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Positive Discipline for Your Elementary Age Child

Teach them: "If it is to be, it's up to me."

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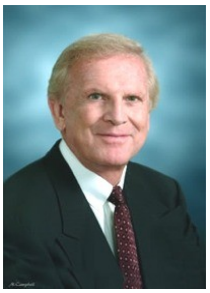

Teaching our children right from wrong requires disciplining with love,and *relying more on influence and rewards* than on power and control. We teach parents every day that their children need to learn that "no" is a good thing so, of course, parents must establish rules and consequences and be willing to put them into effect. It is not possible to be a good parent without giving a child, especially a small child, negative attention, but the issue becomes one of degree. If the parent predominantly takes positive actions (such as giving praise, listening non-judgmentally, relaxing with the kid or working together side by side), the child will get the message that he is loved. And that's the most important message of all.

> **The child who knows that he is loved is able to accept his parent's guidance without hostility and resentment and understands the difference between free choice and boundaries.**

When children are young, parents have almost full responsibility in determining their behavior and one common mistake many parents make is explaining too much. The goal of discipline is to help young children to

understand, and understanding should be age appropriate. When young children are old enough, they should be as responsible for keeping their personal belongings in order as a regular routine. This includes their beds, clothing, toys and school materials. In order to set appropriate limits, parents and caregivers need to stay close by, offer frequent reminders, and be involved with what their children are doing.

Responsibility should be set for family members for operating the home, which becomes training for life management when children are on their own. There should be regular chores at certain times on certain days, in addition to a spirit of cooperation at mealtime and in other routines and family projects like yard work, windows and car washing and shopping. There is no question that some kids are more challenging than others to raise, but the parents who have the most success disciplining with love:

- Always treat their children with respect no matter how frustrated or disappointed they are;
- Avoid all "put down" actions and language;
- Remain emotionally accessible;
- Maintain a sense of humor;
- Are confidential. Gaining your child's trust should be at the top of your list because a great inhibitor for our children is the fear of being exposed or embarrassed.

An effective disciplinarian has:

- Foresight – it's important to set family rules before discipline situations occur. Once a problem occurs you have to go into crisis control and teach the desired behavior later when things are calmer.
- Empathy – "Yes, I am angry… I know that you are capable and competent".
- Good communication Skills – let them know why you are saying "no" and what they have to do the next time to get a "yes".
- Ability to modify negative scripts in ourselves and others – When your child says: "Our team can't win for losing"; redirect with something like, "You made a really good shot and I'm proud of you".
- Addresses the problem without laying the blame. Blame placing wastes time and creates negative results. Move right into the

solution: "What do we do now?" Teach your children to ask: "What do we do now?"

- Appreciation of each child's unique temperament.

As you discipline your child, you should look for the source of her misbehavior. Kids sometimes misbehave out of frustration because they are feeling unhappy or unsuccessful in school. Family problems, such as a new baby, mom going back to work, or sibling rivalry can make a child feel disconnected and left out and cause a child to act out in a negative way to get attention. Of course, you must set limits, but make sure that you are expressing disapproval of your child's misbehavior and not disapproval of your child.

By setting limits you are letting your child know that you care about her behavior. By letting her share her feelings, you will gain insight into her behavior.

Remember, it's a child's nature to want what they want when they want it. In fact, delayed gratification is one of the most difficult principles for parents to teach, because parents want children to have everything the parents have or don't have. Parents often spoil their children because of this and are truly spoiling the children's ability to become independent adults, who learn the cause and effect of their decisions, actions, and choices.

A parent, who gives in to a child's whining and temper tantrums, simply reinforces the behavior and teaches immediate gratification. This permissiveness leads to spoiled, irresponsible and dependent teenagers. As they become adults, they blame their parents, society and externals for their own failures.

Conversely, when parents are domineering, with strict rule, stern punishment and no flexibility, the children may conform outwardly, but inside there's a revolution in progress. When a child's behavior is controlled by an authority figure, the behavior usually lasts only as long as the authority is present, and then the child goes on a permanent

"Spring Break" when he or she leaves home. Or, that child becomes intimidated by all authority figures in the future.

Help your children to understand that they cause their own effects in life, good and bad.

Teach them: *"If it is to be, it's up to me."* Life is a do-it-for-others, do-it-yourself project and rewards in life will be in direct proportion to the quality and amount of effort they give.

Denis Waitley is one of America's most respected and beloved authors, keynote lecturers and productivity consultants on high performance human achievement. He has inspired, informed, challenged and entertained audiences for over 25 years from the boardrooms of multi-national corporations to the control rooms of NASA's space program. Denis has been voted business speaker of the year by the Sales and Marketing Executives' Association and by Toastmasters' International and inducted into the International Speakers' Hall of Fame.

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