving children information because the child seems to experience it as an act of confidence in him. He says to himself, “Grownups trust me to act responsibly once I have the facts.”

Lesson: Give information emphasizing what is right.

Caution:

Refrain from giving the child information he already knows. For example, if you were to tell a ten-year-old, “Milk turns sour when it’s not refrigerated,” he might conclude either that you think he’s stupid or that you’re being sarcastic.

Case Study 6

Children are not fragile. They are perfectly capable of dealing with statements like:-

“This isn’t a good time for me to look at your composition. I’m tensed and distracted. After dinner I’ll be able to give it the attention it deserves.”

“It’s a good idea to steer clear of me for the next little while. I’m feeling irritable and it has nothing to do with you.”

Most parents are relieved to discover that it can be helpful to share their feelings with their children, and that it’s not necessary to be eternally patient.

Example:

Mother raising two young children used to be upset with herself because she often had no patience with them. Finally she decided to try to be more accepting of her feelings, and let her children know about them-in terms they could understand.

Mother: I have as much patience as a watermelon now.

Mother: *(little later)* Well, right now I have as much patience as a grapefruit.

Mother: *(still later)* It’s about the size of a pea now. I think we ought to quit before it shrivels.

(Children took her seriously and stopped unnecessarily troubling her)

Later one evening:

Older Child: Mom, what size is your patience now? Could you read us a story tonight?

Lesson: Describe your honest feelings to children, they are not fragile, they are capable of handling your feelings.

Caution:

Some children are very sensitive to their parents’ disapproval. For them strong statements like “I am angry” or “That makes me furious,” are more than they can bear. In retaliation they’ll belligerently answer, “Well, then I’m angry at you too!” For those children it’s best just to state your expectations. For example, instead of, “I am angry at you for pulling the cat’s tail” it would be more helpful to say, “I expect you to be kind to animals.”

Case Study 7

Most children love receiving notes— both those who can read and those who can’t. Little one’s are usually thrilled to receive a printed message from their parents. It encourages them to write or draw notes back to their parents.



Older children also like receiving notes. A group of teenagers told that a note can make you feel good as if you are getting a letter from a friend. They were touched that their parents cared enough to take the time and trouble to write them.

Parents report that they, too, like using notes. They say it's quick, easy way to get through to a child and one that usually leaves a pleasant aftertaste.

Example 1:

A mother when she comes to the kitchen trying to prepare dinner finds the kids running back and forth between the refrigerator and the bread box. By the time the food is on the table to be served, they have no appetite left.

So the mother put up this notice outside the kitchen door:

Kitchen Closed
Until Dinner

A four year old child immediately wanted to know what it said. The mother explained each word. He was so respectful of that note, he wouldn't even put his foot in the kitchen. He just played with his sister outside the door until mother took the note down and called them in.

Example 3:

A father wrote a note to his son:

Amar,
I'm boiling!!!
My new CD was taken without my permission and now it's full of scratches and doesn't play anymore.
Mom Dad

A little later the father received this note back from his son:

Dear Dad,
I'm really sorry. I'll buy you another one this Saturday and whatever it costs, you can take it out of my pocket money.
Amar

Lesson: Express your requests by writing a note.



How to punish without punishing ?



Chapter 3

How to Punish Without Punishing?

In order to understand more deeply what happens between people when one person punishes another, please read the following two scenes and answer the questions that follow them:-

Scene One

Mother to her son while shopping in a Food Mart:

- “Stop running up and down the aisles.”
- “I want you to hold on to Mothers wagon while we shop.”
- “Why are you touching everything?”
- “I said, “Hold on to the wagon!”
- “Put those bananas back... No, we are not buying them, we have plenty at home.”
- “Stop squeezing the tomatoes! ... I’m warning you, if you don’t hold on to this cart, you are going to be sorry... get your hand out of there, will you?”
- “I’ll pick out the ice cream.”
- “You are running again. Do you want to fall?”
- “Ok, that does it! Do you know you nearly knocked over that old lady?”
- “You are going to be punished. You are not going to have a single spoonful of this ice cream I bought for tonight. May be that will teach you not to behave like a wild animal!”

Scene Two

Father: Vikas, were you using my cell phone?

Vikas: No.

Father: Are you sure?

Vikas: I swear I never touched it!

Father: Well then how come I found it lying outside, fully wet, next to the cricket bat you and your friend were plating with?

Vikas: Oh yeah! We were using it last week and then it started to rain, so we went inside, and I guess I forgot.

Father: So you lied!

Vikas: I didn’t lie, I really forgot.

Father: Yeah, the way you forgot my iPod last week and my pen the week before!

Vikas: Dad, I didn’t mean to. Sometimes I just forget.

Father: Well, maybe this will help you remember. Not only are you never going to get a chance to use my things again; but for lying to me on top of it, you will stay home when we all go to the dinner tomorrow.

Questions:

1. What motivated the parents in the scene to punish their children?

Scene I



Scene II

2. What do you think the feelings might be of the children who were punished?

Scene I

Scene II

Why is Punishment Used as a Tool?

Why do most parents punish their children? Some parents have shared...

1. If you don't punish them, kids will try to get away with murder.
2. Sometimes I get so frustrated, I don't know what else to do.
3. How will my children learn that what they did was wrong and not to do it again if I don't punish them?
4. I punish my son because it's the only thing that he understands.
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

What were your feelings as children when your parents punished you? Some parents have shared...

1. I used to hate my mother. I would think, she such a big problem, and then I would feel so guilty.
2. I used to think, my father is right. I am bad. I deserve to be punished.
3. I used to fantasize that I would get very sick and then they would be sorry for what they did to me.
4. I remember thinking, they are so mean. I will fix them. I will do it again, only next time I won't get caught.
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____



To Punish or Not to Punish?

A. IF ONE DOESN'T PUNISH, Parents' concern...

1. If I give up punishment, won't I be putting my children in the driver's seat?
2. I am afraid of losing my final method of control and leaving myself powerless.

B. IF ONE DOES PUNISH, Children's concern...

The more parents talked the more aware they become that punishment could lead to feelings of:-

1. hatred,
2. revenge,
3. defiance,
4. guilt,
5. unworthiness and
6. self pity.

C. At what point is it right to punish a child who ignores or defies you? Shouldn't there be consequences for a child who misbehaves?

-A child should experience the consequences of his misbehavior, but not punishment. In a caring relationship there is no room for punishment.

