



# Sound Discipline

## **Parenting with Courage & Connection**

### Agenda

#### *Introductions*

#### *Where are we going?*

*Mistakes*

*Resiliency*

*A Little Brain Biology*

#### *Why do humans behave that way?*

*Belonging & Significance*

*Private Logic*

*Mutual Respect*

#### *Encouragement*

#### *Q & A*

# Brief Overview of the Adlerian Approach

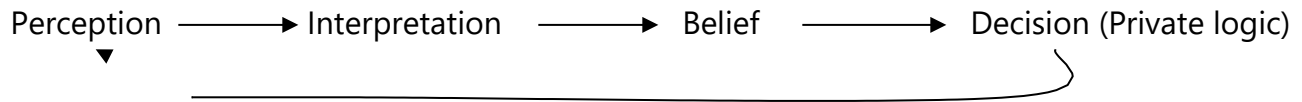
## Theory:

Alfred Adler, Rudolf Dreikurs, Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott.

All behavior has a purpose

The goal of behavior is belonging (sense of connection) and meaning (significance).

(Mis-behavior is from "mis"-taken belief about how to find belonging/meaning.)



People (adults, teens, and children) are continually making decisions based on how their world is perceived.

Horizontal relationships: Everyone is worthy of equal dignity and respect. (This does not mean people are the same, or that leaders are not necessary.)

Gemeinschaftsgefühl (Community feeling):

Being part of a community (belonging/connection)

Being able to make a contribution to the community (significance/purpose)

## Basic tools of Positive Discipline:

Teaching life skills

Understanding the power of perception and interpretation

Encouragement

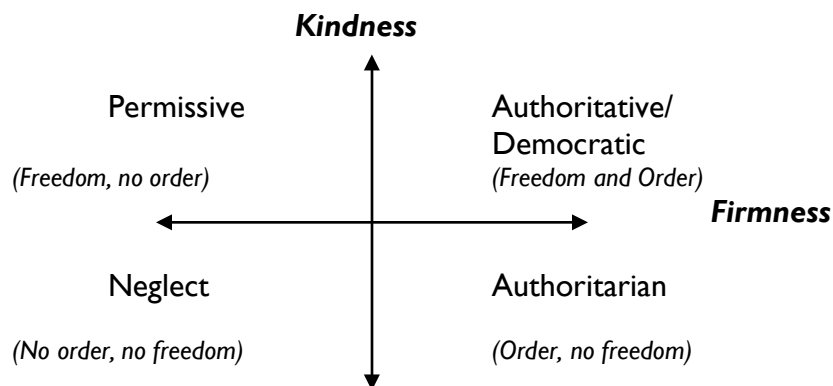
Kindness and Firmness *at the same time*

Mutual Respect

Respect for yourself and the situation (firmness)

Respect for the needs of the child and others (kindness)

Mistakes are opportunities to learn. (The courage to be imperfect.)



## **5 Criteria for Effective Discipline...**

### **1. Is kind and firm at the same time.**

In the past we have thought that kindness and firmness were mutually exclusive. We were kind until we couldn't be and then we were firm. In fact, not only is it possible to be kind and firm at the same time, it is highly effective to be. We CAN be kind without being wishy washy or a doormat. We can be kind and also hold onto agreements and boundaries. AND we can be firm without being mean. We can be firm while also being connected and compassionate.

### **2. Helps a child feel belonging and significance.**

Our two primary goals as human beings are 1) to feel a sense of belonging... a sense of connection to other humans, that we are an integral part of something larger than ourselves and 2) to feel a sense of significance, of importance... to feel a sense that our contribution matters. When children deeply feel both connected and important, they feel well-being and their behavior looks like "good behavior" to us. Sometimes when they do not, their behavior can look like "misbehavior" to us but it may only be unskilled and misguided attempts to get back to feeling significance and belonging. When we understand this, we can look underneath the misbehavior and understand ways to help get kids back on track.

### **3. It is effective long term.**

We know that there is a lot we can do to stop our children in their tracks from doing what we don't want them to do. Parenting is more successful when it is pro-active rather than reactive. If we can parent consciously in ways to support our long term goals for our children, we are more likely to have positive impact.

### **4. Teaches important social and life skills.**

The word "Discipline" comes from Latin and Old French and Means "to teach/to learn." Our goal in discipling our children is to teach them the skills, tools and traits that they need to be happy capable adults.

### **5. Invites children to discover how capable they are.**

There seems to be a strong message in the air that if we love our kids, we are supposed to do everything for them. But it is through opportunities to contribute, help, make decisions and problem solve, to fix mistakes that our kids gain the experiences that allow them to have faith in their own abilities. When we do too much for our kids, we rob them of those opportunities and we exhaust ourselves.

