



Positive Discipline Insights & Cheatsheets

By Alana Pace

This is Why Positive Discipline Matters

I'll be honest. When I first started looking into parenting without punishment, I was a bit skeptical. I wasn't convinced someone could effectively parent children without timeouts, lecturing, and other forms of 'power exertion.'

How would my kids know what not to do? How would they know who's in charge?

It seemed like a slippery slope from parenting with authority to parenting permissively.

Because of my background in psychology, I wanted to dig into research and determine what was the best approach. Here is some of what I found:

- A 50-year meta-analysis from the University of Michigan and the University of Austin Texas found that kids who were spanked were more likely to exhibit antisocial behaviour, aggression, mental health problems, and cognitive difficulties.
- In an analysis of 88 studies across 62 years, psychologist Elizabeth Thompson Gershoff found that there is a general consensus that the use of force when disciplining actually increases compliance temporarily.
- According to Dr Laura Markham, clinical psychologist, timeouts work. They use a fear of abandonment or love withdrawal to elicit obedience.

The problem is that increased compliance does not mean a child is learning to behave. What's happening is the child is learning to avoid punishment. And while that may sound like one in the same, it actually isn't.

Here's why...

In a study, Patterns of child-rearing, researchers found that children were the least likely to internalize their parents' values and ideals when 'power assertion' was used.

Specifically, children whose parents took away their toys, lost a privilege or forced to do something were less likely to show the desire to cooperate with their parents' rules.

And it makes sense...

If you take a moment to reflect on your own childhood and a time where you were grounded or scolded. Most likely when you chose the behaviour that got you punished you disregarded the prospect of being punished. And, when the punishment came, you felt resentful towards your parent or just wanted them to stop talking.

The four types of parenting and what they tell us about punishment

Developmental psychology has established four distinct styles of parenting and only one relies on punishment.

Authoritarian parenting (or strict parenting) uses lecturing, punishment, threats and shaming to get children to obey. It is a high discipline, low warmth style of parenting.

Neglectful parenting is ambivalent to the moral and emotional development of the child. The parent tends to turn a blind eye towards a child's behaviour whether it is difficult or favourable. It is low warmth, low discipline.

Permissive parenting avoids punishment and discipline. Parents who fall into this category on tend to avoid conflict because they don't want their child to cry or get upset. They see appeasing the child's desires as more practical than enforcing boundaries. This parenting style is high warmth, low discipline.

Authoritative parenting or positive parenting is the parenting style of parenting recommended by developmental psychologists as parents set and reinforce boundaries. They are responsive and kind. This parenting style is high discipline, high warmth.

Without punishment, kids still know who's in charge

Based on these findings, children don't need punishment to be well behaved. In fact, they're more likely to embody our values if we don't punish, but teach them instead.

But without punishment what's a parent to do...

The problem with getting rid of punishment when it's all you've known is that you may feel like your hands are tied. When I stopped using timeouts, there was a period I simply did not know what to do. Just like parenting with punishment, permissive parenting has some massive drawbacks.

This booklet is set up to empower you on your journey to becoming a more peaceful and positive parent.

Below, you will find three printable cheatsheets for:

- Executing positive discipline,
- Improving kids listening, and
- Staying calm in the heat of the moment.

For more detailed information on these printables, check out ParentingfromtheHeartBlog.com

Practical Positive Discipline for Every Day Parenting

Parenting from the Heart

Start by...

- Prioritizing connection. When kids feel connected to their parents they are more cooperative.
- Setting clear expectations ahead of time.
- Having clear rules and following through if need be.



If your child doesn't listen...

1

WAIT FOR COOPERATION -

I.E. DON'T DRIVE WITHOUT SEATBELTS, DON'T LEAVE FOR BIKE RIDE WITHOUT HELMETS, DON'T LEAVE FOR PARK UNTIL TOYS ARE CLEAN

2

MODEL CALMNESS AND LABEL THEIR FEELINGS -

I.E. "I CAN SEE YOU'RE SO ANGRY AND THAT'S WHY YOU THREW YOUR LEGO."

3

TAKE A TIME IN - AS SOON AS A CHILD HAS BROKEN A RULE, TAKE A TIMEOUT WITH HER, ADDRESS THE EMOTION THEN THE BEHAVIOUR. HE WILL BE MORE RECEPTIVE TO LISTENING.



Keep language positive.

This makes your directions easier to understand.

Negative: "Stop jumping."
Positive: "Sit on your bum."

The first example the child has to process what you have told him and figure out what he should instead.

Here are some other examples:
Negative: "Don't run."
Positive: "Walk, please."
Negative: "Don't hit."
Positive: "Hands to self."

Affirmations & Strategies for When Your Child is Melting Down

Parenting from the Heart

Affirmations for you

- I can only control my reaction and emotions, not his
- Each time she screams, I am going to breathe deeper and become relaxed.
- This will pass. I just have to ride it out.
- Say to yourself, 'Inhale: Let, Exhale: Go.'



Don't lecture. Give him release by labelling his emotion.

Let her release her pent up feelings before disciplining in any way. When children are emotional, they're not logical.

Affirm him/ her. Say, "I'm here. It's going to be okay."

When the emotion has past, you can talk about strategies for next time.

1

CLENCH AND RELAX YOUR FISTS OR DEEP BREATHE | PROMPT THEM TO DO THE SAME

2

REMOVE THEM FROM THE SITUATION AND STAY WITH THEM | MODEL CALMNESS

3

WAIT AS LONG AS IT TAKES UNTIL THEY COOPERATE WITH YOUR DIRECTION

Ideas for When the Kids Aren't Listening

Parenting from the Heart

Ask yourself these questions:

- Are they hungry or tired?
- Do they need to burn off energy?
- Would a change of scene (i.e. going outside) get them to refocus?
- Have I modelled good listening behaviour to them? When they have asked me for something have I responded to them the first time they say something? Note: this doesn't mean that you jump up and get them what they've asked for. Simply that you've responded to what they've said.



1

GET DOWN TO THEIR LEVEL. YOU'RE HARDER TO IGNORE THEN

2

HOLD THEIR HANDS TO GET AND MAINTAIN THEIR ATTENTION

3

WAIT FOR EYE CONTACT. THEN, ASK THEM TO REPEAT BACK WHAT YOU'VE SAID



Keep language positive.

Set clear expectations

Example: Before leaving for the park let them know, they'll have to clean up.

Ask when they plan on completing a task (i.e. chores, homework, getting ready for school).

Wait for cooperation

Example: Tell them, "I will wait as long as I need to for you to put on your seatbelt."

Drop whatever you're preoccupied with and work with them

Additional positive discipline resources

- [10 page {FREE} printable pack with insights for improving listening](#)
- [How to discipline a child: Why research says this is the best approach](#)
- [What is Positive Discipline and Why You May Have it Wrong](#)