D. But suppose a child continues to disobey you. Isn't it all right to punish him then?

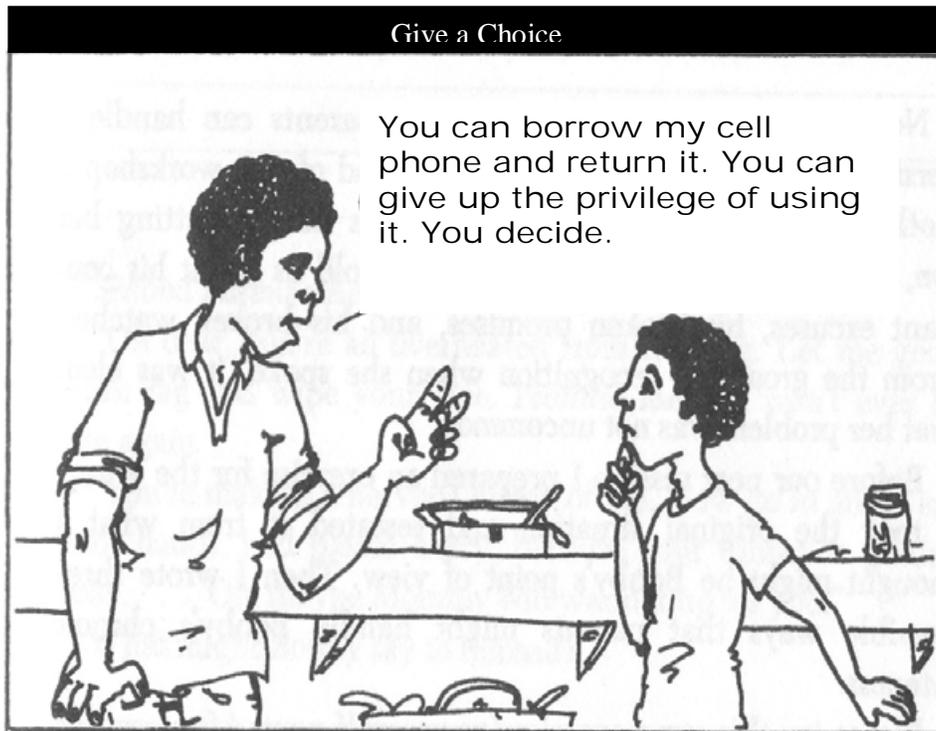
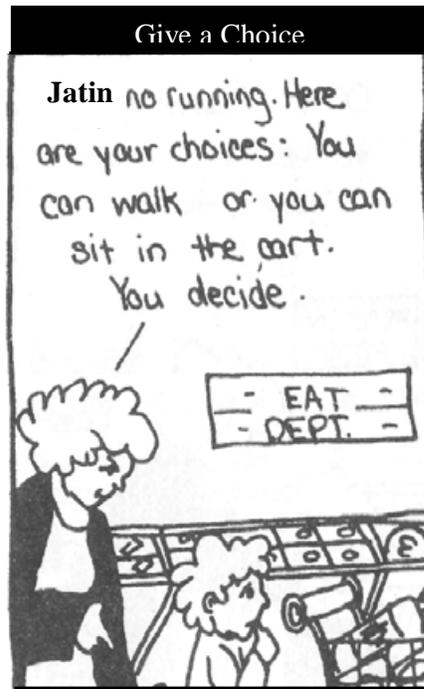
1. The problem with punishment is that it doesn't work.
2. It is a distraction. Instead of the child feeling sorry for what he has done and thinking about how he can make amends, he becomes preoccupied with revenge fantasies.
3. In other words, by punishing a child, we actually deprive him of the very important inner process of facing his own misbehavior and rectify it.

Tips for Alternatives to Punishment – GAS PEST

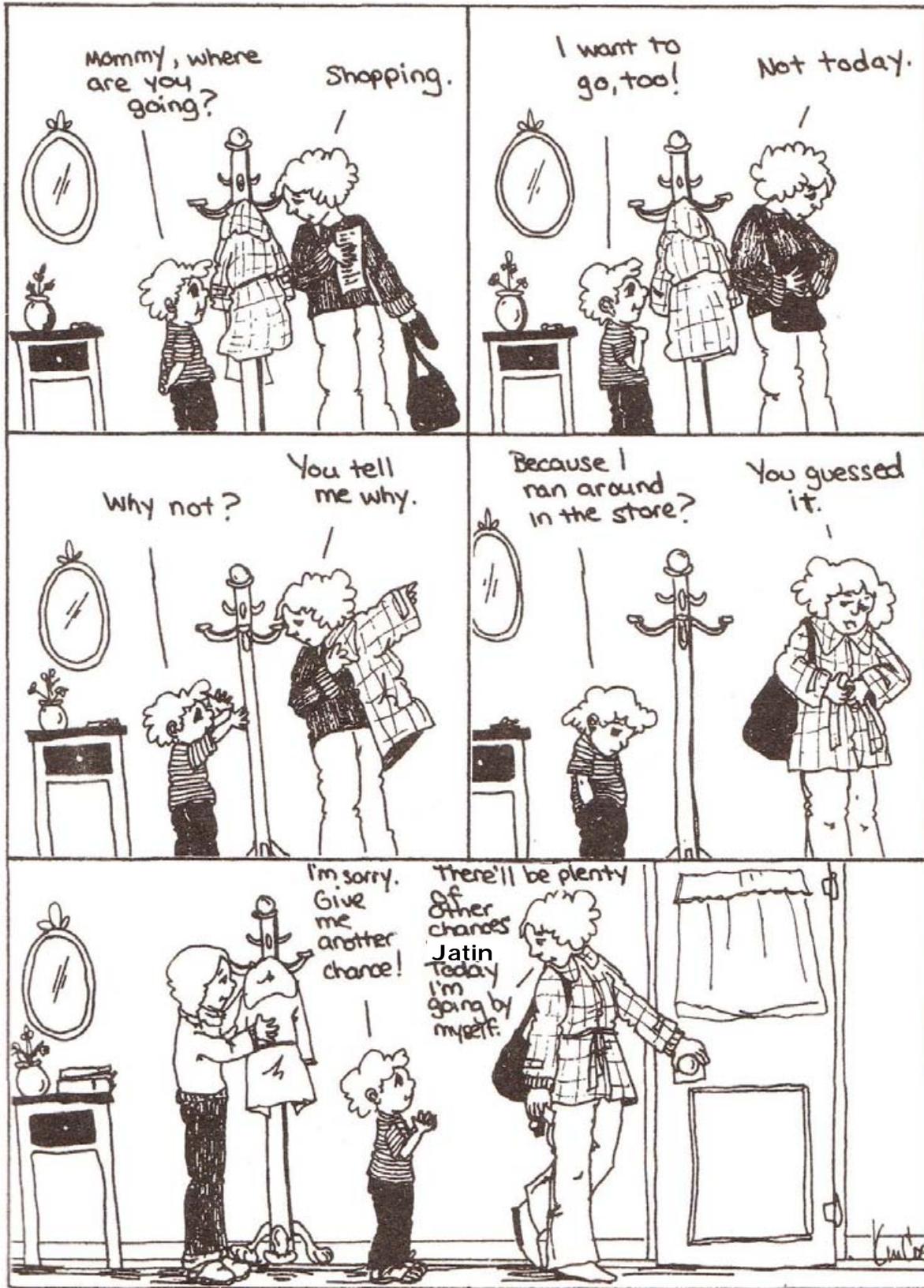
1. **G**ive a choice.
2. **A**llow the child to experience the consequences of his misbehavior.
3. **S**how the child how to make amends.
4. **P**oint out a way to be helpful.
5. **E**xpress strong disapproval (without attacking character).
6. **S**tate your expectations.
7. **T**ake action.



