

The Lamb Will Rule, Not The Lion.

An essay on child discipline.

Esther Ann Morey

*“And thou shalt teach them diligently
unto thy children, and shalt talk of them
when thou sittest in thine house,
and when thou walkest by the way,
and when thou liest down,
and when thou risest up...
And it shall be our righteousness,
if we observe to do all these commandments
before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.”
Deuteronomy 6:7,25*

Dear Friend,

I thought I would share this writing with you. I do not claim to be an authority on child discipline. This is just a sharing that was burning on my heart. It comes from experiences with the many children I teach and interact with, and, of course, from experiences with our children.

Nor is this complete. Several other writings could and may be written on the developing of the child's spiritual, mental, and physical capacities. Much could also be written on the benefits of joy, prayer, and confession being regular parts of the home atmosphere.

However, here it is, as it is. If you find that it will help you in any way--I'll be happy. This writing sure wouldn't make it in the modern day parenting magazines, would it!? A friend suggested I try to sell some of my writings. I said, laughingly, "They would not want what I write--even if I paid them to print it!" That's quite all right. I don't want to write about subject matter that appeals to the mediocrity of the masses. Nor do I want to be a fanatic who is out of touch with reality. Only the Lord can balance us.

Also, this essay is written with younger children in mind. I, at this point, don't know whether all of it would apply to older children--especially to teenagers who haven't been raised in a disciplined manner. That may be a whole other ball game. The Lord knows the way through that wilderness, too.

This letter is just a little voice among the clamor of the modern day philosophies that are causing our homes such unhappiness and unrest. It is a little voice that says, "Joy is for the having! God is able! Homes can be a haven!" It is a challenge to take the road less traveled...and find that it makes all the difference!

Sincerely,

Esther

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ON HUMAN NATURE

O.K. You sit down the first day your son has homework, or your first day of home school. With an encouraging smile you pull out the spelling workbook, and a cloud forms on your little darling's brow. You have just pulled him from play and are asking him to work on spelling. The darling states resolutely, "I don't want to!"

O.K. Now what are you going to do? Threaten? Bribe? Reason? Or discipline? These are the choices. Let's try reason. It is the logical first choice.

REASONING

"Honey, this is going to teach you to spell...won't that be great?"

"I don't want to learn how to spell...I want to play outer space!"

"Sweetheart, all children need to know how to spell. If you can't spell, you won't be able to write letters. You won't be able to get into 2nd grade. It is really a very good thing."

The lip gets lower and more determined. "I don't want to!" Etc. etc.

Even with persuasive and airtight reasoning you lose the argument. *Let me tell you a secret.* The will is much stronger than reason.

Well, then, let's try the bribe.

THE BRIBE

"Honey", you say in your most alluring voice, "if you do this spelling, Mommy will give you a special treat!"

"What is it?"

"Remember those chocolate kisses? You can have a yummy chocolate kiss."

"I want 3 chocolate kisses."

You reason in your mind "Three chocolate kisses for one lesson in spelling--good deal."

The transaction is done and you have won.

Or have you?

Consider the following...

Unknowingly, a bribe mentality is set up within your son's nervous system. If he doesn't feel like doing something, he just won't. Unless the bribe occurs. At first, 3 chocolate kisses. Then, it's that toy at the store. Then, it's going to a friend's house for overnight. Then, it's a bike or a \$50 outfit. Then... The older he gets, the more it takes to make it "worth his while."

Worth his while to do what? **To do normal and necessary tasks!**

Some think their children will outgrow it. However, I have seen this mentality started in children and stay embedded in the personality through adolescence and adulthood. These are the people that weigh every choice with the thought, "What will I get out of it? What is in it for me? If you don't make it worth my while, I am not interested." I have seen this in many stages and at many ages.

They are not considering their responsibilities, the good of others, or the long term benefits for themselves. If it doesn't reward now, it is not worth it. Piano practice. School work. Household chores. These are long term goals--the reward takes years to cash in on. But, oh, what a cash in for those who pursue these 'mundane' daily disciplines! (Yes, even household chores prepare for future responsibilities at home or work.) Their whole life opens up into opportunity after opportunity.

