



Love, Teaching, and Positive Parenting 2018
This content will cover foundational parenting principles and values. Then, I encourage you to watch a couple of videos that highlight two different parenting styles. Critique these parenting approaches paying particular attention to the parent's values, consistency, role modeling, and use of rules and consequences. I'll provide a list of questions to assess the implications of their parenting approach.

Let's build.

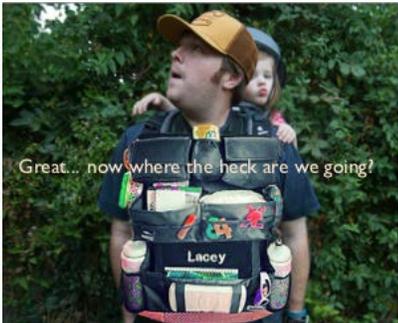


When birds build a nest, they are forming a safe, down-lined home to incubate and hatch their eggs. What would happen if the nest were plush, roomy, and the worms kept coming? The babies might not want to leave. Perhaps, this is how the dodo became flightless and eventually extinct. It could be a part of the grand plan that baby birds would outgrow their nests. Birds are not just building a safe cozy nest; they are building a launch pad.

Those babies are going to grow and go.



Maybe we should construct houses that are so small that they can't contain an 18-year-old. We don't have kids to keep them. We have them to give them away. Keeping this in mind will help you survive the "empty nest syndrome."



In parenting, we are trying to prepare youth, but for what? We can't properly prepare if we don't know the purpose of our preparation.

What is the goal of parenting?

Legitimate interdependence

What is the Ultimate Goal of parenting? I used to think the goal was “legitimate independence.” Alas, pure independence is a myth. Even the recluse who lives extremely remote in the wilderness will bring ax heads, knives, traps, pots, pans, clothes, seeds, and other essential items with them. I think we were created for relationship. We have to learn to live relationally and in community to thrive and survive. Children need to learn soft skills, relational skills, as well as independent living skills to be successful.

All of our activities should support “legitimate interdependence.” The means should be effective in achieving this mission. The end and means should be coherent.

Let’s start with “legitimacy.”

Teach Legitimacy

Personal Essence- I want to be treated as a person, not as an object or a thing.

Others share my personhood equally and deserve the same treatment.

“In everything, do.”

For morals to exist, there needs to be an assumption of “personhood” or transcendence. Humans have an inherent dignity that needs to be recognized and approached with reason. We should be treated as persons, not objects or things. Kant proposed that we are ends in ourselves and should not be treated as a means toward an end.¹ We should not be manipulated, used, conned, or coerced. We need to be respecters of freedom.

Culturally speaking, America went through a nihilistic phase and is now floating on a sea of postmodern existentialism. We have come unmoored so to speak. An

epidemiologist visited Bemidji and delivered some frightening data. Depression has increased in America 10% per decade since 1930. Prozac cannot cure a loss of personhood or value. It merely alleviates some of our angst as we face the abyss. We need to recapture that unique essence we have as human beings, our inherent value, our personhood.

The second essential ethical assumption is what philosophers might call the “assumption of other selves.” Morality requires that we assume others share our basic essence or humanity; that our personal essence is shared equally. This is Martin Buber’s, “I-Thou,” concept. I remember reading “The Autobiography of Malcolm X.” He recounts being in a room with wealthy white adults. Malcolm was just a boy. The adults were talking about the black man as subhuman and inferior as if Malcolm were incapable of reasoning and understanding as if he wasn’t there. Malcolm was there; listening and drawing every inference. The heart of racism is the notion that one’s ethnic or reference group has obtained personhood, but other groups have not.

Jesus of Nazareth is credited with putting all of this together in what we call the Golden Rule. He started his deep insight with, “In everything, do...” As parents, we need to be bold and take action. We need to be engaged and proactive. We should take initiative and if our kids withdraw or isolate go after them.

