



## POSITIVE DISCIPLINE AND POSITIVE PARENTING/GUARDIANSHIP

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Editor: Dragi Zmijanac MA-President and Founder

Author: Prof. Ana Fritzhand PhD, Prof. Sofija Georgievska PhD

Lecturer: Ad-Webb Skopje

Design; Vane Kosturanov

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Prof. Ana Fritzhand PhD, Prof. Sofija Georgievska PhD

## POSITIVE DISCIPLINE AND POSITIVE PARENTING/GUARDIANSHIP

*Every Home is a University and the Parents are Teachers - Mahatma Gandhi*

### WHAT IS A POSITIVE DISCIPLINE?

Often, when the term “discipline” is heard, related with negative associations by many people, mainly with punishment, which is thought to go hand in hand with discipline. However, the true meaning of the term “discipline”, originating from the Latin term *disciplina*, is “learning”. Hence, disciplining is basically a process of learning and adopting values, rules, norms and principles of acceptable behaviour in a society. Traditionally, in the education of children, a discipline based on punishment is often practiced and often causes negative consequences (rebellion, retaliation, reduced self-esteem). To the contrary, there is a positive discipline based on encouraging the children to self-esteem and independence that make them responsible.

Therefrom, with it comes to **positive discipline**, it is referred to learning basically on positive reinforcement, understanding, encouraging and constructive communication between

parents/adults and children, and **not punishment!** Positive discipline means leading and teaching the child how to reach self-control. Discipline is establishing balance between the child's need of independence and the need of constraints. It helps us teach the children to productively participate in life. Here, except for the family, the school becomes another important agent in social learning as well. There are an increasing number of scientifically supported researches in the world showing that practicing discipline in the process of socializing of children provides multiple positive effects on the child's development as a whole.

Basics of the positive discipline are the following: cooperation; responsibility and independence; tenderness and understanding; proper understanding of the rules; participation of children; freedom of action; healthy and successful development.

### **Positive discipline requires both empathy and structure!**

- *Empathy* helps us understand the child, respect their needs, hear what they try to tell us, what need they need to satisfy, how they feel and what are they experiencing.
- *Structure* allows us to provide instructions and establish the necessary constraints that assist the children to learn how to meet their own needs.

### **First thing not attributable to the positive discipline is the corporal punishment!**

Although in the traditional manner of child-rearing, corporal punishment has been present both in the family and school, today, in the modern societies, there are no more dilemmas related to the harmful, and often destructive effects of corporal punishment on the development and psychological well-being of children. There are many arguments confirming this. Practice and researches show that children who are physically punished are more aggressive, emotionally instable and have low self-respect. They learn to behave aggressively because they see aggressive model that displays aggression on them. At the same time, physically punished children try to avoid the parent/adult punishing them, they have shaped a negative image about them and do not respect them, nor their authority. The result of the entire negative relationship is, of course, negative!

### **Not only the corporal punishment does not change the undesired behaviour, but it also feeds it and reinforces it!**

The main reason why the corporal punishment has no positive effects is that the behaviour for which the child has been punished does not change, it is only suppressed by them and postponed for later. Hence, it is a temporary interruption of the bad behaviour, and not its transformation in a positive behaviour. In the meanwhile, the child's anger and pain can be discharged by displaying a series of unpleasant and unacceptable (and even antisocial) forms of behaviour. It is commonly noted that such negative emotions children display on objects (toys, dolls, etc.), on weaker persons that cannot defend themselves (younger children, animals, etc.) by physically punishing, damaging, injuring them, and sometimes they can display self-aggressive behaviours (behaviour in which aggression is directed towards their own body).

### **Punishment among children encourages an embarrassment and guilt, worthlessness and doubt in their own potential for self-control, gives rise to rebellion and resistance!**

In fact, punishment slows down the learning process. Yelling and constant preaching produce similar negative effects, since, in time, the child will get used to that attitude, they will put their hands on their ears and will not accept a requirement, advice or suggestion from

the parent/adult. On the other hand, behaviour and actions made under coercion of authority have no long-term positive effect on learning positive behaviour models that will be based on understanding the mechanisms and reasons underlying the negative behaviour, they only produce it and/or feed it and direct it.

**The emphasis should be placed on conversation rather than ordering the child what to do and criticizing them!**

If the child understands why they should not act in a particular manner and comprehends the negative consequences of their behaviour on other people and the environment, they will be increasingly motivated to behave in a socially acceptable manner and to practice higher levels of self-control. Therefore, the children need the parents/adults as positive role models from whom they can learn and compare with. Each child has their own development pace and specifics. But, in the context of disciplining, common for all children is that when they feel afraid, hurt or angry they do not listen. When, in turn, they feel under threat, they reflect a defensive attitude that closes not only the channel of successful communication, but often the channel of any communication.

**Practicing caring and also a decisive discipline are required!**

In this manner maintenance of the established boundaries is provided, as well as warm atmosphere of mutual acceptance, trust, respect, support and love, above all. Children do not listen when they feel afraid, hurt or angry. When they will feel a threat, children take a defensive attitude. Defensive attitude may appear as obedience, as a rebellion or how these two things work together, because the child must regain the very significant sense of belonging and importance and will do almost anything to feel it again. The thing parents should be aware of is that children should learn the real things - to know that they belong somewhere and that they are important, that they can trust the parents and learn from them and show that they know how they feel. Punishment slows down the learning process. A caring and decisive discipline maintains the balance between safety, boundaries, love and respect that are so needed for children in early life.

