

PROMOTING RESPONSIBILITY & LEARNING

Marvin Marshall's Monthly Newsletter

<http://www.MarvinMarshall.com>

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

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

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1. WELCOME

MONTHLY QUOTE:

I know you believe you understood what you think I said,
but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not
what I meant.

--from a desk plaque of Chris Gilissen when we were both
assistant principals at Westminster High School,

Huntington Beach Union High School District

Shipment of the parenting book will begin in late December.

IF YOU HAVE ALREADY SIGNED UP FOR THE DISCOUNT, you will receive a special e-mail advising you how to order the book with the special 50% pre-publication discount on the \$29.97 laminated hardbound book.

If you HAVE NOT already signed up and are interested in receiving notification for the special discount, go to <http://www.parentingwithoutstress.com> and enter your e-mail address in the notification sign-up box BY WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 18.

2. PROMOTING RESPONSIBILITY

QUESTION:

Can you explain the difference between praise and acknowledgment?

RESPONSE:

It's important to be aware of the difference between praise and acknowledgment because so often we praise when we would really rather create the outcome that acknowledgment accomplishes. Acknowledgments encourage and motivate. They serve to give recognition without the disadvantages of praise.

The following two characteristics usually determine whether a comment is one of praise or one of acknowledgment:

1. Praise often starts with a reference to oneself, as in
 - "I am so proud of you for.... "
 - "I like the way...."
2. Praise is patronizing.

Praise has a price. It implies a lack of acceptance and worth when the youth does not behave as the adult wishes.

Using a phrase which starts with, "I like," encourages a young person to behave in order to please the adult. By contrast, acknowledgment simply affirms and fosters self-satisfaction in the young person.

Notice the difference in the following examples:

Praise:

"I am so pleased with the way you treated your brother."

Acknowledgment:

"You treated your brother very well."

Praise:

"I like the way you are working."

Acknowledgement:

"Your working shows good focus and control."

Praise:

"I'm so proud of you for your good grades."

Acknowledgment:

"Your grades show success in school. How do you feel about that?"

Here is something to consider:

If you would not make the comment to an adult, then think twice before making it to a young person.

3. INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS

One of the reasons we do not get what we want is that sometimes we are a lot clearer about what we don't want than about what we do want.

When asked what they want, people often respond with what they don't want. When what they don't want is the clearest thing in their minds, then that is what they are most likely to get.

As soon as you get clear and make a claim for what you DO want, the greater the chances are of your getting it.

Clarity is critical, and positivity is always more successful than negativity.

4. IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS

Here are five tips for getting along with anyone.

1. Focus on issues, not personalities.

Many people unknowingly use trigger words that can disable a conversation and may ultimately destroy a relationship. Such words as dumb, stupid, and unprofessional criticize the person, rather than the content of their ideas or specific actions.

2. Communicate clearly.

Then ask questions such as, "Am I making any sense?" or "Am I clear in what I'm saying?"

3. Be aware of your body language (kinesics).

Shaking one's head, turning away, or shrugging your shoulders can send the wrong message. It's not only what you say, but how you say it, and SHOW it that counts.

4. Thank people.

One of the most overlooked phrases in the English language is "Thank you." It's not just important to value people but to let them know so they know you value them.

5. Admit mistakes.

Another of the most influential phrases is, "I made a mistake." It's almost amazing how saying this reduces negative feelings.

5. PROMOTING LEARNING

The following is a post from Kerry at DisciplineWithoutStress@yahoo.com

My teaching partner, Darlene, and I recently gave a presentation for the many new staff members who have joined our school since we first studied DWS seven years ago. While highlighting the skill of reflection and the use of questioning in the DWS approach, one of our colleagues, Charlie Fagan, shared a list of questions that he finds can empower young learners. He got this list from a counsellor years ago.

