



# TIME-IN

## To Discipline is to Teach

a newsletter for people who care about self-esteem

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to **WE**, a newsletter for and about groups of people who get together for the purpose of giving each other personal support, examining attitudes, and learning new skills. In this issue we will be examining our attitudes toward the discipline of children and of ourselves, and practicing what may be a new skill.

We will look at:

- why children use uncooperative behaviors
- three common techniques of discipline: criticizing, spanking, and time-out
- time-in, a contactful teaching alternative to the above three

You may already be using all of the time-in techniques; I hope so. Perhaps the four puzzle pieces of time-in will help you think about discipline in a new way. I put them together because I was frustrated with the abuses of time-out.

I am excited about time-in and I am pleased about the wonderful books that support and elaborate on various parts of it. I appreciate all of the people who have read, tested, and offered suggestions about this material. I especially thank Laurie Kanyer, Carolyn Fuchs, Mary Sheedy Kurcinka, Joan Comeau, Barbara Kobe, Beth Brekke, Bob Elliott, Diane Wagenhals, and Carole Gesme for their prompt reading and thoughtful feedback. I am grateful to the members of Carolyn Fuchs' parenting class at Wisconsin Indian Head Technical College. They reminded me that parents need help with their own anger.

On a personal note, many of you know that I experienced memory loss, fuzzy focus, and energy loss as the result of a head injury. It took much longer than I expected, but I am finally recovered and feel confident about writing again. There are lots of **WEs** in the making. Thanks to those of you who noticed their absence and inquired about my health.

Sincerely, *John Alsbey Clarke*

## About Discipline and Teaching

Sometimes children are cooperative, "I'll help," agreeable, "Yup," and even thoughtful, "What do you want?" or empathic, "Did you hurt yourself?" Other times children are not cooperative, "Later!" do not follow the rules, "I forgot," or "That's not a rule!" or they don't respond to your requests in the way you want, "I don't want to," or defy direct commands, "I won't and you can't make me!"



### Why?

Since children are complex beings with many, sometimes changing needs, and since children live in family systems that are also complex with multiple changing needs, it is futile for us to look for a single reason that children misbehave. Seductive, but futile. If there were a single, simple reason that children misbehave, and we could find a single response or child management tool, the task of rearing children would be magnificently easier. But this is not to be. Instead we must do the detective work of figuring out why. Only then will we find the solutions that have long-term positive effects.

## Reasons for Misbehavior

Here are some of the reasons for misbehavior that parent-detectives have found:

1. The **expectation is too advanced** for the child's age and/or developmental level.
2. The **parenting structure has been so inconsistent** the child doesn't believe (trust) that the rules need to be followed.
3. Parents have unwittingly or deliberately set up **competition for love and attention** within the family.
4. **Conflicts between family members are allowed to escalate** because parents need better conflict resolution skills. *Battles, Hassles, Tantrums & Tears* by Susan Beekman and Jeanne Holmes is a book chock full of wisdom about resolving conflict.
5. There is **stress** in the family system (illness, job loss, addiction, dissension, divorce, etc.) Children really know when something stressful is going on, even if the adults don't talk about it or insist it is not a big deal. Children often express stress for the family by doing things that are hurtful and disruptive and look dumb.
6. The child has a **health problem** and does not feel well, can't hear well, can't see well, etc.
7. The child **does not have healthy sleep patterns** or eat the correct foods for his body needs.
8. The **child is over scheduled** and does not have time or skills to manage the many transitions required in her day.
9. The parents **do not give** the child the amount and kind of **positive attention** that particular child needs, so the child arranges to get negative attention. Remember, negative attention is better than none. Far, far better. Every human being has a hunger for recognition and children will figure out what their family responds to.
10. The child has an **extroverted nature** and needs more interaction with other people. Or, the child is **introverted** and is responding to being over stimulated. (Kurcinka)
11. The child's inborn **personality traits** are such that this particular child **does not respond well** to the way the demands and expectations of the family are presented. (Kurcinka)
12. The **child does not know** the rule, does not believe it is a rule because others don't follow it, doesn't understand the rule, or doesn't see any sense in the rule. (Kaye)
13. The child is **sad, angry, embarrassed, frustrated, or confused** about something.
14. The **child just feels contrary** on this particular day. Adults have days when they "get up on the wrong side of the bed."
15. Or one of **many other reasons**.

## Making Changes

If the parents' detective work points to one or more of the first eleven reasons or something similar, parents need to work on that underlying problem. Many of these problems can be resolved by getting the information that is needed and then practicing new parenting behaviors. If there are several problems, working on one at a time is usually easier on the family system than trying to attack several at once. And what happens? Sometimes the child's behavior gets worse at first. Many children respond to any change, negative or positive, with disruptive behavior. It seems to be human nature to hang onto the system we know, even if it isn't working. Then, after a time, the length of time depending on the consistency of the parents and the personality traits of the child, the child's behavior will change.

