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PROMOTING RESPONSIBILITY & LEARNING

Marvin Marshall's Monthly Newsletter

<http://www.MarvinMarshall.com>

Parenting Book: <http://www.ParentingWithoutStress.org>

Education Book: <http://www.DisciplineWithoutStress.com>

Education Charity: <http://www.DisciplineWithoutStress.org>

Blog: <http://www.Responsibility-Learning.com>

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1. WELCOME

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MONTHLY QUOTE:

Children get only one chance at childhood.

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January is the month when many people make predictions. However, as Yogi Berra said, "It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future."

On the other hand, January is also the traditional month for renewal, growth, and for making resolutions. A New Year's resolution is an attempt to take control over one's life.

My own resolution for 2010 is to have my self-talk start with, "I am choosing to. . . ."

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Although My blog will undergo some design changes, the text links are now active at <http://www.Responsibility-Learning.com>.

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## 2. PROMOTING RESPONSIBILITY

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A recent issue of the journal "Circulation" provides hard evidence that links a positive attitude with better health.

"Optimism and pessimism affect health almost as clearly as do physical factors," according to Dr. Martin Seligman, director of the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

Optimists are generally disposed to "positive future expectations." Dr. Hilary Tindle of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine stated, "They expect good things to happen and work toward them."

In contrast to optimists, Dr. Seligman stated, "A pessimist habitually views setbacks as permanent, unchangeable, and pervasive." Pessimists often feel helpless when things go wrong and tend to believe that bad luck repeats itself. Such an attitude can increase stress and contribute to depression.

He further states that pessimists can be reformed. The key is learning to recognize thought patterns (self-talk).

If your thoughts are constantly in the "glass is half-empty camp," it's not too late to change.

Most importantly, optimism is its own reward. After all, who wouldn't prefer to wake up on the right side of the bed every morning?

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Think of the businessman who was pacing the floor at night. He couldn't sleep, and his wife was getting frantic. "Darling, what's bothering you? Why don't you come to bed?"

He said, "Well, we have this huge loan payment due tomorrow, and the bank manager is a good friend of ours. I just hate to face him and say that we're not going to have the money to pay him."

So his wife picked up the phone and called their friend, the bank manager, and said, "That loan payment we have coming due tomorrow, we don't have the money to pay it."

The husband exploded. He said, "What did you do that for? That's what I was afraid of."

She replied, "Well, dear, now it's his problem, and you can come to bed."

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### 3. INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS

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When something goes wrong and you try to explain, it is interpreted as an excuse and extends the argument. The reason is that the other person thinks you are not being accountable. Instead, ask yourself if what the person is saying is basically true--and if it is--simply say, "You're right."

When you agree, you move forward--instead of anchoring yourself in some kind of argument.

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### 4. IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS

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So many arguments focus on the past in attempts to blame by focusing on what and who should have done what.

Instead, move the discussion to focus on the future and what can be done.

It's okay to evaluate in order to see what went wrong, but then move to develop a procedure so that the situation will not be repeated.

The key is to concentrate on construction--what will be done and how it will be handled the next time.

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## 5. PROMOTING LEARNING

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Carrie Sherril shared the following with me.

I tried an idea shared on page 213 in the chapter about "TEACHING." <http://www.DisciplineWithoutStress.com/>

In discussing homework or "home assignments" as referred to in the book, it was suggested that offering students choices or different options would make it more interesting and appealing to them.

So I tried it. I offered one traditional paper and pencil assignment and one that involved a little more creativity and hands on. I found the kids' reactions and choices to be quite interesting. Some chose the traditional assignment while others were excited about the opportunity to be more creative and have more "fun" with their homework.

In the end, I feel like I received more effort and enthusiasm from all because they were doing something that they chose and wanted to do.

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## 6. PARENTING

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Two very useful approaches:

1) Ask the young child a question that infers a choice without stating one--as in, "If you were to eat one of these vegetables, which one would you choose?"

2) The youngster is angry and accuses you of something. Simply ask, "What do you mean?" By asking this question, you will prompt reflection and then will learn the real reason for the anger.

