

Punishment vs. Discipline
Positive Discipline for Your Teenagers
Parent Meeting Packet Contains:

Promotional Poster



Teaching Plan



General Information Sheet



Parent Worksheet



Activity Sheet



A Parent Meeting from

FOR: Parents of Youth DATE: _____

TIME: _____ LOCATION: _____



Punishment vs. Discipline

Positive Discipline for Your Teenager

Teaching Plan (1 hour)

Time: 30 Minutes

Equipment Needed: One copy of the Meaningful Discipline worksheet for each parent present; pens or pencils for each person

Plan: Present the *Meaningful Discipline General Information*. The parts in red are the answers to the blanks on the parent worksheet. Allow plenty of time for any discussion and/or questions.

Time: 15 Minutes

Equipment Needed: A copy of the Meaningful Discipline scenario for each group of 5 or 6 parents; an alarm clock or timer set for 5 minutes; pencils or pens for each group of parents

Plan: Invite parents to work together in groups of 5 or 6. Tell them they will have 5 minutes to review the situation and make some recommendations. At the conclusion of the 5 minutes have each group of parents talk about their recommendations.

Time: 15 Minutes

Equipment Needed: None

Plan: Prayer. Have a time of concentrated prayer on the issues covered in this lesson. Have parents pray in groups for the following:

- That they would be proactive and not reactive in their parenting.
- That their children would be moldable and not rebellious toward discipline.
- That their children would form positive peer friendships.
- That their children would seek to honor God with their lives.
- That as parents they would model True North lives for their children.



One of the most frustrating issues for parents of teenagers is meaningful discipline. When a child is too old for any corporal punishment and isn't fazed by being grounded, what is a parent to do? Even the most well-meaning and mature teenagers misbehave at times and are in need of discipline. What then is the best method of guiding a teen into proper behavior? Well, the first step in that discovery would be to understand

why a child misbehaves.

Understanding

Jane Nelsen, Ed. D., has written a book, *Positive Discipline*, in which she states what she believes to be the primary goal of children. "We see that the goal of all behavior is to achieve belonging and significance within the social environment. Misbehavior is based on a mistaken belief about how to achieve belonging and significance." Dr. Nelsen goes on to state that, "a misbehaving child is a discouraged child." The significance here is that we need to learn to see our children's misbehavior not as a personal attack on us, or our values, but rather as a misguided attempt to meet their needs. Dr. Nelsen notes in her book the four most common mistaken goals of behavior. "They are called *mistaken goals* because they are based on mistaken beliefs about how to achieve belonging and significance."

The Four Mistaken Goals of Behavior are:

1. **Attention** – "I belong only when I have your attention."
2. **Power** – "I belong only when I am winning or in charge, or at least when I don't let you win."
3. **Revenge** – "It hurts that I don't belong, but at least I can hurt back."
4. **Assumed Inadequacy** – "I give up. It is impossible to belong."

Dr. Nelsen identifies two clues adults can use to help them determine their child's mistaken goal:

1. *The adults feeling reaction to the misbehavior.*

The primary feelings adults experience when confronted with misbehavior for each of the Four Mistaken Goals are as follows:

- If you are feeling irritated, **worried**, **guilty**, or annoyed, the child's goal is likely to be attention.
- If you are feeling **threatened** (you want to be the boss as much as the child does), challenged, provoked, or **defeated**, the child's goal is likely to be power. If you react with power, you will become involved in a power struggle.
- If you are feeling **hurt** (How could the child do such a thing when you try so hard to be a good parent or teacher?), **disappointed**, disbelieving, or disgusted, the child's goal is likely to be revenge. If you cover your primary feeling with anger, you will become involved in a revenge cycle.
- If you are feeling inadequate (How can I possibly reach and inspire this child?), **despairing**, **hopeless**, or helpless, the child's goal is likely to be

assumed inadequacy. If you give in to your feeling, you will be giving up just as the child has.

