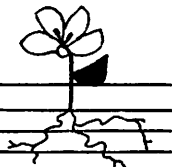




## newsletter for nurturing support groups

**Issue 33**  
**Volume 6, Number 3**  
**July 1985**

### Ground Rules



When leaders of workshops or classes offer, model and honor the "Right to Pass" ground rule for any or all group participation, people often remark that they *feel comfortable*. The purpose of this rule is not to help people avoid discomfort, but rather to put them in charge of the amount of their discomfort. Too much comfort leads to laziness, not learning. Too much discomfort leads to fear or defensiveness, not learning. Frequently people report that when they have the freedom to pass, they participate more, not less. The function of the "Right to Pass" is not to create comfort but to encourage people to be actively in charge of their own learning.

### On Teaching the Fine Art of

## Appreciation

During the hurry-up days when we rush from one activity to another, we may forget about appreciations. Even on the slower days, we may keep the hurry-up habit and neglect to teach and practice the fine art of appreciation to our children and ourselves.

We get in the car after a trip to the zoo and the children clamor, "Read a story, read a story!" I read. Friends leave after a picnic at our house and the children rush to turn on the TV. I leave it on. We walk away from the parade and the children demand, "What are we going to do now?!" I try to think of something that will sound interesting. We leave any number of interesting or enjoyable gatherings and I immediately switch on the car radio. No one objects.

Learning and enjoying the fine art of appreciation demands that we pause between life's events to think and talk or write about

- where we have been
- who took us
- who contributed to our experience
- what we liked and disliked about the activity, setting or people
- how to thank people who helped us
- how to thank ourselves for our own contributions
- what the experience meant to us.

Each of us can encourage ourselves to develop the skill of appreciation by asking questions based on the list above, by discussing any of the items, or by talking about them and expecting others to listen and respond.



Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 33rd issue of **WE**, a newsletter for and about groups of people who get together for the purpose of giving each other personal support. This issue features **POSITIVE and NEGATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**. It includes:

- suggested activities for teachers, parents and support group leaders
- how to give positive and negative messages in esteem-building ways
- how to take time to develop the fine art of appreciation, and
- an old letter about *Victim Blame*.

Use it to help you make your communications be all you want them to be.

*Jean Illsley Clarke*

Jean Illsley Clarke, Editor

### Suggested Activity



### Children's Civil Rights

On page 6 in this issue of **WE** is a poster, *Our Civil Rights*, done by children in a Des Moines, Iowa elementary school. This poster can be used to help children learn to expect positive treatment and to be responsible for their behavior toward others.

#### At School:

- Post the poster.
- Read it aloud together.
- Choose one item to work on and think about for the week. (Example: Not laughing at hurt feelings)
- Talk about why this right is important for students, teachers, custodians, principals, etc.
- Make a contract about what people will do, the rewards for keeping the contract and the consequences for breaking it. (See last issue of **WE**, Volume 6, Number 3 if you need information about how to make contracts.).
- Next week, choose a different item to focus on.

#### At Home:

- Do the same. Talk about why each right is important for children and parents.

## Resentments and Appreciations

Ending each support group meeting with "Resentments and Appreciations" encourages people to verbalize their positive messages within the group. It also offers a safe place for people who do not think it is alright to say negative things out loud to start to do so. Encourage people to keep their resentments general, not personal.

## Facilitator Training Workshops

• August 19-23, 1985 •  
Lafayette, CA  
(San Francisco area)  
• January 27-31, 1986 •  
Minneapolis, MN

A week-long workshop for people who want to . . .  
• Facilitate the **Self-Esteem: A Family Affair** parenting model; or  
• Improve group leadership skills for working with growth, education or support groups.

Also . . .  
**Building Self Esteem**  
Personal, Business and Family Implications  
November 18, 1985  
Seattle, Washington

All led by Jean Illsley Clarke.  
Write to **WE** for details.

## Victim Blame

Sometime this year, I plan to do an issue of **WE** focusing on *Victim Blame*. *Victim Blame* is the name of the feelings and actions of persons who have assumed the blame for some wrong that was done to them by another or others. If you have an example of *Victim Blame* or its effects that you are willing to share with **WE** readers, please send it along.

I'll start by sharing a clipping found in an old box of family letters. The newspaper is the *Boston Post*. The column is called "The Boston Post Sewing Circle," a regular feature of the *Sunday Post* in which readers are invited to share ideas about "domestic perplexities." The clipping was not dated but the letters with it are dated in the 1880's and 1890's.

### Discipline for Wives?

To the sister signing herself "Punished at 20"—You seem to consider your own case an unusual one; but it isn't. There are hundreds of married women who are held to strict discipline by their husbands and punished for wilful disobedience, or for other offences, that the public never hears of except occasionally in some court case.

