

RAISING KIDS WITHOUT RAISING CANE

**A guide to managing young children's
behaviour in helpful and healthy ways.**

Not just a book written for parents
and caregivers of children ages 2 to 6,
but essentially an attitude towards
people of all ages...



Gary Direnfeld, MSW

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Preface To The New Edition

Well, I've been talking with my son again. I told him I was "rewriting" my book and he asked me, " Why"?

I explained that there were a few issues to be cleared up and some things that had been left unsaid.



He then asked me if I was going to tell parents not to smack their kids or was I going to tell them what they should do. I explained that I would do both. I would say a bit about what not to do, but would concentrate more on what to do. He thought that was a good idea and so have the many parents who have provided feedback on the first

edition of the book. It seems that people know enough about what not to do. They are appreciating direct suggestions on how to handle common issues regarding managing behaviour in ways that promote healthy development. When it comes to self help books, the feedback also suggests that it is refreshing to concentrate on how to move in a healthy direction, rather than cleaning up the mess for things gone wrong.

I am proud to have provided ~~Raising Kids Without Raising Cane~~. It fills a niche for those parents who need quick, easy and direct information in a package that doesn't overwhelm. The book is starting to find its way into a kind of underground network with parents giving it to friends and grandparents giving it to their adult children on behalf of the grandchildren. This is

the nicest compliment I can receive. Thank you.

I hope you enjoy this new edition of ~~Raising Kids Without~~
Raising Cane.

-- Gary Direnfeld, MSW, RSW

Preface To The First Edition

When I was just about finished writing this book, my son asked me how thick it would be. I showed him a space between my thumb and forefinger and he said, "That's it? That's nothing at all." I told him, "It's more important what I say, than how long it takes me to say it". With that he was satisfied. I hope you are too.

Raising children is probably the single greatest responsibility most people face and we do it with the least amount of education, training or experience.

In my experience, most *grown ups* only seek education after they find that they are stuck. I hope this book might become a general interest book, so that people could learn about healthy child-rearing, before they actually need the information.

In this fast-paced world, where there is a demand for instant satisfaction, instant solutions and instant knowledge, I hope people will take time to enjoy a book on raising children. If people do take the time, then I believe all children stand a better chance in this world.

I would like to thank my clients and friends for their help in providing feedback for this book. In particular I wish to thank Elizabeth Shaver for her generous feedback and support during the first draft and Lilian Blume for her help in editing the final version.

I especially thank my wife Arlene. As I said in my wedding speech, "A good relationship opens you up, a poor one closes you down". Together we have both opened up to fulfil our

mutual dreams. Arlene is stepmother to our son from my previous marriage. There is much to be learned from someone who can successfully make someone else's child her own. With our house in order, I was able to complete this book.

Please enjoy.

p.s. Mom, thank you too and after Dad died, you made a good choice in Max. Dad, you continue to live fondly in my memories.

RAISING KIDS WITHOUT RAISING CANE

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This book is dedicated to my son
Brennan, who taught me everything
important about raising children,
and to Nichole, who although I only met once
before her untimely death at age nine,
taught me how fragile a child's life can be.

INTRODUCTION

Many parents ask if I believe in spanking, and while I tend to answer most questions head on, this is one I like to side-step. Debates on the issues of spanking take us away from the more important question.

The real question is, "Given all that is known about raising children, what is the most effective way to facilitate the healthy development of a child's physical, emotional and spiritual well-being?".



Frustrated parents of young children are spanking because they do not know other ways to get their children to mind their words. There is more than enough research to show that spanking often creates new problems.

Children who are spanked tend to be more aggressive in the playground and tend to have less developed problem-solving skills. Their self-esteem tends to be lower and they harbour feelings of wanting to get back at those who do the spanking - resentment and vengeance.

Experience has demonstrated time and time again, that when concentrating on teaching parents what to do, instead of what not to do, most parents decrease or stop spanking altogether. So when parents perform other skills for gaining compliance and co-operation, children tend to be better adjusted, play more co-operatively and respond to their parents' words.

At this point however, many parents start worrying about how to teach children right from wrong without spanking. They wonder about discipline.

A truck driver makes long hauls from Canada deep into the southern United States. He enjoys listening to the radio, particularly gospel stations around Tennessee. During a long journey, he heard a story:

Imagine there are two dogs inside of you, inside of everyone. Imagine that one is white and one is black. They are of equal age and equal strength.



They are fighting and fighting constantly. Which one will win the struggle? Which one will win the fight? ...The one you feed!

In the same way, children's good behaviour must be fed.

Unfortunately however, many parents focus on catching children when they are misbehaving.

I was once doing some group work at an inner city school with problematic young teenagers. The teachers loved this group. It kept these kids out of their classroom for a couple of hours a week. However, before a child could be accepted into the group, the teacher had to set some goal for the child. The

teacher had to answer, "What is it you want to see this child do differently as a result of attending the group?". One teacher responded with, "When I reprimand or punish Paul, I want him to listen and follow through". I shuddered!

This was not an ethically acceptable goal. The only way we would know if it were achieved, would be to set Paul up to misbehave, in order to test his response to punishment. With some work the teacher was able to set goals that required appropriate behaviour, instead of misbehaviour.

Our premise has to change when interacting with children, when teaching right from wrong. The focus must not be on catching misbehaviour.

Of course children must learn right from wrong. Of course children must learn discipline. Of course children must come up against structures that channel their behaviour into socially acceptable patterns.

The question is "how".

The solution is by changing the focus - by concentrating on setting children up for success and catching them in the act of behaving in ways we want to see repeated.

SET UP FOR SUCCESS

When I give a workshop on raising young children, I begin by asking for a volunteer. The volunteer is handed a stack of papers and in a kind and gentle voice is told, "Here it is. Please see that it gets done."

It goes without saying that the poor volunteer has no idea what to do. Both men and women react with a nervous giggle.

The audience is then asked, "What is this volunteer thinking? What is this volunteer feeling?" The list of thoughts include: Who is this guy; What does he want; I don't know what to do; Can I do what he wants; I don't like him; I'll just sit here; Gee, this is a big audience. The list of feelings include: embarrassed; scared; centred out; confused; angry; insecure; frustrated.

These are a normal range of thoughts and feelings for people who are centred out and given vague instructions.

Next the audience is asked for a normal range of responses by someone in this position. "What might this person do at work, in this situation?"

Some people say: "get angry", "harbour resentment", "backstab", "not do it", "complain behind the boss's back" and "quit". Eventually someone says the worker could ask for help. Spontaneously a large number in the audience respond with "Oh yeah, sure." Even mature adults find asking for help an unlikely choice when feelings of anger and frustration are present.

Young children in similar circumstances are not as sophisticated

as adults. Although the feelings are the same, children tend to act out more directly. They hit, fight, run away or talk back. And when our kids are acting this way, what do we tell them to do? "Grow up!"

Now, even though the volunteer was approached politely, with a smile on my face, my intentions backfired. The same goes on in interactions with our children and it is not because of them.

When it comes to communication, we take much for granted.

We talk with our mouths full, the television blaring or the headphones on. (Sometimes it is the television that is the distracting the child. Many parents are afraid of "televisionoffitis" - the complaining or tantruming that can ensue when a parent turns off the television. However, turning off the television almost always guarantees gaining the child's attention.)

We shout upstairs and downstairs, unaware of our children's distractions. We assume that children can read our minds and know what we want.