Of course, American history is ripe with dehumanized perspectives and injustice. Most immigrants to the continent treated indigenous nations and people savagely as sub-humans. Tragically, in the late 19th century Americans defined their children as property rather than persons. Children were

¹ Kant, Immanuel. *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*. (Kant's book was first published in 1785.) Edited by 3rd. Translated by James W. Ellington. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993.

valued for their earning and labor potential, a perspective that was carried into the industrial era. Accordingly, parents emphasized subservience to authority rather than empowering independence.



This is Mary McCormack. She was born Mary Ellen Wilson. Her father died, and her mom was too destitute to care for her. She was illegally placed with Mary and Thomas McCormack. Thomas died, and Mary remarried Francis Connolly. They were monsters. The horror stories of what they did to little Mary would ruin your day. So, I won't go into detail.

A neighbor and Methodist missionary, Angell Wheeler, suspected they were abusing a child. He finagled a visit to their apartment. Because children were seen as property, Mary and Francis could do as they pleased with little Mary. However, New York State had statutes protecting livestock. Wheeler rallied

support to advocate for little Mary. In court, he argued that Mary was an animal. He used animal cruelty statutes to rescue her from her tormentors. This was the first child abuse case in the United States.

This case eventually inspired the doctrine *parens patriae* (**par-ens pa-tree-ee**) to be applied in the United States. The doctrine gave the state the power to act as a guardian for those who were unable to care for themselves, such as disabled individuals or children who were being abused or neglected by their caregivers.

Personhood

Value

Reason

Choice

Moral Capacity

Respect- is the ability to see another as a person and treat them accordingly.

Let's look closer at our shared transcendent personhood. What makes a human being unique?

Value- First, we have a unique value. There is more to being human than mere complexity. Our worth goes beyond dollars and cents. Our worth is beyond measure.

Consequently, we don't swear at or belittle each other. We persist in loving our children, even when they are exasperating or in trouble.

Reason- Humans have the ability to draw inferences. The material world functions by cause

and effect. Humans can function with logic. Our insight goes beyond stimulus and response, and association, beyond the world of what is and what happened. We can comprehend why things happened. I agree with Kant that reason is not something we learn from experience. It is something we bring to our experience to make learning possible.

Consequently, we should offer reasonable explanations for our rules. We should be honest and assertive, not manipulative or deceptive.

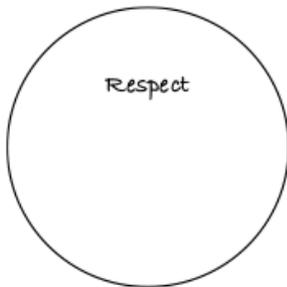
Choice- Contrary to many deterministic thinkers including deterministic psychologists, I believe humans are capable of real choices, independent and authentic action. We are not so much a product of our environments as we are products of our decisions and responses. We make our selves... and can remake ourselves. Change is possible.

Consequently, we should promote freedom and independence. We should offer choices, not ultimatums. We should not threaten, coerce, or bully.

Moral Capacity- The universe operates by cause and effect. What is, is what is. But, humans can reason about what “ought to be” or what “should be.” Our sense of “ought” is categorically and qualitatively different than the world of “what is.” Our approach to parenting should be value-laden and promote fairness and decent treatment.

Respect- Identifying and affirming one’s self as a person is the foundation of self-respect. General respectfulness is the ability to see our common humanity, the personhood of others. In the 21st century, we’re big on diversity. Yet, it is the things we share in common that give us our value and our equality.

Defining Your Family values



We are building the base, the foundation of our family values. Call a family meeting. Draw this circle. Define your core family values. At the Evergreen Shelter, we start with respect. Rules flow from our identified values.

Keys to reasonable rules:

1. based on your family values
2. clear, consistent, understood by all
3. apply to everyone

“We value and respect persons. You will be esteemed, supported, and treated as a person, not an object or a thing. I will expect the same treatment from you.”

Some parents have a hard time with rule #3. The rule follows naturally from the previous two. If the rules flow from our family values, they are pertinent for everyone in the family. The adults should model the values. In some way, the rules will apply to everyone in the home.