And is obedience really taking place when there is a bribe? Instead of bribing--reward! The bribe is used as a crowbar to get them to do something. The reward occurs spontaneously and unpredictably and reinforces good behavior--without *buying* it!

So, to avoid setting up the bribe mentality, let's try threatening.

THE THREAT...

"If you don't work on this spelling, you'll never be good at it." ("Well, so what," he thinks to himself...)

"I don't care."

Whoops.

"If you don't do this, I'll have to send you to your room!"

"I don't want to do it! I'm not going to!"

"Honey, I am serious. Do you want a spanking? Now get your pencil out or you will be in trouble!!!"

It doesn't work. By now, he has his arms folded across his chest defiantly, or has resorted to the 'get her sympathy' route with tears and wails.

You don't resort to any of the threats because that would be unkind and impatient of you, right? The poor little kid doesn't want to do spelling. The darling little thing is not in the mood. Should you make him do what he just doesn't feel like doing?

And, probably, there is 'THE REASON'! You know, the imperfect circumstance (and there almost always is, being that life is rarely on schedule) like the missed nap, the not-quite-having-recovered-from-sickness reason--you know. He is tired, hurting, or just having a bad day. And don't you also sometimes have a bad day and feel the same way?

So what should you do?

What would you suggest that their teacher at the public school do? She has 20 other kids, too, you know. One with a headache. One having a bad day. One got to bed late. Yet, she is responsible to get them academically prepared. What should she do if they don't want to???

A perpetual song and dance routine? (She'll be dancing all day - and soon its effect wears off, too...)

O.K. Then what about discipline? Big, big subject. Discipline is not the 'in' thing right now, so make sure that no one knows that you are reading this. Maybe you should hold a newspaper in front of this so that people think you are just reading the news...!

What is discipline?

Webster's Dictionary says that it is "***prompt and willing obedience to the orders of superiors***" and "***training or experience that corrects, molds, strengthens, or perfects, especially the mental or moral character.***"

It goes on to state that it is to "*punish corporally in order to inflict penance on*" or "*to punish or penalize in any way, often by infliction of extra tasks or by loss of privileges.*"

Just the reading of these definitions causes many conscientious parents to pull back in horror. The modern philosophies are teaching us that a child can be raised without punishment. They teach that children can be raised by positive reinforcement, incentives (bribes) and by reason. But does it work?

If you look at a historical time-line, you will see that the decline of society coincides with these 'new and revolutionary' views of child-rearing. They sound so good--so positive. But look--*take an honest hard look*--at what these views have **produced!** The 'new' way of raising kids is producing kids who are angry, restless, demanding, not willing to work, and not willing to take blame. They want pleasure and a free ride

Discipline...

Back to the darling and the spelling book drama. The little darling states (for the first time) “I don’t want to do spelling.” The mother says kindly, “I know honey. You were having such fun playing. But you have to stop now and do your spelling. You will be able to play again later. There is a time for everything.”

The darling protests.

The mother, without further word, picks him up and takes him to his room. There, an appropriate form of discipline is administered. **Appropriate, meaning without any anger at all**, and insuring that perfect understanding is there of why the punishment is happening. Not a harsh slap that simply irritates the child, but a thorough disciplining that brings repentance. When the moment of repentance comes, the child is gathered into the mother’s arms and held and loved and listened to.

The two walk out to the spelling book, and do spelling together.

And soon thereafter - cooperation becomes the norm.

Mom - The Big Bully?

“Ah!” you say. “You may accomplish spelling, but it is because you were bigger than him, and you bullied him. And, in his heart of hearts, he is resenting you and will forever hate spelling as well!”