Children need to be set up for success. Whenever we talk, whenever we are placing a demand or expectation, we need to make sure we have their undivided attention and provide all the information necessary for them to understand what we want.

Talking to a two year old is different from talking to a six year old. The two year old needs one thing at a time, while older children can handle longer sentences and

more instructions.

If your child is not doing what is requested ask yourself the following:

Did my child actually hear me?

Did my child actually understand me?

Is my child actually capable of doing what is asked?

When was the last time you either misheard or misinterpreted a spouse or friend while watching television. In setting children up for success we must realize that, like adults, you may have to get their attention, before placing a request or expectation.

This is a fundamental lesson in relating to children, gaining their compliance and cooperation, and in getting them to listen. Make sure they are not distracted and can hear you. Make sure you provide all the information necessary for them to do what is expected. Make sure it is in language that is suitable for the child's age and ability.

Why set a child up for success?

1. It makes life easier for the parent.

2. You will not have to consequence as often.
3. Children feel good about themselves when they know what you want and can do it!

The First Golden Rule

Always have children's attention when talking and give them all the information necessary to do what is expected, appropriate to their level of understanding.

THE POWER OF FEEDBACK

Imagine a three year old child is sitting at the dinner table. After about ten minutes the child's parent says, "Good for you. What a nice child." Within the last ten minutes this child has sat quietly, eaten some peas, thrown food at the dog, burped, farted, dirtied the diaper and pulled someone's hair. From the child's point of view, the praise labels every one of the past behaviours acceptable.

Remember the story of the two dogs from the introduction. The dog you feed is the dog that wins. If you feed both dogs, both will grow. Behaviour works the same way.

Some time ago, I was providing a workshop for a group of enthusiastic teachers' aides. They were working with developmentally challenged young children at summer school. An aide approached and discussed the situation of Pino.

Pino was four years old and had Downs Syndrome. According to the aide, Pino just wouldn't listen. Whenever the class transferred from their home room to the art room, Pino was disruptive in the hall.

Pino would begin hopping down the hall and the aide would call on him to stop hopping. Next Pino would begin to skip and the aide would then call on him to stop skipping. Pino did stop skipping but went on to prancing. When told to stop prancing, Pino did stop, but went back to his original hopping. And on and on.

The aide was asked to try something different. Before leaving the home room the aide was to get Pino's attention and tell Pino

to walk quietly down the centre of the hall, one foot after the other, following a line in the floor. After every fifth step, the aide was instructed to say, "You are walking quietly, one foot after the other."

The following week a very happy teacher's aide burst out that Pino was now listening. Pino was now walking quietly and properly from the home room to the art room.

The truth of the matter is that Pino was actually a good listener and had always been a good listener. Every time the aide told Pino what not to do, he stopped. The only problem was that the aide never told Pino what to do and so was feeding the wrong dog.

Telling a child what not to do feeds the wrong dog and omits instructing the child what to do. We cannot assume that children will know what we want them to do, without directly telling them. A child must be told "what to do."

After following the first golden rule so the child hears and understands what you want, back it up with feedback. Provide an informative response. Feed the right dog. The aide looked at Pino and told him he was doing what was asked, as he was doing it. "You are walking quietly, one foot after the other." The aide focused on the appropriate behaviour by feeding the right dog. Pino continued to walk happily. Now he knew he was on the right track!



Feedback draws attention to behaviour you want to see repeated. And why give feedback?

1. It makes our lives as parents much easier.
2. There is nothing to punish if a child is doing what is expected.
3. Children feel good about themselves when they know they are on the right track!

To facilitate children repeating appropriate behaviour, provide feedback on the behaviour you want to see repeated. All you have to do is mention the very behaviour the child is doing. *You are playing quietly... You ate your broccoli... You shared your toy.* If you forget to mention it as the behaviour is occurring, mention it later, like at bedtime. *You put the crayons away this afternoon, all by yourself!*

Think about the dog we tend to feed. We are all experts at catching children doing wrong. For this we provide no shortage of feedback. Phrases like, "...and how many times must I tell you", or, "Oh no, not again.", demonstrate how we feed the wrong dog.

How feedback connects to children repeating behaviour is obvious. The key is not to withhold feedback, but to provide it for what we want to see repeated. Whenever you see your child doing something you would like to see repeated, provide feedback.

The Second Golden Rule

Provide the right information so children know what you want. Provide feedback to let children know they are on the right track to help the desired behaviour get repeated.

PRAISE AND SELF-ESTEEM

Welcome to the jungle. The quest is to raise a kid that has a good sense of self. You've been told that praise is the key but be careful because what you haven't been told is that this key can also open the door to a pack of troubles.

Praise, like any tool for raising kids, can be used inappropriately. Praise tends to imply attaching a value to a child for demonstrating particular behaviour. However, children are valuable and should be loved for the mere fact that they exist. Even though there is a connection, there is also a difference between valuing children and facilitating appropriate behaviour. While it is true that children who are valued tend to behave and perform better, children who are only praised and whose misbehaviours are not dealt with, tend to believe everything they do is all right and that the world revolves around them. This in turn leads to the development of self-righteousness.

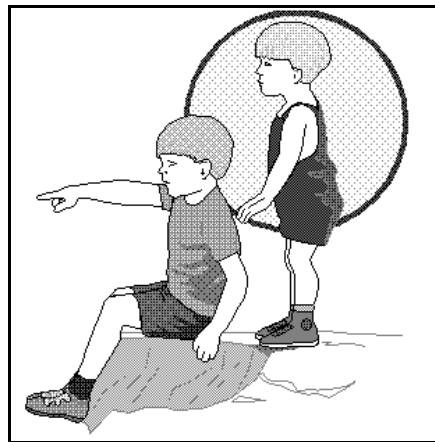
Self-righteousness can best be described as an attitude about oneself. It is characterised by a feeling of being important to the exclusion of anyone else, so that what the child wants or feels or does, counts for everything above anyone else. Kids with this kind of attitude tend to be bossy, telling others what to do, or loners because no one else can measure up. While valuing a child is absolutely important for the development of a healthy sense of self, praise without direction, feedback and consequences, turns out to be a prescription for a self righteous attitude.

Rather than self-righteousness, self-esteem is the true prize to be sought in terms of a child's healthy sense of self. Self-esteem is relational. With self-esteem the child not only feels good

about herself individually, but also in relation to others. Self-righteousness is egocentric, self-esteem is social.

Self-esteem, also an attitude, implies a sense of feeling good about oneself and particularly in relation to others. Children with healthy self-esteem feel good about themselves at no one else's expense. These children tend to be kind and considerate.

There are four things parents can do to facilitate healthy self-esteem in their children.



Certainly the first is valuing - letting your children know you love them. This is done through praise and through direct expressions of love, hugs, and kisses. Some parents feel they can take this for granted, that without direct expression, the child will somehow know they are loved. Wrong.

Children need to be told directly by their parents or caregiver that they are loved. Children need to be held, cuddled, and played with.

Some parents talk about "quality time". Close, but not quite.

While quality is important, children need quantity too! What better way to demonstrate being valued than by spending time

with your child?

Too busy? How about breakfast, a lunchtime or after school phone call, a bedtime story, joining in the carpool to school, a joint hobby, or a family activity like bike riding? Few things speak more to being valued, than just being there.