Safety- Safety is always in the top three. However, eventually, you want your child prepared to leave the nest. Flying lessons are risky. You will need to focus on increasing independence.

Keys to reasonable rules:

1. come from your family values
2. clear, consistent, understood by all
3. apply to everyone
4. Evolve as child develops- increase self-control.

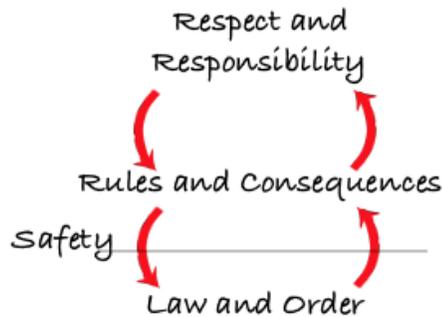
How much freedom you can extend depends on several factors. One should try to limit toxic influences and toxic environments. We are quickly corrupted and slowly restored. For instance, unfiltered Internet access, particularly in a child’s bedroom, is a recipe for disaster. So, be prudent. Kids need risk and opportunity to fail. They don’t need someone feeding them lies or garbage. The following illustration might help with the balancing act.



Imagine a teeter-totter. When a child is young, and their internal control is low, the parent's external control need to be high. Babies have very little internal locus of control. Their emotions cycle by the minute. When they start crawling, they aim for interesting objects. The crawl gives them a modicum of autonomy. When they reach the object, they instantly try to ingest it. Oops. As they mature and gain more internal control, parents should offer more freedom, more choices, and the opportunity to earn more privileges.

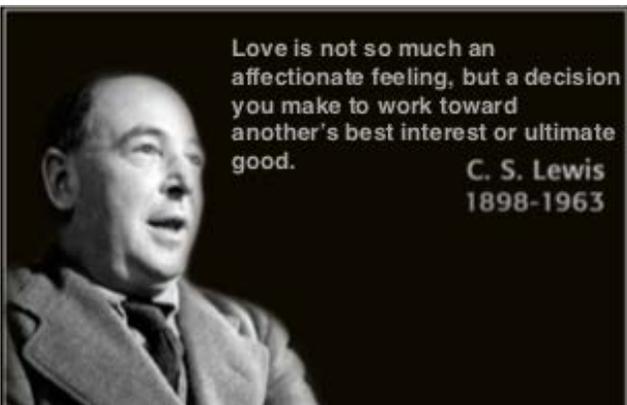


Parents should relinquish external control as their child assumes more internal control. The empowered child can soar to new heights.



We have found the above chart useful. The center section shows structure, rules, and consequences that will support and teach our values. At the top level, we have a child that naturally does the right thing, because they have internalized their values. The rules and principles travel with them. This level of maturity is reached in their 30's; ha.

When kids drop below the safety line or do not agree to be parented, it will require some outside professional help. These are the true Village People. It will take a village or a team to rein them in and turn them around. At Evergreen, we play hardball with drugs and alcohol. Drugs derail a youth's development and are life-threatening. Running away is also dangerous and merits a serious response. An intervention may require some tough love and tough decisions. Sometimes their employer or the Police can teach them in ways we cannot.



Affection has its place in helping us bond and persist in parenting. However, the love we need to foster as parents is not so much an affectionate feeling, but a **decision** you make to work toward your child's best interest or ultimate good.² Lewis used the terms "charity" and the Greek word "agape" to describe this love. This love will enable us to make the tough decisions when necessary. We will realize that we will need to love our children enough to hold them accountable, to sometimes watch them as they struggle with painful situations, especially in those tough situations that only experience can teach.

² adapted from- Lewis, C. S. *God in the Dock*. Edited by Walter Hooper. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970. pg 48.

Let's move from teaching "legitimacy" to teaching "interdependence."

Teaching Interdependency

A relational approach to nurturing interdependence combining love, teaching, and positive discipline.

... a really bad analogy...



Now, this is a terrible analogy. I want something you will remember to demonstrate the mindset I am conveying. Imagine a group of kids playing at the top of a cliff.