2. *The child's response when you tell him or her to stop the misbehavior.*
 - Attention: The child **stops for a while**, but usually soon resumes the same behavior or some other behavior to get your attention.
 - Power: The child continues misbehaving and may **verbally defy** or **passively resist** your request to stop. This often escalates to a power struggle between you and the child.
 - Revenge: The child retaliates by doing something **destructive** or saying something **hurtful**. This often escalates to a revenge cycle between you and the child.
 - Assumed inadequacy: The child is **passive**, hoping you will soon give up and leave him or her alone.

If we are able to break this code, we have traveled a long way in helping resolve the problem at hand. It also helps us to understand that our child doesn't need to be punished, but disciplined.

Understanding why a child misbehaves helps us to correct their mistaken beliefs and lead them to a healthier manner of meeting their needs.



Prevention

In Barbara and Dennis Rainey's, *Parenting Today's Adolescents*, they list what they call "seven priorities for the effective parent." These priorities serve to help parents prevent many problems with their teens, or at the very least, help them to be in the best position possible to deal with any problems that invariably arise.

1. ***Prayer.*** Pray for your teenager. Pray regularly. Pray offensively, praying for at least one strong friend and for his peer group to be a good influence. Pray defensively, praying for the removal of any friend of questionable character from your child's life. Pray intensely. Pray with your child. Pray as a couple.
2. ***Standards.*** Clearly communicate the standards for your family. If you don't nail down your own convictions ahead of time, your teenager and his peer group will establish their own.
3. ***Involvement.*** Become involved in your child's life. Involvement means crawling inside your child's head and heart. Involvement is moving from the outside to the interior of an adolescent's life.
4. ***Training.*** The best parenting is proactive, not reactive. The reactive parent stays in a defensive posture, continually reacting to a child's mistakes. A proactive parent goes on the offensive and does what is necessary to become the child's trainer.
5. ***Community.*** There is a natural community that we need to do a better job of tapping into for our children's accountability – our church. We need to drop our defensiveness and fear and encourage others to offer observations to us about how our children are doing when we are not there to see for ourselves.

6. **Direction.** Christian parents desire more than anything else to raise children who will grow up to love Jesus Christ and walk with Him. Those children need direction in finding their *identity* in being made in the image of God; direction in developing the *character* of Christ; direction in building strong *relationships*; and direction for understanding their passion or *mission* in life.
7. **Perseverance.** Parenting is not a weekend event. At times we may have to endure a broken heart, but we must not lose heart.

Progress

Consider the following list of suggestions from, *Parenting Teens*, by Dr. Bruce Narramore and Dr. Vern C. Lewis. They are a suggested list of ways to help your teen develop more adult self-images.

- Give them increased **responsibilities**
- Be **available** and supportive, but not **intrusive**
- Allow them to learn from the **consequences** of their actions
- Give them a nudge out of the family nest
- Let them see how **human** and **fallible** you are
- **Encourage** and **affirm** their growth and progress
- Keep **criticism** to a minimum
- Be a model of a **competent adult**
- Help them learn to perform adult responsibilities **step by step**

Remember, your goal is to discipline your child for right behavior, not to punish him for what he has done wrong. Consider the previous information and work at understanding the signals your child is sending. Correct misbehavior with firmness and consistency, but with the purposeful goal of directing your child's heart to maturity.

Recommended Reading:

Positive Discipline; Jane Nelsen, Ed. D.; Ballentine Books

Parenting Teens: A Road Map through the Ages and Stages of Adolescence; Dr. Bruce Narramore and Dr. Vern C. Lewis; Tyndale House Publishers

Parenting Today's Adolescent; Dennis & Barbara Rainey; Thomas Nelson Publishers

Understanding

The Four Mistaken Goals of Behavior are:

1. _____ – “I belong only when I have your attention.”
2. _____ – “I belong only when I am winning or in charge, or at least when I don’t let you win.”
3. _____ – “It hurts that I don’t belong, but at least I can hurt back.”
4. _____ – “I give up. It is impossible to belong.”