Other parental behaviours that speak to demonstrating valuing children include things that are sometimes aggravating to them! Infant car seats, seat belts, bicycle helmets, gates above stairways, locked cupboards, selective television, appropriate bedtimes, and proper snacks are all things that many children get annoyed with. So what!

Parents must not be manipulated by children's annoyance into doing things that are potentially harmful to the child. It is absolutely OK for children to feel frustration for things they are either not allowed to do or else supposed to do. Clearly children will not understand the reasons behind many of our parental responsibilities - until they have grown up to become parents themselves! Rather than giving in to their frustration, help them discuss or find other solutions to making the best out of discomforting situations. A song makes most car rides seem faster. Apples cut with a wavy chopper looks fancy and special. Bedtime at anytime is fun when accompanied by a story and a cuddle or a few minutes with a flashlight for shadow puppets.

Competency is the next ingredient to healthy self-esteem. Competency means having a sense of control over one's environment; the personal, social and physical. From the moment kids are born they are developing their competencies. It starts with the sucking response and the competency of nursing. It goes on to social competencies with crying, cooing,

and smiling. Later come competencies over the physical environment as the child learns to play with objects or hold a bottle.

The response of parents to the development of children's competencies is crucial. As the parent responds to the child's crying, cooing, or smiling, he learns that he has some control or impact on the behaviour of another person. This can bring satisfaction in the way of feeding, diaper change, play, etc.

As the child grows and begins exploring the house (often the



kitchen cupboards) the child gains the opportunity to increase competency with access and control of larger objects over greater spaces. Again the response of the parent is crucial. Some parents structure the child's environment for maximum exploration while other parents localize their child's area of living. Either way, making way for the child to play and explore safely, whatever the limits, is often referred to as "baby proofing". The greater the control and mastery of skills a child develops the greater the sense of competency - the second ingredient to healthy self-esteem.

Parents can facilitate competency by providing safe areas for children to develop skills and by allowing their children to participate in household activities such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, making beds, etc. The goal of these activities is for the child to develop a sense of control - not the perfectionist pursuit of the best made bed, etc.

Participation should be fun, supportive or helpful.

The third thing parents can do to facilitate healthy self-esteem in their children is to direct and participate with their children in the doing of good deeds. Doing good deeds teaches children to be aware of the life of others beyond themselves. This enables the development of empathy and altruistic behaviour. These are invaluable ingredients for making healthy relationships and developing a sense of responsibility for making the world a better place. After all, imagine if your child grew up to be the head of the country or even more importantly, a husband, wife, or parent!

Doing good deeds starts very early. Ten month old Vicky has picked up the lid from a jar of food. Mother looks at Vicky, stretches out her hand and says, "Ta". Vicky hands the lid over to mother and mother smiles. A moment later, Vicky notices another lid, picks it up, looks at mother and makes a bright musical noise with her breath as she inhales happily. Mother looks over, sees her child's delight, takes the second lid and says, "Thank you".

Doing good deeds makes people feel good and behave well towards others - remember the lesson Scrooge learned. What's important is that children are encouraged or even positioned to be helpful to the extent of their ability. The little one may carry a plastic cup to the table, the middle one a plate and a spoon, while the big one can clear. Special little projects can be undertaken, visits can be made, and pennies can be put in the charity coin boxes at the checkout counter.

The last thing parents can provide to facilitate self-esteem in their children is structure. Structure is a word that actually implies two separate concepts: routines and limits. Routines

provide structure over time and limits provide structure over behaviour.

Another way to think of structure is like the rules of a game. How well could you play Monopoly, Hop Scotch, Tag, or Hide and Go Seek, if there weren't rules? Rules include who goes next, under which circumstances, and when. The rules also include what happens when someone goes outside the normal bounds of play - miss a turn, pay a fine, etc.

Well, how about the game of life... How much sleep is enough? When do we eat? Where am I allowed to jump up and down? What will happen if I hit?

Knowing the rules of the game of life is sometimes referred to as internalising structure. This too is also a form of competency - when the child knows the how's, what's, when's, and where's, of life. Unfortunately this information doesn't come automatically. Children may pick some of the rules up incidentally as they go along, but this leaves much to chance. Parents can help their children internalise structure by commenting on daily routines, specifying appropriate behaviour, providing feedback and by providing consequences for undesirable behaviour.

These four ingredients, valuing, competency, good deeds, and structure form the basic building blocks for the development of self-esteem. And why develop self-esteem in children?

- 1) Children with healthy self-esteem feel good about themselves.
- 2) Children with healthy self-esteem relate well to others.

- 3) Children with healthy self-esteem behave more appropriately and are more aware of the world around them.

The Third Golden Rule

Praise is necessary but not sufficient. To facilitate healthy self-esteem provide generous amounts of valuing, opportunities to develop competency, opportunities for doing good deeds, and structure.

CONSEQUENCES

Consequences are a fact of life. If you touch a hot stove, you get burned. If you talk harshly, you lose friends. If you share your toys, other children will play with you. If you clean up after yourself, others will be more inclined to give you things to play with.

Consequences are healthy. You only need to touch the hot stove once to learn not to touch it again.

Consequences are not a product of power. They are a product of what may happen in the normal course of life - what comes naturally.



(Please don't think that all naturally occurring consequences are ok. Make sure that you are providing a safe home/environment so that your child doesn't get hurt needlessly.)

Consequences provide a way of learning.

Children may learn from being told what to do. Children may learn from being given feedback. Children may learn from the consequences that result from their actions.

Parents must understand that children will naturally want to explore their environment. They will naturally want to learn and push the limits of their interests and abilities. In so doing

children will come up against certain structures. Structures that provide limits or outcomes for behaviour are called consequences.

Generally speaking there are two kinds of consequences - natural and manufactured.

Natural Consequences

Natural consequences occur on their own. When I touch the stove, I get burned. When I share my toys, more children will want to play with me.

Natural consequences provide for incidental learning; the learning just happens. Natural consequences direct children's behaviour. If something feels good, the behaviour will continue. If something does not feel good, the behaviour will likely stop.

Depending on the severity of the consequence, a child may feel like continuing. If one book falls from the shelf, the child may continue to climb. If the entire shelf topples over, the child will likely withdraw.

Many parents want to spare their children any pain. If the consequence is upsetting, but not really physically or emotionally harmful, it can be permitted.

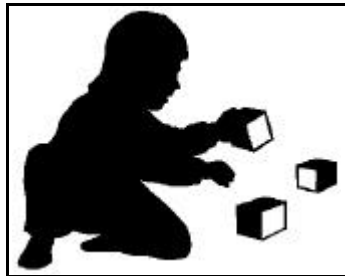
Jerry's mother overhears her son's growing frustration while playing with blocks. The tower gets so high, and then topples over. The mother, herself upset by her son's frustration, steps in to help with the blocks. The scenario becomes a pattern. Before long, the mother finds herself playing with the blocks with Jerry supervising.

Children who are continually spared the consequences of their actions are less able to handle the demands of life as they get older. Why? Because they are not practised or experienced. They have not been provided the opportunity to develop competencies in this area.

Sure it is good to help and play with your children, but be aware not to let it impede your child's own learning process. Rather than building the blocks, consider providing instruction or helping out with the feelings of frustration. Provide feedback on accomplishments and/or perseverance.

Natural consequences provide a powerful tool for learning right actions from wrong actions and allows the child the full responsibility for the outcome of the behaviour. *Let the blocks fall where they may.* The key here is not to spare children the consequences of their actions, but to help them understand the connection between behaviour and consequences. Parents can

help children find alternative behaviours that have positive payoffs.



