



Dear Parent!

Welcome to your final module in this Challenge

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## A Step By Step Process

Let's re-review where we are in the Challenge!

By the time you've got to this homework you should have the following key pieces in place

1. Step 1 - You know what triggers your stress score and you've taken concrete actions to improve your life and stay more in the green zone.
2. Module 2 - You've thought about the 'why' behind your child's behaviour and it's more clear to you than ever - you're labelling your child less and understanding more.
3. Module 3 - You've been more consistent about your rules and boundaries than before - with an emphasis on teaching your child.

If the answer to all 3 of these statements is "yes" - congratulations, you're ready to apply discipline (with love)!

If the answer is no, please reach out to me and let me know in our meeting. It's not a problem, this challenge is all about making sure we follow this step by step process. Don't suffer alone - reach out!

With love,

Patrick

## When Do We Use Discipline?

Put simply, we use discipline **only when we can answer 'yes' to the following questions:**

1. Is my child's relationship with me and others satisfying their 3 basic psychological needs?
2. If there are other factors affecting the "why" of my child's behaviour, have I taken steps to address them?

3. Does my child know the behaviour I expect from them? (Have they been taught through rules and boundaries)
4. Am I sure that my child's behaviour is intentional?

If the answer to each of these questions is 'yes' and our child continues to break our rules or boundaries, then it's most likely time to introduce discipline.

### **What We Think Discipline Is**

When our children act out, we often go into the Red Zone. In the Red Zone, we often apply discipline **based on punishment**, exactly the same way we were raised by our parents.

We were smacked, yelled at, humiliated, compared to our siblings, ignored and many other things. That's true for the vast majority of parents I've worked with. As a result we learnt to diminish those aspects of our Selves that our parents/caregivers judged undesirable. We minimised ourselves, made ourselves small. We also learnt to lie to our parents - anything to avoid the pain of a punishment.

That's what most of us consider discipline to mean: punishments.

Punishments mean pain.

*You, child, learn when I, the adult, hurt you.*

This pattern is so hardwired into us that most parents go through their entire parenting 'careers' assuming this to be the case and borrowing from the punishments used from them.

**Exercise 1:** Take a moment to think of your own childhood. What punishment was most often used on you and what lesson did you learn from that punishment? If you like, write down your answer to this question on a piece of paper, or a notebook, so that it begins to take shape. Let it sink in over the coming days.

### **But Punishment Works!**

Punishment seems effective—your child stops misbehaving immediately. But why? It's not because they've learned right from wrong. It's because they're afraid. That's not cooperation—it's fear-based obedience.

And punishment has a major flaw: it stops working over time. Like bribery or threats, its impact fades. A light smack might work at age two, but by age 6, they barely react. Threatening to take a phone away at 13 might work, but a 17 year old will shrug their shoulders and laugh. So parents may end up escalating, using harsher punishments just to get the same effect. But what happens over time?

1. Children become immune. If punishments are your main discipline tool, what happens when they're 14 or 15? Many parents find themselves out of options, feeling helpless.
2. It damages emotional security. Imagine saying, *"You've upset me, so I'm not talking to you today."* A child feels abandoned, shaking their sense of unconditional love and self-worth.
3. It teaches that force resolves conflict. If we punish children harshly, they learn to use the same tactics - with us, with peers, and eventually with their own children.
4. It doesn't build responsibility. Punishment suppresses behavior but doesn't teach accountability - (one potential reason so many adults struggle with responsibility today)

Let's be honest, the true purpose of a punishment is **pain**. And none of us joined this Challenge because we want to raise our children based on pain.

### **Discipline Based on Teaching**

All About Parenting is a methodology that focuses on teaching discipline through a focus on Consequences.

Consequences are designed to teach children an increasing level of responsibility, self-awareness and self-discipline, over time. They also help us moderate our children's behaviours and maintain boundaries in our families.

### **Consequences**

What do we mean by consequences? Let's start with an example from adult life.

