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|  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [**MISTAKES ARE WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN**](http://store.positivediscipline.com/MISTAKES-ARE-WONDERFUL-OPPORTUNITIES-TO-LEARN_b_34.html)  Dr. Jane Nelsen on 11/23/2014  Close your eyes and remember the messages you received from parents and teachers about mistakes when you were a child.  When you made a mistake, did you receive the message that you were stupid, inadequate, bad, a disappointment, a klutz?  When hearing these messages, what did you decide about yourself and about what to do in the future?  Remember, you were not aware that you were making a decision at the time; but when you look back it is usually obvious what decisions you made based on what you now believe and what you now do. Some people decided they were bad or inadequate.  Others decided they should not take risks for fear of humiliation if their efforts fell short of perfection. Many decided to become approval junkies and try to please adults at great cost to their self-esteem. Some are obsessed with the need to prove their worth. And some decided they would be sneaky about their mistakes and do everything they could to avoid getting caught.  When parents and teachers give children negative messages about mistakes, they usually mean well.  They are trying to motivate children to do better for their own good.  They haven’t taken time to think about the long-term results of their methods and how the decisions children make stay with them for the rest of their lives.  So much parenting and teaching is based on fear. Adults fear they aren’t doing a good job if they don’t make children do better. Too many are more concerned about what the neighbors will think than about what their children are learning.  Others are afraid that children will never learn to do better if they don’t instill them with fear and humiliation.  Most are afraid because they don’t know what else to do—and fear that if they don’t inflict blame, shame and pain, they will be acting permissively.  There is another way.  It is not permissive, and it truly motivates children to do better without paying the price of a lowered sense of self-worth. Teach children to be excited about mistakes as opportunities to learn.  Wouldn’t it be wonderful to hear an adult say to a child, “You made a mistake. That is fantastic. What can we learn from it?” And I do mean “we.” Many mistakes are made because we haven’t taken time for training and encouragement. We often provoke rebellion instead of inspiring improvement.  Children need daily exposure to the value of mistakes—and learning from them in a safe environment. Many families have found it helpful to invite everyone to share a mistake of the day and what they learned from it during dinnertime. Children can truly learn the courage to be imperfect when they can laugh and learn from mistakes | | | |

[**Child Discipline: To Punish or Not**](http://store.positivediscipline.com/Child-Discipline-To-Punish-or-Not_b_16.html)

Dr. Jane Nelsen on 9/1/2014

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What do you think of when you hear the word “discipline”? Most people think of punishment. I invite you to think a little deeper starting with the exploration of the long-term results of punishment.  
  
When children are punished they do not learn self-discipline. Punishment provides “external” motivation. Self-discipline requires “inner” motivation. When children are punished they either comply to avoid the punishment (and may become approval junkies), or they may get sneaky and do all they can to avoid getting caught. They may they blatantly rebel—resulting in endless power-struggles with their parents. Then parents complain about the behavior of their children without taking responsibility for their part—how they invited the power struggles by using ineffective discipline methods (punishment).  
  
Positive Discipline does not advocate any form of punishment—no punitive time-out or grounding, no withdrawal of privileges, no yelling, no lectures, no threatening, no spanking, no rewards, no praise.  
  
At this point you may be wondering two things, “What else is there?”, and, “Wait a minute; praise and rewards aren’t punishment.” Praise and rewards are not punishment but they are external motivators, which do not teach self-discipline, self-control, and the desire to make a contribution based on inner motivation.  
  
In answer to what else is there; that is what Positive Discipline is all about—providing many non-punitive parenting tools that follow two basic guidelines:

1) Create a connection before correction,

2) Correction usually involves children in focusing on solutions.  
  
There are many specific parenting tools that meet these basic guidelines. A deck of cards called Positive Discipline Parenting Tools includes 52 of them. All are designed to help children learn self-discipline, responsibility, cooperation, problem-solving skills, and other valuable social and life skills for good character. I’ll mention a few:  
  
**\*\*Family Meetings**: where children learn to give and receive compliments and to brainstorm for solutions to family challenges that have been put on the agenda.  
**\*\*Curiosity Questions**: where parents invite children to think instead of telling them what to think.  
Validating Feelings: to help children feel supported without needing to be rescued or fixed. They learn they can survive the ups and downs of life.  
**\*\*Positive Time-out**: to help children learn self-soothing by creating a place that helps them feel better (so they can access their rational brains).  
**\*\*Routine Charts**: created by children so they feel motivated to follow the routines they have created (or at least helped create.)  
  
Most parents would prefer to give up punishment if they knew what else to do that would help their children develop into capable and caring adults. That is what Positive Discipline is all about.

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