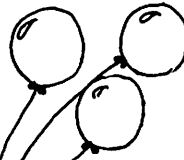
In my own experience, I went to the moving pictures one day about a month ago, when my husband brought home a friend to supper, and in consequence there was nothing prepared for his guest to eat. He had not notified me, of course, or I would have had supper ready.

Well, after the guest was gone, he told me that "in punishment for my offence and neglect of home duties" he would expect me to go supperless to bed for the next week; and I did so, patiently, for I had to admit to myself that his indignation was justified.

A WIFE SENT TO BED SUPPERLESS.

Please share your examples; we can use old or new examples to help raise our awareness of and ability to resist *Victim Blame*.

## Suggested Activity



## The Three Balloon Sheet Ways to Give Positive and Negative Messages

Use the *Three Balloon* worksheet on page 4 to practice identifying self-esteem building messages for BEING (positive), for DOING (positive) and for DOING POORLY (negative).

### GIVE THE MESSAGES DIRECTLY

**Individuals:** Read the examples listed on page 3. Think of a specific person you want to give the message to. Choose examples from the list or make up your own and write them in the balloons. Say them to the person or hand her the sheet.

**Group:** Read the examples listed on page 3 for one balloon at a time. Have the whole group generate other examples. Write them on newsprint or on a sheet to be duplicated and passed out. Ask each person to choose one message from each list that he would like to hear or give. He can write them on a balloon and decide when to ask for them or when to give them.

### WRITE A REPORT

On the *Three Balloon* worksheet record esteem-building messages to report about one person to another. For example:

- Report to a parent about a child in your school, nursery school or day care. The example on page 5 was written for four-year-old Jane by teacher Carol Gesme.
- One parent can use the sheet to record the progress of a child while the other parent is absent.
- Use the sheet to help a child learn to report accurate positives and negatives about any family member (self, sibling, parent) to a parent who is absent.

### CATCH PROBLEMS WHILE THEY ARE SMALL

Use the sheet to identify messages to give to a loved one, friend or business colleague. People who have a rule against saying negative things often let little problems or "pinches" pile up to become big crises or "POW's!" Use the sheet to help you think about how to give information about negative behavior while a problem is still small.

### MANAGE

Use the sheet for management practice. This is one way of thinking about and organizing the management techniques recommended in *The One Minute Manager* by Kenneth Blanchard and Chuck Morris (Berkley Publishing Group, Wm. Morrow).

**Three Balloon** Handout Worksheet 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

The uses of the *Three Balloon Worksheet* have been adapted from Jean Illsley Clarke's **Self-Esteem: A Family Affair Leader Guide**, Winston Press.

*the*  
**Three Balloon Sheet**

**Examples of Positive and Negative Messages That Build Self-Esteem**

**I like you**



This is a self-esteem building message that says you are important and lovable because you exist. It does not have to be earned. Examples:

- Hi! • Good morning. • Hugs
- I love you. • I'm glad I know you. • Time and attention lovingly given.

**for being**

**I like what you do**

This is a self-esteem building message that says that you do something well or that you are capable of doing well, of learning.

Examples: • Nice job.

- You think well. • You draw great pictures. • I like the way you listen. • Thanks for helping me.



**for doing well**

**I don't like what you did**

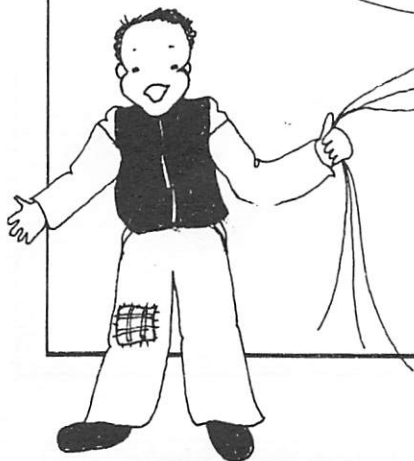
This is a message that says:  
Behavior to change \_\_\_\_\_  
Because \_\_\_\_\_  
Do this instead \_\_\_\_\_