Charlie teaches his students to use these questions as an aid to improve their ability to focus and learn. He introduces the questions OVER A PERIOD OF A COUPLE OF MONTHS, adding one new question at a time. He has noticed that unfocused students become more aware of things that distract them from their learning and are more willing to take responsibility for their learning behavior when they are encouraged to ask themselves the following questions:

10 HABITS OF ATTENDING

Students should be encouraged to ask themselves:

1. Am I here now? (Meaning "Am I fully present?") Sometimes Charlie actually encourages kids to leave the room and come back in once they feel they're ready to learn. For most, that only takes a minute--perhaps a trip to the water fountain and back is enough to adjust their frame of mind. Others may need longer to shake off something that's happened at home or on the playground. In that case, he might find an adult in the school who has a minute to speak with the student and help them to make a better start to the next portion of the day.
2. Am I focused?
3. Am I listening to the teacher?
4. Do I know what I have just read?
5. Is my mind wandering?
6. Is the voice in my head taking me off task?
7. Am I being distracted by sights, sounds or other people?

8. Do I need to ask for help to clarify any confusion?

9. Is my desk clear of distractions?

As DWS promises in its three principles (positivity, choice, and reflection) it's much more positive and effective if a child makes a proactive decision to get rid of his/her own toys rather than having a teacher confiscate them when they become a problem.

10. Should I change where I'm sitting to be in a better place to learn?

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

6. PARENTING

The following is from a USA TODAY article of September 2, 2009.

Headlines:

THE SECRET OF SCHOOL SUCCESS. WANT YOUR KIDS TO MASTER BOOKS? FIRST THEY NEED TO MASTER THEMSELVES. FORTUNATELY NEW RESEARCH IS FINDING THAT SELF-CONTROL CAN BE TAUGHT.

There is growing research on "self-regulation"--people's ability to stop, think, make a plan, and control their impulses.

These are the same skills needed to do well in school and in life.

Researchers have become keenly interested in psychologist Walter Mischel's famous "marshmallow study" from the 1960's in which a researcher would place a marshmallow in front of a hungry 4-year-old and tell the child that she could eat the marshmallow right then--or have two if she waited until the researcher returned. About a third of the children could distract themselves and wait.

Followed for years, these disciplined kids had better school

outcomes and scored more than 200 points higher on the SAT than the children who shoved the marshmallow in their mouths right away.

The ability to control behavior in purposeful ways has enormous implications for later life. For example, the ability to control impulses is critical for choosing to study instead of watching TV.

Unfortunately, children are getting less and less practice in self-regulation. They don't spend much time observing adults beyond their care givers as they go about their work and their daily lives. They watch a lot of TV and play video games, neither of which promotes impulse control.

Widespread practices of modern parenting don't help older children flex their muscles necessary to master themselves. We hate to see children make mistakes, or worse, fail. Rather than challenging children and teens to self-regulate, the easier approach is to regulate them.

Parents "help" in science fair projects. Well-meaning moms and dads race to school with forgotten assignments rather than view such mistakes as an opportunity to coach children to solve their own problems. These actions have positive immediate outcomes, but they undermine the self-regulation skills children will need as adults who are suddenly responsible for planning their own lives.

Parents need to "back off" when kids get frustrated but encourage them and direct them in positive ways.

How to do this is a prime focus in the new book described at <http://parentingwithoutstress.com/>

7. DISCIPLINE WITHOUT STRESS (DWS)

The following is from the mailing
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DisciplineWithoutStress/>

QUESTION:

Here is a question I have for the DWS gurus out there. What kinds of positive recognitions do you use in your classroom? I don't mean like prizes or rewards, but recognizing good choices. Do you ask the kids about their behavior when they're doing the right thing and emphasize how good it feels or how it's going to lead to getting what you want? Do you use any kind of awards?

The teacher across the hall uses a fish stuffed animal (she uses the FISH philosophy in her room) as a "mascot" and chooses a student every weekend to take it home. She chooses the student who has "earned" it by making good choices all week. She really hams it up and makes it a big deal and the kids get really excited about it.