Manufactured Consequences

Consequences do not always occur naturally. Sometimes they have to be manufactured.

In the absence of naturally occurring consequences, parents must provide a consequence for undesirable behaviour.

This is how society works. If you speed, you are likely to get a ticket. If you contribute to your community, you may receive an

award.

Manufactured consequences are things that parents do following their child's behaviour. These can be divided into two kinds: positive and negative. Positive consequences will contribute to a child continuing behaviour. Negative consequences will contribute to a child stopping behaviour. Parents act as the mediators of society. They teach children right from wrong and the meaning of no, through manufactured consequences.

A child who touches the stove today may not get burned. However, we do not want our child to learn naturally if it means they might receive a serious injury. In this situation first try the set up for success. Tell the child not to touch the stove and explain he could get burned. Then and very importantly, provide appropriate alternatives for playing, other than the stove. In the event the child continues to touch the stove the parent can manufacture a consequence, a negative consequence that would deter the child from taking that path again.

Common forms of negative consequences are those that involve the loss of pleasurable things: a favourite food, a special play toy, a preferred activity. More intense negative consequences include the loss of personal freedom by sitting in the corner or being sent to one's room and the withholding of social connection by ignoring.

1. Ignoring

Many parents feel that as a consequence, ignoring a child is doing nothing. On the contrary, the withdrawal of social connection is a powerful device for consequenceing behaviour and it is a very active process. (Ignoring is actually quite difficult to do and should not be used if it leaves a child at risk

of being hurt or doing harm.) Whining and temper tantrums are often behaviours that respond well to ignoring as long as the parent perseveres.

Remember the story of the two dogs. Sometimes it takes more effort to not feed a dog. It is true that just as feeding one dog makes it stronger, not feeding the other can make it weaker.

Many parents feel however, that they cannot let certain behaviours go without comment.



Remember the two dogs. Remember that although you think you are weakening one, you may actually be strengthening it. The secret to successful ignoring is that rather than commenting on undesirable behaviour, wait until you see or else ask to see the appropriate behaviour and then provide feedback on that. Work the situation for the set up for success scenario. Jesse won't stop picking a scab. Father is concerned that it may get infected and continually scolds Jesse for picking. Jesse's picking increases and the scab starts to bleed. Father remembers the two dogs. He tells Jesse to take a ball and makes a game by getting Jesse to roll the ball along his arm. Father and son are enjoying some play. The scab stops bleeding and father comments how well Jesse can balance the ball.

And how about little Pino! You can bet that he was told time and time again what not to do and all to no effect. Ignore the undesirable. Tell the child what to do and provide feedback for the appropriate behaviour.

2. Response cost

Another negative consequence is the loss of favourite activities or things. This is generally regarded as a *response cost*. In other words, "If you are going to dance, you are going to pay the piper". If I get caught speeding, I lose some money. If I continue to speed, the response cost increases and I lose my licence. Rather than sitting a child in the corner, consider placing the toy in time out!

3. Time out

Loss of personal freedom is generally regarded as "time out". Time out requires the loss of anything that might be pleasurable, for a determined length of time. If I continue to drive after I have lost my licence, I go to jail.

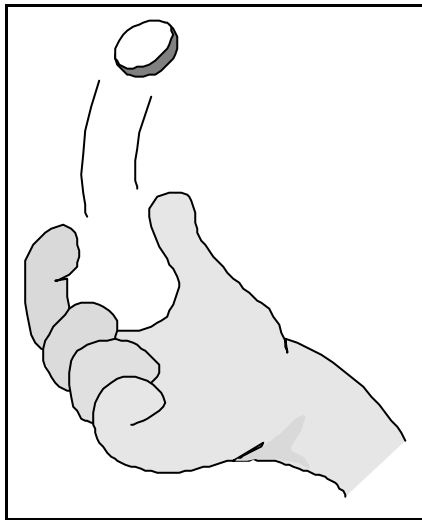
Time out can be served anywhere! (sitting in the corner, sitting on the stairs, sitting quietly in your seat with your hands folded - if riding in the car) Time out simply requires withholding anything pleasurable from the child. A child should be separated from activities and other people for up to as many minutes as years old. (A two year old would get up to two minutes and a five year old would get up to five minutes, etc.) Long time outs (greater than 5 - 10 minutes) lose their effect. After a few minutes, the child is likely daydreaming to idle the time away so there is no longer any benefit to the time out. In fact time outs that are very brief, a matter of seconds, are sometimes even more effective, particularly when there is a misbehaviour that continues repeatedly. Some parents when sending a child to his room forgets that he may be playing with a bunch of toys in there. This is not time out and can have the exact opposite effect of what was intended! Remember, time out is not a picnic. For some, sitting on the stairs or on a spot on the floor is better than the bedroom.

About protesting; Protesting is the behaviour that occurs when

the child feels the negative consequence is unjust or the child simply doesn't want it to happen.

"No! You can't make me!", or other forms of screaming, yelling, stomping and flopping are common childhood forms of protesting.

Protesting doesn't necessarily mean that the negative consequence is wrong. It just means that the child doesn't like it. Have you ever enjoyed getting a speeding ticket? Wouldn't it be nice if you could talk your way out of one? When was the last time you did get out of a speeding ticket by protesting? Would screaming or banging on the roof of the car help? Does protesting mean children should be let off from the negative consequence you provide?



Protesting is usually expected, particularly in younger children or with children who have not experienced sufficient negative consequences in the past. As children experience negative consequences on a regular and fair basis, they will stop or reduce the behaviour that leads to this outcome and they will also stop or reduce their protesting.

Many children are in fact gambling when it comes to misbehaving. They are gambling on whether or not they will get

away with it. They are weighing the benefits of their misbehaving against the cost or probability of getting caught.

Many of us buy lottery tickets. Some lotteries offer a one in fourteen million chance of winning, yet we continue to buy lottery tickets. Why? Because the hope of payoff is greater than the loss of a dollar.

Children who misbehave often have learned that they win or get away with their misbehaviour enough times to make it worth their while. Negative consequences must be provided immediately, directly, and consistently in order to teach children that this behaviour is not worth their while.

Many parents feel that if a particular negative consequence doesn't work, they have to increase its severity, intensity, or duration. This is a process known as *escalation*. Escalation can lead to overly harsh or even abusive behaviour. More important than increasing the intensity, severity and duration of a negative consequence is applying it consistently.

With children who are out of control, you may have to sit them in the corner many times when you start. Very problematic behaviour takes more time, patience and consistency, not harsher negative consequences.

Children also tend to have a short attention span while enduring consequences. Children who have been sent to their room for more than a few minutes are either daydreaming or have forgotten why they are there. The child who loses an activity or toy for more than a little while forgets about the loss and goes on to other things.

Some parents resort to grounding or loss of a privilege for

several days duration. While this may be appropriate for teenage children, it is seldom helpful with the younger child. Some children develop an attitude that actually enables them to misbehave. They tell themselves, "Well, I'm already grounded, or I've already lost my privilege, so why not continue to misbehave? They can't do anything more to me!" And when they do misbehave the parent is stuck because they rarely complete consequences that span days. (And the kids learn this.)

Brief, immediate and consistent negative consequences are more effective than long, drawn out, inconsistent and intense negative consequences.