In addition, this question clears the air and gives a fresh start to the conversation.

<http://parentingwithoutstress.org/> describes the book that contains many such suggestions.

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## 7. DISCIPLINE WITHOUT STRESS (DWS)

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When there is a discipline issue, the first course of action for a DWS teacher is to return to the teaching model:  
[http://www.marvinmarshall.com/teaching\\_model.html](http://www.marvinmarshall.com/teaching_model.html)

I first look at my procedures. Have I taught/practiced this particular procedure enough times for THIS child to be successful?

Can I offer this child a chance to find his OWN procedure or should I work with the youngster to develop a procedure together?

Have I taught about impulse/impulse management? Have I explained, at this child's level of understanding, what it means to be a victim of impulses?

A grade four teacher in our school had a student who blurted out continually--after everyone else in the class had learned not to do so. She worked with him, teaching him to use a poker chip to keep his impulses in check. At lunch, she gave him a poker chip to put on the left hand corner of his desk. Together they practiced. She pretended to teach and when he wanted to say something, his procedure was to first take the poker chip in hand and then raise it so she could see it. Then she would acknowledge him and ask him to speak. By practicing together in a fun way (because after all, it is kind of funny to do this when no one else is around and the teacher is pretending to teach and the child is pretending to want to say something!), he learned to curb his impulse to call out during regular classes.

Steven Covey refers to "the gap between the stimulus and the response." He suggests that any person is capable of consciously using this small gap of time to CHOOSE to do something other than simply react. Covey asserts that the goal for anyone who wants to be less reactive is to make this gap bigger over time. If a person practices doing something CONCRETE in the gap, it's easier to extend that little space of time.

If a "blurter" gets into the habit of employing a deliberate and concrete physical procedure (such as having to pick something up before he speaks,) he has automatically created a bigger gap. This larger gap affords him more time to consciously choose a desirable response. Over time, with enough practice, a positive habit can replace a negative one; self-control can replace impulsiveness.

Kerry in British Columbia, Canada  
More of Kerry's posts are available at  
<http://disciplineanswers.com/>

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See Impulse control at <http://www.marvinmarshall.com/resources/posters.html>

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## 8. TESTIMONIALS/RESEARCH

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We have been using your Raise Responsibility System for over 5 years now and are incredibly happy with the way it has guided our young people.

Matthew Jorgensen  
Coomera Anglican College  
Oxenford, Queensland  
Australia

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### Keynote & Seminar Topics

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For Parents:  
--Parenting without Stress: How to Raise Responsible Kids

For Educators:

- Using a discipline system to improve academic achievement
- Discipline without Stress, Punishments, or Rewards
- Simple Strategies for Dealing with Difficult Students

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Products and services

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THE PARENTING BOOK:

<http://ParentingWithoutStress.com>

THE DISCIPLINE AND LEARNING BOOK

<http://www.DisciplineWithoutStress.com>

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: See the navigation bar at

<http://www.MarvinMarshall.com>

POWERPOINT:

[http://www.MarvinMarshall.com/pdf/DWS\\_ppt\\_secure.pdf](http://www.MarvinMarshall.com/pdf/DWS_ppt_secure.pdf)

VISUALS--INCLUDING EXAMPLES OF HIERARCHIES:

<http://www.MarvinMarshall.com/visuals.html>

SUPPORT LINKS AND DESCRIPTIONS

<http://www.MarvinMarshall.com/support.html>

[http://www.MarvinMarshall.com/media\\_room.htm](http://www.MarvinMarshall.com/media_room.htm)

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About Dr. Marvin Marshall

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The proactive and noncoercive (but not permissive) discipline, learning, and parenting approach stemmed from his acquiring knowledge about young people as a parent; a

recreation and camp counselor; a classroom teacher at the elementary, middle, and high school levels; a middle school counselor and assistant principal; a high school counselor, guidance department chair, assistant principal of both supervision and control and curriculum and instruction; and as an elementary and high school principal.

He has presented in 44 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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