There is a mystery that defies the intellect. It cannot be explained by the mind, but I have seen it again and again and again, not only with my children but with many other children. Appropriate and consistent discipline does the opposite of what you fear. It endears you to the child and the child to you. It strengthens your love and respect for one another and gives you peace. Not harsh discipline, nor inconsistent, but consistent, loving, and firm discipline.

Susanna Wesley states that precept (teaching) and example are *ineffectual* in conquering the will of children! **Good example and instruction are very valuable, but they do not conquer the will.** Only discipline goes that deep. She goes on to say, “Heaven and hell depend on this alone. So that the parent who studies to subdue it (*self-will*) in his child, works together with God in the renewing and saving of a soul.”¹ She said that the parent who indulges it does the devil’s work, making religion impractical. For what is true religion other than finding and obeying the will of God?

¹ “Children Can Be Taught To Obey,” quoted by Loran W. Helm, *A Voice in the Wilderness* (Bourbon, IN, USA: Evangel Voice Publications, 1994) p. 81.

What are the benefits of consistent discipline?

PEACE IN THE HOME. Can you imagine a home without arguing, without whining, without debate, and with prompt and willing obedience to your requests? Sound like heaven? Heaven can come to earth if we follow heaven's advice. Here is some advice out of heaven's guidebook. The wisest man on earth wrote these Proverbs:

“Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul” (29:17).

“He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him” (13:24).

“Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying” (19:18).

“Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right...” (20:11).

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (22:6).

“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (22:15)

Then, these scriptures on the attitudes we are to cultivate within ourselves and our children:

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

“Children, obey your parents...” (Ephesians 6:1).

“Do ALL things without murmuring and complaining, that you may become blameless and pure...” (Philippians 2:14-15).

What?! Does it really say that?

I just can't do it! You are right about that. This method of child-rearing has supernatural benefits but requires supernatural help. Without extra help from above, we will find ourselves in a non-ending cycle of try and fail. Be encouraged though! God will do it through you! **How do you access the strength and power of God to help you go on this journey? By spending time alone with Him every morning.**

I know of no other way. If I do not wait on God, I find that I do not have His strength and wisdom within me. My prayer time is my filling station!

My 'private instructor' is there--and He, little by little, imparts His wisdom and strength during our little meetings together.

He wants to be your confidant, friend and instructor. With Him, you will find yourself gaining ground--whether small or big steps--He will take you to the goal! Time with God is a whole other subject which deserves a writing all of its own. So...on to the wonderful benefits of discipline.

Speak softly and carry a big stick

Like Roosevelt, I believe in speaking softly and carrying a big stick! I request our child *softly* and once to do something. If he understands me and chooses not to do it, there is no raising of voices, no debate, no threatening by degrees or argument. There is simply quick and thorough discipline, followed by tender hugs and kisses. Consequently, he willingly obeys without contention most of the time. And there are no raised voices. (Except in exciting adventures during play!) This is only by the grace of God and because of the wisdom of His words helping us.

ARGUING AND WHINING WASTES TIME!

While one parent is discussing, bribing, threatening and raising her voice at her children, another is using that same block of time to build a birdhouse, learn an instrument, or enjoy a game of make-believe. If you had a machine that could clock how much time in your day is taken by whining and demanding attitudes--what would the machine reveal? Hours, days, and eventually months or years of accumulated wasted time. Time that will be remembered with regret by you *and* your children.

The disciplined child's memories will be flooded with sweetness, with memories of precious times with you. Whether learning, playing or just plain 'being together', your days will be filled with meaningful and non-combative moments. The respect and healthy fear that disciplining places in his heart toward you, produces a nest for such sweet love and tenderness. You won't believe it until you experience it! It cannot be put into words how sweet it is.

Are we born good, evil or neutral?

A vision for consistent and thorough discipline comes from the fundamental recognition that we are born innocent yet with a sin nature, and that this bent toward sinning has to be dealt with early and without vacation or variation. This sin nature that we were born with is what makes our children unhappy and unfulfilled. When we help them conquer this innate selfishness--it sets them free! Free to love...instead of hate. Free to learn! Free to excel! Free to develop their potential. For we were born with tremendous potential in the image of God.