**for doing poorly**

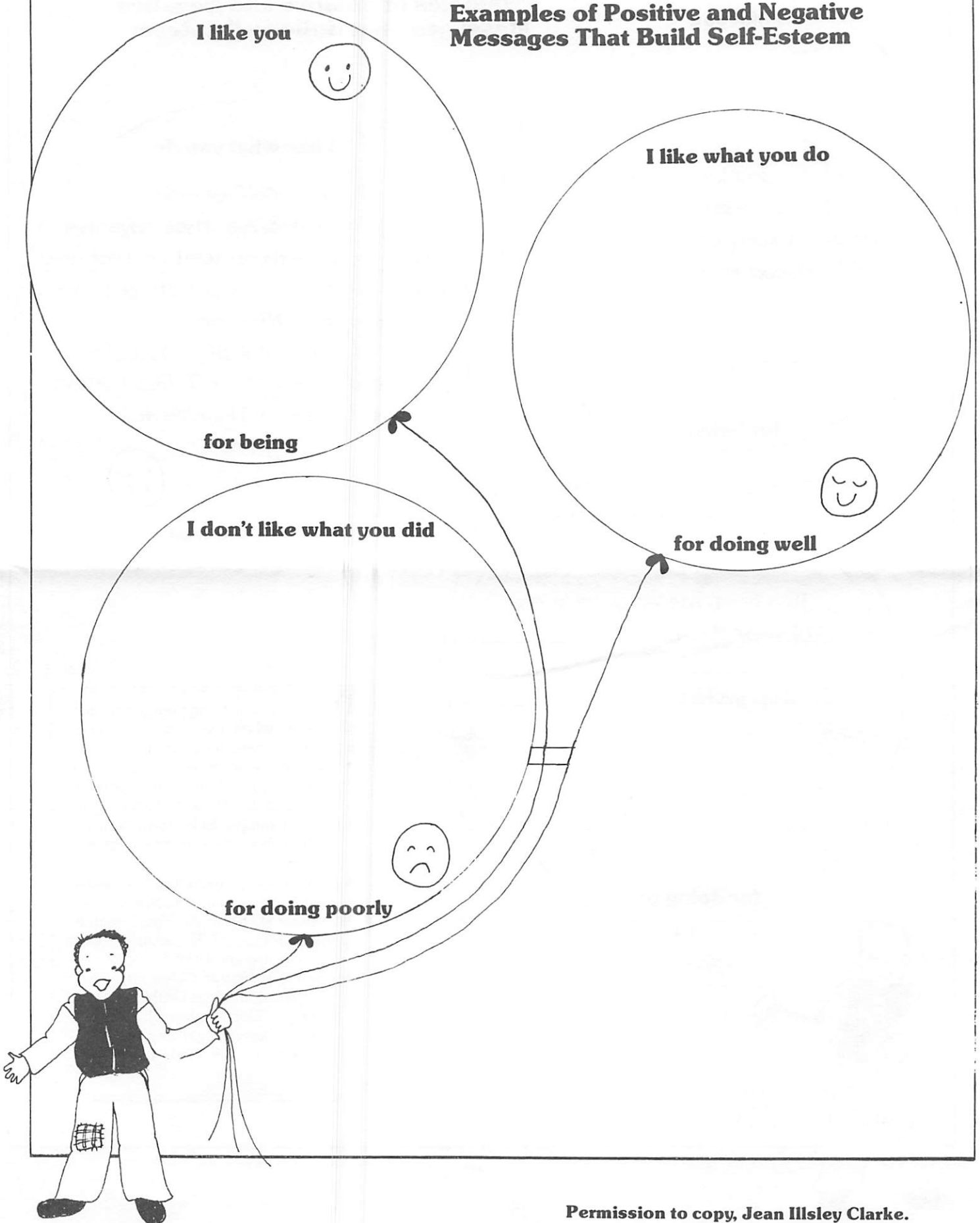
**m**essages about doing poorly can build self-esteem when they are given in a respectful tone and when they:

- **honor** the other person; "Don't do this because it may hurt you or someone else. Think of a better way to do it." Example: Slow down. You are driving above the speed limit and it is slippery.
- show that you **care** enough to set the limits; "Don't do this because you are important!" Example: Your health is important to me. Do whatever you need to stop smoking.
- **own feelings**; "Don't do this because I don't like it. Do this instead." Example: Don't fiddle with things on my desk because I get mad when you rearrange my stuff. Find another place to write.



*the*  
**Three Balloon Sheet**

**Examples of Positive and Negative  
Messages That Build Self-Esteem**



**Record of the progress  
of a child in class. Used  
to report to parents  
during conference time.  
Jane - 4 years old**

**I like you**

- ①. I like Jane  
and I'm glad  
she is here.



**for being**

**I like what you do**

- ②. Jane is easy to get  
along with in the classroom  
and very accepting of other  
children.

Jane thinks independently  
and asks appropriate questions.  
She sees work that needs  
to be done and does it.



**for doing well**

**I don't like what you did**

- ③. **Behavior to change** - when  
Jane puts her toys away  
she throws them on the shelf.  
2: **Because** -- this causes the  
room to be messy and the toys  
usually don't fit properly.  
3: **Do this instead** -- Take  
time and show her  
how to do this properly.