## So What Is A Parent To Do?

Whether the child is having a grumpy day, or whether the parents are working on an underlying contributor, daily misbehavior must be dealt with. There are many ways to do this - here are four: criticize, spank, time-out and time-in.

### Criticize

Criticizing may help the parent feel better for the moment because it lets angry feelings out. In the long run, it doesn't help the child because it programs negative behavior, "*Clumsy!*" and it attributes negative characteristics, "*Stupid,*" and it doesn't tell *how to succeed*. Criticism also creates shame which can be an aggravating problem in adult life relationships. You can learn more about the effects of criticism by reading *Growing Up Again, Parenting Ourselves, Parenting Our Children*, chapters 1 and 2. (Clarke & Dawson)

### Spank

Spanking sometimes helps the parent feel better because it lets angry energy out of the arm and the

# Steps in Using Time-In

**Ex: Child has broken a rule the child knows: No laughing at people who are hurt.**

## Step 1. ◆

Remind  
or  
Ask



### Example:

“Remember the rule about not laughing when someone is hurt.”

or

“Do you remember the rule about laughing at hurts?”

*If child remembers the rule and stops the behavior, encourage child and stop after Step 1.*

## Step 2. ◆◆

Discuss  
or  
Teach



### Example:

“Why do you suppose we have a rule like this?”

or

“Let’s think of three things you could do instead of laughing.”

*If child responds appropriately and stops the behavior, encourage child and stop after Step 2.*

## Step 3. ◆◆◆ OPTIONAL

**If person is hurt or object is damaged**

If a person is hurt, start with Step 3.

- Stop the activity
- Apply first aid if needed
- Empower the victim



**Example: Amy is not seriously injured but her feelings are hurt by Jane’s laughter. Empower Amy.**

- “Jane, Amy has been hurt. You stay beside us while I help Amy. Amy, do you remember the rule about laughing at hurts?”
- “Amy, can you tell Jane that rule by yourself or shall I stand right beside you while you tell her or do you want to listen while I tell her?”
- “Amy, do you want to tell Jane how you feel?”

or

If an object is damaged, attend to the object.

**Example: Object is broken**

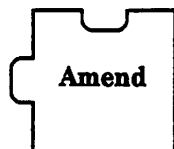
- “Amy’s toy is broken. She can’t play with it unless we can fix it, and neither can you, Jane. How do you feel about that? Do you think we can fix it? How?”

*If offending child responds appropriately, encourage child and stop after Step 3.*

## Step 4. ◆◆◆◆

Amend

Help child decide how to make restitution in a way that satisfies the victim or helps someone similar and helps the offending child to learn



positive ways to interact with others. May be a repayment of time, objects, or services, or restoration of reputation.

**Example:**

“Andy, when you laughed at Tommy’s ruined art work you hurt his feelings. Now you need to make amends. Do you want me to help you think of ways to make it right? Your amends will have to be okayed by Tommy and by me.”

*When child has made amends, encourage child to see self as stronger and as a better person.*

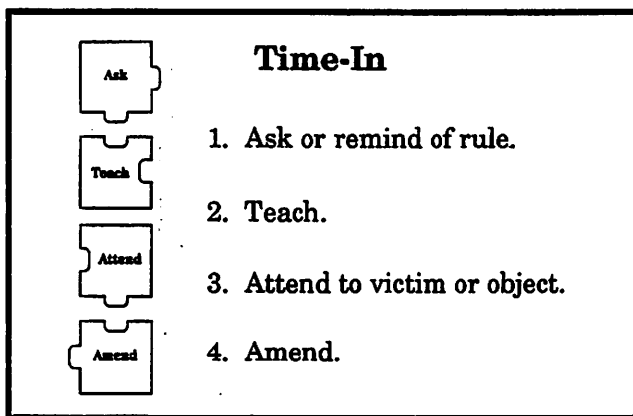
## When to Use Time-In

- Only when the child's behavior violates a rule the child already knows.
- Only when the child is old enough to remember and state rules.
- When you want to make contact with the child without criticism or punishment.
- When you want to emphasize the child's need to be responsible and competent.
- When you want the child to learn to set internal limits, to build internal structure.
- When you remember the steps in time-in and use time-in to teach the child, not to shame or criticize the child.
- When you have the time and the patience to use time-in and keep it positive.
- When you want to address the child's behavior. Time-in will not remove the cause of the behavior if the cause is external to the child.