**Parents/educators' behaviour requires persistency and consistency!**

It is of an extraordinary importance for the child to be clearly aware of what is expected from them. Parent/adult should be persistent and consistent in their behaviour with the child (for example, if they have to prevent certain behaviour – the child stubbornly tortures the pet and treats it as if it was a toy – they should act in the same manner whenever unacceptable behaviour is displayed, not to sanction the behaviour at times, and not to react to it at other times), they should direct rather than to control the behaviour, they should establish a cooperation with the child, they themselves should respect the child, above all, in order to teach them to respect others, they should try to put in the child's position and to see and understand the things from their perspective, to offer a choice, to help when needed, to be patient and caring, to pay attention, to monitor and redirect, and of course - to accept the child's uniqueness, that is, not to compare it with other children.

**Clear rules and boundaries of behaviour should be established!**

Rules the parents set should be comprehensive and well-defined expectations from the child that will be communicated with clear and short messages so that the child could easily understand what is asked (and why it is asked) from them (for example, “When you are done playing, please, collect your toys. That way you will always know where your toys are and you will not lose them, and the room will be tidy as well. Tidiness is an important trait.”). At the same time, the parent/adult should talk through and clarify their expectations with the child in order to align the same. The latter is important, because the practice shows that

children are more prepared to follow and respect the rules in which they themselves took part.

**Using positive support and rewarding the positive behaviour!** (it is important to stress out here that rewarding should not be of material nature, i.e. such rewards to be as rare as possible)

These activities by which the child shows patience, self-control, endurance and finishes them completely should be especially supported. Most often, younger children give up in the first failure. In such situations, the parents should practice patient and non-accusing attitude, helping the child restore their motivation and showing them that what at the beginning seems an unsolvable problem, can be solved step by step, in a slightly different approach. In this manner, giving up and anxiety will be replaced by behaviour that will be headed to successful realization in conditions of several consecutive unsuccessful attempts as well. Final effect of practicing positive discipline is happy individuals, with high self-respect, self-esteem and self-control with developed ability of empathy (sympathizing with others), willing to cooperate and help, who can distinguish good and appropriate from bad and inappropriate behaviour, with a developed system of values and a positive image of themselves and others.

## **POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOL**

### **Model of positive discipline of Friedrich Jones**

Friedrich Jones's "positive discipline" model is based on the researches of how the teachers behave when the pupils behave inappropriately. It contains four methods: establishing the rules, applying responsibility, applying proper behaviour and support system. In the model, the structure of the school is particularly important. In addition, the organization of the time and space in the classroom, as well as the school rules, are also important. The teacher is required to establish general rules for proper behaviour, equipping the classroom so that they can move through it unimpededly and will be able to monitor all pupils.

Positive discipline is divided in two sections. The first belongs to the teacher, who should do anything to avoid the punishment and the second section is consisted of punishment (support system). Jones recommends the teachers, before solving the problematic behaviour, to firstly offer (positive) solution of how the problem can be solved. It only in this manner the misbehaviour of the pupil will no longer be repeated. Furthermore, in its management system, the application of positive rewarding is needed in order to obtain positive results in the behaviour of the pupil. That is why this model of Jones is called a "positive discipline". The author thinks that the pupils causing troubles should not be punished, but their behaviour should be directed towards positive behaviour (application of rewards).

The mentioned model contains three levels of negative sanctions. *First level* is application of small negative sanctions (small punishments), quiet warning by the teacher or meeting alone with the pupil. *Second level* is a level of medium negative sanctions (punishments of medium intensity). Here the teacher excludes the pupil from the activities, the pupil is sent out of class, the teacher retains the pupil after classes to talk with them, the teacher meets with the parents or reduces the grades of the pupil. *Third level* is application of large negative sanctions (large punishments) where the pupil is sent to the principal for a conversation or corporal punishments are applied.

Positive side of this model can be the experience of the teachers who used this model.

Large number of teachers is satisfied from the application of non-verbal communication which makes them feel secure and more successful. While, in turn, as a critique to this model is that it has showed as inefficient for pupils displaying serious discipline issues. Shortcoming of this model is also the application of rewards for pupil's good behaviour.

Characteristics of the methods for establishing positive discipline described in this model can be summarized as follows:

### ***Method of Establishing Rules***

The applied non-verbal communication by the teacher aims at establishing rules of conduct. By applying non-verbal communication, the teacher encourages the pupil to give up on the inappropriate behaviour. This includes the application of various mimics, gestures, head movements, facial expression (calm), posture, etc. In this manner, the pupil will be encouraged to work on the class and the teaching will not be disturbed at all. The teacher must establish a balance applying mild forms of punishment and rewarding at the same time.

Jones points out that one of the biggest mistakes of the teacher is when they loudly warn the pupil and criticize them before the entire class, which immediately disturbs the positive mood in the classroom. This attracts the attention of other pupils, the course of the class is disturbed and the misbehaviour of the pupil is directly supported. So applying body language will be more effective than the verbal warning. Knowing the rules about how a pupil should behave, the teacher can point out to them not to disturb other pupils with their behaviour. It is also important in all this the teacher's closeness to the pupil, that is, standing up to the pupil can lead to prevention of misbehaviour.

There are specific steps in establishing boundaries, such as: teacher should stop lecturing immediately, teacher should have "eyes and on the back", teacher should turn to the pupil and rebuke them with a look, teacher should go to the pupil's desk - the power of spatial proximity, teacher standing in front of and behind the pupil.