1. Give a choice.



2. Allow the child to experience the consequences of his misbehavior.

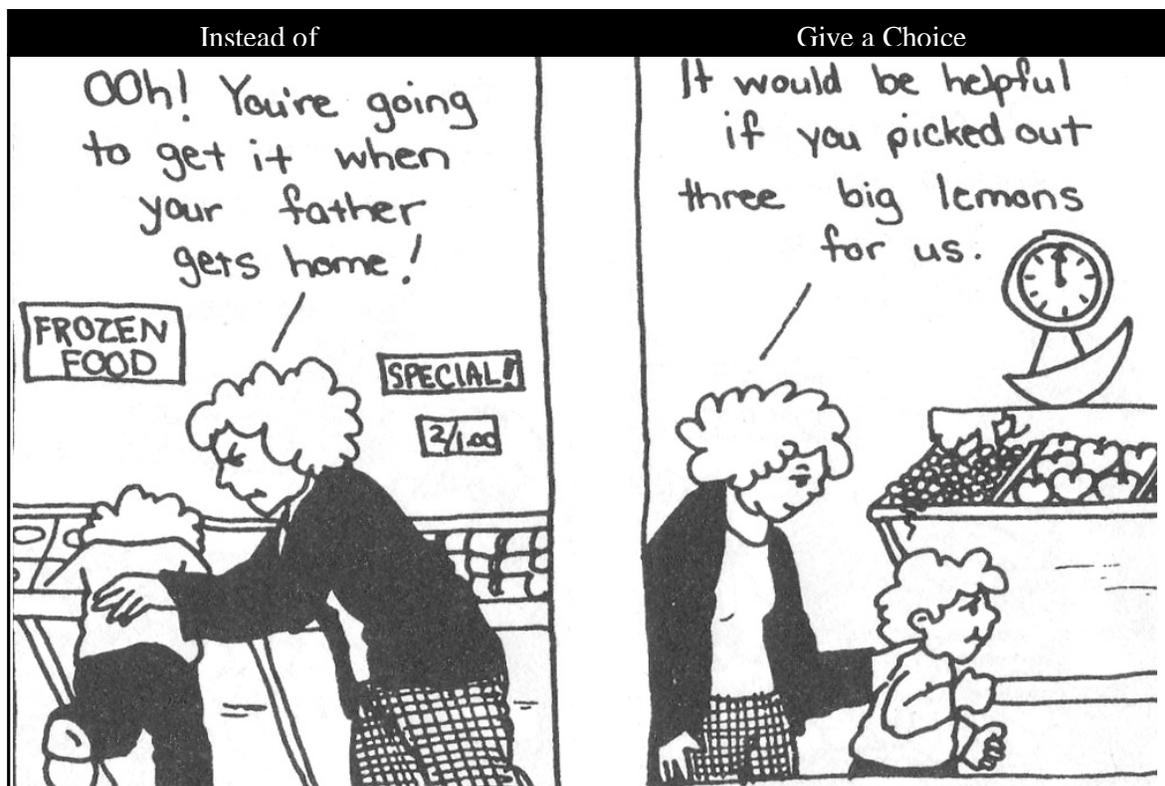


3. Show the child how to make amends.



For many children any of these approaches would be enough to encourage them to act more responsibly.

4. Point out a way to be helpful.



5. **E**xpress strong disapproval (without attacking character).



6. **S**tate your expectations.



7. **Take action.**



But suppose he behaves so badly that mother is forced to leave the store. What then? On the following day, without lecturing or moralizing, she can let him experience the consequences of his misbehavior



If he still continues forgetting.



Resolving Complex / Recurring Problems

Suppose you really have tried everything, and the problem goes on and on. What can we do when there seems to be nothing left to do but punish?

When problem persists, we can usually assume that it is more complex than it originally appeared. For a complex problem, a more complex skill is needed. Parent educators, labor negotiators, marriage counselors have worked out some excellent detailed methods for resolving conflicts.

Step I. **Y**our Way: Talk about child's feelings and needs

Step II. **M**y Way: Talk about your feelings and needs.

Step III. **H**ighway: Brainstorm together to find a mutually agreeable solution.

Step IV. **A**ction way:

- Write down all ideas— without evaluating.
- Decide which suggestions you like, which you don't like, and which you plan to follow through.

Step I. **Y**our Way: Talk about child's feelings and needs



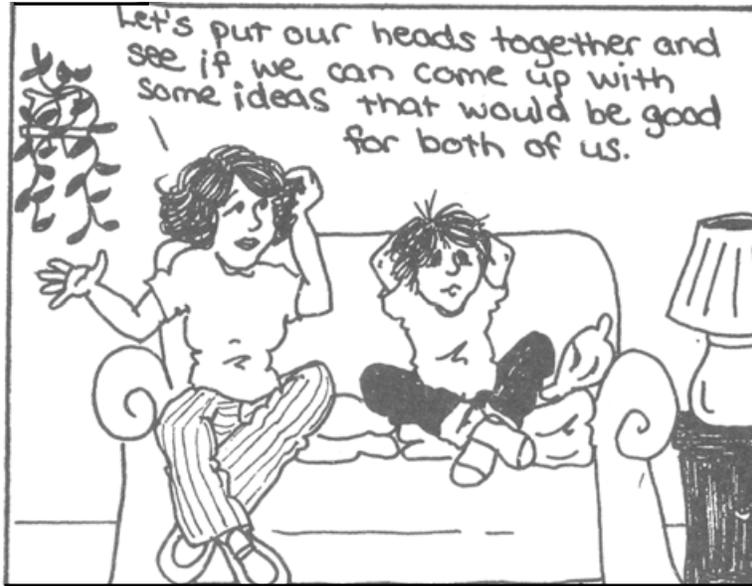
Step II. **M**y Way: Talk about your feelings and needs.



..



Step III. Highway: Brainstorm together to find a mutually agreeable solution.



Step IV. Action way:

- a. Write down all ideas— without evaluating.



- b. Decide which suggestions you like, which you don't like, and which you plan to follow through.**



Does learning the separate steps sound too hard?

The hardest part in the problem solving approach is not the learning of the separate steps, with a little study that can be accomplished, but the hardest part is the shift we have to make in the attitude. We have to stop thinking of the child as the “problem” that needs correction. We have to give up the idea that because we are adults we always have the right answer. We have to stop worrying that if we are not tough enough, the child will take advantage of us.

It requires a great act of faith to believe that if we take the time to sit down and share our real feelings with the younger person and listen to his feeling together we will come up with solutions that will be right for both of us.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE BUILT INTO THIS APPROACH: It says “when there is a conflict between us, we no longer have to mobilize our forces against each other, and worry about who will emerge victorious and who will go down in defeat. Instead we can put our energy into searching for the kind of solutions that respect both our needs as individuals. We are teaching our children that they needn't be our victims or our enemies. We give them the tools that will enable them to be active participants in solving the problems that confront them – now, while they are at home, and in the difficult, complex world that awaits them.