## How to Teach Yourself to Use Time-In

1. Study the *Steps in Using Time-In* and think of your own examples. (page 5)
2. Use time-in only when you are willing to keep it positive and not slip into punishment or criticism.
3. Make several copies of the direction card. Put one in your wallet and post the rest where you can easily refer to them.

### Direction Card



4. Start using time-in with a simple issue that will involve only pieces 1 and 2.
5. Experiment with the number of puzzle pieces you need to use at one time. Use the fewest number possible to get the response you want.
6. If the rules in your household aren't clear, make them short and clear and post them. *Growing Up Again* has helpful information about non negotiable rules and negotiable rules and when to use each. (Clarke & Dawson)

7. When you ask your child if she remembers a rule, you remember to listen carefully to her response.
8. When you discuss or teach about a rule, be sure to include and listen to the child's feelings. "I hear that you are angry about that rule sometimes, but we have to keep it because it is about safety. How would you feel if... happened to you?"
9. Empowering the victim is important for the victim. It is also a way to keep the offending child from getting that wad of attention she may be aiming for. If you have access to Family Information Services, listen to Dr. Ronald G. Slaby on empowering the victim in his taped interview, *Violence Prevention Update*, with Dr. Joan Comeau. (Family Information Services, 12565 Jefferson St. NE, #102, Minneapolis, MN 55434, 612 755-6233)
10. Use restitution only when you have time and patience. Diane Chelsom Gossen's book, *Restitution, Restructuring School Discipline*, is written to be used in schools, but the information is straightforward and many of the wonderfully enlightening examples are from the home or easily translatable to it.

"What," you say, "ten steps to learning to use time-in?" Too hard? Too long? Not so. You probably use several of the steps with great skill right now. It won't take as long to learn as softball, bridge, or how to use a computer. Some people shorten the time it takes by role-playing common problems with another adult who is willing to play the role of the child. Anyway, parents are children's most important teachers so learning a new discipline skill that teaches is an investment in your and their futures.

## How to Teach Your Child to Use Time-In

1. Tell your child you will be using time-in some times and that you are learning how to do time-in so you will be referring to your direction card. *Be Positive.*
2. Tell your child you will decide when to use time-in. *Be positive.*
3. Start using time-in with a simple issue that will involve only Step 1 or Steps 1 and 2. Tell the child you are using time-in. *Keep it positive.*
4. Add more steps after the child has been successful with steps 1 and 2 several times. *Be positive.*
5. If you wish, you can make up a story about a child using time-in and let your child guess if the story child will need to go on to each next step. *Be positive.*
6. If you wish to role play using time-in, start with scenarios in which your child can easily succeed. *Keep it positive.*
7. After the child learns each step, ask the child to teach it to a sibling, a friend, a pet, or a doll. *Insist that the child keep it positive.*

## But What About My Anger?

"But what about my anger?" the parent asked. "I think I understand time-in, but I get so angry when my child pulls the same old tricks! I can't keep it positive." Ah, yes. Who among us has not felt anger, despair, or even rage when we have done the best we could, have other worries, and are probably tired, hungry, and in need of recreation or love ourselves?

Well, we all know about anger management - take 10 deep breaths, beat on a pillow, go for a walk, or take a relaxing bath, etc. But if we are trying to use time-in with a child who has been marching around the edge of our patience all day, ten deep breaths don't make a dent. If we are dealing with a kid who just smashed a vase or hit her brother, it is hardly the time to stop and beat on a pillow. If we have a child who has just run away, this is hardly the time for a long walk. If the youngster just tried to drown the gerbil, a relaxing bath just doesn't fit.

The thing about anger is that it is always a sign that there is something that we want to keep or to change and the thing we want to keep seems to be threatened or we feel ineffective or powerless to change the thing we want to change. When I want to change my noisy, tantrum filled house to one of peace and quiet and I can't succeed in doing that, it is normal, natural, and appropriate for me to feel angry. My anger is my signal to myself that I need to pay attention to my needs. Maybe I have to get an hour of peace and quiet somewhere else. Maybe I need to look at my rules about peace and quiet - do I really need it or do I think it is the sign of a successful parent? Maybe I need to learn some new parenting skills and give up the wish that a new skill will give me immediate gratification. Or I may need to accept that this kid is wired on fast forward and learn how to deal with that and take care of myself at the same time.

Here are five things you can do to help you put your anger to work helping you.

1. Look at the list of reasons why kids may be misbehaving. If there is an

underlying cause, go to work on that. It is worth it for your child and for your peace of mind.

