

Sue Atkins
The Parenting Expert

Parenting Made Easy System

**iCAN CONFIDENCE PARENTING COURSE
FOR KIDS AGED 7-13**

DAY 8: ALL ABOUT DISCIPLINE

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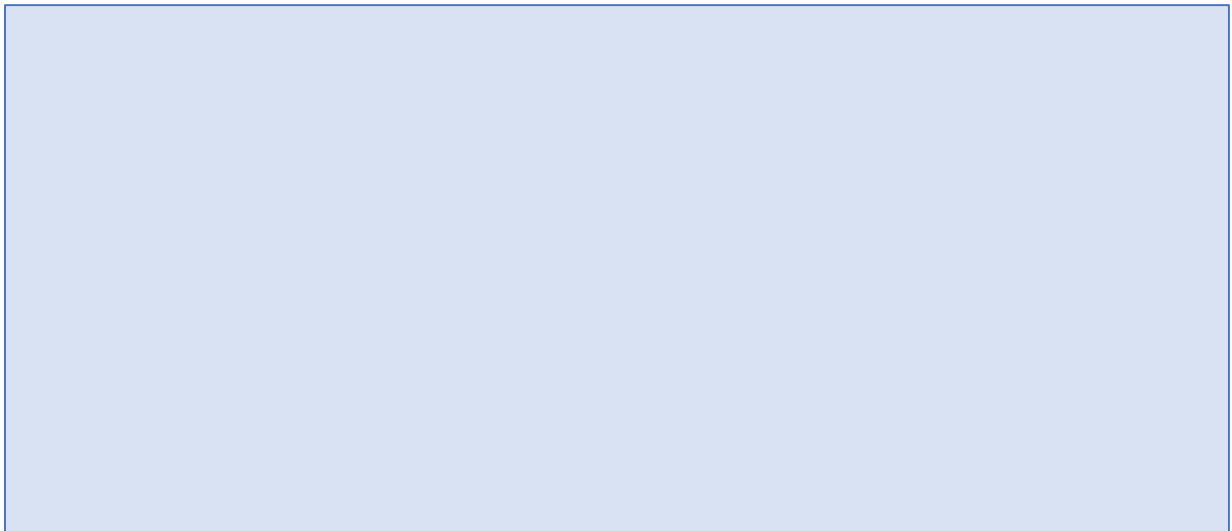
In a nutshell – In this session, we discuss discipline. From time to time you may feel that you need to discipline your child. But what are the right steps to take? And how should you discipline positively? What are the positive alternatives to punishment? Read on! ...

Welcome back!

Your Style of Discipline

We often talk about the need to set limits for you and your children, and to establish boundaries that must not be crossed.

Why do we need to set limits? Grab a pen and write down as many reasons as you can think of. Why do we need to set limits and establish boundaries? And why do you think that it is so hard to set boundaries?



Setting boundaries, and policing them, is hard. There are dozens of reasons for this:

- You're too tired
- You're too busy
- Guilt
- Other things to worry about
- Peer pressure
- Lack of confidence
- You don't want to parent like your own parents
- Other parents do things differently
- You feel the need to be loved by your children
- Too much hassle
- It makes you angry

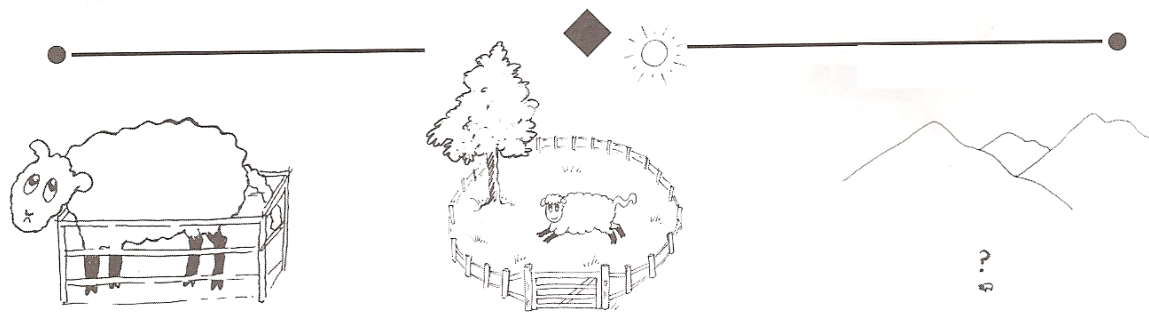
What is loving discipline?

Loving discipline is about training your child's character, rather than punishing it. The secret is that you need to be a leader more than a friend, however much you want to be liked or loved.

You need to be consistent, and follow through to earn respect. You can't say one thing one day and not the next. You must avoid:

- Dominating or controlling behaviour yourself
- Yelling. Threatening. Criticising
- Violence

What's your style of discipline?



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Boundaries

Children like to know where they stand. So routines, boundaries and structures give children security and help them understand what acceptable behaviour is. By following, accepting and understanding your limits your kids learn autonomy and self-control - which is a crucial life skill.

As soon as you feel that your children are old enough start talking to them about your rules and limits and start explaining why you have them and what you expect from them. This gives your kids an understanding about where you're coming from but make your explanations appropriate and relevant to their age!