Assignment

1. This coming week, use an alternative to punishment. What alternative did you use? What was your child's reaction?

2. Think of a problem that comes up regularly in your home that might be eased by the problem-solving approach.

Cautions about Each Step of Problem-Solving Process

Before you begin, ask yourself, "Am I still seething with emotion or am I calm enough now even to begin this whole process?" (You can't problem-solve when you're boiling). Then check out your child's mood. "Is this a good time for you to talk?" If she says "yes" then:

1. **Y***our Way*: Talk about the child's feeling. ("Imagine you must be feeling...")
Don't rush this part. Let your attitude be "I'm really trying to get clear on how *you* feel about all this." Only when the child feels heard and understood will she be able to consider your feelings.
2. **M***y Way*: *Talk about your feelings.* ("Here's how I feel about it.")
Keep this part short and clear. It's hard for a child to listen to a parent who goes on and on about his worry, his anger or his resentment.
3. **H***ighway*: *Invite the child to work on finding a mutually acceptable solution.*
If possible, let the child come up with the first few ideas. The crucial point here is to refrain from evaluating or commenting on any of those ideas. The instant you say, "Well, that's not good," the whole process ends and you have undone all your work. All ideas should be welcomed. Very often the most unlikely ones can lead to some fine, workable solutions. The key sentence is "We're writing down all our ideas." It's not essential to write, but somehow putting each idea in writing gives great dignity to each contribution. (One child was overheard saying, "My mother is so smart. She writes down all my ideas.")
4. **A***ction way*: *Decide which ideas you like, which you don't, and which ideas you want to put into action.*



Watch out for “put down statements (“That’s a dumb idea”). Instead describe your personal reactions: “I wouldn’t be comfortable with that because...” or “That sounds like something I could do.”

5. *Follow through.*

The danger here is getting so carried away with your good feelings at having come up with a workable solution that you don’t bother to make a specific plan to follow through. It’s important to add,

“What steps do we have to take to get this plan into motion?”

“Who’ll be responsible for that?”

“By when shall we have it done?”

6. *Don’t permit the child to blame or accuse you at any point.*

CHILD: Yeah, but that wouldn’t work because you always... You never...

It’s important that the parent be firm when this happens.

PARENT: No accusations or talk about the past. What we’re trying to do now is to focus on a solution for the future!

A Quick Reminder....

Instead of Punishment

1. **G**ive a choice.
“You can borrow my cell phone and return it, or you can give up the privilege of using them. You decide.”
2. **A**llow the child to experience the consequences of his misbehavior.
3. **S**how the child how to make amends.
“What this saw needs now is a little steel wool and a lot of elbow grease.”
4. **P**oint out a way to be helpful.
“It would be helpful if you picked out three big lemons for us.”
5. **E**xpress strong disapproval (without attacking character).
“I don’t like what’s going on! It’s disturbing to shoppers when children run in the aisles.”
6. **S**tate your expectations.
“I expect my tools to be returned after they’ve been borrowed.”
7. **T**ake action.
Child: Why is the tool box locked?
Father: You tell me why.
8. **P**roblem-Solve
“What can we work out so that you can use my tools when you need them, and so that I’ll be sure they’re there when I need them?”



Case Studies

Case Study 1

Sometimes parents in order to make a small child (who doesn't speak) learn, slap his little hand when he does something wrong. Just because children aren't talking doesn't mean they aren't listening or understanding. Little children are learning every minute of every day. The question is, what are they learning? The parent has a choice here. She can repeatedly slap child's hand or treat him as a dignified small human being. How? By giving him information he can use now and for the rest of his life.

Small Child: (*tries to lick a knife*)

Mother: Knives are not for licking. You can lick this spoon if you like.

Small Child: (*fiddles with china dog*)

Mother: This china dog can break. Your stuffed dog won't break.

Lesson: Repeated information conveys a far different message from repeated slaps. Repeatedly slapping child's hand might teach him that the only way for him to learn what not to do is to be slapped.

Case Study 2

Ashish: (teenager) Dad, can you lend me your navy blue sweater, it'll look "Neat" with my new jeans!

Father: Okay, but be careful.

A week later,

(Ashish forgets to return the sweater. Father finds sweater lying under a pile of dirty laundry on the floor of Ashish's room. Moreover, the back of sweater was covered with chalk and the front spattered with something that looked like spaghetti sauce.)

Father's Reaction: I was so mad that I swear if he had come in at that moment, I would have told him that he could forget about going to Museum with me on Sunday. I'd give his ticket to someone else. Anyway when I saw him later I had calmed down a little, but I still bawled him out.

Father: (*very unhappy*) Ashish I saw my sweater in your room under pile of dirty laundry!

Ashish: I am sorry dad.

Father: Problem is that this isn't the first time!

A month later,

Ashish: Dad, can you lend me your plaid shirt for my school field trip?

Father: Look, before I lend anything again, I need some reassurance— in writing – that my shirt will be returned in the same condition in which it was borrowed.

Same night Ashish writes a note to his father:

Dear Dad,

If you let me borrow your shirt, I'll do everything I can to keep it clean.

I won't lean against the blackboard. I won't put my ball point pen in the pocket. And when I eat lunch I'll cover myself with paper napkins.

Love,
Ashish



Father's reaction:

Well, I was very impressed with the note. I figured that if he took the trouble to write it, he'd probably take the trouble to do what he said. The shirt was returned to me the next night on a hanger, and it was clean!

Punishment and Natural Consequences: We see punishment as the parent deliberately depriving a child for a set period of time or inflicting pain upon him, in order to teach child a lesson. Consequences on the other hand, come about as a natural result of child's behavior.

One natural consequence of returning borrowed property in damaged condition is owner's displeasure. Another natural consequence is the owner's reluctance to lend you anything. It's also possible that the owner might change his mind if he gets some concrete evidence that it won't happen again. But the responsibility to change is clearly the borrower's. The owner doesn't have to do anything to teach him lesson.

Lesson: It's lot easier to learn from hard realities of people's real reaction than from a person who decides to punish you "for your own good."

Case Study 3

Father found a pile of orange peels and pits on the sofa. When he asked his children "Who did it?" each one pointed to the other.

The question "Who did it?" usually leads to an automatic "Not me," which in turn lead to "Well one of you must be lying." The more we try to get at the truth, the more loudly the children protest their innocence. When we see something that angers us, it's more helpful to express that anger than to locate the culprit and punish him.

Father: I get furious when I see food on our sofa! Orange peels can stain it permanently.

Younger Son: But I didn't do it.

Older Son: He made me.

Younger Son: The dog did it.

Older Son: It was the baby.

Father: I'm not interested in knowing who did it. I'm not interested in blaming anyone for what happened in past. I am interested in seeing improvement in the future! Now I'd like both of you to help clear the sofa of all the peels and pits.

Lesson: When we see something that angers us, it's more helpful to express that anger than to locate the culprit and punish him. By not blaming or punishing, we free the children to focus on taking responsibility, rather than on taking revenge.

Case Study 4

Mother gets a call from her son's Math teacher regarding his bad performance in class. Teacher tells that her son was falling behind his work, that he was disruptive influence in class, that he still didn't know his times tables, and that maybe what he needed was more "discipline" at home.

Mother's reaction: "Karan should be punished. He'll watch no television at all until he learns those multiplication tables and starts to behave himself in class."

Luckily mother had an hour to cool off in before Karan came home from school. When Karan came home, she had following conversation:



Mother: Your Math teacher, Mrs Tyagi called today and sounded very upset.

Karan: Oh, she's always upset about something.