Dr. Nelsen identifies two clues adults can use to help them determine their child’s mistaken goal:

1. The adults feeling reaction to the misbehavior.

The primary feelings adults experience when confronted with misbehavior for each of the Four Mistaken Goals are as follows:

- If you are feeling irritated, _____, _____, or annoyed, the child’s goal is likely to be attention.
- If you are feeling _____ (you want to be the boss as much as the child does), challenged, provoked, or _____, the child’s goal is likely to be power. If you react with power, you will become involved in a power struggle.
- If you are feeling _____ (How could the child do such a thing when you try so hard to be a good parent or teacher?), _____, disbelieving, or disgusted, the child’s goal is likely to be revenge. If you cover your primary feeling with anger, you will become involved in a revenge cycle.
- If you are feeling inadequate (How can I possibly reach and inspire this child?), _____, _____, or helpless, the child’s goal is likely to be assumed inadequacy. If you give in to your feeling, you will be giving up just as the child has.

2. The child’s response when you tell him or her to stop the misbehavior.

- Attention: The child _____, but usually soon resumes the same behavior or some other behavior to get your attention.
- Power: The child continues misbehaving and may _____ or _____ your request to stop. This often escalates to a power struggle between you and the child.
- Revenge: The child retaliates by doing something _____ or saying something _____. This often escalates to a revenge cycle between you and the child.

- Assumed inadequacy: The child is _____, hoping you will soon give up and leave him or her alone.

Prevention

1. _____. Pray for your teenager. Pray regularly. Pray offensively, praying for at least one strong friend and for his peer group to be a good influence. Pray defensively, praying for the removal of any friend of questionable character from your child's life. Pray intensely. Pray with your child. Pray as a couple.
2. _____. Clearly communicate the standards for your family. If you don't nail down your own convictions ahead of time, your teenager and his peer group will establish their own.
3. _____. Become involved in your child's life. Involvement means crawling inside your child's head and heart. Involvement is moving from the outside to the interior of an adolescent's life.
4. _____. The best parenting is proactive, not reactive. The reactive parent stays in a defensive posture, continually reacting to a child's mistakes. A proactive parent goes on the offensive and does what is necessary to become the child's trainer.
5. _____. There is a natural community that we need to do a better job of tapping into for our children's accountability – our church. We need to drop our defensiveness and fear and encourage others to offer observations to us about how our children are doing when we are not there to see for ourselves.
6. _____. Christian parents desire more than anything else to raise children who will grow up to love Jesus Christ and walk with Him. Those children need direction in finding their *identity* in being made in the image of God; direction in developing the *character* of Christ; direction in building strong *relationships*; and direction for understanding their passion or *mission* in life.
7. _____. Parenting is not a weekend event. At times we may have to endure a broken heart, but we must not lose heart.

Progress

Consider the following list of suggestions from, *Parenting Teens*, by Dr. Bruce Narramore and Dr. Vern C. Lewis. They are a suggested list of ways to help your teen develop more adult self-images.

- Give them increased _____
- Be _____ and supportive, but not _____
- Allow them to learn from the _____ of their actions
- Give them a nudge out of the family nest
- Let them see how _____ and _____ you are
- _____ and _____ their growth and progress
- Keep _____ to a minimum
- Be a model of a _____ _____

- Help them learn to perform adult responsibilities _____

Remember, your goal is to discipline your child for right behavior, not to punish him for what he has done wrong. Consider the previous information and work at understanding the signals your child is sending. Correct misbehavior with firmness and consistency, but with the purposeful goal of directing your child's heart to maturity.

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Jonathon goes out riding around with some of his friends. As they cruise around town, one of the guys gets a bright idea. He suggests that they stop at his house and get his old aluminum baseball bat so they can run out to the rural roads and bash mailboxes. The driver agrees and they stop at the friend's house. While he goes for the bat, Jonathon argues that maybe this isn't a good idea. Everyone gives him a hard time and when his friend gets back in the car they all take off. Everyone takes a turn smashing mailboxes except for Jonathon. After about 20 minutes or so, a policeman pulls over the car. The baseball bat is discovered and all of the boys are taken to the police station. Jonathon's parents have to go down and pick Jonathon up. He swears he didn't want to do it and that he didn't participate at all. His parents don't know what to think. They want him grounded for two weeks and to use that time to repair peoples' mailboxes.

Do you think this is fair discipline? What would you do differently if you were Jonathon's parents?