If I was to drive at 100 miles an hour on city streets, I'd face the consequences of my actions pretty quick. I'd probably end up being stopped by police, fined, or - God forbid - I might end up crashing and hurting myself or someone else.

Because I understand that my choices and decisions have consequences, I choose to moderate my behaviour. I drive safely.

Now, let's imagine that I was reckless, driving 100 miles an hour without a care in the world, and crashed my car. The police arrive, but instead of holding me accountable, the officer says, *"No problem, I'll sort it all out. You just go home."* Sounds unrealistic, right? And yet, that's often how our parenting looks like - parenting **without** consequences.

### **Magic Wand Parenting: Parenting Without Consequences**

I once spoke with a fantastic mum at a workshop who shared a funny but insightful story about her 11-year-old son. The problem? He refused to tidy his room.

I asked, *"What do you do?"* She replied, *"I shout at him."*  
*"Does he tidy his room?"*

*"No."*

*"So what do you do next?"*

*"I shout some more."*

*"And does he tidy it?"*

*"No."*

Eventually, she admitted, *"I take away the internet, I threaten him... but in the end, I can't stand the mess, so I tidy it myself!"*

This is what I call **"Magic Wand parenting"** - where parents huff, puff, and issue threats and get angry, but ultimately swoop in to fix the problem.

What do children learn? If they wait long enough, mum or dad will do it for them. No responsibility, no real consequences - just a magic wand.

### **So how do we teach consequences based discipline?**

Let's start with 3 beliefs that it'd be wise to learn first.

1. **Discipline is about learning.** Discipline isn't about punishment - it's about helping children understand and learn from their actions over time.
2. **Discipline is about choice.** The older our child gets the more choice they have over their behaviour. It's my job to teach them responsibility for their choices.
3. **Discipline is about consequences.** When we choose a behavior, we choose its consequences. Consequences don't just "happen" to us-they are the direct result of our choices.

**Exercise 2:** Because these 3 beliefs are relatively new for most of us, take a moment to write them down and place them somewhere you can see them, like the kitchen. Take a moment to read them every day until they become the way you consider consequences. You just *know* them to be true.

### **Before We Get Into Any More Theory - An Example**

Let's say we have a typically developing 12-year-old with whom we share a good relationship. While they are growing up and spending more time with friends, they still enjoy moments of love and laughter with us. We're pretty sure we're satisfying their 3 basic psychological needs.

For their birthday, they receive a phone. As parents who value clear boundaries, we establish visual rules for phone use. We involve our child in setting limits- 15 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the evening. They understand and agree to these rules. So we're pretty sure we answer 'yes' to the question, 'does my child know the rules?'

Yet, despite this agreement, they resist handing over the phone when their time is up. How do we apply discipline that focuses on learning, responsibility, and consequences?

Parent: *Darling, your half-hour is almost up. I trust you to switch your phone off and put it back.*

Child: *Yeeees, Mum.*

(When the time is up...)

Parent: *I see you haven't put your phone back. What are you going to choose to do?*

Child: *Just five more minutes, Mum!*

Parent: *Remember the rule we agreed on- 30 minutes in the evening. You'll have your phone again tomorrow morning for 15 minutes, just as you chose. Now it's time to switch it off and put it back.*

If the child still refuses, the parent calmly follows through:

Parent: *Since you chose to use your phone beyond the agreed time, that means you're choosing not to have it tomorrow. After that, you'll get it back, and I trust you'll learn from this experience.*

This approach keeps the parent calm and firm- staying in the Green Zone rather than reacting emotionally (*Red Zone* parenting, where phones get thrown, banned for weeks or smashed). The focus remains on teaching, not punishing. The child learns that choices have consequences, reinforcing responsibility without unnecessary conflict.

### **But my child will flip out if I do that!**

Yes, you're absolutely right- there's a high chance your child will be upset when you enforce consequences-based discipline. Whether it's sweets, tidying their room, or screen time, they won't like having limits placed on things they enjoy.