Mother: I consider it very serious matter when I get a call from the school. She said you were disruptive in class and you didn't know your times tables.

Karan: Well, Rohit keeps hitting me on the head with his notebook. So I hit him back with mine.

Mother: You feel you have to retaliate?

Karan: What's retaliate?

Mother: Get back at him.

Karan: That's right. And sometime he writes me a note and cracks me up. And then he kicks my chair until I answer him.

Mother: No wonder no work gets done.

Karan: I know my tables up to six. I just don't know my sevens and eights.

Mother: Hmm...Karan, do you think it would help your concentration in class if you and Rohit didn't sit near each other?

Karan: I dunno...May be...I could get sevens and eights if I studied.

Mother: I feel your teacher should know that. Suppose we write her a letter. Okay with you? (*Karan nodded.*)

"Dear Mrs Tyagi,

I discussed our phone conversation with Karan and he says" Karan what shall I tell her?

Karan: Tell her to change my seat away from Rohit.

Mother: (*writing*) "He says he would like his seat to be changed so he doesn't sit so close to Rohit." Is that right?

Karan: Yeah.

Mother: Anything else?

Karan: (*long pause*) Tell her I'll write out my seven and eight times table and say it out loud to myself.

Mother: (*writing*) "He also plans to write out his seven and eight times table and drill himself." Anything else.

Karan: No.

Mother: I'll close by saying, "Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention."

Both signed the letter, and Karan brought it to the school next day. When Karan came home the first thing he told was that Mrs Tyagi had changed his seat and was "nice to him today."

Lesson: Be accepting and tuned in to your child, listen for his information and feelings. Let him elucidate and clarify his position, before you loose your temperament.

Case Study 5

Some children refuse to sit down and problem solve. For these youngsters, a note, based upon the same principle, can be an effective substitute.

Dear Varun:

I'd like your ideas on solving the problem of..... You probably (want, need, feel,....)

I (want, need, feel....)

Please let me know of any solutions you can think of that we might both agree upon.

Love,
Dad.



Lesson: Write note if child is uncomfortable with the other approach for problem solve.

Case study 6

Gaurav: (*age two*) Mommy, I go up in cradle.

Mommy: Sweetheart, you are much too big for that cradle.

Gaurav: Yes, I go up in cradle. (*begins to climb into it*)

Mommy: (restraining him) Gaurav, Mommy said you're too big. The cradle might break if I put you in it.

Gaurav: *Please* Mommy! I go up in cradle—NOW! (*begins to whine*)

Mommy: I said, NO!!

As Gaurav's whining turned into a minor tantrum, she decided to try problem-solving with him.

Mommy: Sweetie, I can see how much you want to get into the cradle – right now. It probably looks like lots of fun to swing in. I'd like to swing in it, too. The problem is that it won't hold me and it won't hold you. We're too big.

Gaurav: Mommy too big—just like Gaurav (Gaurav leaves the room and comes back with Goover, his stuffed bear, and puts him in the cradle. He begins to rock the basket back and forth.)

Gaurav: See, Mommy? Gaurav rocking Goover, okay?

Mommy: (Whew!) Goover is just the right size.

Lesson: Problem-solve approach not necessarily works for older children, it can work with children as young as two.

Case Study 7

Mother has to buy milk. Her three and a half year old daughter Nisha attends a 45 minutes morning pre-school. However, Nisha goes to pre-school only when her mother sits on bench outside within view. Mother doesn't have time after pre-school for shopping, so she has to do it during pre-school. She uses problem solving approach.

Mommy: I must go to shopping today while you're in pre-school. In the afternoon some guests are coming home, so I won't have time to shop.

(*Nisha starts crying*)

Mommy: I see you're sad. How can we solve this problem? Let's write this all down.

Nisha's eyes lit as Mommy writes:

Problem: Mommy has to buy milk. Mommy doesn't have time after pre-school, so she has to do it during pre-school.

Suggestions to solve problem:

(Mommy) 1. Go during school and run back.

(Nisha's) 2. Not buy milk.

(Nisha's) 3. Go after school.

(Mommy) 4. While Mommy is shopping, Nisha could sing, draw, and play.

(Mommy) 5. Nisha will stay at pre-school while Mommy is shopping.

(Nisha's) 6. Mommy only buys one thing and will run back fast.

(Nisha's) 7. Tomorrow we will buy gum together.

(Nisha's) 8. If Nisha wants to cry she will cry.



Mother reads the list and explains that if she didn't buy the milk Nisha and Daddy would be disappointed. So they crosses that off the list. She re-explains that she wouldn't have time to go after school— so that was crossed off too. Nisha seems content.

Next day, both walk to pre-school. Nisha hugs and kisses Mommy goodbye. She reminds Mommy to go to one store only, and then she sits down in the circle with the other children.

Mommy rushes to the store and returns in plenty of time to see Nisha happily engrossed in a game with her friends.

School let out:

Nisha: Did you go?

Mommy: I sure did. You must be proud of yourself – staying here by yourself.

(Nisha nods)

Wednesday morning:

Nisha: *(looking tense)* Is there pre-school today?

Mommy: *(expecting, "Are you staying?")* Yes.

Nisha: Oh Mommy...Well, if I want to cry, I'll cry. And if I don't want to cry, I won't!

Mommy: Let's write that down.

Mommy writes that down. Nisha further adds that she would sit next to a friend.

Nisha: Mommy, when you come back, come back fast. So fast that you fall down. Run!

Mommy brings her to pre-school. Nisha gives her a hug, a kiss and reminder to run and run.

Mommy returns 45 minutes later.

Mommy: You stayed by yourself!

Nisha: Yeah, I'm proud of myself!

Friday morning:

Nisha: Mom, is there pre-school today?

Mommy: Yes.

Nisha: Well, write this down: I'll sit next to a friend.

Problem resolved. Nisha goes to pre-school. Mommy shops!

Lesson: Despite great deal of endeavor, problem solving approach helps easily resolve the difficulty

Parents realization:

"Now that I look back on it, I realize that it took a great deal of effort to discipline myself to spend necessary time to sit with Nisha and work through our problems. I'm glad I did. Nisha is too!"

Case Study 8

Rinku (four) and Garima (two and a half) are outside. Rinku is riding Garima's tricycle and Garima wants to ride it.

Garima gets hysterical and Rinku refuses to get off.

Mother: I see you both have a problem. Garima, you want to ride your tricycle. Rinku, you want to ride Garima's tricycle and she doesn't want you to. I think you should try to find a solution to the problem that would be acceptable to both of you.



Rinku: (*thinks for a moment*): I think Garima should stand on the back of tricycle and hold on to my stomach while I ride.

Mother: This solution should be discussed with Garima not me.

Rinku then asks Garima and Garima agrees. They then both ride together!

The statement that seem to activate the children to take responsibility to resolve their own conflicts is, "Kids, this is a tough problem: but I have confidence that you two can put your heads together and come up with a solution that you can both agree to."

Lesson: Once children become accustomed to problem-solving, they are more able to work out their differences with their sisters and brothers. This is a big bonus for parents. Instead of having to step in, take sides, play judge, and come up with a solution, they restate the problem and put it right back where it belongs— in the lap of the children.