### **Recovery from a mistake** (*repair is critical!*): (adapted from Jane Nelsen, *Positive Discipline*)

**Re-gather:** Make sure both of you have calmed down. Even if it means waiting.

**Recognize:** "Whoops, I made a mistake."

**Reconcile:** "I'm sorry."

**Resolve:** (Re-Solve): "How can we work on this together to make it better?" (or some variation)

# The Brain in the Palm of your Hand

(From *Parenting from the Inside Out*, by Daniel Siegel and Mary Hartzell)

**Your Wrist and Palm:** Brain Stem. Responsible for survival instincts: flight, freeze or fight; Autonomic (“automatic”) functions

**Your Thumb:** Mid brain. Freeze, flight or fight response, emotions, where we store and integrate memories, and hold fears.

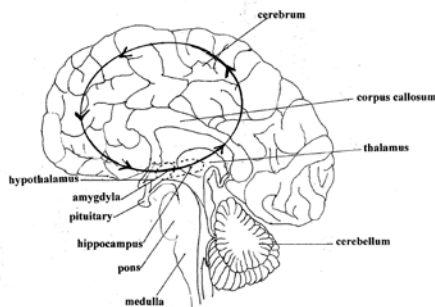
**Your Fingers over your Thumb:** Cortex. Perception, motor action, speech, higher processing and what we normally call “thinking.”

**Your Fingernails:** (This is approximately behind your eyes in your head) Orbitofrontal cortex/ pre-frontal cortex – a primary integration center for the brain, almost like a “switchboard” that makes sure messages get where they need to go. Documented functions of the pre-frontal cortex are: regulation of body through autonomic nervous system, emotional regulation, regulation of interpersonal relationships, response flexibility, intuition, mindsight, self awareness, letting go of fears, morality.

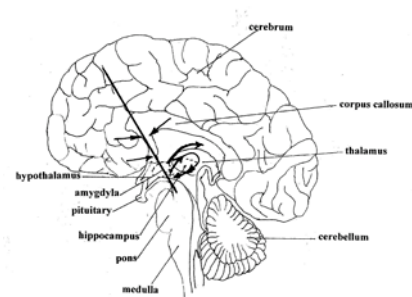
What happens when you are stressed, overwhelmed, or trying to deal with traumatic or painful memories? The pre-frontal cortex shuts down; it no longer functions. (This is temporary, thank goodness!) You have flipped your lid. You can’t use most of those 9 functions above. And you can’t learn without them. To engage, to learn, you need to calm down and bring the orbito-frontal cortex back into functioning.

Your brain, when the prefrontal cortex is working:

Integrated function (the high road)



Non-integrated function (flipping your lid, the low road)



**Integrative functioning:** “A form of processing information that involves the higher, rational, reflective thought process of the mind. High-road processing allows for mindfulness, flexibility in our responses and an integrating sense of self awareness. The high road involves the prefrontal cortex in its processes.” Siegel and Hartzell, *Parenting from the Inside Out*.

“**Low road** functioning involves the shutting down of the higher processes of the mind and leaves the individual in a state of intense emotions, impulsive reactions, rigid and repetitive responses and lacking in self reflection and the consideration of another’s point of view. Involvement of the prefrontal cortex is shut off when one is on the low road.” Siegel and Hartzell, *Parenting from the Inside Out*.

Drawings adapted from Siegel and Hartzell, *Parenting from the Inside Out*. P. 157

**Mirror Neurons:** The “monkey see, monkey do” neurons that play a key role in social interaction, connection and learning.

## Connection before Correction”

### De-escalation tips: For when the mid brain takes over...

Partly adapted from *Conflict Unraveled: Fixing Problems at Work and in Families* by Andra Medea. We refer to this as “**having a flipped lid**” or “**flooding**”

Tips for when YOU have flipped your lid:

- **Recognize what it feels like physically:** fast heart beats, pounding head, a sense of urgency etc. Learn your own body’s warning signs.
- **Recognize what it feels like mentally:** a sense of urgency, thoughts that keep repeating or going in circles, an inability to think calmly and clearly (or do mental math). Learn your own body’s warning signs.
- **Take a time out from the situation to calm down.** Recognize that continued engagement isn’t going to help.
- **Focus on your breathing.** Do belly breathing.
- **Use large muscles:** walk, do isometrics, do windmills with your arms.
- **Try to engage your cortex.** Do mental math, spell things backwards, list facts...and slow the pace.
- **Notice why you are in “survival brain.”** This situation makes me feel vulnerable because (I’m not being heard, I may not be able to prevent injury, I’m not being respected) and work to not take it personally.