### ***Method of Exercising Responsibility***

Applying responsibility for introducing positive cooperation in the class. Author considers that the pupils need stimulation system by which the teacher will motivate the pupils to perform the given tasks. Teacher should be prepared to be able to help the pupils and provide them with positive support at any time. Jones believes that grades, symbolic recognitions and other rewards should not be used as a stimulus for pupils, as this will motivate successful pupils. The reward should be provided to the entire class, i.e. to all classmates, for the tasks they like and perform with special interest. That will make the pupils satisfied, that teaches them to responsibility, since the reward received is for what they like to do and should further adopt a proper decision of how to use the same. This encourages developing a climate of cooperation among the pupils in the class, because the positive behaviour of each pupil contributes to earning a reward. In order the teacher to be able to implement that encouragement system, it is necessary for them to be especially qualified for skills and activities.

### ***Method of Applying Proper Behaviour***

If in one class there are pupils who often cause troubles and they are not involved in the system of exercising responsibility, it is necessary for the teacher to work with a special individualized programme. That programme aims at encouraging the pupils to stop behaving

inappropriately.

### ***Method of Applying a Support System***

This system is foreseen for pupils who cause disciplinary troubles in spite of the numerous measures that have been undertaken previously but have failed. This support system covers a series of punishments, negative sanctions for the pupil's misbehaviour. These negative sanctions appear with different level of intensity. Teacher should establish a balance applying negative and positive sanctions i.e. each type of negative measure (punishment) should be supplemented by a positive measure (reward).

## **POSITIVE DISCIPLINE AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN**

Emotional development is one of the key domains of person's development. It is closely related to the cognitive and social development of the individual. It plays an essential role in the development of identity, self-esteem, self-control and self-image. It is embedded in the process of communication between the child and the adults, but also among the adults themselves. Emotions lie at the core of non-verbal communication competence. In many researches, the relationship of emotions to temperament with socio-emotional attachment in childhood is emphasized, with affective association in youth and in the adult period, as well as with the quality of interpersonal interactions in general. Positive discipline in the domain of emotional development helps the child learn to recognize and respect one's own feelings and the feelings of others, to develop empathy, to advance and upgrade self-control and self-confidence, to build a positive image for themselves and the like.

**For example:** recognizing the emotions in others and encouraging empathy is best promoted through daily communication between the child and the parent, in situations where the effects of the child's behaviour or of someone else's behaviour are clearly visible. In this sense, the parent should draw the maximum from the conversation with the child in order to stimulate the empathic ability. Thus, for example, if their child took the toy of another child by applying force and/or without seeking permission, and with this action they caused sadness and revolt in the other child, the parent, instead of responding with reproach and punishment, should use that situation in order to point out to their child the feelings that they caused with the other child.

**Parent:** "By taking the toy from your friend without permission, you really made them sad. I believe that you would be revolted and sad too if someone took your toy in the same manner. We always get angry and sad when someone takes the things that belong to us without asking or by applying force."

Situations with positive connotation also contribute to the development of empathy and related abilities in the child.

**Parent:** "Helping your friend to find the lost toy was very nice of you and you made them very happy. Look how cheerfully they hug and play with it. It is important to help friends, that makes them happy and us as well. I am proud of you!"

**Emotions' role in the communication process is central, especially in the first years of life.**

It is known, for example, that communication throughout the first year of an infant is emotionally coloured. This means that infants rely on the expression of emotions (most often crying and smiling, as innate) to express their needs and desires or to send out a message about the state they are currently in (for example, they want to be embraced and comforted). In addition, the appropriate and timely response by parents is crucial for building the relationship between them and the child, that is, the quality of socio-emotional attachment.

**Socio-emotional bonding of a child to parents is a process through which positive relationships are created that enable a sense of protection to emerge and thus meet the basic need for security.**

This is about the innate need of the other and the ways through which the relationship with the other is built. Quality of the established socio-emotional attachment in childhood is the basis for building up all further interpersonal relationships in adolescence and in adulthood. This affects the development of the image for oneself, self-esteem, self-acceptance, social competence of the individual and the like. This is so, because the internal model of socio-emotional bonding for parents, which is different for each child, tends to persist and influence the shaping of the experiences of the individual, their memories, their attention, the ways of reacting in certain situations, and the like (for example, when a child is not accepted by peers, a child can react with withdrawal and isolation, and another will find ways to get closer and be involved in joint activities). This model of bonding develops in the second half of the first year and continues to develop in the period of early childhood (more precisely somewhere to the fifth year).

### **Qualities of Socio-Emotional Attachment of the Child to the Parents**

The most commonly stated classification groups the qualities of the child's socio-emotional attachment to the parent in two general categories: secure and insecure attachment. Within the uncertain attachment, the avoidance and hesitant quality are distinguished, which, when combined, give the fourth quality of an unorganized-disorientated attachment.

#### **Secure Socio-Emotional Attachment**

It is characterized by the behaviour of a child in which openness to new experiences, active research and a calm response to an unknown person when the parent is nearby dominate. However, at the moment when they are separated from their parents, these children become strongly upset, inasmuch as any attempt to be appeased by someone else remains unsuccessful. In the re-encounter with the parent, the anxiety that is followed by intense crying, relatively quickly calms down. In such a situation, the child requires close, physical contact with the parent, they want to be hugged and calmed and evidently prefer the parent over any other person from the immediate environment. Cheerful mood and focus on game and research activities is returns back soon. Securely attached children are relatively happy individuals who in time successfully build trust in relationships with other people, create positive image of themselves, usually they are popular in the peer group and among adults, they have higher self-control and self-esteem etc.