How to Correctly Praise your Child ?



Chapter 4

How to Correctly Praise Your child

It would seem logical that those children who grow up in families where their best is appreciated would be more likely to feel good about themselves, more likely to cope with the challenges of life, and more likely to set higher goals for themselves than those who don't.

If a child's self esteem is so important, then what can we as parents do to enhance it? Certainly all the principles and skills we've talked about so far can help a child see himself as a person of worth. Each time we show respect for his feelings, each time we offer him a chance to make a choice, or give him a chance to solve a problem, he grows in confidence and self esteem.

How else can we help our children build a positive and realistic self image? Surely praising them would seem to be another part of the answer. But praise can be tricky business. Sometimes the most well meant praise brings about unexpected reactions.

In the following exercise you will find the descriptions of four different hypothetical situations in which someone praises you. Please read each situation and jot down your reactions to the praise you received.

Situation 1: You have an unexpected guest for dinner, you heat some ready made snack and serve it to the guest. The guest says, "You are a great cook!"

Your inner reaction: _____

Situation 2: You just change out of your sweater and jeans into your new outfit to go to an important meeting. An acquaintance approaches you, looks you over and says, "You are always so beautifully dressed."

Your inner reaction: _____

Situation 3: You are taking an education course, after a lively class discussion in which you participate, another student comes up to you and says "You always have a brilliant mind."

Your inner reaction: _____

Situation 4: You have just started learning how to play tennis, and hard as you try you still aren't making any progress with your serve, the ball usually goes into the net or off the court. Today you are playing doubles with a new partner and your first serve lands where you hope it will. Your partner comments "Hey you have got a perfect serve."

Your inner reaction: _____



Situation 5: You just gave a dance performance in an auditorium. You realized that the performance was pathetic. Someone in the audience comes up to you and tells you, "Your performance was the best I have seen till now."

Your inner reaction: _____

Situation 6: When you arrive one morning to office, your assistant starts praising your every word and every activity, right from the way you drink water to the way you handle accounts expertly.

Your inner reaction: _____

Conclusion:

You have probably discovered for yourself, some of the built in problems of praise. Along with good feelings can come other reactions.

Choose your inner reaction for the above situations from below options:

- a. Praise can create anxiety and interfere with the activity. (I will never be able to hit the ball like that again, now I am really in tight situation.)
- b. Praise can make you doubt the praiser. (If she thinks I am good cook, she is either lying or knows nothing about good food.)
- c. Praise can lead to immediate denial. (Always beautifully dressed... you should have seen me an hour ago.)
- d. Praise can also be seen as manipulation. (What does this person want from me)
- e. Praise can force you to focus on your weaknesses. (Brilliant mind, are you kidding, I still can't add a column of figures.)
- f. Praise can be threatening. (But how will I perform at the next concert.)

Tips for Correctly Praising the Child

1. **D**escriptive Praise.
2. **S**umming Up in a Word.

1. Descriptive Praise

Helpful praise comes in two parts:-

1. Parent's action: The adult describes with appreciation what he or she sees or feels.
2. Child's reaction: The child after hearing the description is then able to praise himself.

Story 1

A four-year old child comes home from nursery school and shoves a page of penciled scribble under a father's nose.

Son: Is it good?

Father: Very good.

(Father then realizes that he got to describe in more detail.)

Father: I see you went circle, circle, circle,...dot, dot, dot,...Wiggle, wiggle, wiggle.....



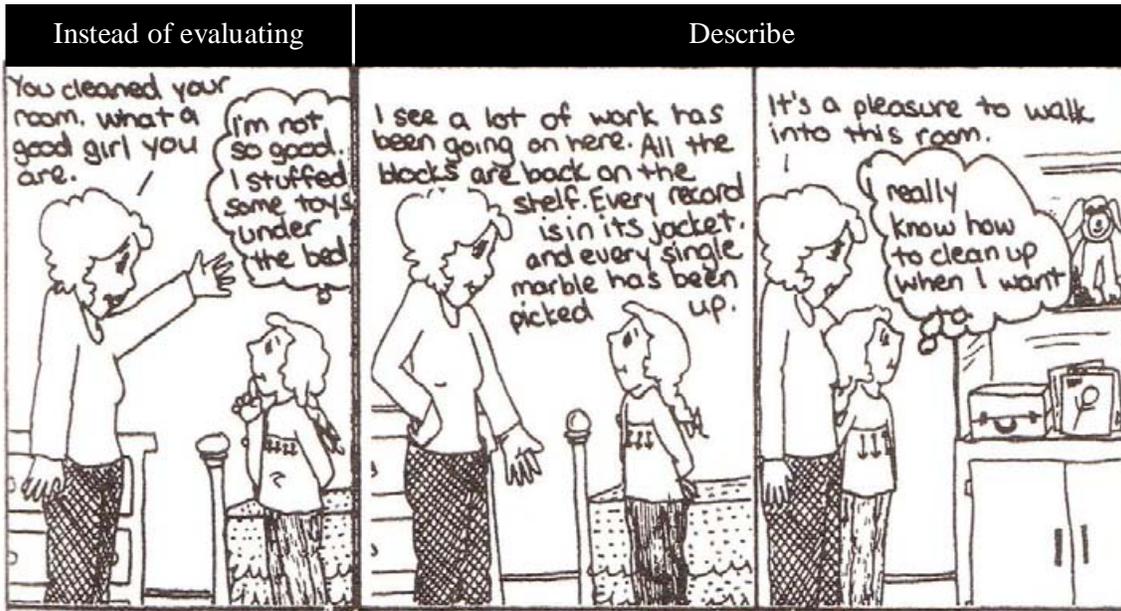
Son: (nodding enthusiastically) Yeah!

Father: How did you ever think to do this?

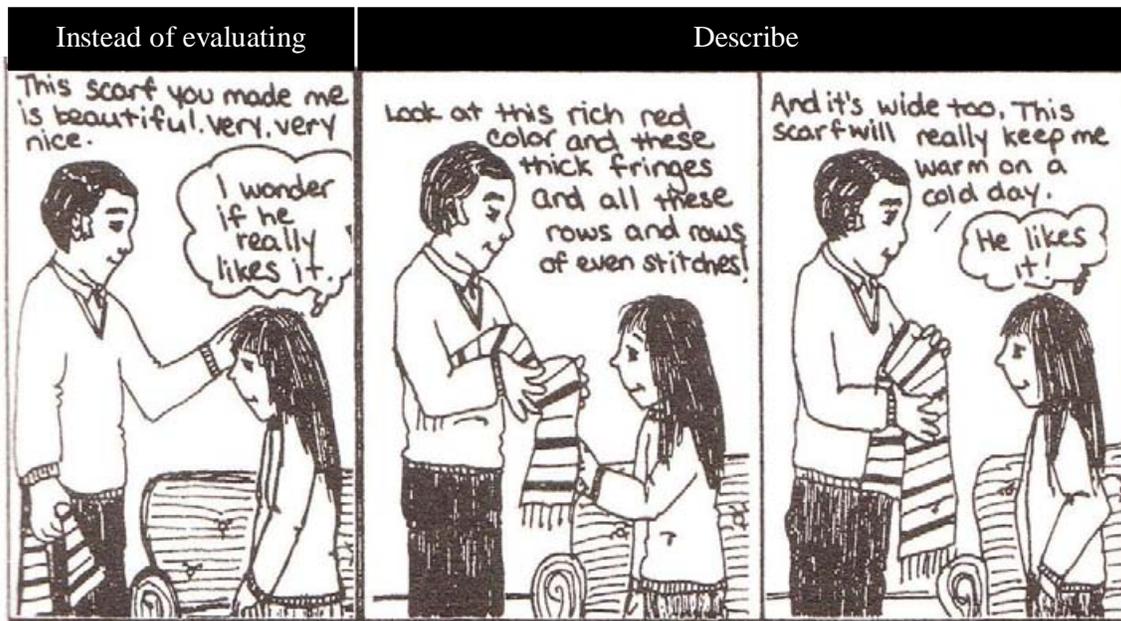
Son: (thinks for a while) Because I am an artist.

