

Child Raising Styles

Transcribed by Evernote

There are many different styles for raising and teaching children. These represent different philosophical, religious, political, psychological, and spiritual ideas. As others have pointed out, they can at times contradict each other. As this discussion proceeds, I plan to point out how certain people and certain philosophies clash with others on the subject of child raising.

One of the most common styles of child raising is the old fashioned heavy discipline approach. This has been going on for ages. It's often referred to as "spare the rod and spoil the child." Some use this Bible verse very literally, others more figuratively. The belief behind this approach is children need discipline in order to become decent people

[as proponents say]. You have to be strict with children, this philosophy asserts. If you're not, they could become terrible devils.

A lot of children naturally dislike strict parenting. A lot of parents think, nevertheless, it's good for their children. I question that, as do a lot of others. Some say a little less discipline is better.

The issue of actual corporal punishment can be Corporal punishment has fallen out of favor. It once was the norm. Today, a lot of people are concerned about child abuse. And although it isn't as much as it should be, there is concern about the needs of children. Some parents believe the only way to teach usually young children to obey is through These parents believe oftentimes behavior and circumstances dictate physical pain. Oftentimes children cry It's supposed to be deterrence. Usually it's absurd to

think about having corporal punishment for older kids, but sometimes it does continue. High up. There's a joke, "you only hit your kids until They're big enough to be able to hit you." There are some different reasons people are against corporal punishment, whether at home or in schools.

Herbert M. Shelton was against corporal punishment long before it was fashionable to be against corporal punishment. In his book, *The Hygienic Care of Children*, he condemns corporal punishment. He is certainly concerned about what's healthy for the body, and certainly physical violence is often not healthy for it. Even though his main purpose in life was to focus on health and nutrition, he does have some really good philosophical rationale for opposing hitting children. He says [in the aforementioned book], "It's hard for kids to respect their parents when their parents hit them." He, like others, believe the best

bonds between parent and child are those based on love, not the rod smacking the bottom.

Shelton tells of this story where father and son had a really good relationship: Unfortunately, the son misbehaved and the father hit him. According to Shelton, “the relationship was never the same.” Shelton does not believe it's worth it.

Others say you are teaching children the wrong message by hitting them. There's an old saying, "Do what I say, not what I do." But this is hypocritical. Even mainstream experts on this topic have said, “Children follow most what you do, if not entirely, and not just what you say.” Thus, if your actions and words contradict themselves, they will follow your action. Thus you will say, “when you hit a child, you are showing your child that hitting people smaller than you is okay” [like observers have noted].

Mad Magazine had a strip that really put this into perspective. In the strip, one child hit another. The parent got upset and it ordered to teach the child a lesson, threaten to hit the child. It's like the Saying with the death penalty: "We show people that killing is wrong by killing people." Or to put it another way, as the saying has been put, "we kill people to teach people that killing people is wrong." That's the same with hitting children, as some have said. Wayne Dyer has expressed the idea that hitting children "is not bad just for the kids, but also bad for the parents." On one of his audio tapes, he makes an impression of a crazed parent overreacting to some transgression of a child. His intention was not to be Humorous. He was trying to make a very serious point. But his impression did such a good job at illustrating how outrageous some parents can be, it was hilarious to me.

People like Buddhists say anger is an unhealthy psychological state. And when you're hitting a child, you're certainly in the state of anger. Ever hear Garth Brooks' song, "The Night I Called the Old Man Out"? In the song, He tells about how he regrets a time when he was young when he talked back to his dad. Respect for authority is one deal. I'm sure a lot of people listen to this song and think Garth is making a good point. But I found something really repulsive in this song. In this song, Garth describes angering his father to such a degree that his father hits him in the face. The line said over and over in the song is, "Son, it's going to hurt me more than it hurts you." Worse yet is later in the song, Garth says, "I hope one day I'm half the man he is." If he really was a great man, would he hit his son in the face just for talking back? Probably not.

Some people draw the line between spanking and more severe forms of corporal punishment. When I worked in the public schools, in one of the classrooms I worked in, the teacher told “the kids that she spans her kids Thus, she thinks it's okay to spank, but on the bottom with a hand, not in any other way is it acceptable to hit children.” To me, that distinction is not where I draw the line. I want to be totally non-violent with children.

One issue that I have encountered is the issue of restraint. Initially I thought restraint was always acceptable for just about any purpose. I had long ruled out actual violence, but I thought restraint was something different. It is really different.