#### **Avoidant Socio-Emotional Attachment**

Characteristic in the child's behaviour for this attachment quality is avoiding and/or neglecting the contact with the parent. The latter is especially expressed after a certain absence of the parent. The child does not try to get close to their parent or to establish "eye-to-eye" contact by themselves, although they do not refuse the parent's attempts to make contact. Usually it is noticed that the child continues with the playing activity in the presence of unknown person as well, treating them as they treat the parent i.e. they avoid both of them or ignore both of them. Externally, the child looks calm and focused on the game. However, many researches have shown that in terms of physiological reactivity (when measuring the temperature of the skin, blood pressure, pulse, etc.), these children are very upset, although they do not display it. This means that the separation from the parent affects them greatly, but they have learnt that no matter how they react they have neither control nor power to direct the events in favour of their desires and needs – something which in developmental psychology is called "learned helplessness" – a condition adversely affecting the optimal

development of the image of oneself, the self-esteem and trust in other people, the motivation to be active and to have control on one's own life and decisions etc.

### **Ambivalent Socio-Emotional Attachment**

It is shown in the extremely negative reaction and anxiety of the child after separation with the parent. In such a condition, the other person sometimes manages to calm the child in relatively short period of time, but it is possible sometimes the child to refuse the contact with them and does not want to be calmed. However, most indicative thing for this attachment quality is that on reunion, the parent cannot calm the child who cries even more and becomes more anxious. Ambivalence is evident in child's attempts to get closer to the parent that can be intensive to a level of dependency, on one hand, and in the rage and annoyance, or in the withdrawal and avoidance of contact with the parent, on the other. Overall behaviour of the child is often followed by the so-called. Regressive forms of behaviour such as wobbling, sucking a thumb or object, teasing with teeth, etc. Thus the parent needs more time to calm them down and to restore the research focus in playing.

### **Disorganized-Disoriented Socio-Emotional Attachment**

This quality of socio-emotional attachment is most rarely encountered in practice. It is about most insecure bounding which is combination of avoidant and ambivalent attachment. The child may display a series of different reactions after separation with the parent, as well as on reunion. These reactions may typically involve stiffness, confusion, anxiety in the meeting, hesitation whether to establish contact or to withdraw, and the like. It is possible for the child at one point to ask for intensive contact with the parent, and in the next they will reject them and suddenly escape from them. This does not left out the possibility to display strange and unrelated emotions to the persons present around them. Presence of conflict models of behaviour of the child to the parent is also common.

### **Quality of established socio-emotional attachment comes to the fore in the manner in which the child reacts in separation from the parent(s).**

Most of the children, who are securely attached, especially at age between 12 and 16 months, are anxious when they should separate from the parents. They give strong resistance followed by crying, fear and other types of reactions. Such behaviour is underlid by the fear of abandoning and the endangered basic need of security. This is because the child is convinced that even a short-term separation is permanent i.e. that the parent leaves forever. Over the course of age, especially after the third year, such reactions are spread out and disappear, so the child can be separated from the parent(s) for a longer time. If after the third year the child still cannot be calmed in separation and cannot stay without the parent for certain time (for example, in pre-school institution), this indicates insecure quality of attachment. Researches in developmental psychology unambiguously show that the child simultaneously builds several socio-emotional relationships with adults who take care of them and equally attaches to both parents.

### **In terms of quality of the parent-child relationship, the quality of the relationship rather than quantity is of crucial importance!**

It is more important HOW the child spends time with the parent(s) rather than HOW MUCH time they spend together. This essentially means that the child will have more development benefits from a 15-minute quality interaction with the parent (playing, talking, reading, walking, etc.) rather than spending the whole day in a parallel stay (together) where the child and the parent are committed each to their own activities, the child is bored and/or requires interaction, and the parent, deeply involved in the obligations, irritably reacts to the child's requests and complaints.

## **POSITIVE PARENTING – CONCEPT, CHARACTERISTICS AND STYLES**

Parenting is a process that lasts and abounds with skills that are learnt and perfected. Not a person is born knowing how to be a successful parent, instead they learn the parenting from their parents, from their own experience, from professionals and/or advices received etc. Parenting is one of the greatest challenges, while the parental role is one of the most complex social roles an individual may experience. Parenting implies commitment and long-termness, requires patience and time, trust and closeness, love and understanding, temperateness and skill. But most of all, it requires knowledge and responsibility. Therefore, at the beginning of their parenting career, parents should ask themselves “What is my final goal as a parent?”, “What I would like to teach my child?”, “What kind of adult do I want for them to grow up?”. Each parenting decision made is important and, more or less, affects the quality of child's life and development. Hence, everything that parents do should contain these same qualities that they want to be developed in their children.

### **Perfect parents do not exist, it is a myth!**

Perfect conditions and forms exist only in theory, so becoming a perfect parent in the everyday life is a project condemned to failure at the very beginning. Raising a child is anything but simple. Both the parents and the children make mistakes. But these mistakes do not have to incur irreparable damage if both of them are prepared to learn from them. For this reason, each parent's aspiration should be directed towards becoming a “good enough” parent who will open the road to their child to unimpeded growth and development. Positive parenting is indivisibly related to the positive discipline. In other words, they complement one another. In addition, the active and qualitative involvement of both parents in the life and child-rearing (whether it is a complete family or a family of divorced parents) is of great importance.

### **Each family is special, different from others!**

Today, there are various forms of families in the world. Each family is a unique system that provides unique environment to its members. It has its specifics, dynamics, level of functionality, customs, rules of child-rearing etc. In terms of functionality, families are mainly divided in two general categories: functional and dysfunctional. Psychological literature and empiricism agree that the conditions that exist in the family and the quality of relationships among its members are extremely important for the optimal development of the individual. Hence, it is essential that the family be functional and provide the child with an environment in which they will feel safe, secure, loved, accepted as they are, respected and understood. It should be a place where the child will be able to grow up freely, to learn and explore, and thus develop unimpededly and realize the potential that they bring within themselves.