Negative consequences are relative. A consequence, such as withdrawing attention, is more effective in a home where hugs and praise are common, than in a home where there is little display of affection. Therefore if the love, attention and feedback occurs regularly and frequently, their withdrawal will be experienced more significantly. If you want to increase the effect of a consequence, don't escalate the consequence. Increase the displays of love, attention and feedback shown at other times.

Some parents are concerned about breaking their child's spirit if they provide negative consequences. They fear they will stifle their child's creative energies. I have yet to see this happen as a result of appropriate negative consequences in a home where love and affection are shown openly.

Misbehaving or being out of control is actually damaging to a child's spirit. It is only after children have internalised structure and discipline that they can achieve freedom and creativity. Without structure and discipline, there is chaos. Children who

are out of control seldom accomplish great feats.

Nadja complains. Her six year old always leaves the bedroom light on when he goes downstairs. She shouts down, "Terry, you forgot to turn off the light," but then turns it off for him.

This child has never turned off his own bedroom light. Nadja says she turns it off for him because he's already downstairs. Nadja agrees to try an experiment. She is to remind Terry to turn off the light before he leaves his room. She tries it, but finds it doesn't work. Terry had learned that his mother always turns the light off for him, no matter what.

Time for a negative consequence - one that makes sense.

Nadja is to call her son upstairs the next time he doesn't turn off the light and watch what happens. Sure enough the son protests, saying he will miss part of the T.V. cartoons. Nadja is prepared and explains that if he turned off the light in the first place, he wouldn't be inconvenienced by having to come up, turn the light off and miss T.V. She insists that he turn off the light and adds that if he doesn't, she will come down and turn off the T.V. Terry is called back upstairs, everyday, for 14 days.

On the fifteenth day, Terry starts off downstairs. About halfway down, he stops - he turns around and comes back up to turn off his light. Nadja comments that it is nice that he can watch T.V. without interruption. He has turned off his light ever since. (The experiment took a lot of faith.)

So why are consequences healthy? Because they provide for learning. Consequences help children sort out right from wrong and this leads to moral development, which in turn facilitates

self-esteem.

Why should parents provide negative consequences?

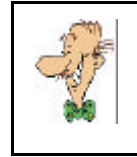
1. Because natural consequences do not always occur and children do need to learn from their behaviour.
2. Children who come up against structures such as consequences tend to be better behaved.
3. As our children behave acceptably, we are able to relate more positively to them and everyone feels better in the long run.

The Fourth Golden Rule

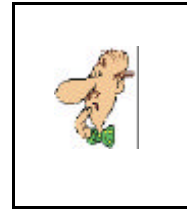
Spare the rod, but not the consequence. It is OK for children to pay for behaviour that is unacceptable, potentially dangerous or harmful.

NEGOTIATING

This story about my son, Brennan, dates back to when he was five. It's Monday morning. I tell Brennan to rise and shine and he slowly draws himself from bed. Being the good father and social worker that I am, I explain to him that we are in a hurry and that I need extra cooperation today. Like most parents, I want my son to have a healthy breakfast before heading off to school. And like many other households, the day I am most in a hurry, is the day my child decides he doesn't want breakfast. I have a menu of instant and frozen breakfasts for him to choose from. I offer him cold cereal with milk, frozen waffles, toast, or instant hot oatmeal.



Brennan opens his eyes, rolls over to the edge of the bed and announces, "I'm not eating. I don't want breakfast". The battle of wills is on. I explain how I need cooperation and that he has to eat breakfast for the good of his health. Brennan responds, "French toast."



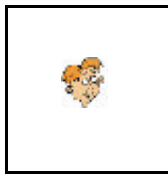
This is a start. The only problem is that I don't have any instant French toast and I don't have time to make it from scratch. I go over the menu again. Brennan folds his arms and says, "I am the boss of my body."

He has me. He is using my social work stuff on me. Not being one to back down from a challenge, I look him in the eye and say, "Yes. But I am the boss of the kitchen!"

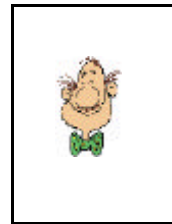
Brennan thinks for a minute, then says, "Oatmeal...half a bowl."

We have negotiated a compromise and I agree.

The art of negotiating is to make both sides feel they have won something.



Negotiating demonstrates respect for the interests and feelings of those involved. Respect is crucial in providing children with a positive sense of self.



Negotiating demonstrates

the value of children because parents respect their position while, at the same time, look for compromise. Many *situations* can be avoided by negotiating. Children really can and do respond to this mature technique.

I opened my eyes to the power of negotiating on another occasion. About two months after we moved from Toronto to the small town of Dundas, five-year-old Brennan was fussing for attention. I was nervous and distracted by my new job. Brennan started misbehaving, whining and getting underfoot. I sent him to his room. After five minutes, I let him return. He started up again, so I sent him back to his room for another five minutes. Soon after, he started up again. I realized my authoritarianism wasn't working. I was too self-absorbed to see that I was consequencing when I should have been negotiating.

"Brennan I think I'm missing something because you're still misbehaving. What's the matter?"

"Daddy, I miss my friends. I'm bored." He was lonely and wanted to play with me and rightly so. We negotiated.

"Brennan, if you will let me work on this report for twenty minutes, I will play two games of Fish with you."



He agreed.

When I help parents deal with children's difficult behaviour, I

sometimes discover that parents often feel absolutely certain about their own position when, in fact, there is room for compromise. So many more things are negotiable than we realize. We really can all win.

Why do we negotiate?

1. Negotiating makes life easier.
2. Negotiating demonstrates respect for children's positions and develops their self-worth.
3. Both children and parents can come away winners.

The Fifth Golden Rule

Negotiating offers a process where both sides can come away winners. Sometimes parents have to remember to let go a little.

PARENTS AS GODS

As parents, we are as gods in our children's lives. Children come into this world totally helpless, dependant on us for survival. The newborn has basic reflexes and many needs. With proper care and nurturing, the child develops. Throughout, the child must be fed, sheltered, clothed, cleaned and loved. Without at least one caring adult, the child will surely die.

Toddlers, preschoolers and young school-age children continue to be dependant on grown-ups, particularly their parents, for food, shelter, clothing, love, guidance and protection.

Because of our position in our children's lives, we are of the utmost importance to them. Children will seek to please their gods, as best they can, no matter what. Children will use their gods as models of behaviour and will copy the behaviour they observe.

More than anything else, when all is said and done, the most powerful influence on a child comes in the form of watching the parents' behaviour.

Apart from the setting up for success, feedback, facilitating self-esteem, consequences and negotiating, what children see their parents do forms the basis of their interactions with others - for the rest of their lives. This process is called *modelling*.

Monkey see, monkey do. Modelling places much responsibility on parents for their own behaviour and its impact on their children.

Children who are abused are likely to be in abusive relationship as adults. Children who experience appropriate love, compassion, caring, nurturing, and respect are likely to find these qualities in their adult relationships.

Some parents insist they are remaining in harmful relationships "for the good of the children". However, remember modelling. Children who are exposed to harmful parental relationships are at greater risk of suffering problems than children in single-parent situations where there is no exposure to destructive parental interactions. In other words, it is worse for some children to live in a war-zone than to live in peace, with the parents divorced.

If children are being exposed to a harmful relationship between the parents, divorce is not necessarily the only answer. Parents can seek help.

It is important for parents to realize that even though their children may see them as gods, parents cannot always solve everything on their own. Parents are not really gods.