But here's a key principle: *The purpose of parenting is not to avoid pain.* Our role isn't to be our child's friend. We can have a warm, loving relationship, but parenting is about teaching responsibility - not accommodating every behavior like a friend would.

Too many parents avoid rules and boundaries to prevent meltdowns. If your child is neurodivergent or has significant behavioral challenges, you may require more work before you come to discipline. But if you've met their core needs, understand the 'why' behind their behavior, and clearly explained rules and boundaries, this difficult moment is an opportunity-a chance to prove to yourself that you can be a firm and consistent parent.

Staying in the Green Zone is key and that's why we started this course with that idea. And one thing is certain: if you apply consequences consistently, your child will learn that Mum and Dad mean what they say. The more structured and consistent we are, the more structured and consistent our children become. That's the real power of consequences-based discipline.

### **The 4 "Rs of Discipline"**

Effective discipline follows the 4 Rs: it is **Revealed in Advance**, **Related to the behavior**, **Reasonable in intensity**, and **Respectful** to both parent and child. Let's explore each principle and how to apply it.

## #1 - Revealed in Advance: Setting Clear Expectations

Children need to know the rules before they break them. When we clearly outline consequences in advance (which is what “Setting the Stage to Avoid the Rage” and the other techniques for Module 4 is all about), discipline becomes predictable and fair.

Example: Imagine a police officer stops you while driving and fines you for not driving in a zig-zag pattern - a rule you didn’t even know existed. That would feel unfair, right? Children feel the same way when punished for rules they didn’t know about.

### Examples

- Instead of saying, *“You’re not getting dessert because you lied to me,”* tell your child beforehand: *“In our family, we value honesty. If you choose to lie, you’re choosing to lose a privilege, like screen time.”*
- Before going to the store, you might say: *“If you choose to stay by my side, we’ll have a fun trip. If you choose to run around, it’ll mean you choose to leave early.”*

When children know what to expect, they learn responsibility and can make informed choices.

## #2 - Related: Logical Consequences, Not Random Punishments

A consequence must be logically **related** to the behavior. When punishments feel random, children see them as unfair and resist learning.

Example: A child hits their sibling. Instead of saying, *“That’s it! No TV for a week,”* a related consequence would be: *“You chose to hit your brother. Because you chose to hit him, you’re choosing not to watch TV this evening. I trust you’ll be able to learn to hit your bashy pillow instead* (which is an example of discipline and redirecting together).

### Examples

- If your child refuses to wear a coat in winter, the related consequence is feeling cold- not being grounded for a week.
- If they leave toys scattered, a related consequence is losing the privilege of playing with them for a day.

Children learn best when they see a direct cause-and-effect relationship between their actions and consequences.

## #3 - Reasonable: Keeping Discipline Proportionate

Because the goal of discipline is learning, not fear, a consequence should be **small at first** and increase only if the behavior continues.

Parents in the Red Zone typically tend to turn to extreme punishments ‘to teach the child a

lesson' like *"because you broke the remote, you're grounded for the whole summer"* or *"I'm smashing up your Xbox after you hit your brother again."*

Think of a driver's licence point system. A first mistake costs one point, not an immediate ban. Similarly, children should face gradually increasing consequences rather than extreme punishments.

### **Examples**

- If a child forgets their homework, they deal with their teacher's natural consequences rather than losing TV for a month as a punishment.
- If they miss curfew, a reasonable consequence is coming home 15 minutes earlier next time, not being banned from going out for weeks.

### **#4 - Respectful: Preserving Dignity in Discipline**

Discipline should build a child's confidence, not tear them down. As we've learnt from our own childhood, shame, humiliation, and emotional punishment do more harm than good.

#### **Example**

- Instead of *"you're disgusting and pathetic for not tidying your room!"*, say *"If you choose not to put your clothes in the washbasket, you're choosing not to have clean clothes for the party next week."*

### **I Get the Principle but this Sounds Like Way too Much for Me**

If this feels like too much, I completely understand. That's why we started with a strong focus on staying in the Green Zone.