In that direction, individuals that come from families with mutual trust, respect, love and understanding display positive attitude to other people, in general, they have developed a sense of independence and self-confidence and balance. Unlike them, those who come from families in which conflicts are daily or in which there is rejection and indifferent attitude by parents, display negative image for oneself, low self-esteem and low self-respect, and often behave aggressively.

Relationship between parents is emphasized as very important element affecting the child's socialization process. Adjusted relationships contribute to the proper development of the child, while unadjusted relationships cause conflicts in the child as well, since they perceive the consequences of such a relationship as jeopardizing the main needs of security and love. This is, among others, one of the risk factors for occurrence of asocial and antisocial behaviour.

### **Parents are the first and most important role model of children for their proper physical psychological development!**

Child learns by a model they identify themselves with and they imitate. In that learning process, action is more important than words for the child. Therefrom, stronger effect on the child's behaviour will have the parents' actions (what do the parent do) than what they say. Of course, the proper verbal management of child behaviour is important, but it is essential that parents are positive role models for their children. Style of child-rearing applied by parents affects all aspects of the child's life, from their body mass to their self-esteem. Therefore it is important to select the right way to ensure and support optimal growth and development, which will be the foundation for the way in which children will continue as adults and will be productive members of society.

Contemporary psychology identifies 4 most often analysed parenting styles or parenting authorities. Each person has their own, special characteristics and results in different reactions and effected among children. On the other hand, each parent-child relationship is different, which is why it is not really possible to apply one style to anyone in every situation. Here, it is essential to stress out that the so-called "clean" parenting styles exist in theory only. In practice, nuances of each of the stated styles that can be more or less close to the typical (theoretically described) style of parental behaviour are encountered more often.

### **Parenting Style/Parental Authority – Types and Development**

The development of parental authority is a complex process, which begins in the pre-natal period through the mother's attitude towards pregnancy and her care for her and the health of her still unborn child. Parent-child relationship is bi-directional and depends on several factors that originate both from the parent and the child. Thus, for example, among the most stated factors originating from the parent is the parent's development history (i.e. how they were growing up). In other words, parents learn authority from their parents. Furthermore, this includes parent's health, economic and educational status, their value system, gender of the parent and child, familiarity with development and developmental characteristics of the different age periods etc. Child's effect on the parent, in turn, is related to their temperament, mood, their innate abilities and parental expectations from them, as well as the child's age. Thus, it becomes clear that, for example, a parent of two children can practice different parenting style to each of the children, depending on the factors in terms of which children defer from one another.

### **Four Most Frequently Mentioned Parenting Styles in Theory and Practice**

#### **Authoritarian (Demanding) Parenting Style**

This style is most often described as very strict and rigid. It is characterized by low warmth, high control and strict demands for accepting responsibility. Parents who practice this style are cold, rigid and critical towards the child. In this style, obedience and submissiveness are emphasized. Corporal punishment and control are applied. Demands for discipline are strongly highlighted, and the communication between the parent and the child is cold and discouraging. The children are expected to be responsible, docile and fulfilling.

They do not participate in making family decisions, neither do they are let to express their opinion.

Children who grow up by parents who practice this style are neat, obedient and fulfilling, they can have high academic achievements, but they are not very happy and in the later development they usually have lower self-esteem, a feeling of lower value, aggressiveness, passivity and difficulties in their independence.

**In addition, here is some of most common expressions authoritarian parents use:**

- Because I said so!
- There is nothing you can think, I know what is best for you!
- Do as I say, not as I do!
- Shame on you! *or* I'm ashamed of you!
- It is going be as I said. Conversation is over!

Parents should be aware that sometimes the line between constructive application of power, their social role provides them, and its misuse and imposition of their will on the child, can be very thin. There are numerous and severe restrictions on the use of parental power over the child, which makes it more desirable to apply alternative approaches in directing child's behaviour.

**Practice shows that most common effects of imposing parental power on children are negative and include:**

- Resistance, defence, rebellion, negativism.
- Dissatisfaction, anger, hostility.
- Aggression, vengeance, retaliation.
- Lying, concealing feelings.
- Accusation of others, cheating.
- Domination, command, intimidation.
- Desire (unrealistically large) to win and avoid defeat (at any cost).
- Uniting against parents.
- Subordination, exaggerated obedience (bounded by passivity).
- Flattery, insincerity.
- Conformism, lack of creativity, fear of failure and lack of initiative.
- Retreat, avoidance, fantasy, regression.

### **Authoritative (Democratic) Parenting Style**

It is distinguished as the best in comparison to the authoritarian, permissive and indifferent, because warmth and control are high and balanced. Children receive warmth, but responsibility for their actions is demanded. Control is high and adjusted to the child's age, needs, interests and desires. Child participates in joint family decision making and is entitled to express their opinion. When the established rules are violated, an explanation is demanded and the consequences are discussed. Communication between the parent and child is clear,

warm, open and bi-directional. Punishment is rarely applied, and the acknowledgments and positive support are more frequent.

Children who grow up in this parenting style are happy, cooperative, sociable, generous, with high self-esteem and self-control. Often, they are popular in the peer group and adults (teachers), because they are socially competent and have no need to draw attention to themselves, involving in problematic forms of behaviour, they have high academic achievements and are courageous and empathetic.