Tips for when the OTHER person has flipped his/her lid (child or adult):

- **Watch for signs in the other person:** Irrational action, flushed face, intense emotion, disjointed sentences.
- **Notice your own body.** Remember that mirror neurons work quickly. Don’t let the other person’s flipped lid “catch you.”
- **Remember safety.** People who are using their mid brain and not their cortex do not act rationally and can be physically dangerous. Stay calm, move slowly and be aware.
- **Use your mirror neurons.** The more you stay calm and connected, the easier it is for them to calm down.
- **Acknowledge feelings:** using few words and calm empathetic tone.
- **Don’t talk at them.** Don’t touch them, and don’t make fast movements. If they want to leave (and it is safe) let them.
- **Don’t crowd them.** Don’t demand from them, don’t give complicated directions (they cannot process them).
- **Invite them to take a time out (non-punitive) or “cool down time” (CDT)**  
This works best if it is an option, not a command.
- **Simple tasks may engage their cortex.** You might ask them to remind you how their name is spelled, to count to ten, ask if they remember how to spell your name.
- **Ask for their help.** When they have begun to de-escalate, change the subject by asking for their help. “I can tell you aren’t ready to engage in work yet, but are you calm enough to help me by.....?” “I can tell you aren’t quite ready to play again, but would you be willing to help me by...?”

## Curiosity Questions, starring “What” and “How”

By asking questions, we invite others to come up with their own thoughts, to think for themselves and to be a part of solutions (increases belonging and significance). In order to be inviting tone is very important: *Interest and caring must be expressed through tone*. Without the “invitation”, this approach can be perceived as disrespectful and will not be helpful!

### **Benefits:**

- Children feel listened to, taken seriously and respected
- Helps young people learn from their inner wisdom
- Encourages thinking and problem-solving skills
- Cultivates beliefs of capability, significance, and personal empowerment
- Helps parents learn what their child is feeling and thinking
- Creates closeness and trust

### **Hints:**

- These questions are not effective during a time of conflict. Allow for a cooling off period first.
- The purpose of “curiosity” questions is to get into the child’s world.
- Ask only if you are truly interested in your child’s ideas and beliefs.
- Have a friendly tone, and good eye contact.
- It is important to keep listening and not jump in to lecture about something your child is saying.
- Avoid the temptation to defend yourself.
- If you hear something that you want to comment about, make a mental note to bring it up in conversation at another time. This way, children will trust that you really want to hear what they have to say and are not just using the question to get your point of view across.

### **Examples**

#### Motivational:

- What is your picture of... (doing homework, telephone use, cutting school, etc.)?
- What’s your plan for... (your education, getting your chores done, etc.)?
- How do you see that working... (so many hours of TV, staying up late on school nights, not keeping your commitments, etc.)?
- What is your story about... (curfew, partying, drinking, etc.)?
- Is there anything else? (Asking this question encourages your youngster to dig deeper for thoughts and feelings while you listen.)

#### Conversational:

- What happened?
- What do you think caused that to happen?
- What were you trying to accomplish?
- How do you feel about what happened?
- What did you learn from this experience?
- What ideas do you have to take care of the problem?
- What could you do next time?
- How do you think you could solve this?
- How can you use what you learned in the future?

## **Encouragement**

Courage (from the root word: cor – Latin, heart):

Think of the actions of a 'hero'. From this perspective, *courage* can be framed as a step they take in the direction to be more of who they truly are when it might be easier to take a step in another direction. So when we encourage someone, we are creating a space for them to take that step.

Some simple types of encouragement are:

Descriptive Encouragement (describe without evaluation):

I notice...

Appreciative Encouragement:

I appreciate...

Thank you for...

Empowering Encouragement (must have data to back it up):

I believe in you...

I have faith you...

I trust you can...

With Empowering Encouragement you must have data to back it up, for example: I saw (evidence) with (characteristic) so I know you can...

Contact Information:

General info or questions -  
[info@sounddiscipline.org](mailto:info@sounddiscipline.org)

Website: [www.sounddiscipline.org](http://www.sounddiscipline.org)  
Workshops: [sounddiscipline.eventbrite.com](http://sounddiscipline.eventbrite.com)

*“A misbehaving child is a discouraged child.”*

Rudolf Dreikurs

## **Parenting Resources**

- Sound Discipline Parenting Newsletter and Archives -

<http://www.sounddiscipline.org/subscribe/>

- Sound Discipline Blog – <http://www.sounddiscipline.org/sd-blog/>

- Recommended books for parents - <http://www.sounddiscipline.org/books/>

Self-regulation cards and cool down kits - <https://www.sounddiscipline.org/products/>

- Recommended books - <https://www.sounddiscipline.org/books/>

- Sound Discipline Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/sounddiscipline/>

Sound Discipline Twitter - <https://twitter.com/SoundDiscipline>

Dan Siegel on the Brain in the Palm of Your Hand (2:31 minutes):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gm9ClJ74Oxw>

We offer a 6-week *Parenting with Positive Discipline* series. Contact [mary@sounddiscipline.org](mailto:mary@sounddiscipline.org) for more information on how to bring this workshop to your school or community.

Interested in becoming a certified Positive Discipline Parent Educator? More information about our *Teaching Parenting the Positive Discipline Way* workshops can be found here - <https://www.sounddiscipline.org/teaching-parenting-the-positive-discipline-way/>