Father's reaction: I thought it's a remarkable process. The adult describes and child really does praise himself."

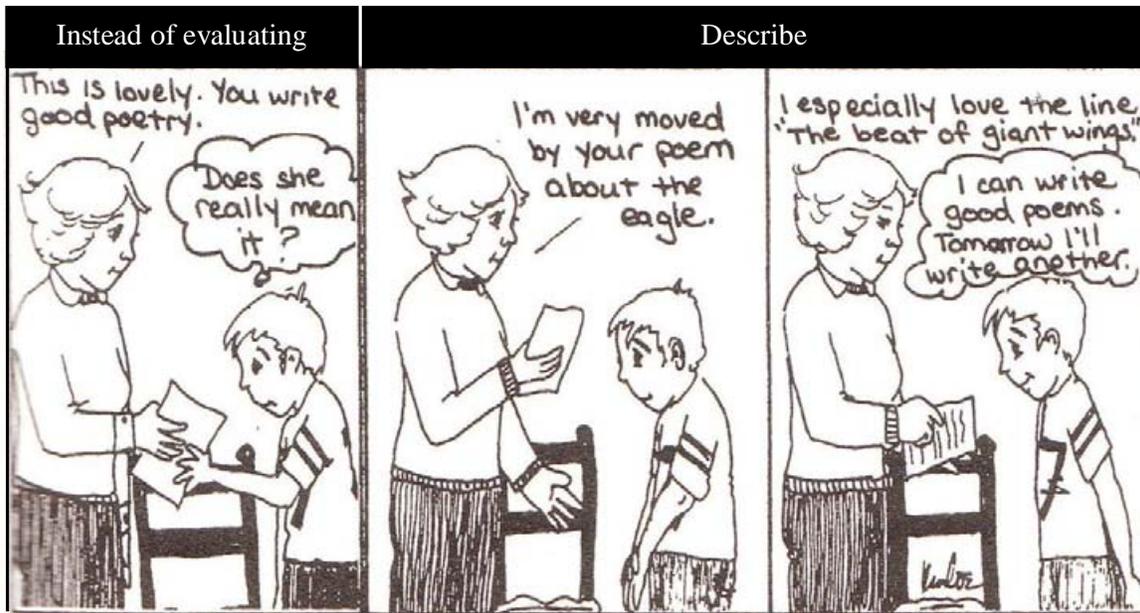
Story 2



Story 3



Story 4



Lesson: The adult describes and the child really does praise himself. As a result of such descriptive praise the children become more aware and appreciative of their own strengths.

Practicing Descriptive Praise

Example 1

Mother: (*instead of "Jyoti, you're terrific"*) You figured out that the can of corn on sale— the three for Rs 50 ones— are actually more expensive than the brands that aren't on sale. I'm impressed.

Jyoti: (*grinning*) I got "the smarts."

Example 2

Mother: (*instead of "Aditya, you're great"*) That was a complicated phone message you took from Mr Sharma. It was written so clearly, I knew exactly why the meeting was postponed, who I had to call, and what I had to tell them.

Aditya: Yeah, I'm pretty dependable kid.

Is developing the habit of descriptive praise easy?

Some parents confess that in the beginning they were dubious about this new method of praise. Even though it had worked for them once, the very thought of having to change to a descriptive style of praising irritated them. Why should we have to give up "Great...wonderful...terrific," which come so naturally, and find another way to express our honest enthusiasm. But there is no doubt about it. The children do become more aware and appreciative of their own strengths. This alone is an incentive for parents to continue making an effort. And it was an effort. It's lot easier to say "wonderful" about something, than to really look at it, and experience it and then describe it in detail.

The following exercise is meant to practice descriptive praise. Take time out to picture in your mind exactly what your child has done, then describe in detail what you see or what you feel.



Situation 1: A young child has just dressed herself for the first time, she stands in front of you hoping you will notice.

Praise unhelpfully: _____

Praise by describing in detail what you see or feel: _____

What might the child tell to herself? _____

Situation 2: You have been invited to see your child in a school play. He plays the part of king. After the show the child comes running to you and asks, "Was I good?"

Praise unhelpfully: _____

Praise by describing in detail what you see or feel: _____

What might the child tell to himself? _____

Situation 3: You noticed that your child's school work is improving in small ways. His compositions now have margins, he is been drilling himself on his vocabulary words until he knows them. His last report was finished one day ahead of time.

Praise unhelpfully: _____

Praise by describing in detail what you see or feel: _____

What might the child tell to himself? _____

Situation 4: You have been sick in bed for few days. Your child has drawn you a get well card decorated with balloons and hearts. She hands it to you and waits for your response.

Praise unhelpfully: _____

Praise by describing in detail what you see or feel: _____



What might the child tell to herself? _____

Find below some sample unhelpful praises that parents use in the above situations:

1. "You are a good boy!"
2. "You are a great actor."
3. "You are finally becoming an excellent student."
4. "You are so thoughtful."

Find below some sample praises describing the achievements of the children in the above situations:-

1. "I see that you put your shirt on with the tag in the back; you zipped your pants, you put on matching socks and you buckled your shoes. What a lot of different things you did!"
2. "You were such a royal king. You stood tall and straight and when you gave your big speech, your voice filled the auditorium."
3. "Seems to me that you are putting extra effort into your school work these days. I noticed your compositions have margins; your reports are done ahead of time and you have worked out a way to teach yourself vocabulary."
4. "I love these yellow balloons and red hearts. I feel better already just looking at them."

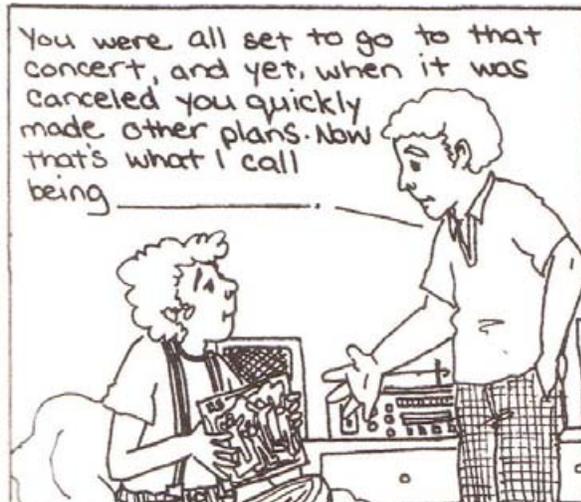
There is another way to praise that also uses description. The additional element here is that we add to the description one or two words that sum up the child's praiseworthy behaviour.