**Some expressions that authoritative parents use are the following:**

- What do you think about that?
- I believe you can do this. I am here if you need me.
- We can consider this together, than you can decide what to do.
- That is a really good idea! Go ahead!
- I am proud of you!

**Permissive Parenting Style**

This style is characterized by high warmth, and low and inconsistent control. Parent gives a lot of love, but does not set limits and control. The approach is permissive in the way of structuring leisure time, the choice of comradeships and the execution of school and domestic responsibilities. Expectations from the child are low, and the discipline and obedience demands are lower than in those in the previous two styles. The parent responds positively to almost every requirement and desire of the child, even when they are irrational and impulsive. Frequently applied discipline techniques are manipulating with resources. They manipulate with the warmth and material assets such as toys, food, money etc. There are few rules in the family. In situations when the rules are disobeyed, most often taking responsibility is not required. Children have great freedom in making decisions and structuring the leisure time. Permissive parenting style stimulates the negative patterns of behaviour, such as irresponsibility, spoiledness, insolence, and impulsiveness. Children who grow up with such a parenting style are unhappy, have lack of self-control, and are usually emotionally immature.

**Indifferent Parenting Style**

This is one of the most harmful styles of child development. This is an indifferent relationship of the parent to the child, where priorities are placed on the needs and desires of the parent, not of the child. Parent is, above all, focused on their hobbies, interests, comfort and the like, and is not actively involved in the child's disciplining, neither in sharing the love and tenderness. Children who grew up with this type of parents have very low self-control, they are unable to set limits in behaviour, emotionally immature, and often display problematic behaviour in different forms and intensity.

**POSITIVE PARENTING AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILD'S PERSONALITY**

Personality development and identity formation of children and adolescents have been explored and explained by many psychologists. One of the better known is Eric Eriksson, who thinks that this development takes place in eight psychosocial phases that include: trust, autonomy, initiative, competence, identity, intimacy, generativity and personal integrity. Each phase has its own developmental tasks and each represents potential crisis situation. The order of these eight phases is universal, with the possibility of variance in duration. First four

psychosocial phases occur during the childhood, while the fifth is characteristic of the period of adolescence. In each of the first five phases, the parents' attitude towards the child and then the teachers' is crucial for the successful overcoming of developmental crises, which is especially pronounced as younger as the child is. This is largely conditioned by the style that parents practice in relationships with their own child(ren) for whom it was previously spoken.

### **Phase One: Basic Trust - Basic Distrust.**

This phase is in the course of the first year (infant period). Its main task is to build basic trust that represents a foundation of the later self-acceptance, of the love of others and of hope. The author emphasizes that the basic trust is a fundamental sense of self-sufficiency, for the individual's comprehensive attitude towards himself and the world. They indicate that this feeling is formed, above all, under the influence of warm relationship and acceptance relationship with the mother and other adults who take care of the child. If the relationship with them is not satisfying, basic distrust will be built instead of basic trust, which marks the further path in the formation of identity. From the favourable ratio of trust and distrust, there is hope. The dominance of distrust results in an introversion. In adult age, the basic trust appears as ability to believe, while the basic distrust exists in the form of self-alienation.

### **Phase Two: Acquiring Autonomy.**

It takes place in the course of second year of life (period of early childhood). Crisis in it is aimed at autonomy or shame and doubt. Child's motor development, increasing radius of movement, development of speech, experience with the parents regarding the accustoming to hygiene, are circumstances that enable the child to experience themselves as an independent, autonomous creature. The task of this development phase is the acquisition of self-esteem, a sense of power and pride. But, often this phase ends up with sense of insecurity, doubt, powerlessness and shame. Adults, parents, above all, with their strict demands in accustoming to hygiene lead the child to start seeing themselves as dirty, disobeying and bad instead of powerful. Quality arising out of the second phase is the will, whose prerequisite is development of early trust. Negative quality arising out of the failure to overcome the crisis in the second phase is compulsiveness i.e. excessive shyness, repetition, the need for everything to be as it should, etc. If the crisis is not overcome, shamelessness may result.

### **Phase Three: Acquiring Initiative.**

This phase is characteristic about the pre-school period i.e. playing age. Crisis in it is directed towards initiative or guilt. In this phase the child becomes capable to modify reality through play and fantasy. The task here is to build initiative which will later be the foundation for pursuing achievement, realistic ambition and focus - aspiration, planning and determination to accomplish the set tasks and goals. If the crisis is not positively resolved, shame, resistance, aggression towards anything new and unexplored is created instead of initiative. At the same time, the sense of guilt can follow any attempt to seek solutions that do not fit in the usual, familiar frames. Quality developed from this phase is focus, while the negative quality is inhibition.

### **Phase Four: Accepting Responsibility**

Crisis in this phase which occurs in school age (middle childhood) is hardworking or inferiority. Child starts school and is then most interested and ready to learn quickly, to discipline, to do things together with others, to participate in building and planning, to connect with teachers, etc. Starting school changes their relationship with parents and themselves. Teachers are the persons the child identifies with in order to successfully pass this developmental phase. Unskilled or disinterested teacher, unskilled or overprotective parent will not develop child's independence, nor will they let the child know that results

come with their own effort. Overprotecting the child or constant comparisons with the results of other children can lead to self-reliance or a feeling of impotence and inferiority.

According to Ericson, timid persons, prone to regard each and even the smallest difficulty in their lives as an insurmountable obstacle, then - the conformists who sacrifice their own desires living in impersonal alignment with others - belong to those persons who in this life phase have not accepted responsibility, but developed a sense of lower value. Overcoming the crisis in this phase results in emergence of competitiveness - certainty that they are capable of performing activities. Overcoming the crisis leads to inertness and inferiority. This can lead to regression or to be a basis for strong tendency toward competing.