I think it's helpful to remember to follow your own boundaries and rules - there's no point in insisting that your child eats all their vegetables if you just tuck into your chips and leave your carrots!!! Or you deny them TV time while you sit and devour your favourite soap! You do have to walk your talk as you are a role model all the time whether you like it or not!

Consistency

Another key skill to develop as a parent is one of the simplest yet most important strategies for successful discipline - Being Consistent.

Your consistency is really the key to success - every time your child pushes the perimeter fence of your boundary - push back making your limits crystal clear. Give a sanction, take away a privilege, or reward the good behaviour but keep your messages consistent.

It's really important - your kids will get the message eventually that you mean what you say.

House Rules

One way that you can set positive limits and boundaries for your family is to establish a list of house rules. If your child is old enough to take part, you could host a family meeting to discuss and agree your house rules together.

Getting your kids involved is a great opportunity to make them feel part of the decision-making process at home. Creating solutions to family niggles together provides a real incentive for everyone to co-operate.

If you're interested in trying this idea here are some ways to organise yourselves:

- Choose a natural time when you will all be together like at a mealtime.
- Allow the conversation to have a purpose and a gentle agenda of airing family niggles, stresses or flash points.
- Develop a set of "House Rules" that suit your family at your first meeting and be sure to write them down so everyone is clear about what to expect.
- Make sure that ALL your family members are present and have a chance to be heard.
- It's often a good idea to put all decisions from the meeting in writing and have everyone sign the sheet when the meeting ends to show their commitment to what's been talked about and agreed - get one of the kids to design it on the computer!
- Keep the meeting positive and have rules against disrespectful behaviours such as interrupting, insulting, yelling or laughing at other people's suggestions.
- Avoid distractions - so turn off the TV and radio, and take the phone off the hook so you can relax and enjoy chatting together.

Some examples of house rules

1. We don't take anything without asking the person first (tee shirts, make-up, trainers or even chocolate from the larder!!)
2. When we go out we will say where we are going, and who with, and when we will be back.
3. Bedrooms have to be tidied, vacuumed and dusted every Sunday.
4. When friends come around we are responsible for tidying up the mess.

Now it's your turn!

Arrange a time for you, your partner and your children to meet and agree on your own house rules. Write down each one as you agree it, and then post the finished list somewhere where everyone will see it.

Rules of our house

Positive Alternatives to Punishment

Point out ways to be helpful

“Go and see if you can find your jumper in the ironing basket, help me put the shopping away in the fridge or pick up your clothes from the floor.”

Express very strong disapproval using your eyes, body language and tone of voice (but not attacking your child’s character):

“That’s enough!”

Clearly state your expectations

“I expect you to give back my necklace when you borrow it”

Show your child how to make amends

“Sweep up the cereal from the floor with a dust pan and brush.”

Give a choice

“You can either join us for the BBQ or stay in your room. You decide.”

Take action

“I’ve locked away the scissors for a while because I need to know where they are when I need them.”

Allow your child to experience the consequences of their actions

“So you won’t be going to Sophie’s house tonight as you came in late last night.”

What to Do When All Else Fails!

DISTRACT/HUMOUR-

good for nipping trouble in the bud

Quickly point at something and say "What's that?"

"Ooh! Something tickled me! Was that you?"

Pretend incident was an accident and no one was to blame

TIME OUT- good for defiance or disobedience and calming down

Sit quietly somewhere

Child leaves room for a period, goes to set 'naughty' place

Parent holds child to calm them

PLANNED IGNORING- good for dealing with irritating/rude behaviour or squabbling

Offer no reaction

Do something else

Go elsewhere

CHOICES- good for giving child responsibility for actions

Offer two choices and let the child decide

Explain fully any consequences the actions will incur

Praise child if he/she makes the right choice

What have you tried?

Here is a list of ways to deal with your troublesome child or teen. Tick off the techniques that you have already tried. Perhaps try some of the other techniques over time.

- Praise and encouragement
- House rules or boundaries
- Empathy (looking for feelings)
- Active listening
- “When you... I feel... because”
- Negotiation
- Identifying goals behind behaviour
- Being assertive

What to do when your boundaries are challenged

Ask yourself:

- Are your rules realistic and appropriate for the age of your child? (Taking a small child to a fancy restaurant where they have to sit still for ages is setting them up to fail and be naughty!)
- Are your rules appropriate for the age of your child? Is it necessary for your teenager to ask to leave the table until everyone’s finished (Parents often forget to adapt the rules as their children grow up!)
- How do your children show respect to you, to property and to others?
- What kinds of behaviour are acceptable to you?

A Quick Recap

- Your parenting style is important, and will reflect the way that you discipline your child or children.
- The way you behave affects your children.
- Your parenting style needs to change and become more flexible as your children grow up.
- It's important to set boundaries and establish house rules.
- Kids thrive on loving, fair discipline and learn to self-discipline and self control.

Next time ...

We'll look at ways to praise, motivate and reward good behaviour ...

See you then!



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As seen in:



THE  TIMES



theguardian

BBC
RADIO

Daily Mail

BBC

The Daily Telegraph

this
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