Anyone who is wrapped up in himself is about the smallest thing there is. But one who is taught to serve, to love, to look outside himself--is destined for stability, joy, and the freedom to excel.

That we are not born good seems obvious. *You don't have to teach a child to become angry, to be selfish, to whine, and to not share.* These are part of the nature that we acquired in the fall of Adam. (So the Bible is really true???) A child has to be taught to share, to obey, to not whine, etc. Each child is precious beyond measure, but if we are honest, we can see that we are born with a sin nature. It is ultimate kindness to come against this nature--**not against the child, but against this nature that will bring him unhappiness.**

So we are out to break self-will, not the spirit. The spirit and the personality are set free as self-will is broken. *Harshness can break the spirit.* But consistent and thorough discipline in love produces original thinkers and dynamic individuals--because their personalities and spirits are set free!

The Lion and the Lamb

I think it is self-evident that rebellion, anger, and selfishness do not bring joy. Is an angry child happy? Is a rebellious child at peace? Does selfishness bring contentment?

Benjamin Franklin said, "Sin is not hurtful because it is forbidden, but it is forbidden because it is hurtful."²

I know that this society is telling you that you cannot survive in this dog-eat-dog world with a heart free of anger, selfishness, hate, etc. But I tell you, the lamb will rule, not the lion.

Purity is the elixir of life!

Elixir was a substance that turned cheap metals into gold and caused one to live forever. It was looked for and never found. But, oh! A few have found it! Purity turns ordinary life into an adventure and causes one to live forever with God! Most don't even know what it feels like to be free of negative attitudes and motivations. These attitudes are heavy burdens to the soul, mind, and body. They stifle creativity, taint relationships, and cause the loss of objectivity. Self-centered persons do not see the big picture. Therefore, all their decisions are out of kilter, based on selfishness and the 'now'. These kinds of decisions may seem pleasant for the moment but do not yield the long term benefits and open doors that are so marvelous.

What a gift! What a gift we give to our children when we, with the help of God, set them free from these chains that will doom them to circular negative patterns and that can rule them all of their lives.

² "Poor Richard's Almanack," quoted in Our American Heritage; J. H. Moore, comp., L. Hicks, ed. (Pensacola, FL, USA: Abeka Book Publications) p. 88.

But watch out! **You have to go along on this journey.** You can hardly make war on the attitudes in your children without simultaneously confronting the same attitudes within your own heart. What a blessed journey of the soul you can take together--from glory to glory. How rich it becomes with each step taken, with each shackle loosed.

One may be tempted to let God fix them later. He can do all things, yes, but oh the pain and sorrow that will have to be your child's teacher if these things are to be removed later. (And have compassion on their future spouse...!) Now, it is as easy as pruning a tiny plant--compared to pruning an overgrown apple tree.

To Discipline *Attitude* or *Action*?

What should you discipline: attitude or action? What is action, but a grown-up attitude?! Many actions start as an attitude. So, should we get it in its beginning stage or wait until it has birthed the action? I tell you, it depends on how hard you want to work. *One attitude will birth many actions.* If you keep treating the symptoms and do not go for the cure, you will be hard-pressed to keep up with it all.

If a child is worked with as soon as a bad attitude occurs (impatience, anger, whining, disrespect, etc.), then in one fell swoop, you stop many actions from ever occurring.

When our son becomes moody and sour, we sit down right away and have a talk. It may go like this. "Honey, a bad attitude has slipped into your heart. I want you to get the victory over this before it gets any farther." Sometimes we pray together about it. Usually, with tears in his eyes, he apologizes...and the spirit is resisted and overcome. His joy returns. And that with no yelling or harsh words from his parent. If he chooses to maintain the bad attitude--the very next manifestation of it would require discipline of some sort. It is simply not acceptable to maintain a bad attitude in our home. We all know that these attitudes come upon us suddenly. But we also know that they *can* be overcome.

