



A Developmental Approach to Teaching Self-Discipline

SELF-DISCIPLINE: THE GOAL OF ALL DISCIPLINE

The word discipline comes from two Latin root words 'discipulus' which means a disciple and 'disco' which means to learn. The goal of all discipline is to help others curb destructive behaviors and learn self-directed behaviors which are more positive and productive.

There are four reasons for teaching children to be self-disciplined:

1. It is necessary if a person is to learn the standards of conduct tolerated in any given culture.
2. It is necessary for personality development. Being dependable, self-reliant, self-controlled, persistent and able to tolerate frustration are learned skills.
3. Self-discipline develops moral standards that are expressed in daily decisions and actions.
4. Self-discipline helps to integrate childhood fears with the facts of reality and provide stability and security.

Self-discipline is a person's ability to 'Wait' and 'Think' before 'Acting'. It is a master skill that is needed throughout life.

There are fifteen natural opportunities to practice waiting. In fact they are so natural unless they are pointed out they can often be missed. The fifteen self-discipline skills that provide an opportunity for people to practice 'Waiting' are these:

1. Listening
2. Following Instructions.
3. Asking Questions
4. Sharing: Time, Space, People, Things
5. Exhibiting Social Skills
6. Cooperating
7. Understanding Reasons for Rules
8. Independently Completing Tasks
9. Exhibiting Leadership
10. Communicating Effectively
11. Organizing: Time, Space, People, Things
12. Resolving Problems.
13. Initiating Solutions
14. Distinguishing Facts From Feelings
15. Sacrificing/Serving Others

When we look at behaviors in light of skills, we learn that inappropriate behavior provides us with an opportunity to coach and teach missing skills. We can then temper our attitude and approach in handling misbehavior and instead of disciplining children we can teach them how to become self-disciplined.