

PROMOTING RESPONSIBILITY & LEARNING  
Marvin Marshall's Monthly Newsletter

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1. WELCOME  
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MONTHLY DISCIPLINE AND LEARNING QUOTE:

"A problem is a problem only when you label it a problem."  
--william Glasser, M.D.

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REWARD or COMPENSATION?

I was asked the following:

What is a good response to people who argue that extrinsic rewards are okay because it's like adults getting a paycheck? When people say this, I cringe. I know it's not the same, but I don't know how to argue intelligently with them.

My response:

Employment is a social contract. People provide service for compensation. The only thing a fee for service has in common with a reward is that it may involve legal tender. When was the last time you looked at your paycheck and thanked your employer for the reward?

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"DISCIPLINE WITHOUT STRESS - How to Handle Every Discipline Problem" will hold a teleconference on May 13 sponsored by Otter Creek Institute. Information and subscription at various time zones are available at:

1. <http://www.ocisems.com/eoci/email/50470T.htm?type=ebrochure&ctname=50470T&woyc=20&woys=14&year=2009&location=NTL&division=OCI>

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I have added a new link for visuals to my homepage:  
<http://www.marvinmarshall.com/visuals.html>

The link contains visuals of:

#### POSTERS

- (1) The procedure described for impulse management
- (2) The Hierarchy of Social Development

#### CARDS

The procedure described for impulse management and for the Hierarchy of Social Development

#### ATTENTION MANAGEMENT

A simple visual and a procedure for quickly obtaining students' attention

#### PRIMARY POSTER

Poster for primary students

#### LEVELS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Descriptors of the levels for all grade levels

#### ALARM CLOCK ANALOGY

How to use the hierarchy to prompt students to get to school on time

The hierarchy as it relates to READING

The hierarchy as it relates to MATH

The hierarchy as it relates to SPELLING

The hierarchy as it relates to PERSEVERANCE

The hierarchy as it relates to PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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## 2. PROMOTING RESPONSIBILITY

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The current May 2009 edition of EDUCATION LEADERSHIP, the journal of the Association for Supervision and Development (ASCD) has published an article by Kerry Weisner, who I often quote in this newsletter.

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(ASCD) has published an article by Kerry Weisner, who I often quote in this newsletter.

ASCD's journal is the most widely distributed educational journal in the world. To have an article included in the publication is an honor few educators achieve. The article explains how Kerry's elementary school changed FROM making daily announcements that told students what was expected, TO ASKING REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS. Instead of listening passively, students were prompted to THINK. As a result they became more engaged and interested in implementing the messages of the announcements.

The approach is so simple yet so effective in promoting responsibility. The entire article can be read online at <http://disciplineanswers.com/one-question-a-day/> or download the article in portable document format (pdf) at [http://www.marvinmarshall.com/pdf/one\\_question\\_a\\_day.pdf](http://www.marvinmarshall.com/pdf/one_question_a_day.pdf).

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### 3. INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS

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The following are a few highlights about making the brain more effective from the February/March, 2009 issue of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN MIND:

Scientists are finding that the adult brain is far more malleable than they once thought. Our behavior and environment can cause substantial rewiring of the brain or a reorganization of its functions including where they are located. EVEN OUR PATTERNS OF THINKING ALONE ARE ENOUGH TO RESHAPE THE BRAIN.

Researchers now know that neurogenesis (the birth of new neurons) is a normal feature of the adult brain. Studies have shown that one of the most active regions for neurogenesis in the hippocampus, a structure that is vitally important for learning and long-term memory.

Mental AND physical exercise boost neuron survival. New cells need connections with other neurons that are already thriving.

Following are some suggestions for increasing brain power:

#### 1. EXERCISE

Exercise can improve the brain's executive functions of planning, organizing, and multi-switching to name a few.

Exercise is also well known for its mood-boosting effects, and people who exercise are less likely to develop dementia as they age.

Exercise increases blood flow to the brain, which also increases the delivery of oxygen, fuel, and nutrients that encourages growth, communication, and survival of neurons. Exercise also improves sleep quality and immune functions.

Senior citizens have shown that as little as 20 minutes of walking a day can do the trick.

## 2. DIET

Omega-3 fats found in fish, nuts, and seeds--along with fruits and vegetables--appear to be brain superfoods. Some of the best brain foods: walnuts, blueberries, and spinach.

## 3. MUSIC

The auditory cortex analyzes many components of music's volume, pitch, timbre, melody and rhythm. However, there is more to music's interaction with the brain than just the raw sound. Music can also activate the brain's reward centers and depress activity in the amygdala, thereby reducing fear and other negative emotions.

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Of course, I would add the three principles to practice: POSITIVITY prompts good feelings and promotes healthy neural connections, CHOICE empowers and reduces the disempowering and negative emotions of victimhood thinking, and REFLECTION prompts thinking that activates and creates new neural connections.

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## 4. IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS

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Last month I wrote about CLARITY being far more important than agreement.