Now in retrospect, I realize that much of the time restraint is tricky, if not unwise. Restraint sometimes, unlike punishment, is

done just to stop behavior. You're not necessarily concerned with teaching the child a lesson. You may just want to maintain the safety of others or the child. I have seen kids get worked up due to restraint. Often times when adults do it, it's not just because there is a violence threat. It's been done when kids just aren't doing what adults want them to do. Adults may want them to move from an area, but they're not moving.

We have to ask ourselves, is it justifiable? Oftentimes it's not. We wouldn't need to use it much at all if our school system was different [Kindly see anti-school system books by authors like David Albert, A.S. Neill, and John Taylor Gatto for more about this topic.]

One approach that overlaps with the spare the rod, spoil the child approach, at least at times, is the old idea that adults are always

right. Children should be seen and not heard is not just an old fashioned way. It's still popular today.

Most parents want to have good kids. Some parents, very few of them, try to do something better. Wayne Dyer actually has praised what we call bad kids. He believes bad kids have great independence, great self-actualization, ability to think for themselves. He talks about how he was a bad kid.

When I was in school, for much of it I was a good kid. But I do look back and see a lot of rebellion too, particularly toward the end of high school. My rebellion was different than typical rebellion. Thus, I like to make a distinction between certain types of rebellions. Some kids that rebel are going to grow up to be petty thugs. Just like breaking the law, I don't think all law breaking is automatically virtuous just

because the government sucks. Something like Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil disobedience is virtuous. Robbing a convenience store? Not so. When I work in the schools, when I think about my favorite kids, they were often the naughty ones, the ones other people hated having in class.

Ned Beaumont believes the school system exists to condition kids into obedience to the state [In *The Policeman is Your Friend and Other Lies*]. It sounds far-fetched, but working in a school system and thinking about it, I cannot conclude otherwise. He has this great analogy. He says, “Most kids are aluminum, easily molded, shaped, and bended.” [In *The Policeman is Your Friend and Other Lies*] He says, “A few are iron, tougher to bend.” [In *The Policeman is Your Friend and Other Lies*] He says, “A rare few are silver or even gold.” [In *The Policeman is Your Friend and Other Lies*]

Two girls I worked with, one who is now in fourth grade and the other who now is in first grade, were gold. They both were very independent. They both had their own sense of self. With one, I feel a strong connection intellectually. With the other, I feel a strong connection with my heart. I call the one in first grade *Amazing* and the other one *Free Spirit*. The teachers wanted kids who sat still and did everything they said. But these girls threw teachers for a loop. It's so funny how these two girls were gold in my eyes, but in other people's eyes they were headaches and big problems.

A lot of parents act as if just because parents are parents and adults are adults, children need to respect all of them. This is foolishness. Certainly not all parents are wise. Just a cursory look out in the world will prove this. I have even read how sometimes children become vulnerable to

those with deviant intent because children are taught that adults need to always be obeyed. If we teach more critical thinking, kids can benefit in immense ways And even when it comes to such horrible situations such as when adults have deviant intent with children.

I try to teach kids some critical thinking. For example, when I monitored this bus route as a part of this weekly contest we did toward the end One week, I had the kids write down a rule they disagreed with.

William Dyer says our society is big on what he calls approval-seeking behavior [in various books and other media]. He says, “Schools and family often teach people they need to please others rather than look inside and be true to themselves.” That is so true. Approval-seeking behavior is the seed of authoritarianism. That's why those two

girls I mentioned, along with some others as well, are so wonderful. They do what they want to do. They are not nearly as concerned with the approval of others. It's so refreshing to see that.

One sociological study found something very interesting about authoritarianism. They found that in homes where the father withholds love when children misbehave, the children become authoritarian. Don't mistake disciplining children with withholding love. The two are very different. You can still love your child and discipline the child [like experts say]. As long as there's conditional love there, you're probably doing it right. [like experts say] If you withhold... Love from a child and the child displeases you, then a troublesome circumstance can arise. [like experts say] If children are conditioned in that pattern, that in order to be acceptable as people they

have to please authority, they are likely going to grow up with this drive to always please authority. [like this sociological study said]

Some people will back authority no matter what. You can throw the most absurd evidences of their cognitive dissonance, but it won't matter. They will back authority. It's because they have this great emotional response. It's not just because they are lacking in intellectual sophistication to criticize and question authority. That may be there. But a big part of it is an emotional response stemming from childhood conditioning [like one sociological study pointed out].

A lot of parents think they can do anything they want with kids. Because they're adults. Parents think they have this right. It's my house, I pay the bills, what I say goes. Maybe I'm just disrespectful, but to me, this

doesn't seem right. Just because you gave birth to children that gives you the right to dictate everything? A lot of parents act as if they deserve medals for providing the basics for their children. That's expected. Certainly, parents do go above and beyond the call of duty. And in such situations, praise is merited. Otherwise, parents are really reaching if they think just because they provide shelter for their children, the children need to worship them.

