

## Differences Between Discipline and Punishment

By Judy Arnall



### DISCIPLINE

Proactive  
Focus upon the future: "Here is what to do instead".  
Preserves mutual respect of feelings and dignity.  
Raises self-esteem. Leaves child feeling good about himself.  
Teaches self-control by explaining reason.

Parent and child feel good about each other and the relationship.  
Presents choice.  
Sensible: related to misbehaviour  
Motivates and encourages to do better next time.

Looks for feelings and needs that drive behaviour.

Child feels understood.  
Decreases power struggles, since the needs of parent and child are met.  
Time-In: Parent and child decide together on time, place, tools and helping person to calm-down.  
Consequences: Focus upon restitution, problem -solving and natural outcome of events. Many solutions proposed by parent and child.

### PUNISHMENT

Reactive  
Focus upon the past: "Stop doing that!"  
Ignores feelings and dignity of the child.  
Lowers self-esteem. Leaves child feeling bad about himself.  
Teaches outside control by offering no explanation.  
Parent and child feel disconnected from each other and the relationship  
Demands compliance.  
Arbitrary: unrelated to misbehaviour  
Inspires anger, resentment, rebellion, revenge, or withdrawal

Focuses on behaviour only without consideration of cause.

Child feels misunderstood.  
Increases power struggles, because only the needs of the parent are met.  
Time-Out: Parent decides on time, and place to isolate.  
Consequences: Focus on hurting or depriving the child. One solution imposed by parent only.

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