I again quote Benjamin Franklin, "Who is strong? He that can conquer his bad habits."³ Our bad attitudes are largely habitual responses. So, let us develop in our children this strength of conquering the bad habit called 'attitude'.

But isn't stifling negative emotions dangerous?

The **three** ways to deal with a negative emotion...

Most think there are only two choices when it comes to dealing with a negative emotion: stuff it or express it. However, there is a little known third option: *replace it*.

Take anger, for example. Someone does something very wrong to you. Naturally, anger flares up. You can express it (pound on a pillow, yell, throw

³ Ibid.

something, etc.), stuff it (outwardly look normal while seething and going nuts inside), or you can replace it. **Replacing a thought is not stuffing it!** And contrary to stuffing it, replacing works and has **no side effects!**

The difference in replacing is that you don't mull it over. **YOU REPLACE IT!** If you resist a negative thought within 3 seconds, it never becomes 'yours'. In 5 seconds, you will likely be swept away with it. But, if you immediately resist the angry thoughts and fill your mind with something else--the victory is yours. I don't care what you fill your mind with. Read a good book or think about good things--maybe even good things about that person! I praise the Lord vigorously in my mind. Oh, I know that it will knock hard at your mind's door, but you boot it out every time it attempts to cross the threshold. This can be done with the power of God assisting you. After a little while, the anger will acknowledge the "No Entry" sign on your mind and go away, leaving you at peace and without regret.

You can teach your child this skill. He will be in control of his emotions. This is the ultimate in maturity. He will become more mature than most adults.

Appropriate and thorough discipline actually removes the wrong attitude. It is not stuffed. It is replaced.

MY THOUGHTS ARE MINE!

It's natural to be possessive of your thoughts. "Nobody can tell me what to think!" How true. How true. That is your choice entirely. Replacing negative thoughts requires the discipline even of our mind. The mind is the battleground of the soul, and there is where we win or lose. The power of God can help anyone win.

Remember - your child is a pragmatist!

If throwing a fit or stomping their feet will get them that piece of candy--then believe me--it will become a regular part of their routine! Whatever works! Whining. Bargaining. Crying. Whatever works! Did it ever occur to you that if your baby's fit - never worked - that he would soon - never throw a fit? I'm serious...this really...*works!*

Your kid is a pragmatist. You be one too! Don't let their fit or whine work! And soon - your plan will - **WORK!**

Susanna Wesley said, "the one grand impediment to our temporal and eternal happiness is this self-will. **No indulgence of it can be trivial, no denial unprofitable.**"⁴ Two of her sons saved England from anarchy and were instrumental in the transformation of a nation.

⁴ Ibid., "Children Can Be Taught To Obey."

She also stated that it was cruelty to playfully develop behavior that later must be broken.

Teaching a baby to come to rest

One of the best things I ever did was start a quiet time with our son when he was about 5 months old (just starting to sit up). I would set him on my lap and have a holding time. I gently restricted his movement into a small range by holding his wrists loosely. He could move, but not a whole lot. There we would sit without any entertainment for about 5 minutes...if he was compliant. If he resisted and threw a fit, the five minutes started after the fit was over. And a fit he did throw. For the first few days he was really mad! He would scream, and I would whisper, "Rest..." and "I love you..." in his ear while he took his breath for the next scream. The first few days he would be in a rage for around 20 minutes...an eternity it seemed! After his crying changed from anger to repentance and his movements stopped fighting me, I would start the five minutes, whispering encouraging things in his ear from time to time and then say cheerfully, "It's over! It's time to get down!"

After a week or two of doing this almost daily, his crying times got shorter and shorter and then disappeared altogether. His nervous system learned to come to rest. He actually began to enjoy our quiet time together. I began slowly stretching our quiet time, adding 5 minutes to it a week until I was up to 20 minutes. After that I could take him almost anywhere--to church, to gatherings, to presentations--and he would sit quietly and contentedly on my lap. People would comment how lucky I was to have a child that would sit still like that. They thought he was born that way! If they only knew....