Often, when parents say discipline "doesn't work," what they really mean is that they're still operating from Red Zone thinking. If that sounds familiar, take a step back. Revisit the first module, identify what's keeping you in the Red Zone, and work on that before applying discipline.

The second key point? You don't need to apply discipline in every aspect of your child's life. Just like when we set rules, choose one or two behaviors that are currently the most frustrating. Introduce discipline gradually, making sure it aligns with the rules and boundaries you've already set.

Start with just one change—this alone can significantly ease the pressure. And honestly, what do you have to lose?!

### **An Example From My Own Life**

When I first started applying consequence-based discipline, my daughters were much younger. One recurring issue was their fluffy toys—of which we had about a hundred—being left scattered in the hallway after playtime.

At the time, our relationship was good, though I was often a Red Zone parent. I decided to set a clear rule: *If they chose not to tidy up their toys at the end of the day, they were also choosing to have them put away for two days.*

That evening, they didn't tidy up. I calmly took the toys and said, "Because you've chosen not to tidy up, you're choosing for the teddies to go away for two days."

"I don't care," said my eldest, Zafia, who was a rambunctious 4.5-year-old at the time.

When I returned the toys two days later, I reminded them: "You're getting the teddies back now. If you choose not to tidy them up again, you're choosing for them to go away for four days. I trust you to take care of them."

Of course, they nodded, but a couple of days later, we were back in the same situation. Luckily, I was in the Green Zone, so I followed through calmly:

"Because you've chosen not to tidy up the teddies today, you're choosing for them to go away for four days. After you get them back, I trust you'll be responsible for them."

A few days later, they got the teddies back—and once again, they were left in the hallway. That evening, while I was in the bath, the girls came in to chat. As it got close to bedtime, I called out:

"Zofia, remember what we discussed? If you choose not to tidy up the teddies today, then you're choosing for them to go away for six days."

I'll never forget what happened next. Zofia turned to her little sister Mia, who was still very young at the time, and said: "Come on, Mia, Dad means business."

I'm not sharing this to boast, but to show how consistency leads to predictability. When we calmly follow through with fair, pre-discussed consequences, children learn responsibility without arguments or anger. This was the first time I truly saw how well this approach works.

### **How We Can Teach Using Mistakes**

If our children don't know how to behave in a given situation - because we haven't taught them or they're too young to know, then there's a very high chance that they're not behaving badly on purpose, but making a mistake.

This is when you can use this concept of consequences and teaching to a fantastic effect.

Resist the urge to scold or shame your child for making a mistake. Instead, use it as a chance to help them develop self-discipline and responsibility.



When your child carelessly carries a glass and it falls out of their hand, avoid shouting at them, drop down to their level and say “because you chose to hold that glass in one hand, it fell, what did you learn from that?”

If your child shares a friend's secret and the friend finds out, instead of scolding them and saying “serves you right, that's what you get for blabbing at school” you can again connect to your child and say “I get it, it can be tempting to share secrets. I've done it myself. What do you think you learnt from this?”

It has certainly been my observation that we learn MORE from mistakes than we do from successes, so treat each mistake from your child as another opportunity to help foster self-discipline and responsibility, rather than pain and shame.

### **Example: Homework**

So your kid doesn't want to do their homework. Join the club ;) First, remember to understand the *why*—ensure your child feels safe, secure, loved, and respected. If not, address that first.

Now, let's consider a consequence or restriction that relates directly to not doing homework. A consequence must be logically related to the behavior, revealed ahead of time, reasonable, and respectful.

Many parents struggle with this question: *“What can I take away to make my child do their homework?”* But discipline isn't about taking things away—it's about guiding responsibility.

Homework is your child's responsibility. To find an appropriate consequence, think about the adult equivalent of homework—your job.