When I was young, and even today, I have come to hate when adults would punish a group of children just because of what one child or a few children did. Many adults believe anything goes if it gets your children to behave. It's total manipulation. When you're a child, it's hard enough to control yourself. How do you control somebody else? Sometimes the only way to control another child is by also misbehaving. I have

heard adults say, "If you misbehave, any of you, you're all losing your allowance." If one child is misbehaving, how do you prevent the other child from misbehaving? About the only way you can do it sometimes is smacking the kid. Some parents would care less about the child getting hurt than the impression of well-behaved children being there. It's really wrong to make you responsible for somebody else's behavior.

One cliché of parents is, "When I was your age, such and such was so much harder, kids were so much better, "The world was a better place." A lot of people find this ridiculous. Weird Al has a great parody of that in the song titled Nothing Other Than "When I Was Your Age." I think there's attitude that the current generation really sucks. And we, as adults, are so much better than they were, they are, stems from a couple factors. One is selective memory. Another is wanting to feel better. Add the

two together, you have something like,
when I was your age,

Sometimes this can take a religious context. Political conservatives will say, "Back in the 40s, society was so much better than it is today." A lot of time they blame something like taking prayer out of the schools. You hear that over and over. "We took prayer out of the schools and so much happened." That was horrible. That never happened before. People have said they have selective memory about the past. One of my friends told about how, ironically, at his atheist meeting, people were saying this. And one person who was younger pointed out "Better for who? The 40s and 50s were pre-civil rights era." Keep that in mind. I read in one place that this idea that the current generation is terrible. And the past generations were so much better has been a mindset throughout the ages. I've even seen

it pointed out that Plato way back a couple thousand years ago had such a mindset. There's one quote from Plato where he says something along the lines, "As the children today are unlike the children of yesterday. They are disrespectful to their elders. They are lazy. They don't know the value of hard work. They have terrible manners."

Maybe it's not... Kids getting worse. That it's just parents perceiving kids being worse. They don't remember or they choose to forget what life was really like back in the day and thus are nuts about it.

I have even heard people younger than me make comments along those lines. Age is truly a state of mind, like the saying goes. Some people, though not old chronologically, are old in age. They have already become part of the establishment. My old supervisor Kelly Wilke is a couple years younger than me. When she was 25,

she made a really ridiculous comment. One of the staff members was talking about how “her son skipped school” and the school really didn't do anything about it and she was trying “to think of some consequences.” Kelly Wilke said, “When I was a kid, we didn't get to just come and go as we pleased. There were consequences for our behavior.” Yes, Kelly. In the last seven years, it's all gone downhill. Seven years ago, kids were perfect angels. Today, they're devils. You have got to be... Out of your mind.

I'm just glad... The kids did not see me as part of the establishment. In fact, they could not take me seriously when I was trying to defend the establishment. When I was in the role that so many other adults fit, the role of teacher, aid, disciplinarian, they didn't respect me. But when I was more myself, they responded to me extremely well. Unlike just about anybody else.

I played tag with the third graders at recess. They loved it when I played. Not a lot of other adults would do that. There were a few. But it seemed like they responded best to me most of all. I think it's because they see me differently than other adults. They even joked that I wasn't a staff member, "I was a student."

Some parents are excessively permissive [say observers]. Some people do this because they don't care. They may be more concerned about themselves and their kids. They may not have the energy to be proper parents. Other people are permissive with children because they actually believe it's the best way. They may think really harsh parenting styles are bad news for the kids, and thus they want to avoid it. Sometimes permissive parents are also very indulgent. [say observers] They just don't have the discipline to say no to kids. They can't resist

the displeasure that may arise from making a child unhappy. One audio tape I listened to pointed out that the naughtiest kids often come from two very different environments: The really harsh, strict ones that I talked about earlier and the really permissive ones. It makes the most sense when you think about the permissive backgrounds leading to bad behavior. In permissive households, children get away with anything. So they're taught they can get away with everything: They know discipline is not going to come, so they don't have inhibitions about misbehaving [say child rearing experts].

It's less intuitive to understand why really strict homes would lead to something like rebellious behavior. Some have pointed out it's because in those homes what holds the kids back from misbehaving is mostly fear, and once kids get over that fear, there's nothing holding them back. Kids often resent parents who base their parenting

styles on fear manipulation. [as observers note] Once they see through that and are afraid of that, rebellion enters the picture. [as observers note]

Mad Magazine had a great parody of this parenting style. In its strip *The Lighter Side*, a classic childhood scene occurred: A young child was throwing something she shouldn't have been throwing and a vase broke. Initially, the mother reacted in the classic way. She yelled at the child. Then the child started to cry. She yelled out, "I'm a victim!" The mother then said, "Let me validate your feelings."