Would we build a fence on the cliff edge or plant an ambulance on the bottom? I am suggesting, that as children develop we slowly get into the ambulance business. OK, we can plant signs and give warnings, but we need to allow increasing opportunities for independent thought, decision-making, and responsibility, knowing full well that there are risks involved. Your EMT skills will be your relationship, communication, consistent consequences, and your sage advice.



I used to think "responsibility" was a word adults used for "quit having fun." Responsibility was boring, sober, stuff, and I didn't want much to do with it.

Responsibility is actually our door to opportunity and adventure. It's also tied to our personhood.

Responsible = Response able
or
"able to respond"

that's empowerment!

Keys to reasonable rules:

1. come from values and Beliefs
2. clear, consistent, understood by all
3. apply to everyone
4. Evolve as child develops- increase self control.

Keys to effective consequences:

1. hand responsibility and power back

Big Fat Parenting Tip

So, here's a Big Fat Parenting Tip. When a child gets in trouble, let them know that the ball has clearly landed in their court. I learned This one from Corwin Kronenberg. Here's what you say-

You've Got a Problem!

There are some variations on this useful expression. You might try, "Now, that is a problem. I'm just glad it isn't mine."



Too often, as parents, we are the ones considering all the implications of a child's decision. They worry and losing sleep while the child sits smugly, comfortably, unfazed and clueless. They haven't a worry in the world.

Somehow the responsibility for their decisions needs to shift back to them.



Let them carry the load for a while. Put the responsibility back on the child. Get them involved in considering the positive and negative consequences of their behavior. Try to see if they can solve their problem. If they get stuck, you can offer some possible solutions.

Suppose a child got thrown in jail. The Swooperman or Swooperwoman parent would immediately bail them out to avoid the psychological damage of incarceration. They

would run to the rescue.

The strict, commander in chief parent, would feel vindicated, "I warned you. Now, you've got what you deserve." They might consider throwing away the key.

The managing parent would visit their child. "Dang, I feel bad you did this to yourself. It's going to be scary and depressing. But, I've got faith in you and believe you can handle it. If they offer you a Public Defender, I would recommend taking one. I've heard, ____ is a good attorney, maybe see if you can get him/her."

Learning to shift the responsibility back to my kids did wonders for my parenting. Here was one of my more successful applications. My daughter, **Leah**, was a young, first or second grader, and she started missing the bus. We live in the sticks. I was on my way to my car and Leah was whimpering and dragging her feet, moving at a crawl. I said, "I would be running, not shuffling if I were you. You're going to miss the bus." As I approached my old Toyota, I could see the bus driving away. She had missed it. I said, "You've got a problem," and then I called work. "I've got a problem."

Leah had to sit on the steps and come up with a plan to get to school. “Maybe I could walk.” I replied, “I don’t know. You’re six years old and have six miles to go. What if you don’t get there by the end of the day. It doesn’t sound safe.” Eventually, she hired me as her chauffeur for four shiny quarters.

That wasn’t the end of it. When Leah returned from school, she had to go back on the stairs and think of a plan not to be late for school in the morning. She’s a bright kid. After deliberating, she said, “I’ve got it. I’ll get dressed the night before. When morning comes, I’ll pop up and be ready to go.”

OK, we have a plan. It’s not morally dangerous or physically dangerous. It might just be bad fashion. We just needed to break it to her mom.

So, she got dressed the night before. Wrinkles weren’t a problem. What do first-graders wear? Stretchy outfits. You can’t tell if they’ve been used as PJ’s. She was never late for school another day in her school life.

There’s the “stretchy outfit” I was talking about.



She grew up... and learned how to dress herself and my grandson... and now foster babies.

Offer Choices
Offer Choices
Not Offer Choices
Offer Choices
Ultimatums

Ultimatums are the quintessential expression of external control. “Do it or else.” They necessarily pit the authority figure against the subordinate. Kids have egos. If you push, they will push back. Adults with ill intent have used this knowledge to provoke responses that escalate a conflict.