I believe this was a very beneficial part of our discipline in his first year. Before he knew the meaning of 'no', he was being taught how to 'shut down' and how to come to rest. It also taught him that what he wants to do sometimes has to be put on hold.

TURN THE TV OFF!

I have a bag of flour on my refrigerator with an advertisement on the back reading, "*Who wakes kids up in the morning and welcomes them home in the afternoon?*" Then a picture of television cartoon characters saying, "**WE DO!**"

Excuse me, but **I** wake up my child in the morning, and **I** welcome him home if he is gone. A TV set is a poor substitute for *you*. And even when you are busy--*let their imaginations grow!* **The television set will undermine most of what you are trying to do.** Even many of the children's programs feed them bad attitudes or just **meaningless fluff**

There are a few good things on now and then, but nothing beats creative play. Our son and his best buddy watch it very rarely and don't even know that there is such a thing as Saturday morning cartoons. What adventures they have! Most cartoons are violent and have much questionable content.

“What will my child do without TV?” How did children for the last few thousand years do without a television?? Much better!!! After your kids recover from withdrawal, they will do better, too! Turn it off. Sit down with them and make something out of paper, or read them a good book, or act out an adventure, or learn an instrument. Soon, they will be doing it on their own and having fun! And you will have one less thing undermining your child's character.

I let our son help me cook, and he loves it! It is more time together, and he learns a skill at the same time. The extra time and mess is nothing compared to those sweet moments together. Take courage . . . and turn the TV off!

Happiness is not the goal--it is the by-product!

“I just want to make my child happy.” If that is your goal, you will find that it eludes you. You try to buy everything they want, do everything they want and not cross them. You avoid putting them into difficult and unpleasant situations--yet--they are still restless and unfulfilled, angry and complaining.

Then take my supposedly hard line approach. I rarely *buy* our son anything. (What I give him is my time. Instead of sharing with him *things* we share experiences and time together. Instead of giving him many possessions, I give him security and skills-----I invest in *him!*)

I not only don't do everything he wants, but I expect him to do as **I** want, and cheerfully. I purposely put him into situations that require stamina, perseverance, and self-denial. He adores his father and mother and is one of the happiest children I have ever met. His face is bright, and he bounces around the house with joy and creativity--the 'life of the party' for sure.

To make a further confession, I treat all his friends the same way. And all my music classes are treated this way as well. No whining, arguing, or disrespect is allowed in this house. If it occurs, there is immediate consequence of some sort. Of course, I cannot discipline other people's children in the same way I can my own, but the line is still there, and his friends and my music classes know exactly where that line is.

The interesting thing is that these children love to come to my house and often cry when they have to leave.

WHY??? They can't do everything they want. They can't whine. They can't argue. HOW COULD MY HOUSE BE ANY FUN AT ALL?

My house is fun. One of the most fun houses on Nickleville Road, I bet. You know why? There is peace at my house. And instead of the sounds of battle, there are the sounds of very creative and adventure filled play.

An undisciplined house is filled with the sounds of war.

You walk into a house that uses bribes, threats, and reason, and this is just a sampling of what you will hear...

"I don't want to!"

"Honey, if you'll do this Mommy will..."

"I hate you! You never let me do anything I want to do!"

"MOMMMMMY! He hit me!"

"If you don't stop hitting, *I am going to be very angry!*"

"But can't I just do this first?"

"Sweetheart, the reason I want you to do this..."

The atmosphere is rarely without the sounds of whining, arguing, fighting, or a demanding spirit. (Unless they are asleep--right?) Is that the atmosphere you want to give your children to grow up in? Nobody wants it, of course. Unfortunately, though, most become so accustomed to the din that they don't even realize how much din it is. They have simply resigned themselves that there is no alternative. Happily, there is. But how to do it?

The answer is simple, but radical. Discipline. Consistent and loving discipline. Nip attitudes in the bud. Allow no disobedience to go un-dealt with.