Some people believe it's a wrong approach to emphasize self-esteem. Some people say you shouldn't teach kids to feel good when their behavior is wrong. I generally support tolerant and open parenting and teaching

styles. I do have problem with extreme permissiveness. I believe on some matters you need to be very firm and you don't let go.

When I worked in the schools, I saw a lot of teachers not have the discipline to go through with their discipline. They would tell kids, "If you do such and such, such will or will not happen." And then the kids did, and they didn't hold true to their promises. Some teachers would cave in to kids I believe if something is worth fighting a kid over, and such situations should be rare, you need to hold your ground no matter what the kid does. A lot of teachers would ultimately encourage temper tantrums because they didn't have the discipline to ride them through [which is what some experts recommend.] I tried to have the discipline. A lot of parents change punishment. A lot of teachers change punishment. That is not the way to go. I

believe if punishment is deemed necessary, you need to go through with it. You don't take it back.

James C. Hunter is probably the leading advocate of servant leadership today. He believes servant leadership is ultimately a comprehensive philosophy for life and it should govern all aspects of existence. Naturally, this would include parenting. He does specifically address the issue of servant leadership and parenting in his book, *The Servant, a simple story about the true essence of leadership*. This story is a parable. There's this one business leader who is failing miserably all through his life. He comes to the conclusion ultimately it's because he hasn't been a servant leader. He's the main character, but there are these other people in different fields who also are failing because they have not understood what leaders really need to be like. So they

all go to this retreat led by this monk. At one point in the retreat, they are talking about Maslow's hierarchy of needs and how that applies to children. Somebody asked a question along the lines, "So if we're serving leaders as parents, we just have to let our children get away with everything?" The monk says, "Maslow was not an advocate of permissive parenting." The monk makes a very important distinction then. He says, "You should serve the *needs* of your children, not the *wants*." Hunter believes "servant leaders should put the needs of who they are leading ahead of their own. Thus, parents should put the needs of their children, and not the wants of their children, ahead of the parents' own needs."

Believe this should be done. Wayne Dyer says, "It's unhealthy to teach children that you are going to sacrifice your needs for them." [in his books and videos] He

believes “it shows them that some people deserve to be treated like doormats.” [in his books and videos]

Both approaches are noble, so it's hard to decide what is right here. Some say the absolute worst form of parenting is alcoholic parenting. This is because alcoholic parents are extremely erratic and unpredictable, thus inconsistency is the rule [*Adult Children of Alcoholics* by Janet Woititz.] Some say this is far worse than really strict environments because with really strict parents, even though that's probably not ideal, at least the kids have something to rely on. *Adult Children of Alcoholics* by Janet Woititz.] Some have compared alcoholic homes to war zones because you have to constantly be on edge, never knowing what will happen next. *Adult Children of Alcoholics* by Janet Woititz.]

Sharon Wegsdeiser, in her book, *Another Chance, Hope and Help for an Alcoholic Family*, describes how alcoholism destroys a whole family.

What really bothers me when I'm discussing alcohol is that a lot of people act as if just as long as the alcoholic is not swinging fists, or actually physically neglecting the basic needs of the child, no damage is really done. It's not quite that easy. *Another Chance* describes how “every member of an alcoholic family suffers because they are dealing with something unhealthy.” The author says in that book, “There is no healthy way to respond to alcoholism because alcoholism is unhealthy.” She says, “Each family member takes on these roles in order to survive the chaotic environment and also in order to mask it for the world.” The roles she says that exist are “scapegoat,

those always getting in trouble, hero, those always being good, mascot, those always making a joke of everything, being a clown, and lost child, those who try to disappear. A lot of people believe these days, at least those who have studied this, that alcoholism causes a lot of trauma in adult survivors of it. They are called ACOAs or adult children of alcoholics. Just because they leave the house, these researchers say they have not just ended it. The scars are still there and they are still deep. They say adult children of alcoholics have difficulties in life, particularly relationships.

Janet Woititz says, “They don't know what healthy is because they never got an example of what is healthy.”

Wayne Dyer has a really good approach for child raising. I think it's one of the best I

have come across. He wrote a book called *What Do You Really Want for Your Children?* I read part of that book, but it's really thick, so I didn't get through it all. I did listen to the audio tape version of the book. In the book, he describes a number of principles he believes are important to teach children. One "is to be internally directed." He says... "Children need to learn that they're responsible for how they feel about life, not the events of life." He says, "Children should learn to be creative, to value their own individuality." He says, "Children should be taught to be healthy, value good nutrition and physical health."