Choices internalize the conflict, placing it in the child’s head, so the parent/caregiver can avoid bumping heads. Here are some tips on offering choices:

- *Lead with the preferred choice, the path of least resistance.
- *Be confident you can follow through with either option.
- *Step aside for a few minutes to let your child “save face,” and allow the cognitive dissonance a chance to spur some action.

Learning to package everything as a choice is an art. If you’re stuck, consult with a co-worker or another parent for ideas. There is another benefit to offering choices. When you offer choices, you are empowering a child and affirming their personhood.

Keys to effective consequences:

1. hand responsibility and power back to the child
2. relate directly to offense

I like it when kids get caught. It presents you with a teachable moment. Many consequences will follow the “you abuse it; you lose it,” formula.

A dad approached me once. His son got caught shoplifting. The dad was contemplating giving away his son's puppy as a consequence, perhaps thinking this would have the highest impact.

"Has your child taken care of his puppy?"

"Yes."

"Has he fed the puppy?"

"Yes."

"Exercises and plays with the puppy?"

"Yes."

"So, he doesn't have any problem with the puppy."

"No."

"He has problems with stores and trust."

"Yes."

"Maybe, he should lose store privileges and provide restitution and an apology to the store owner."

"Oh... yeah, that makes more sense."

Some consequences seem entirely unrelated to the offense. I once witnessed a Vice Principal assault two of my friends for fighting. Why do we suspend students for skipping school? Why not consequence them with more school, like after-school detention, or Saturday school?

Keys to effective consequences:

1. hand responsibility and power back to the child
2. relate directly to offense
3. restorative rather than punitive

First, let's talk a bit about "punishment" as there are some legal limits on corporal or physical punishment.

Legally- You can't threaten or physically injure youth.

You can't do crazy, reckless things where kids get hurt.

Boot camp tactics probably won't fly.

You can't lock kids up or deprive them of necessities.

Parents can use some reasonable physical or corporal punishment.

You could gently restrain a youth in school to avoid injury.

What is Physical Abuse?

- Any inflicted non-accidental physical injury, mental harm, or threatened injury, inflicted by a person responsible for the child's care
- Certain actions done in anger or without due regard to the safety of the child
- Any physical or mental injury that can not be reasonably explained by the child's history of injuries
- Or, unauthorized aversive or deprivation procedures

What is NOT Physical Abuse?

- Reasonable and moderate physical discipline by a parent or guardian, which does not result in an injury
- Reasonable restraint in schools
- Accidental injuries
(However, unintentional injuries resulting from physical discipline are considered physical abuse).

For punishment to work...

- 1) The parent would need to objectively and dispassionately determine that the misbehavior merited corporal punishment.
- 2) The adult would need to cautiously deliver pain.

The following dialogue boxes were taken from DHS's training on mandatory reporting. When would physical punishment be excessive or illegal?

Physical Abuse Defined as Risk

<u>Dangerous Actions</u>	<u>Threatened Injury</u>
<p>Actions done in anger or without regard for safety include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Throwing, kicking a child• Striking a child with a closed fist• Shaking a child under age 3• Striking a child under age 1 on face or head• Threatening a child with a weapon• Unreasonable interference with a child's breathing• Poisoning or chemical restraints• Unreasonable physical confinement or restraint	<p>A statement, overt act, condition, or status that represents a substantial risk of physical or sexual abuse or mental injury.</p> <p>Includes, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exposure to dangerous persons and dangerous situations• Threats of violence• Threats of sexual abuse (Also referenced in sexual abuse statutes)• Exposing a child to a person responsible for the child's care who:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Has had a past involuntary termination of parental rights, or has had an involuntary transfer of custody of a child- Has subjected a child to, or failed to protect a child from, egregious harm

Physical Abuse That Results in Injury

<u>Physical Injury</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any inflicted non-accidental injury.• Physical injury includes but is not limited to: marks, bruises, abrasions, swelling, as well as burns, broken bones, and internal injuries.