2. Summing Up in a Word





Complete the sentence in the above drawing by filling in the missing one-word descriptive praise.



Complete the sentence in the above drawing by filling in the missing one-word descriptive praise.

Complete the sentence in the above drawing by filling in the missing one-word descriptive praise.

Assignment

1. A quality I like about my child is:



2. Something he or she has done recently that I appreciated, but never mentioned is:

3. What could I say to show my appreciation to him (or her), using the skills of descriptive praise?

Cautions about Praise

1. *Make sure your praise is appropriate to your child's age and level of ability.*

When a young child is told with pleasure, "I see you're brushing your teeth every day," he experiences pride in his accomplishment. Were you to tell the same thing to a teenager, he might feel insulted.

2. *Avoid the kind of praise that hints at past weaknesses or past failures:*

- "Well, you finally played that piece of music the way it should be played!"
- "You look so nice today. What did you do to yourself?"
- "I never thought you'd pass that course—but you did!?"

It's always possible to rephrase your praise so that the focus is on child's present strength:

- "I really like the way you kept a strong, rhythmic beat going in that piece."
- "It's a pleasure to look at you."
- "I know you put in a lot of work to pass that course."

3. *Be aware that excessive enthusiasm can interfere with a child's desire to accomplish for herself.*

Sometimes parents' continual excitement or intense pleasure in their child's activity can be experienced by the child as pressure. A young person who gets daily doses of "You're such a gifted pianist! You should be playing at Auditorium," may think to herself, "They want it for me more than I want it for myself."

4. *Be prepared for a lot of repetition of the same activity when you describe what a child is doing appreciatively.*

If you don't want him to blow the whistle five more times, then refrain from saying, "You certainly know how to make a big noise with that whistle!" If you don't want her to climb to the top of the jungle gym,



don't tell her, "You really know how to use your climbing muscles." There's no doubt about it praise invites repetition and a great outpouring of effort. It's potent stuff. Use it selectively.

Additional Hints

1. *When child is upset, don't minimize his distress.*

("There's nothing to be upset about.") Instead, bring out into the open what you think he might be feeling.

"It can be frustrating to work on a project for so long and not have it come out that way you want!"

When his frustration is understood, a child tends to relax inside.

2. *It helps when a parent can be accepting of his child's mistakes and view them as an important part of the learning process.*

It can even be pointed out that a mistake can be a discovery. It can tell you something you never knew before.

"You found out that milk kept outside becomes sour."

3. *It also helps if parents can be accepting of their own mistakes.*

When parents "beat up" on themselves ("I forgot my key again. What is the matter with me? That was such a dumb thing to do! How could I be so stupid? I'll never learn."), children conclude that this is the proper way to treat themselves when *they* make mistakes.

Instead we should provide a more humane, solution-oriented model for our children. When we do something we wish we hadn't, let's seize the opportunity to say aloud to ourselves:

"Oh, heck, I wish I hadn't forgotten that key...It's the second time...What can I do to make sure it doesn't happen again...I know, I'll have a duplicate key made up and keep it in a secret place."

By being kind to ourselves, we teach our children to be kind to themselves.

A Quick Reminder....

How to correctly Praise your child

1. **D**escriptive Praise

a. Describe what you see

"I see a clean floor, a smooth bed, and books neatly lined up on the shelf."

b. Describe what you feel.

"It's a pleasure to walk into this room."

2. **S**umming Up in a Word

"You sorted out your pencils, crayons and pens, and put them in separate boxes. That's what I call organization."



Case Studies

Case Study 1

Naveen: (*jumping in excitement*) I made my bed for the first time today. Come have a look.

Mother: (*praising, despite noticing that the spread didn't cover the pillows and was dragging on the floor on one side and short on the other*): Wow, you got the spread to cover most of the bed!

Next Morning:

Naveen: See I got it to cover the pillow too. And I made the sides even!

Lesson: It's not always that you have to point what the child did wrong to make him learn. By telling child what they did right, can help him to improve on his own.

Case Study 2

A mother's story:

I used to operate on the reward system. Whenever I was worried that Monisha might not behave, I'd say, "If you're good, I'll buy you ice cream or a new toy or— whatever." Monisha would be good that one time, but then I had to promise her another reward for the next time.

Recently I've stopped saying, "If you're good, I'll..."

Instead I say, "Monisha, it would be helpful to me if..."

And when she does do something helpful, I try to describe it back to her.

For example, last weekend I told her that it would be helpful if she made her grandparents feel welcome when they visited. When they came on Sunday, she was terrific with them. After they left I told her, "Monisha, you made Granny and Pop so happy when they were here. You told them jokes, offered them some of your trick-or-treat candy, and you showed them your gum wrapper collection. That's what I call hospitality!" Monisha just glowed.

Lesson: With reward system child may feel good for the moment because she gets a reward, but by using descriptive praise child feels good about herself as a person.

Case Study 3

A few parents found that it is even more possible to use praise at the most unlikely times— when their children did something they shouldn't.

Rakesh lost her subway pass and feels miserable.

Mother: Come to think of it Rakesh, you've held on to your subway pass for the last three and a half terms of high school. That's a lot of days of being responsible.

Rakesh: I guess so. But still I'm not taking any more chances. When I get my new one, I'm keeping it in my wallet.

Lesson: Instead of scolding, the children get inspired by reminding them of their past praiseworthy behavior.

Case Study 4

Sagar is nine years old and has always been shy and lacking in confidence. He had a following conversation with his mother:



Sagar: Mom, I'm having problems with Mrs Garg .She's always picking on me and making remarks to class about me.

Mom: Oh.

Sagar: Yes, you know when I got my haircut she said, "Look class, we have a new boy in school."

Mom: Hmmm.

Sagar: And then when I wore my new checkered pants, she said, "Oh, look at Mr. Fancy Pants."

Mom: (*unable to resist*) Do you think you should have a talk with her?

Sagar: I already did. I asked her, "How come you always seem to be picking on me?" She said, "One more crack like that and I'll send you to the headmaster's office." Mommy, I felt so low, what can I do? If I go to the Headmaster and tell him, she'll really be on my back.

Mom: Hmmm.

Sagar: Well, maybe I'll stick it out. There are only thirty more days left.

Mom: That's true.

Sagar: No, I just can't stand it. I think you'd better go up to school with me.

Mom: Sagar, I think you're mature enough to handle this situation. I have great confidence in you. Chances are, you'll do the right thing. (*kiss and hug*)

The next day:

Sagar: Mom I fell so good about myself. I went to the Headmaster and he said I had courage to come to him, and he was glad that I was strong enough to, and he was glad I thought enough of him to share my problem with him. That's why he's there, you know!

Mom: You handled that difficult situation all by yourself!

Sagar: (*looking ten feet tall*) Yeah!

<p>Lesson: Descriptive praise generates courage in children and makes them face the challenges on their own.</p>