As children continue to grow, they eventually recognize that parents make mistakes. It is quite healthy for children to see that their parents will seek the help of others when they can no longer resolve their own difficulties.

Ellen and Frank were concerned about their daughter, Jill. Jill had been complaining of headaches and stomach-aches for several weeks. Jill had been to the family doctor, but no physical illness could be found. Jill was referred for counselling.

Jill was a bright girl, eight years old. She was slow to talk, but eventually commented, "My parents never play with me

anymore. They are always fighting and arguing. My friend, Marci, told me her parents don't live together. They used to fight a lot too."

Jill talked about how scary her life was. It seemed the more her parents argued, the more her stomach hurt. With her permission, her parents were invited in to talk about the situation.

Ellen and Frank were surprised to hear how aware Jill was of their difficulties. This prompted them to accept counselling. Ellen and Frank told Jill that they were going to get some help to learn not to fight. Jill's headaches and stomach-aches went away.

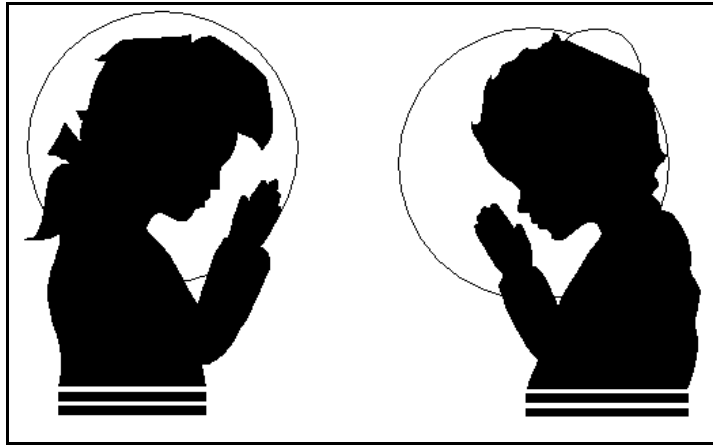
About Marci - she cried a lot when her parents separated, but as she told Jill, "At least mommy and daddy don't fight anymore."

In family therapy, another eight year old, Trevor, told his parents that when they fought, he would gather his younger brother and sister into his bedroom. He described monitoring their fights by placing a walkie-talkie under the kitchen table. He encouraged his younger brother and sister to behave well, so they wouldn't upset their parents further. The children worried for their mother's physical safety. She had been battered by father before. Eventually the parents separated. The children relaxed.

Parents as gods can be a very frightening concept. Where else but in the home, are children exposed to so much that is beyond their control?

The Sixth Golden Rule

Be aware of how you are interacting with others in the home. Children are more aware than we sometimes realize. Children will always learn more from what we do than what we say. Parents are not really gods.



Sometimes parents need help too.

THE WORLD OF THE FAMILY

Parents have a great influence on their children, but they are not the only influence. Children do not live in a vacuum, but live in the context of their family. Families also exist in a context: the social, political, economic and environmental.



Children are subject to the same stressors as their parents. Children live in poverty, are subject to violence, racism and sexism, and live in a world that is being destroyed at a phenomenal rate. Children are exploited sexually, materially, physically, and spiritually.

These are not just the conditions of places far from our homes, but the conditions children face in our country, our rural communities, our cities and our neighbourhoods. Raising kids without raising cane, requires us to acknowledge the many forces at work on children and families. There are many persons raising children in a context that seriously undermines their ability to deliver care.

Is a father, who lives in poverty, who steals in order to feed his family, a criminal? Is a single mother, who can barely make ends meet, who prostitutes herself to take care of her children, an unfit mother? Frequently we do not appreciate the social circumstance well enough when looking at individual behaviour.

A government announces a decision to limit funding for credit counselling. This decision, while saving two million dollars, will necessitate the expenditure of many more millions of dollars in welfare for people who can no longer attend a credit counselling program. Poverty wins.

The ugly truth of women abuse and its effects on children are being exposed. Just as many women are now coming forward to end this abuse, funding for women's and children's shelters is so scarce that thousands of women and a multitude of children will be turned away. This form of emotional abuse is called "teasing".

Raising kids without raising cane requires sensitivity to issues that are beyond the immediate scope of the family. However, there are things that can be done, originating from the family and its members. While society impacts on families, change can begin by the workings of individuals.

Steve and Dan were talking. Steve was criticizing the government again. He was complaining about the municipal government, the provincial government and the federal government. He went on to attack his community for lack of programs and a poor safety record. He threatened to leave this country, his place of birth, if "they" didn't wise up. Steve presented himself as helpless and a victim of a bad situation.

Steve had not participated in his community. Steve didn't know what he could do. Dan provided some alternatives. Dan suggested talking to neighbours, writing letters, voting, being a cub or boy scout leader, attending community meetings, joining a neighbourhood watch group, becoming a block parent, recycling and composting and several more. Steve got the

message. A better world begins with the actions of individuals.

The environmentalists have a great slogan: Think globally, act locally. This applies equally to social, political and economic issues.

The Seventh Golden Rule

Factors beyond the immediate scope of the family also impact heavily on children's development. To help our children, we must also work to create a better world.

STORIES FROM CLINICAL PRACTICE

When Is A Behaviour Disorder Not A Behaviour Disorder?

Mr. and Mrs. Franklin requested counselling for their "acting out" son, Mike.

Mr. and Mrs. Franklin agreed to bring all four of their children to our first meeting.

Mike's father was waiting to be called back to work following a strike settlement, and mother drove a school bus.

A detailed family history revealed nothing remarkable. The parents appeared to get along well during the meeting and all the children, from the thirteen year old down to the one year old, acted appropriately - except Mike.

The parents' list of Mike's problematic behaviours included acting without thinking, not minding his own business, hurting and annoying others, and acting silly (attention seeking). These behaviours occurred equally in the home, school and community.

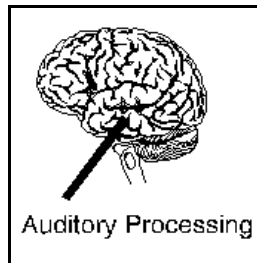
When asked what they do in response to these behaviours, the parents were able to rattle off a long list of very appropriate consequences with a sophisticated understanding of how to apply them. Oddly enough the behaviours continued and the parents were exhausted.

Apart from his inappropriate behaviours, Mike did seem a likeable lad. Talking with Mike directly, I could hear that he was not fully pronouncing all his words. More questioning

revealed that Mike's misbehaviour happened mostly in situations where there were distractions: groups of people, other events, or noise.

When is a behaviour disorder not a behaviour disorder? When it is a language/auditory processing disorder. Mike had a learning disability!

Because no one had assessed Mike as having this disorder, he developed misbehaviour that compensated for his problem.



Mike's world is like the midway at a carnival. Imagine entering a midway with all the noise, lights and excitement of the rides and games.

For the first few minutes, you can't hear yourself think, let alone carry on a decent conversation. However, after about five to ten minutes, you are desensitised to the intensity and are again able to focus without being distracted. You are able to filter out the noise and, therefore, pick and choose what you want hear.

Mike's filter didn't work properly and he had no awareness of this.

Now imagine you don't have a filter and you are slowly driven to distraction by all the noise and confusion of the midway. If you can't leave the situation, perhaps you would run around and try to turn off some switches to make the midway more manageable.