The power of consistency

Here is your powerful 'secret weapon': consistency. People ask me, "How do you do it?" My answer now is, "You don't want to know!" for most don't want to hear the word "**consistent.**"

Our son knows that if he disobeys, he will be disciplined in some way. There is no guesswork in it. No gamble. If a parent *sometimes* disciplines for throwing a fit and *sometimes* not, the child will throw a fit. It is worth the gamble. If the parent disciplines immediately and predictably when the fit occurs, the child will only try it a few times and then will give it up.

The secret is in the bud

If you are fortunate enough to begin this when your child is a baby, what an advantage is yours. If you discipline your child the *first time* he ever throws a temper tantrum--hooray! You are close to victory. Our darling threw a temper tantrum. Once! He never felt it worth his while to do it again. But even if he had tried it again, if I had been consistent *every time*, he would have only tried a VERY FEW TIMES. So nip it in the bud. Get it the first time! (And the second...and...)

Now it is more probable that at least some of your children are beyond the *first time* for many offenses! The bud is still your key. Sit your children down and explain the change in policy. "O.K. kids. I know that we use to allow disrespectful voices, but now we are changing the policy. Any disrespect will have immediate consequences." Then, remember, today is the first day of the rest of your life--and nip it in the bud! Catch it the first time and every time. Your home will be in a state of shock, adjustment, and uproar for several days or maybe two or three weeks (if this is your first time at consistent discipline). But then--oh, joy! A peace, love, and respect will steal into your home and make its abode. The incidents of disobedience will become fewer and fewer--if you nip it in the bud! And the incidents of hugs, kisses, and creative play will become more and more!

Creativity--SET FREE!

What does discipline have to do with creativity? Much! Much! Much! Anger and rebellion put creativity under lock and key. How creative do you feel when you are seething over something? O.K. You may create some tumultuous looking abstract art or some strange piece of angry music. But let's face it--it is not a conducive attitude for the creative juices to flow. Let's look at it another way. How easy is it to get an angry child to practice an instrument? To write a story? To draw a drawing? Things are simply locked up.

Once free of these inhibitors, the secrets of the child begin to unfold and blossom. You will be amazed what gifts lie within each child. Every child! And not only will the gifts be discovered, there is enough submission within for the practice and developing of it. He will find rest and security and joy in the routine development of his inner gifts.

A disciplined child is a learning machine...

CHARACTER FIRST, EDUCATION SECOND.

So in closing, I quote the great educator Suzuki.

“Character first. Education second.”

He knew that character is the foundation of all learning. Our schools and many parents have it backwards. They try to emphasize academics in the early grades, and then feverishly work to instill character during their teen years. Too late, by far. Character development should be primary and early in our efforts. For it opens the door to joy, to creativity, and to learning. To ignore this side of child-rearing foils or taints all our other dreams for our children.

Open the door for their dreams--and yours to come true as well!

Sincerely,

Esther Ann Morey

Esther Ann Morey, mother of two, lives in West Virginia and is a pastor's wife. At church, she is choir director and children's church leader. At home, she home-schools her son and assists another mom with home-schooling her two children. Added to that, she also has an in-home music school with around 60 students. Her piano students have performed with top recognition at the state level. Considering all the activity, she gives this response:

“Discipline saves time! It is discipline that has made it possible for me to do all those things I do. An undisciplined child takes much time and maneuvering. A disciplined child is flexible and easy to get along with. Discipline (and love) in the home *saves* time and *makes* time for you to do a lot more!

“However, this does not mean that I respond to every request and opportunity. Because of my musical abilities, I am flooded with wonderful opportunities and requests. These things kept my schedule full at one time. Now I must say ‘no’ most of the time. I let these opportunities go without regret. I am still busy, but I am busy with my motherhood. I involve our son with almost everything I do. He even loves singing in my church choir. The day will come when they will be grown, and we can pursue other interests. These moments with our children are fleeting and most precious. Savor those moments!”

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