### **Phase Five: Identity or Role Confusion.**

Adolescence is the most turbulent period in the lifecycle, because all conflicts and bad decisions from the previous developmental phases meet in this period of life. How the child passed these phases determines how the conflicts in this life period will be resolved. At this age, adolescents face their changed physical appearance, their high sexual needs, changed attitude of the environment. Their expectations from themselves and the people around them are high. Often, the confused and timid adolescent should grow up in a skilful person overnight. Parents are no longer the best just because the adolescent loves them. Adolescent begins to observe the persons who were their role models not long ago. Through the building of one's own value system, conflicts with former identification models become almost inevitable.

Main goal of the changes in the period of adolescents is to synthesize everything that happened in previous development phases and building a solid sense of identity. If this phase's crisis fails to be successfully resolved, instead an identity that will allow the adolescent to see themselves as a unique and unrepeatable human being and adopt a decision for their future life, identity confusion, isolation, fear, indecisiveness, and doubt regarding their own future will emerge. Quality developed in successfully resolved crisis in adolescence is reliability - the ability to accomplish the promised, to be loyal. Failure to overcome the crisis will result in denial - the adolescent does not have a clear picture of themselves, does not accept roles, and they are timid.

### **What about the Image of One's Self and the Self-Esteem?**

In the essence of this constructive resolving the developmental crisis described in the aforementioned phases there is optimal development of the image of one's self, self-esteem, self-respect, empathy, social competence and many other aspects of the individual's development. Thus, for example, the methods of child-rearing affect the normative-developmental changes in the image of one's self, which are the main causes of individual differences as to whether the reasoning about one's self is good or bad. Global self-worth is actually a concept of one's self, which is created in social interaction and depends on the valuing of others. Developing one's self-concept involves affective processes emphasized in the moral emotions of pride, shame and guilt.

### **Fair part of self-respect and good opinion of one's self is acquired in pre-school and school period.**

Children shape the image of one's self at earliest age, when they become aware of the occurrences around them. In this entire process it is extremely important what kind of messages (verbal and non-verbal) they receive from their significant others, the parents, above all. From the very first day, the child should know and feel that they are loved for what they are. Love shall not be conditioned. Expressed and demonstrated, it should be a manner of nurturing responsibility and self-respect of the child.

**Therefore, among others, parents should:**

- spend quality time with their children;
- praise the effort they invested in certain activity;
- encourage independence;
- let them know they love them the way they are, without conditioning love;
- Do not use sarcasm, irony and mockery etc.

Starting from child's second year of life, parents should teach them to formulate the memory by narration. That creates personal narrative. Therefore, it is important the child to be told of events and significant periods from their life which they cannot remember by themselves (from developmental point of view, the first relatively lasting memories in children begin to form at the age of about 3-4 years). Self-awareness at 2-year-olds is recognized in striving to do everything all by themselves or when they show that the toys are theirs. What the child will value about themselves depends on what their parents value about them. The created internal model of self-worth persists, because the child will continue to select experiences that confirm and support their image of one's self.

**In order for the child to build healthy and positive image of one's self, it is necessary for the parent to:**

- recognize their needs;
- satisfy the child's needs appropriately and on time;
- show emotions of warmth and interest in their activities;
- put themselves in their place in order to get how they feel and what they think;
- learn to listen them actively in order to understand them;
- speak to them in a manner in which they will feel accepted and understood;
- support them and unobtrusively encourage them.

**PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION – AN IMPORTANT ASPECT IN POSITIVE DISCIPLINE**

Those individuals who have the ability to feel what others feel and to present it in an appropriate and accurate manner have more success when they help other people. This is because they accept others as they are, without the need to change them. This is the key of guaranteed success: we do not have the magic power to change people according to our desires and needs. But! When the other one feels that they are truly accepted, they begin to think about how they could change themselves, how to become different, how to "grow up" beside us, and realize what they carry in themselves as a potential.

In context of parenting, many parents (often by negligence and unconsciously) use a language of unacceptance in the process of child-rearing. The issue in this language is its abundance with criticism, accusations, evaluations, judgments, moralizing, preaching, convictions, orders, and the like. This adversely affects the child, causing resistance, anger, revolt or withdrawal and closing in one's own world. In this manner, the child creates distance with parents and terminates the conversation with them. Instead of sharing, they keep their feelings and problems to themselves.

To the contrary, language of acceptance is completely different. It encourages the child to talk about their problems and feelings with parents, to ask for an opinion and advice as well. Practicing this manner of communication with the child is great challenge for the parents, but at the same time it pays off multiple times, as it has many positive effects on the child. **Among the most common are the following:**

- The child develops sense of being loved and accepted;
- They learn to accept and love themselves;
- They grow able to accept other people the way they are;
- They acquire and build sense of self-worth;
- They respect themselves and others, their own and others' feelings;
- Allows the child to develop their own potentials and self-control;
- Helps the child to resolves problems by themselves in future;
- The child builds constructive attitude and view of the world they live in;
- . Learns how to make good decisions.

**Children very often become what their parents tell them they are.**

The manner the parent talks to their child determines whether that manner helps or impedes child's development. Therefore, knowing the communication skills that are crucial to communicating acceptance is of great importance.