I was thinking that I wanted to incorporate some more positive recognition. But I don't want to choose students who have "been good" because I don't want to send that message. Rather, I want to acknowledge things like clean desks every week, homework completion, and things that are tangible and easy to recognize.

So I guess what I'm looking for are thoughts on these kinds of "awards," good or bad--if you use anything like it in your rooms or other things you do to recognize the positive.

ALAN'S RESPONSE:

Since we use reflective questions to help kids evaluate negative behavior, we would do the same with positive behavior. When a kid reflects on how she felt after helping someone, we are telling her that what is important is how she feels, that intrinsic reward--not that her self-esteem is dependent and contingent on what others are saying. Feedback is important, but it can be given as information rather than trying to be manipulative and be judgmental, inferring "You are doing what I want."

WHEN WE FOCUS ON THE INTRINSIC REWARD WE FOCUS ON THE PROCESS, not the end result. We want to focus on the motives. So completing homework does not say very much as to whether the kid is enjoying learning and found the homework challenging and interesting.

The other teacher is using rewards and awards to externally promote interest and get compliance. It works in the short term but undermines any prospect of developing an interest or love for the learning itself. The competition of putting kids against one another, ranking them, inferring that one student's success is dependent on another person's failure are not really conducive with the values of caring and cooperative learning that we are trying to foster. Competition is not only bad for the weak students, the so-called losers, but even the A students lose out. And the parents, too: My kid came home with the mascot and yours didn't.

We cannot only ask what type of person kids want to be and what actions support these values, but kids could also be prompted to ask what type of classroom they want, talking in the plural we, rather than I.

We don't need rewards and recognitions to extort extra effort. If we make it interesting, focus on connecting, kids' natural curiosity to learn, and make learning associated with fun then we promote intrinsic motivation. When we use praise, rewards, and recognition (vs. acknowledgments), we change their motivation so that it becomes to get the praise, reward, and recognition.

8. TESTIMONIALS/RESEARCH

Here is a cute story about rewards in a classroom:

I teach first grade, and sometimes just getting the kids to remember their folders and to sharpen pencils is a chore. I usually start out the year reminding them, nagging them, and finally giving up. THEY don't care if they have a folder or a pencil. I'm the only one who seems bothered. So I put a sticker chart in their folders and offer stickers and trips to the treasure box if they come prepared. I KNOW it's not helping, and it bothers me every day as I waste time on this activity, but at least they have pencils when we start to work.

One day recently I was monitoring the kids' work. I commented to one boy about his pencil; it was really short

and dull. He said it was all he had, but in his pencil holder on his desk there were three long, sharp pencils just sitting there. I asked him about those. He said, "But those are my sharp pencils! I don't use those. Those are just for getting stickers."

It took me all year to realize that this kid had used the same sharp pencils EVERY DAY to get a sticker, but never once used them to write with. So much for external motivation transferring to internal motivation!

>From "Parenting Without Stress: How to Raise Responsible Kids While Keeping a Life of Your Own," p. 190

Products and services

THE PARENTING BOOK:
<http://parentingwithoutstress.com>

THE DISCIPLINE AND LEARNING BOOK
<http://www.DisciplineWithoutStress.com>

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

POSTERS, CARDS, AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE:
<http://www.marvinmarshall.com/products.htm>

Resources and Support

RESOURCES: See the menu bar at <http://www.MarvinMarshall.com>

POWERPOINT:
http://www.marvinmarshall.com/pdf/DWS_ppt_secure.pdf

VISUALS:
<http://www.marvinmarshall.com/visuals.html>

SUPPORT LINKS AND DESCRIPTIONS
<http://www.marvinmarshall.com/support.html>
http://www.marvinmarshall.com/media_room.htm

About Dr. Marvin Marshall

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; a middle school assistant principal; a high school counselor; a high school guidance department chair; a high school assistant principal of both supervision and control and curriculum and instruction; and as an elementary and high school principal. Additional information is available at <http://parentingwithoutstress.org/about.html>.

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>.

About this Newsletter

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