If spanking causes welts, bruising or swelling, it would be considered abuse. These legal limits pretty much rule out spanking with any implement, a switch, whip, spoon, ruler, or belt. A friend suggested that the first whack might be for the child. The second would be for the parent. Whose need is it?

If the punitive parent did not believe the child was sufficiently compliant, do they keep on spanking?

For punishment to work...

- 1) The parent would need to objectively and dispassionately determine that the misbehavior merited corporal punishment.
- 2) The adult would need to carefully deliver pain.
- 3) The child would have to connect the punishment or pain with their misbehavior.
- 4) The child would have to generalize from the targeted behavior to other similar behaviors and decide to modify their behavior.

Keys to effective consequences:

1. hand responsibility and power back to the child
2. relate directly to offense
3. restorative rather than punitive
4. give leverage to the parent/teacher
5. Leaves light at the end of the tunnel

Punishment typically tries to make the child feel bad in an attempt to make their behavior better. Most of the kids I work with already feel bad. Feeling bad is a big part of why they are misbehaving. Feeling worse will not improve their behavior.

Restorative consequences are the bomb. They are also directly related to their misbehavior or poor decision. Teach your child how to fix the problems they have

created. If they messed it up, they can clean it up. If they abused trust and freedom, they need to earn it back. If they hurt someone's feelings, they need to make apologies and amends. When they have restored or repaired the damage done, they also restore themselves. They have made amends and brought themselves back in good standing.

Contingency Consequences- are a great way to put responsibility back on a child. Instead of going "head to head" with the child, you outsmart and outwait them. Contingency consequences also have a positive feel as you get to say, "yes" instead of, "no." Here are some examples:

Child: "Can I watch TV?"

Parent: "Sure, as soon as your chore has been checked."

Child: "I want to go over to Mike's and play."

Parent: "Sure, as soon as your homework is done."

We use this approach when children get suspended. We have them do three hours of work to get them familiar with their employment options should they not graduate from High School. We emphasize

that they can watch TV and play outside as soon as their time is done. We continue to encourage and guide them along the way but extend their time if they are slacking.

Make sure time is truly “on your side.” If kids fail to do a “time sensitive” chore, trade their chores for one of yours when you have time. It works like this: “If you don’t have the dishes done by 11:30, I’ll do them for you. Then, you’ll do one of my chores for me. I have to warn you. My chores are harder than dishes, and they will start Saturday morning.”

Don’t get stuck. What happens when you’ve pulled everything? What happens when there are no more carrots to dangle? Where do you go from there? Don’t gunny sack. Clear the slate. Keep moving forward.

Time stands still when you are a kid. If they lose everything or are grounded for a long time, they will either give up or they will put up. Either option is a lose/lose situation.

Let's practice

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k11ujzRidmU>



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k11ujzRidmU>

Critiquing Tommy Jordan- (41,543,003 hits and counting)

What were some of Tommy’s key values that his daughter Hannah offended?

Is Tommy consistent in supporting and modeling the family value?

What standard do you think the family is setting for language?

Is his response developmentally appropriate (15-year-old brain)?

Is she asked to fix this problem?

Do his consequences fit her offenses?

Is she asked to fix the insults or hurt she inflicted on her dad or the cleaning lady?

lady?

Is there any light at the end of the tunnel?

What is being done to improve or build relationships?

How’s Tommy doing?

What is he doing right?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBi9jaOFcRU>

Critiquing Rico

Relz <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBi9jaOFcRU>

What were some of Rico’s key values that his daughter offended?

Is Tommy consistent in supporting and modeling the family values?

What standard do you think the family is setting for language?

Is his response developmentally appropriate (3-year-old brain)?

Is she asked to fix this problem?

Do the consequences fit her offenses?

Is she asked to fix any hurt she inflicted on her dad or mom?

Is there any light at the end of the tunnel?

What is being done to improve or build relationships?

How’s Rico doing?

What is he doing right?

Would you have a preference as to which dad you would want to babysit your son, daughter, grandson, or granddaughter for a day?



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