**Acceptance can be communicated non-verbally** and it is then expressed by:

- *Non-interfering in what the child does* (when doing something positive and constructive). This is a very powerful way of showing acceptance, because it sends the child an implicit message that the parent agrees on or approves the child's activity i.e. behaviour. (Note: care must be taken to distinguish this positive type of non-interference from the adverse effects of non-interference when it comes to behaviour by which the child harms themselves or anyone else. In such a case, the parent's non-interference indicates lack of interest for what the child is doing, not having limits, nor rules of conduct, and hence a poor quality or inadequate relationship between the parent and the child.
- . *Silence or silent acceptance* of the child's behaviour. (The note afore also applies to this).

**What is not a sign of acceptance by the parent:**

- . Orders, commands and directions;
- . Warnings, convictions and intimidations;
- . Moralizing and preaching;
- . Advising and offering ready-made solutions;
- . Instructing and giving logical arguments;
- . Evaluation, criticism and imputation;
- . Mocking and embarrassing;
- . Interpreting, overanalysing and diagnosing;

- . Tempting, checking and interrogating;
- . Retreating, suppressing and deterring;

It is important to have in mind that when the parent tells something to the child, they simultaneously say something for the child themselves. That is why the way in which parents communicate with their children has a great influence on the child and on their interpersonal relationship. Style of communication and the manner in which the parent sends the messages can close/interrupt or open and encourage the communication channel with the child. Therefrom, besides WHAT was said, equally important about the message effect is HOW it was said (i.e. by what kind of intonation, gesture, facial expression is accompanied the message being sent, etc.). In this entire complex communication system, active listening and the I-messages have key roles.

### **ACTIVE LISTENING AND I-MESSAGES: KEY SKILLS OF LANGUAGE OF ACCEPTANCE**

The concept of active listening in narrowest sense means “I listen (actively) in order to understand what the interlocutor is telling me”. This is one of the basic communication skills. Its strength is that the one who uses it shows that they understand and sympathize with the interlocutor. When it comes to children, active listening by the parents helps them get familiar with their feelings, and if they apply it themselves, they start to listen carefully what their parents think and how they feel. In this manner, active listening helps the child to cease to be afraid of negative feelings, encourages them to share them and leaves space to express them without fear of being accused or rebuked by their parents. This is so, because when the parent shows the child that they accept child’s feelings, they help them accept them as well.

**For example:** In the afternoon, after you have returned from kindergarten, the child complains that no one wants to play with them and that she plays alone all the time. She starts crying, saying that she has no friends.

Child: Today no one wanted to play with me in kindergarten!

You: Sounds like you are very angry about it.

Child: Yes! I am! Sad as well. Nobody likes me... (starts crying).

You: I see that this really makes you sad.

Child: Yes. I am sad. Even Nela did not want to play with me. She went playing with the other girls, leaving me all by myself... (she still cries, but a bit calmed).

You: You do not want to play alone.

Child: Of course I do not! It is more fun when we play together. Yesterday we played Lego, me, Nela and Lana. We built a castle and it was awesome!

You: You are happy when you and your friends do something together.

Child: I am very happy! Tomorrow I am going to tell them to build larger castle! (smile).

Active listening makes children more independent, because in listening active, the parent sends the child a message of trust. It helps and makes it easier for them to solve the problem they face and thus increase their self-esteem. This communication skill becomes part of the communication style of both the children and the adults if practiced regularly.

According to certain authors, parents should consider the following rules.

**For real functioning of the active listening:**

- You need to really like to listen what the child has to say which requires time and concentration. Therefore, take the time and patience to listen the child.
- You need to really like to help the child to solve the problem that appeared at certain moment.
- You need to be really able to accept the child's feelings as they are, without judging, blaming, labelling etc.
- You have to deeply trust your child and their power to be able to master their feelings.
- You have to accept that the feelings are temporary and changeable, not permanent.
- You have to be able to see the child as a person unlike you, but as an independent person, with their own identity and their own life.
- In order to understand the message you should be able to put yourself in their shoes (i.e. to be empathetic).

In addition to the active listening, the use of I-messages or I-statements also provides fairly positive effects. The basic rule on which these messages are based is that the person to whom the message is sent is never attacked (which is always the case when sending You-messages), instead, they always "attack" the problem, that is, the procedure, the situation, the behaviour which is problematic and similar. Second important element of any I-message is to communicate how the person sending the message feels about (or because of) the situation, behaviour or about what has been experienced as a problem. Finally, I-message should mandatorily contain the future expectations about change in situation/behaviour of the person sending the same, in order for the person receiving the message to be aware of what is expecting of them.

**For example:**

**YOU-Statement:** How many times I have told you not to pull the cat's tail?! Are you so dumb that you cannot understand that this bothers it?! Do not get close to it again, otherwise you will be in trouble!

**I-Statement:** It makes me really angry when I see how you pull my cat's tail, which is upsetting it, and I expect not to do this once again, because it hurts it.

Positive effects of using the I-messages are multiple. First of all, they create a reliable basis in order to avoid serious communication or open conflict. They calm the atmosphere down and open the communication channel between the interlocutors. They use the moment of surprise, since the receiving party may have expected an awkward reaction and overreaction, an attack or something similar, but the opposite happens - the person sending the message does not attack the person, talks about their own feelings in the given situation and tells the expectations they have in relation to what is being talked about. That, in turn, increases the trust, sincerity and understanding between interlocutors, clears up perceptions and possible misunderstandings. The other party, often, makes an apology if by their behaviour (conscious or unconscious) they contributed to the bad feeling of their interlocutor. On a long run, use of I-messages gets the relationship at a higher lever and increases its quality. At the same time, such manner of communication establishes communication practice and represents a positive model of how the child should communicate with people

around them, starting from the members of their closest family to other adults and peers.

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