Here is an example that changed from a "telling" approach to ASKING A CREATIVE, REFLECTIVE QUESTION THAT--THROUGH CLARIFICATION--INFLUENCED THE WORLD.

The event occurred on November 20, 1985 at Fleur d'Eau, Geneva, Switzerland, during the Geneva Summit meeting between the U.S. President, Ronald Reagan, and the USSR General Secretary, Mikhail Gorbachev. Gorbachev accused Reagan of lecturing him. Reagan responded that he (Reagan) had been misinterpreted.

Later that afternoon, Reagan asked Gorbachev (and only their interpreters) to go on a short walk to the cabin by the lake. During the conversation the president asked the following question to the general secretary: "If the United

States were to be attacked by something from outer space, would the U.S.S.R. come to the rescue of the United States?"

Gorbachev responded, "Of course."

Reagan responded, "Me, too," meaning that it would be the same if the situation were to be reversed.

The question asked and the resulting response immediately changed the relationship between the two world leaders and marked the beginning of the end to the "cold war."

To review, telling or lecturing (versus sharing) was reduced by asking a brilliant, reflective, and creative question. This led to CLARIFICATION THAT INFLUENCED, IMPROVED RELATIONSHIPS, AND ESTABLISHED A FRESH MINDSET.

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## 5. PROMOTING LEARNING

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THE SERIOUS NEED FOR PLAY - A few highlights, also from the February/March, 2009 issue of Scientific American Mind:

"Free play," as scientists call it, is critical for becoming socially adept, coping with stress, and building cognitive skills such as problem solving. Play-deprived childhood disrupts normal social, emotional and cognitive development. Psychologists say that limiting free play in kids may result in a generation of anxious, unhappy, and socially maladjusted adults.

Why are experts concerned that structured games--such as soccer and more structured activities--are eating into free play? Certainly games with rules are fun, foster learning to work with others, and develop group cohesion.

The reason is that games have rules set up in advance to follow. Play, on the other hand, does not have a priori rules, so it affords more creative responses. This creative aspect is key because it challenges the developing brain more than following predetermined rules do. In free play, kids use their imagination and try out new activities and roles.

Children's free play involves fantasies--such as pretending to be doctors or princesses or playing house--or mock fighting, as when kids (primarily boys) wrestle and tumble with one another for fun, switching roles periodically so that neither of them always wins. The activity does not need to have a clear goal.

Play helps develop social skills. Young people don't become SOCIALLY COMPETENT by teachers telling them how to behave. Those skills are learned by interacting with peers, by learning what is acceptable and what's not acceptable.

Because kids enjoy an activity, they develop persistence and negotiating abilities. They do not give up as easily in the face of frustration as they might doing a math problem.

Play is also critical for emotional health because it helps kids work through anxiety and stress. Through imaginative play, which is most easily initiated without adults or rules, children build fantasies that help them cope with difficult situations. Play encourages flexibility and creativity that may be advantageous in unexpected situations or new environments.

Relieving stress and building social skills also seem to be the obvious benefits of play. But there is another, more counterintuitive area of influence: Play actually appears to make kids smarter. Play improves problem solving. By playing with blocks or a Quaker Oats box, for example, youngsters spend less time in unproductive developmental activities such as watching television. (Even when young people are watching educational programs, the activity of watching is a passive one rather than an active one.)

Many parents believe they are acting in their children's best interests when they swap free play for what they see as structured learning activities. Some hesitate to let their kids play outside unattended; they fret about the possibility of physical harm that sometimes arise during play fighting or rambunctious fantasy play. A child who has had a rich exposure to social play experiences is more likely to become an adult who can manage unpredictable social situations.

Parents should let their children be children--not just because it should be fun to be a child but because denying youth unfettered joys keeps kids from developing into inquisitive, creative creatures. Play has to be reframed and seen not as an opposite to learning but rather as a complement. Curiosity, imagination and creative are like muscles: if you don't use them, you lose them.

Reducing "free play" in attempts to promote academic achievement (as in making kindergarten into first grade) is another well-intentioned but counterproductive approach--as are the others at [http://www.marvinmarshall.com/counterproductive\\_practices.htm](http://www.marvinmarshall.com/counterproductive_practices.htm).

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6. DISCIPLINE WITHOUT STRESS (DWS)  
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The following was from a post and response on the mailing:

QUESTION:

I have questions about the levels. Is it possible to use the

levels as a self-evaluation tool for any inappropriate or undesired behavior?

Here is an example of what I mean. My 6th graders had real difficulty staying on task in reading group. I told them before we began reading group, I was going to ask them some questions and that they needed to be completely honest with themselves by raising a hand to the answer that best describes what they do.

When you break into reading groups do you:

A/B - Make little or no effort to read or practice while misbehaving or disturbing others?

C - Practice and focus only when an adult is near you to impress the teacher (external motivation)?

D - Display a desire to read by reading even when the teacher is not looking and remaining focused the whole time (internal motivation)?

Out of 25 kids, 5 raised their hands for A/B, 15 raised their hand for C, and 5 raised their hand for level D.