2. Find some sympathetic, non blaming support. Turn off criticism and shame.
3. Remember that what works for your child may not be what your father or your sister or your neighbor thinks you should do.
4. Find a good counselor if you need one. It's like going to the dentist. Like an abscessed tooth, you may have an old anger you are not even aware of that is spilling out on your child.
5. Meanwhile, try Robert K. Cooper's "Instant Calming Sequence Steps:"

Step 1. Uninterrupted Breathing

Step 2. Positive Face

Step 3. Balanced Posture

Step 4. Wave of Relaxation

Step 5. Mental Control

Breathe! Deliberately. Relax your face or make it positive - smile if you can. It will change your emotions. Pull your head high and relax your shoulders toward your back. Flash a wave of relaxation from the top of your head to your toes, or from your feet up to your head, whichever works better for you. Then repeat to yourself, "What is happening is real and I'm determined to find the best possible solution right now."

Too fast? Too simple? Try it. It works. Thank goodness there is something we can do that is fast and simple.

If you are a WE subscriber, see Vol. 11, No. 4 or write to WE for a reprint. (WE) Or get Cooper's book, *Health & Fitness Excellence - The Scientific Action Plan*.

Good luck, and remember - your anger is your friend. It lets you know there is something you need to keep or change.

## Activities

Why might my child misbehave?  
for a group of parents

- Hand each parent a copy of the list *Reasons for Misbehavior*. (page 2)

- Ask each person to check any three of the reasons that interest him.
- Ask each person to think about how each of those three items applies to or doesn't apply to his family and then share those impressions with a partner, preferably not a member of his family.
- Ask each person to pretend to be the age and personality make-up of his child, pretend to be tired and hungry, and think about how he might behave or misbehave if asked to
  - wait for the next meal to be prepared
  - pick up his toys or straighten his room
  - make a Mother's Day card
  - sit quietly and read a book
  - play quietly with a sibling
- Ask people to share with their partners whether they think there is any connection between their child's misbehavior and the three reasons for misbehavior discussed earlier.
- Ask if anyone wants to share an awareness with the whole group.

## Practice Time-In

for a group or a pair of parents

- Choose a misbehavior you want to address.
- Review the *Steps in Using Time-In* sheet.
- Think of things you might say and do for each puzzle piece.
- Decide which piece to try first.
- Role-play the time-in with another adult playing the part of the child.
- Discuss what you learned.
- Decide what you will do in the future.

## Self Discipline

for an individual

- Choose a behavior you wish to improve in your self.
- Review the *Steps in Using Time-In* sheet.
- Think of things you might say to yourself for each puzzle piece.
- Decide which piece to try first.
- Have the conversation with your misbehaving self. Keep your practicing self nurturing, encouraging, and positive. No criticism!
- Decide if you want to contract with yourself for a change in behavior.

## Opening Activity

for thinking about discipline

Hand out name tags.

- Choose a partner. Make a name tag for him and ask him to tell you one kind of discipline he experienced while he was growing up and what he learned from that.
- Introduce your partner and tell the group the kind of discipline he experienced and his learning if he is willing for you to share that information.

DISCIPLINE

## Closing Activity

that encourages people to think of discipline as teaching

At the end of the meeting, briefly review the activities of the meeting.

- Ask several people to share one of the lessons they want discipline to teach their children.
- Ask for Resentments. Listen to Resentments, do not defend or explain.
- Ask for Appreciations.

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## TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

### Facilitator Training

A week-long workshop for people who want to learn group facilitation skills.

- June 24 - 28, 1996, Minneapolis, MN  
Led by Jean Illsley Clarke & Carole Gesme
- July 15 - 19, 1996, Seattle, WA  
Led by Jean Illsley Clarke
- October 7 - 11, 1996, Toronto, Canada  
Led by Jean Illsley Clarke

Reminder: Facilitators who have taken the workshop anywhere may repeat it in Minneapolis for half price.

### Growing Up Again

A three day workshop for people who want to lead the six meeting Growing Up Again model.

- June 19 - 21, 1996, Minneapolis, MN  
Led by Mary Paananen & Nat Houtz

### Help! About Drugs

A three day workshop for people who want to explore *The Key Chain*, a way to teach drug abuse prevention as a separate course or as part of any parent education program.

- July 1 - 3, 1996, Minneapolis, MN  
Led by Carole Gesme & Jean Illsley Clarke

### Transactional Analysis Training

One of a series of workshops on the psychological system of Transactional Analysis for beginners and professionals.

- May 18 - 19, 1996, Minneapolis, MN  
*How groups are structured and why they function as they do.*  
Led by Nat Houtz, Susan Clarke, Mary Paananen, Jean Illsley Clarke & Russ Osness

Write to WE for details on the workshops.

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