

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PUNISHMENT AND DISCIPLINE

Children are not usually aware of the decisions they are making in response to being punished. However, future behavior is based on the subconscious decisions that are being made. For this reason adults need to be more aware of the long-range effects of their actions instead of being fooled by short-range results.

PUNISHMENT

Grows out of anger and has the goal (often unconscious) of releasing our anger by hurting another- either physically or psychologically, or comes from the belief that one must first suffer or feel worse in order to learn or do better.

Most common results of the use of punishment:

1. Resentment (“This is unfair. I can’t trust adults.”)
2. Revenge (“They are winning now, but I’ll get even...”)
3. Rebellion (“I’ll do just the opposite to prove I don’t have to do it their way.”)
4. Retreat :
 - a) Sneakiness (“I won’t get caught next time.”)
 - b) Reduced self-esteem (“I am a bad person.”)

DISCIPLINE

Grows out of understanding and compassion and has the goal of guiding and teaching the child internal, (self) discipline.

Common results of using discipline:

1. Opportunity to learn from mistakes (“Gee, I bet you learned a lot from that! What will you do differently?”)
2. Cooperation (I appreciate your willingness to help figure it out.”)
3. Problem solving skills (“Oh well, what will you need to do to clean that up?”)
4. Responsibility (“I noticed that you are putting in lots of effort on your homework. Does that help you feel more prepared? It sure is responsible!”)

Where did we ever get the crazy idea that in order to make children do better, first we have to make them feel worse?