When I asked them which one they thought was the best, they all raised their hands for D. I then told them that was what I expected from them for the remaining time during reading class. They lived up to it.

Was it an intrinsic reaction, or was it the fact that the majority of the class assessed themselves as externally driven and were therefore just seeking my approval?

RESPONSE:

You will never know!

We can only accurately judge the level of our OWN behaviour. We cannot judge whether ANOTHER PERSON is at Level C or D simply because we don't have access to the internal thoughts of another person. That's why the DWS Hierarchy is a tool of self-assessment. It's not a tool that a teacher can use to assess a student. We don't know (with 100% certainty,) what is motivating another person to act as they do. All we can see is the behaviour, not the motivation. We can accurately judge the behaviours of Level A and B, but we can only guess at the motivational levels in another person (C or D.)

The good news is this: It doesn't matter whether or not we can accurately assess a student's level. It doesn't even matter if students decide to choose Level C rather than D. It is not our job to have everyone operate from Level D motivation.

The very definition of Level D motivation is that it be

heartfelt and genuine. Our job is simply to make students aware of their choices and then inspire them to aim for a high/higher choice. LEVEL C IS EXPECTED, LEVEL D IS VOLUNTARY.

It's important that students understand that operating at any particular level is a personal choice and that BOTH Levels C and D are completely acceptable. Of course, the benefits to someone motivated on Level D are greater than the benefits a person receives when they choose Level C. This difference in benefits is what motivates many people to WANT to move up a notch in any given situation. This link might be of use to you:

<http://disciplineanswers.com/benefits-higher-levels/>  
[target=browserViewhttp://disciplineanswers.com/benefits-higher-levels/](http://disciplineanswers.com/benefits-higher-levels/)  
<http://disciplineanswers.com/benefits-higher-levels/>

Once a person consciously becomes aware of the the benefits of Level D, they very often strive to experience them again and again and again; the process just naturally spirals upward. I found the information Marv shared in his February 2009 e-zine, regarding the release of opiates in the brain in response to Level D behaviour, really interesting. No wonder Level D is so powerful! No wonder people are inspired to repeat this level once they have experienced it. Nature is on our side--providing a reward like no other!

(The link Kerry referred to is at

[http://www.marvinmarshall.com/newsletter/promotingresponsibility\\_2-09.htm#promotelearning](http://www.marvinmarshall.com/newsletter/promotingresponsibility_2-09.htm#promotelearning).)

By asking the kids to assess themselves SILENTLY, you avoid problems that might interfere with your objective. For instance, when people are asked to reflect silently, they are more inclined to be totally honest with themselves, instead of being focused on denying responsibility or trying to impress others. These things might happen when students announce their assessed level in the presence of others.

I have found that the more often you discuss the benefits of Level D, the more people become interested in trying them out. I tell students that I expect them to operate at Level C by following the procedures I have taught. Then I let them know that Level D motivation is an OPTION they can CHOOSE if they want to experience greater benefits. EXPLAINED AS A CHOICE, the highest level becomes even more appealing.

I often think that one of the very best ways to learn to use DWS is by first learning how to motivate kids in academic situations such as the one you described. If a person does this PROACTIVELY (rather than trying to fix an academic situation where the kids are already poorly behaved or unfocused), then it's easy to be positive. If a teacher is finding it hard to learn how to use the Hierarchy in discipline situations, my advice is to leave it for awhile, switch the focus to using the Hierarchy in academic settings. In time this practice will make it easier for the

teacher to remain positive in discipline situations, too.

The following link gives more information about implementing PART IV of the DWS Teaching Model:

[http://www.marvinmarshall.com/using\\_the\\_hierarchy\\_to\\_promote.htm](http://www.marvinmarshall.com/using_the_hierarchy_to_promote.htm)

Kerry

(More of Kerry's posts are at <http://disciplineanswers.com/>)

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7. TESTIMONIALS/RESEARCH  
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Your presentation was rated among the best at the conference, and there is quite a "buzz" about the simplicity of your discipline management system.

Len A. Davidson  
International Best Practice Network  
Kingston, Jamaica West Indies

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Products and services  
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THE BOOK, E-BOOK, POSTERS, CARDS, AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE:  
<http://www.marvinmarshall.com/products.htm>

FREE BOOKS AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE FOR USA SCHOOLS:  
<http://www.DisciplineWithoutStress.org>

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Resources and Support  
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RESOURCES:  
<http://www.MarvinMarshall.com>

SUPPORT LINKS AND DESCRIPTION  
<http://www.marvinmarshall.com/support.html>

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About Dr. Marvin Marshall  
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The proactive discipline and learning approach was inspired from his experiences as a parent; elementary, middle, and high school teacher; middle and high school counselor; elementary, middle, and high school principal; and district director of education. More about the author is available at <http://www.marvinmarshall.com/about.htm>.

He has presented in 43 of the United States and in 15

countries on five continents and can be contacted for presenting a keynote or workshop at <mailto:Marv@MarvinMarshall.com>.

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About this Newsletter  
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