Mike's behaviour, from very early on, had not been to get attention, but to control the overwhelming input that he was

unable to filter out. Mike's parents thought they were using strategies to punish his misbehaviour. In fact, they were providing relief for Mike from the overwhelming input, and therefore actually reinforcing poor behaviour. Mike and his parents had no awareness that he was being rescued from situations that were really beyond his ability to handle. Mike's learning disability also came as a surprise to his teachers.

Mike needed himself and others to have an understanding of his language/auditory processing disorder and to learn specific strategies to manage it.

As these strategies were put in place by Mike, his parents and his teachers, his behaviour changed rapidly.

You don't punish a one-legged man for not walking. You provide him with a wooden leg. You don't punish children with learning disorders. You develop teaching strategies that accommodate their needs.

And Baby Makes Three

Through the fifties, sixties and seventies, *mid-life crisis* meant rethinking career choices and adjusting to the empty nest as the youngest child left home. However, in the eighties and nineties mid-life crisis includes "later in life" parenting. Many couples of the baby-boomer generation have chosen to bear children after finishing their education and establishing their careers. So, in the eighties and nineties, we see couples over thirty, thirty-five and even forty, having their first child.

Many couples are dealing with adjustment issues relative to being "later in life" parents. Their issues surface through their

child's behaviour, conflict in the marriage, or changes in relationships with friends and family members.

The Little Terror

John was 44 and Sue was 37.

Their little "hell on wheels" was two. She wouldn't listen and was adept at throwing tantrums that left others rattled to the bones or running for cover.

Chris was actually a delightful toddling girl who hadn't quite caught on to her parents' rigorous pace and expectations.

John and Sue were at their wits' end. They were in conflict about child discipline techniques and household order and it had been some time since they last "sparked". They sat on opposite ends of the couch during our first meeting. They agreed that the trouble had started shortly after the birth of their daughter. At that time, John was working long hours in his business and Sue was working part-time in an office. The couple reminisced about their numerous holidays - B.C. (before Chris).

I offered to meet with the couple at their home, assess their daughter, and facilitate a range of appropriate expectations and child management strategies. Until that meeting, John was instructed to brush his wife's hair each night for about three minutes as part of a quiet ritual for the couple.

Over the course of six meetings, the couple agreed on specific child management techniques and they discussed their change of status - from free-wheeling couple to family. Chris' behaviour improved and the couple developed their own strategies for finding time alone.

~~We Have It All (and it's more than we can handle)~~

Andrea and Ted were both 33.

Andrea called because of her decreased sexual desire. The referral was from her family doctor, who was sure the problem was not physical in nature.

Andrea wondered if she should attend alone. After some discussion, she accepted the suggestion that she and her husband come to the first meeting together.

In walked a reluctant man and an anxious woman.

This couple had been together for over eight years. Both held responsible positions at work. He worked shifts and she was a sales representative travelling on long day trips. Together they enjoyed a very comfortable income. Over the years they had bought and sold numerous houses - each house a little bigger than the one before. Their holidays were extravagant and all their friends regarded them as highly successful. They almost had it all. Then they had Jacob and Jacob was now two years old.

Andrea was burnt out. Neither parent wanted to consider a loss of income in order to spend more time at home. They were caught in a trap and something had to give. In this case it was Andrea's sexual desire.

In Africa there is a trap for catching monkeys. A gourd is hollowed out and then attached to a tree. Into the gourd is placed a handful of food. The monkey slips its hand through the

opening and grabs the food. With its hand clenched tightly around the food, it forms a fist which is too large to be withdrawn from the gourd. The monkey, unwilling to let go of its prize, loses its life to the hunter. (I showed the couple a monkey tooth bracelet.)

Andrea and Ted found this an interesting story. By the end of our first and only meeting, they were already discussing alternate strategies for adjusting to family life. They re-mortgaged their home and sold one of their cars. Andrea was able to change her work situation to part-time.

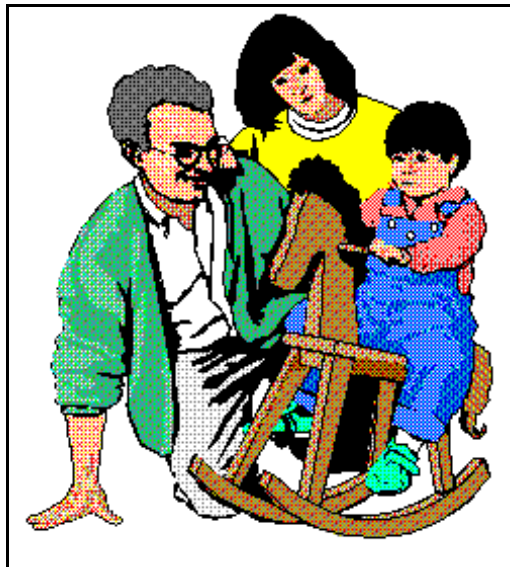
Oh, the issue they came in for, well that took care of itself:

CONCLUSION

Of all the resources in the world, only one determines the future of everything - our children!

Do you remember the children's television show, Romper Room? That show begins with the teacher looking through a special mirror. She calls out the names of the children she sees beyond the television, children she knows are watching. She says, "I see Susan. I see Billy and Margaret. I see John."

Her actions remind us that there are many children out there, beyond our own, that we do not see. Children are important. We must make them our priority.



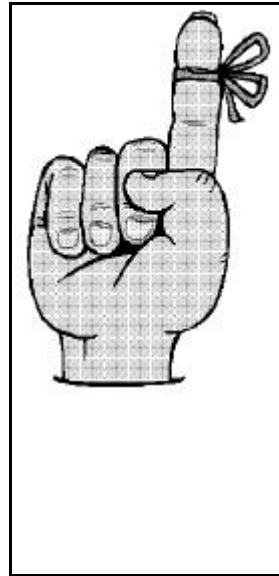
Children become a priority as we become attuned to their needs. When attuned to their needs, we will demand and develop more appropriate social policy and services. We will act in ways that sustain the environment.

Again, of all the resources in the world, only one determines the future of everything - our children! Invest wisely.

Gary Direnfeld, MSW

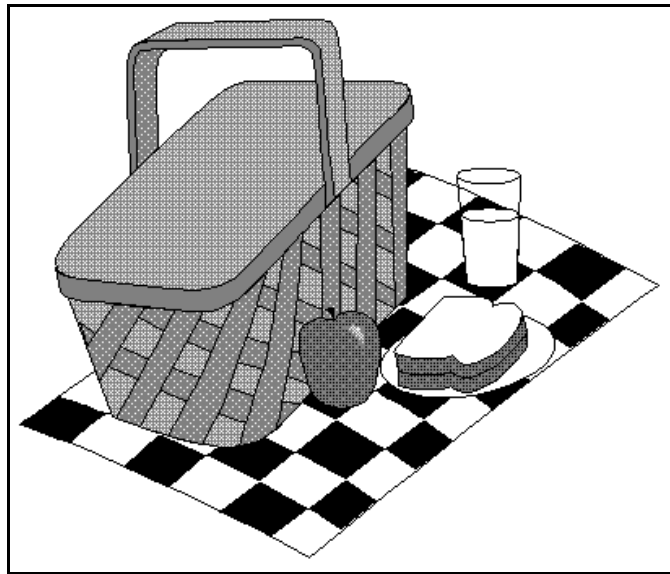
THE SEVEN GOLDEN RULES

- 1. Always have children's attention when talking and give them all the information necessary to do what is expected, appropriate to their level of understanding.**
- 2. Provide the right information so children know what you want. Provide feedback to let children know they are on the right track to help the desired behaviour get repeated.**
- 3. Praise is necessary but not sufficient. To facilitate healthy self-esteem provide generous amounts of valuing, opportunities to develop competency, opportunities for doing good deeds, and structure.**
- 4. Spare the rod, but not the consequence. It is OK for children to pay for behaviour that is unacceptable, potentially dangerous or harmful.**
- 5. Negotiating offers a process where both sides can come away winners. Sometimes parents have to remember to let go a little.**