He's big on the concept of self-reliance. He wants to teach children not to have "approval-seeking behavior", as he calls it.

He is really big on this concept that children should get to guide their lives instead of parents projecting rigid agendas onto

children. He talks about children each having a mission, a calling in life that is wrong for parents to interfere with. He says, "We shouldn't interfere with what they are here to do."

He has some really great stories about child raising [on this audiobook and elsewhere]: When one of his daughters was in school, she ran into a situation that was difficult.: She didn't have the right clothes for gym, so she was given two options: participate in the wrong clothes Or don't participate and you'll get in trouble, including "a letter in your file."

Unlike the vast majority of other parents, Wayne Dyer gave her good advice about this. He told her "to do what she thought was right." He had a really great line. He said, "If you're going to be your own person, you're going to have a big file," referring to

her concern that she was going to get a letter in her file.

In another situation, he talks about his daughter who was in college: His daughter was really fond of music. Thus, she thought it was right initially to major in music. But as time went on, it was not feeling right for her. She talked to her dad about that. A lot of parents would have said, “Suck it up. You've gone through all this school and you need to keep there.”

Wayne Dyer [said he] reflected upon it. He told his daughter something that is also rare among parents. His daughter was telling him how she really didn't want to learn about musical theory: “She just wanted to sing.” Wayne Decker ultimately told her “he thought it was best if she dropped out of college because she didn't feel right there and he thinks it's very important to follow

your calling.” Ultimately, she did drop out and she became ever so much more happier because of it. Wayne Dyer says, “It's particularly significant given his perspective because he says he really values education after all he got his doctorate. But it wasn't right for his daughter.”

He says, “I taught my children to think for themselves.” What a great way. I know I have resented people imposing ideas on me. So the alternative is so much more refreshing. I've heard people besides Wayne Dyer talk about the whole issue of projecting. I think her name is Cheryl Richardson. She does something called “Life Makeovers.” She talks about “how so many people are not doing what they really want to do, and she helps people find out what they really want to do.” She seems to be a more yuppie version of what Wayne Dyer is doing. Both of them have a noble approach. On one audio tape it was

described as, "You're living according to someone else's script."

The ideas behind unschooling and free schools are very similar to Wayne Dyer. Wayne Dyer, from what I have read and heard of him, has not specifically addressed the concept of homeschooling, though many of his views are definitely in line with the ideas of homeschooling. He has critiqued the public schools, but I don't recall him ever advocating homeschooling specifically.

Unschoolers believe we need to follow children and let children guide their learning instead of imposing rigid, mandatory curriculum onto kids. I worked in the public schools and I left the public schools for a great number of reasons. One of my big philosophical aversions to the public schools was mandatory curriculum. The idea is abominable. I certainly believe it's okay to force people to do something,

but intellectually we shouldn't be forcing. Mandatory curriculum is repulsive. I don't want to have mandatory curriculum. It's so much more wonderful to learn whatever I want to learn. Unschoolers believe children are “naturally curious” and we should not force them to learn and thus inhibit their curiosity.

I once dated a woman who was homeschooled. She was way different than her peers. She was independent. She was intellectual. She actually thought it was really depressing in college to see so much apathy and sickening. All people care about is drinking beer. There are so little exuberance out there. But homeschoolers have that. Unschoolers would say, “It's because they have not been beaten down by the school system.” I think some people, even though they go to public schools, are able to survive that. The vast majority of people are not strong enough. Again, that's

going back to Ned Beaumont's idea about some people being gold. I'm glad to say that exuberance... And will has not been beaten out of me even though I was in the public schools.

I'm glad to say I'm resisting the system. In fact, I have increased my resistance to the system as time has gone on. I may have had less hang-ups, have been more psychologically free had I been homeschooled. But like they say, sometimes “life happens for a reason”. Maybe working in the schools... Gave me a fire in my belly to change that. If I didn't work in the schools, I would have never engaged in this effort to overthrow the school system. My experience working in the schools was so bad, it totally turned me against it. Also at the time, I was thinking a lot intellectually. A lot of factors went into play. Some were specific personalities, some were big

themes. I wrote about it in the book, 95
Theses Against the School System.

I had long been familiar with
homeschooling, but it wasn't until I actually
worked in the schools where... I came to
embrace it wholeheartedly. It wasn't just an
intellectually interesting idea, but one I
have come to embrace in my soul. I am now
fighting District 622. I believe I was
personally wronged. I believe the kids are
being destroyed. And I believe it's up to me
to fight.

Good evening.