

Would You Like a More Peaceful Family Life?

by Charlene Savoie

Most people answer the above question with a big **YES!!** I believe we can have a more peaceful family life. I'm not saying family life is not chaotic, busy, noisy etc. at times. I'm saying it can be more peaceful.

Parenting involves so many big and small issues. Many people say parenting is one of the hardest jobs. I somewhat agree because anyone can parent **HOWEVER**, parenting **EFFECTIVELY is** one of the hardest jobs.

It is difficult at times to stay in emotional control of ourselves and to always use the connecting habits (listen, encourage, respect, trust, accept, support and negotiate disagreements). However, when we do so the **majority** of the time, we strengthen our relationships with our children/teenagers. Strong relationships = a more peaceful family. I am **NOT** saying be "friends" with your children/teenagers. I am saying be friendly. We usually respect our friends and treat them well. So let's do the same with our families too.

When we are respectful towards others and utilize the other caring habits, then we gain influence with them. When we have influence in someone's life, then they are **more likely** to respect us and comply with our requests. We are less likely to use the dis-connecting habits which are: criticize, blame, complain, nag, punish, threaten and bribe.

Therefore, when we "slip" and use the dis-connecting habits, we can choose to take responsibility for our behavior, apologize if necessary, and re-connect with our children right away. This way we have not damaged the relationship and we did not lose any influence with them. On top of that, I ask that you forgive yourself and do not waste energy on guilt. **WE ALL "SLIP" SOMETIMES.**

If your parenting challenge is to raise healthy, cooperative and independent adults then I encourage you to focus on what habits you are using 99% of the time. As you will notice, punish or punishment is a dis-connecting habit. Discipline is necessary while raising children and it is **NOT** the same thing as punishment. Discipline is delivered with respect and kindness, i.e. friendly and firm, it's about the poor choices not the "bad kid", it fits the misbehavior and it usually allows choices. Punishment is none of those things. If you are using punishment then usually you are eroding away at your relationship with your children day by day. This in return is eroding away the influence you have with them. Day by day, let's make it a habit to connect and re-connect to our children/teenagers.

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