- 6. Be aware of how you are interacting with others in the home. Children are more aware than we sometimes realize. Children will always learn more from what we do than what we say. Parents are not really gods. Sometimes parents need help too.**
- 7. Factors beyond the immediate scope of the family also impact heavily on children's development. To help our children, we must also work to create a better world.**

RECIPE FOR A HEALTHY CHILD



Basic Ingredients

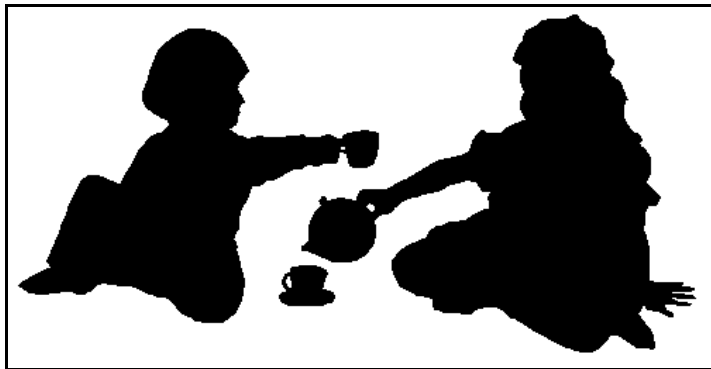
1. At least one loving adult whose needs are differentiated from the child's and who puts the child's needs first.
2. Information given liberally so that the child always knows what's going on and what's expected.
3. Feedback given liberally, like a signpost, to keep the child on the right track.

4. Consequences to help the child learn right from wrong, good from bad, the meaning of "no", and respect for one another.
5. Negotiation as a way out of conflicts when it is reasonable for both adult and child to be winners.
6. A clean and safe environment extending from one's home to the community and to the world.
7. Food, water, shelter, clothing, education and freedom from harm.
8. A chance to be special, a zillion times a year.

Directions

Take all the basic ingredients and blend them in equal and generous amounts (like chocolate chip cookies - more is better). Bake in a home warmed by caring and sharing. During the baking process, demonstrate all aspects of appropriate values. Treat each other well. Play with one another. Let your child participate in doing good deeds with you. Be prepared to stand back as the child rises. (You don't want to stifle rising children or they can fall flat. Also you don't want to open the door too quickly, before they are set to stand on their own. It's important to get it just right.)

If you follow this recipe as closely as you can, you will find that there is room for mistakes because when you use good ingredients the mix develops some forgiveness. (This is a secret ingredient that develops out of the combination effect of the other ingredients.)



When is it cooked?

The really neat thing about this recipe is that a child is always cooked, even when they continue to rise. You can enjoy your child anytime you take the time.

Bon Appetit!

POSTSCRIPT

The book is finished and the earth didn't move. Nothing miraculous happened. Perhaps your child or your neighbour's child is still a handful.

When I think of "change", for the people I help, I think of starting with the smallest step possible. Many people look for amazing and quick differences. Rather than turning things around 180 degrees, consider just five degrees. A hundred and eighty degrees of change is an awesome task. Five degrees is manageable. But why only five degrees?

Imagine you are facing a particular town or city. Shift your body five degrees to the left or right. Think of where you will be in twenty miles if you start walking out from where you are standing. You will be in a very different place, than had you continued from where you were first facing!

Out of all the things talked about in this book maybe you can only try one and maybe only five degrees worth. If you do, you have a better chance of being in a different place twenty miles or three years down the line than if you don't.

The first step is the hardest. The first step takes the *leap of faith*. Changes are scary, even small changes.

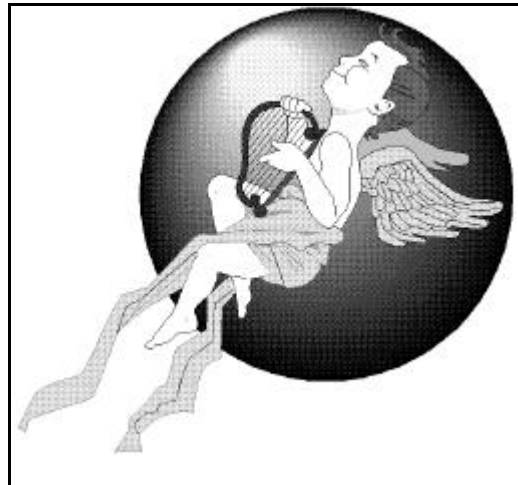
The first step, the *leap of faith*, looks like crossing over a huge abyss. We all know sayings like, "Better the devil you know, than the one you don't", or, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush". There are many forces and sayings that can keep us from taking the first step. That is why it must be small and

manageable.

Think of how to make a big snowball. Start it out as a little clump of snow at the top of a hill. Roll it around and let it gather size. Bring it to the edge of the slope and begin rolling it down. Soon it gathers momentum. After that, it carries itself down the hill, by its own weight.

In order for change to occur, it must begin with the scary first step. The process must be supported until it gathers its own momentum. Then it can be let go, in the right direction, under its own weight. This is how we make change manageable. This is how we move the earth. This is how miracles happen.

Begin with the *leap of faith*.





When people ask Gary what he does for a living he says pretty much the fact that he helps people get along or helps them feel better about themselves, but truth be told, Gary is an accomplished Social Worker. Since graduating with a Masters degree from the University of Toronto in 1985, Gary has not only helped people get along or feel better about themselves, but has also enjoyed an extensive career in public speaking.

His workshop, Raising Kids Without Raising Cane, led him to present to parents groups and social service agencies across Canada and into the US. Unable to meet the demand for his workshop, he published this book by the same title, which in turn led him to numerous radio talk shows and television appearances. Helping families of young children grow their children; he then turned to teenage issues as these children grew up. He concentrated on helping parents understand teens through another workshop entitled, “Adolescence Is Not A Disease”. Gary’s social work career and interests seem to also follow the development of his own family. It makes sense then that his attention has been drawn for the past couple of years to teen driver safety, as his own son had just entered the age of independent driving. Gary has developed and implemented a North American wide teen safe driving initiative dubbed the I Promise Program – www.ipromiseprogram.com

In the business arena, Gary is known and regarded for his ability to help companies develop and manage human assets to deliver their products and services with a sense of good corporate citizenry.

Today Gary is sought after by such diverse groups as daycares, schools, parents, community organizations, insurance companies and more, to talk on issues ranging from child behavior management and development; to family life; to business development from a socially responsible position.

Gary is just as comfortable talking with a group of 5 people as with an audience of 500 people; whether the group is comprised of young persons, parents or Fortune 500 types. Just make sure you give him a wireless clip-on microphone. He likes to talk with his hands his hands and walk around as he engages the audience. If only one word were used to describe Gary, you will remember him for his passion. His belief in human dignity runs deep, as does his caring for children and families.

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