*“You go to school like I go to work. Your homework is like my job. “What happens if I don't do my job? First, a warning. Then, I could lose my job and my salary.”*

Just as work provides money for our needs and desires, homework builds skills for future success.

Since parents must meet children's needs, consequences should apply to wants, not needs. A logical restriction might be the tablet:

*“If you choose not to do your homework, you are also choosing not to use your tablet today.”*

Start with the smallest consequence and increase it if needed and remember to keep it revealed well in advance.

### **Example - Bad Language**

Let's say your child has had a pattern of speaking in a rude way to you. Should you ‘tolerate’ this behaviour?

Would we tolerate anyone speaking like this to us at work?

The answer is no.

Here's how a discipline based conversation might go

*Child: I hate you, you're a bad person.*

*Parent: I understand you're upset right now. I get it.*

*Child: No you don't, \*\*\*\* you.*

*Parent: I really do understand, I also have my boundaries as well. If you choose to speak that way to me, you're choosing for me to end this conversation.*

The parent has been empathetic, calm but has also been clear about what they will and won't tolerate, with a gentle consequence (leaving the room) being a signal that they are able to confidently put a boundary in place.

### **How Can I Tell If My Child's Behaviour Is Deliberate?**

The key to understanding your child's behavior lies in two factors: knowing and being able to behave as expected.

If your child doesn't yet know the correct behavior or isn't capable of following a rule consistently, their misbehavior isn't intentional-it's part of learning. Punishing them won't teach the right behavior faster. For example, if a child doesn't clean their room or scribbles on walls, punishment won't help-they need guidance and practice instead.

Some parents feel their child misbehaves just to provoke them. However, deliberate misbehavior isn't about annoying you-it's about achieving a goal.

Children learn what works based on your reactions. If a child throws a tantrum in a store and you give in, they learn that tantrums help them get what they want. Next time, they'll try the same strategy.

The same applies to swearing. If a child says a bad word and gets a big reaction- whether shock or laughter - they learn that cursing gets attention. From that point, using bad words becomes intentional.

To prevent this, focus on consistent response through rules based discipline. Reinforce positive behavior and stay neutral when addressing negative actions. Children learn best when they understand what works -and what doesn't.

### **Why Discipline With Love**

Discipline with love means recognizing that boundaries and consequences are essential for a child's growth, even when they protest. As parents, we often worry that enforcing rules makes us bad parents- especially when our children cry or tell us we are. But in reality, boundaries provide the structure they need to reach their full potential.

It may feel like we're causing harm, but in truth, we are giving our children an invaluable gift: the ability to understand that choices have consequences. We are not traumatizing them by saying no or introducing appropriate consequences- if we do it right, in the way discussed in this document. That doesn't mean it's easy or enjoyable.

Loving a child means supporting their growth, and part of that is providing a framework that will help them navigate adulthood. The world is harsh. It teaches lessons, whether children want to accept them or not. They will learn that their choices have consequences. Isn't it better for them to experience these lessons in the safety of a loving family rather than through the cold realities of life?

Difficult behavior- swearing, arguments, fights- are all part of family life. A certain level of negative behavior is normal and not something to be feared or avoided. Likewise, as parents, we will have difficult days when our children are unhappy because they didn't get what they wanted. But in those moments, trust that you are still showing them love.

Saying no with love teaches children self-respect and resilience- qualities they will carry into adulthood. Perhaps we will be the first generation of parents to raise children who can set boundaries, stand up for themselves, and say no in ways we weren't able to. That choice starts with us.

Well done!

Patrick

To finish, some **inspiring quotes**

"The way we talk to our children becomes their inner voice." – Peggy O'Mara

"Children need love, especially when they do not deserve it." – Harold Hulbert

"Your children will become what you are; so be what you want them to be." – David Bly

"A child's mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled." – Plutarch

"To raise a child who is comfortable enough to leave you means you've done your job. They are not ours to keep, but to teach how to soar on their own." – Unknown

