

Discipline without being controlling and using negative reinforcement and ultimatums.

September 17, 2014 | 8 upvotes | by [thelotusknyte](#)

I have an almost 3 year old. He literally is the best behaved child I know when I compare him to others in his nursery group at church etc.

However, he's still a toddler. At first when I would say something like ok, you can put the fire poker down or you can go lay down in your bed, he dropped it like it was hot. But now he refuses both answers and I have to give him the options multiple times before he'll choose one, and it usually doesn't stick.

I don't like constantly getting obedience from just straight if you don't then time out approach. I know if my son is anything like me he'll eventually say, I don't give a flying you know what, I don't want to do whatever it is you're asking me to do, so go ahead and ground me.

How can I implement Red Pill Parenting, without ultimatums and the very consistent (like 95% of the time) need for two options, one where he does what I ask and one where he goes to his room, or has no tv time or whatever (we only do 30-60 of tv time max a day, many days no tv time). Any ideas?

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Comments

lloopy • 2 points • 20 November, 2014 03:29 PM

I follow the Love-and-Logic approach. It's a good series of books with lots of examples and specifics.

There are some things where I give my daughter choices. There are some things where I don't. If there's immediate danger, then I simply act quickly, sometimes telling her what to do/what I'm doing, sometimes not. Often when I'm done, I explain why I did what I did, or what I expect her to do.

The key to the giving-choices is that you have to be okay with either one. If you're doing the 'stop right now or go to your room' choices, then you've already lost, and I think you know this. This is your reason for writing this in the first place. So, the hard part of giving-choices is that you have to really work at finding two good choices. The goal of the choices is that you are training your child to make good decisions, not punishing them. So, your son wants to play with the fire poker. Since we aren't in-the-moment, how can you help him make a good decision with it? "I know you want to play with the poker, but there are some things we have to talk about first. 1) You have to be careful with it. You can hurt yourself or others with it. 2) Inside is not the right place to be playing with it. Where could you play with it where it won't damage the house?" I don't know your situation, but maybe there's a way to talk to your son about it where it makes sense to him what your concerns are.

My daughter sometimes just gives up on what she was going to do because she doesn't want to hear the lecture.

thelotusknyte[S] • 1 point • 21 November, 2014 09:28 PM

Interesting. I'll check it out, thanks!

[deleted] • 3 points • 19 September, 2014 02:30 PM

[permanently deleted]

thelotusknyte[S] • 2 points • 19 September, 2014 06:26 PM

She backs me up on discipline things luckily

[deleted] • 2 points • 19 September, 2014 06:31 PM

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thelotusknyte[S] • 1 point • 19 September, 2014 06:56 PM

Lol

thelotusknyte[S] • 2 points • 19 September, 2014 03:05 PM

Ok I'll try that. I used to, but as soon as he understood the concept of options it became convenient at first, but now he's not listening as much.

brotherjustincrowe • 2 points • 24 October, 2014 05:58 AM

I'm wondering this myself, how to instead of discipline bad behavior, correct it into good behavior. I know people aren't dogs, but maybe <http://useyourclicker.com> is onto something with the idea that positive reinforcement is easier to push than negative.

I am **NOT** advocating being a doormat or letting children grow up to be spoiled, entitled little brats like this generation seems to be turning out to be. I'm just thinking "do this" is easier to process than "don't do that".

There's a time to be firm but overreacting with strictness can be as bad as underreacting.

thelotusknyte[S] • 1 point • 24 October, 2014 06:07 AM

I still don't have a perfect answer unfortunately.

Garathon • 1 point • 6 November, 2014 02:52 PM

Is this really a question? The fact that positive reinforcement is a thousand times better as a child raising tactic can't be disputed. Do you use negative reinforcement when training your dog? No, because he doesn't know what he's being punished for nor remembers it. The same with kids (up to a certain age).

lloopy • 1 point • 20 November, 2014 03:30 PM

You sound like a doormat. Maybe you've only raised one kind of child. Or maybe you've never raised a well-behaved dog.

Positive and negative reinforcement is good. You reward good behavior, sure, but you also correct bad behavior.

trpMilo • 2 points • 2 January, 2015 02:55 PM

So there's some confusion in this thread over the terms positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, positive punishment, and negative punishment.

You can look this up on google and understand the reasoning for categorizing incentive schemes in this way, but for now I'll just say that negative reinforcement means you are trying to encourage your son's behavior (i.e. reinforcing) by removing (removing = negative) an undesirable feature from the child's environment.

An example of negative reinforcement would be "If you sit still in church today, you won't have to eat your vegetables tonight."

The commenters above are talking about positive punishment, which would be "If you don't sit still in church, you will have to do the dishes." Positive = action must be performed. Punishment = to disincentivize the behavior.

And while negative reinforcement and negative punishment are not effective ways to train your dog, positive punishment is actually highly effective and commonly employed, with the caveat that for dogs and small children the effectiveness of the punishment is much higher if the punishment occurs immediately after the behavior you want to stop, i.e. rubbing a dog's nose in its pee if it pees in the house.

Just wanted to clear that up so that we have common language to discuss this with and don't end up talking past each other.

lloopy • 1 point • 2 January, 2015 03:03 PM

Positive reinforcement is encouraging good behavior.

Negative reinforcement is discouraging bad behavior.

Giving a child a treat for good behavior is positive reinforcement.

Putting a child in timeout for bad behavior is negative reinforcement.

The dog training rules I learned give you a 2-second window to either encourage or discourage behavior. So if you come home and your dog has pooped on the carpet, you have to just clean it up and move on with life. Any punishment will be misunderstood by your dog.

trpMilo • 2 points • 2 January, 2015 07:30 PM

This is not the scientific use of the term. The second example you gave is punishment, not reinforcement. People commonly mistake this. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reinforcement>

Edit: I know I'm getting pedantic here and I apologize, but it is important to have share common language to communicate ideas.

autowikibot • 1 point • 2 January, 2015 07:31 PM

Reinforcement:

In behavioral psychology, **reinforcement** is a consequence that will strengthen an organism's future behavior whenever that behavior is preceded by a specific antecedent stimulus. This strengthening effect may be measured as a higher frequency of behavior (e.g., pulling a lever more frequently), longer duration (e.g., pulling a lever for longer periods of time), greater magnitude (e.g., pulling a lever with greater force), or shorter latency (e.g., pulling a lever more quickly following the antecedent stimulus).

Imageⁱ - *Diagram of operant conditioning*

Interesting: Visual reinforcement audiometry | Rebar | Communal reinforcement | Rate of reinforcement

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lloopy • 1 point • 2 January, 2015 08:26 PM

Fair enough.

When I was originally thinking of negative reinforcement, I was thinking of when I used a shock collar with my dog. I had a trainer that required we do at least an hour of training with him on the use of the collar. As he said, if you, as the trainer, don't maintain strict discipline with it, then your dog is just going to be confused and in pain. But when used correctly, it gives your dog very clear signals as to incorrect behavior and it ties in to instinctual correction behavior.

The particular model I had had very sensitive controls so you could set it to the minimum threshold for your dog. I used it specifically with teaching the command, "Come!". Starting with a short leash (6 feet), saying the word, then drawing the dog to me, and giving him a treat when he got to me. Standard positive reinforcement, rewarding the correct behavior. When he was solid on that, I moved to a 24' leash, continuing in the same vein. Then I went to a shock collar and a 100-300' range. With my dog some distance away, I would say "Come!", then apply the shock. When he reached my feet, I would let off the button. This is technically negative reinforcement, since I was stopping the noxious effect once he had completed the task.

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