**for doing poorly**

- ①. Reports to parents a message for  
being. It is given just because the  
student exists. It tells the parent  
that the student is loveable.  
②. Reports to the parents what stu-  
dent does well. It is earned by stu-  
dent and tells what student has ac-  
complished while she has been in  
your classroom. Tells the parent  
that the student is capable.  
③. You can-do-better message can  
be given for something the stu-  
dent did poorly and tells how she  
can improve. Messages about  
negative behavior can build self-  
esteem and give security when  
they are given in a way that  
honors the worth and com-  
petence of the student.



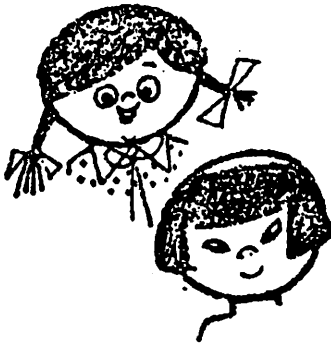
**Thanks to Carole Gesme.**

## Our Civil Rights

I HAVE A RIGHT TO BE HAPPY AND TO BE  
TREATED WITH COMPASSION IN THIS ROOM:  
THIS MEANS THAT NO ONE  
WILL LAUGH AT ME OR  
HURT MY FEELINGS.



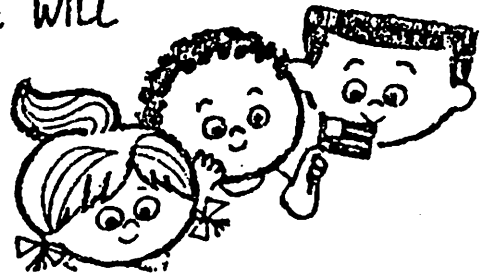
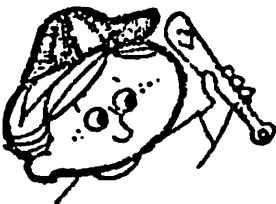
I HAVE A RIGHT TO BE MYSELF IN THIS ROOM:  
THIS MEANS THAT NO ONE WILL  
TREAT ME UNFAIRLY BECAUSE I AM  
BLACK OR WHITE,  
FAT OR THIN,  
TALL OR SHORT,  
BOY OR GIRL.



I HAVE A RIGHT TO BE SAFE IN THIS ROOM:  
THIS MEANS THAT NO ONE WILL  
HIT ME,  
KICK ME,  
PUSH ME,  
PINCH ME,  
OR HURT ME.



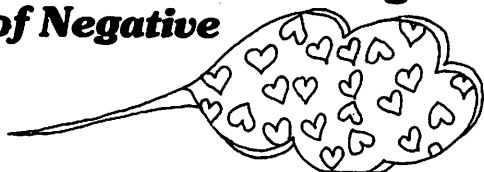
I HAVE A RIGHT TO HEAR AND BE HEARD IN THIS ROOM:  
THIS MEANS THAT NO ONE WILL  
YELL,  
SCREAM,  
SHOUT  
OR MAKE LOUD NOISES.



I HAVE A RIGHT TO LEARN ABOUT MYSELF IN THIS ROOM  
THIS MEANS THAT I WILL BE  
FREE TO EXPRESS MY FEELINGS  
AND OPINIONS WITHOUT BEING  
INTERRUPTED OR PUNISHED.



## How To Use Positive Messages Instead of Negative



**B**ecky Kajander shared this list of affirmations and positive things to do instead of being negative and controlling with her dyslexic child.

1. Take at least 10 minutes "time off" of mothering each day instead of being "in charge" all the time.
2. Believe my son is smart, capable and competent instead of incompetent because he is dyslexic.
3. Practice allowing him to experience consequences instead of rescuing him.
4. Use a normal tone of voice, even when correcting, instead of a critical, nagging one that invites defensiveness.
5. State an expectation and then STOP instead of reminding, nagging.
6. Find time to read or play everyday.
7. Be ready to listen to him instead of having my own answers to his questions.
8. Say what I need and then STOP instead of begrudgingly doing it myself.
9. Make a list of things I want to nag or criticize about and tear up the list, instead of saying them out loud.
10. Make a list of things I've done *well* today instead of berating myself.
11. Start each new day fresh instead of being unhappy about yesterday.
12. Let hugs fill me up everyday instead of resenting them.

## When to Give Negative Information to Other People

Are there times when it is appropriate to give other people negative information about themselves? Yes, of course. People need information about their behavior. The question is, *when* and *how* to offer it.

Here are some suggestions to help you think about when and how to do this.

1. Think about the criteria you use to decide whether or not to give negative information to a person.
2. Read the following list, "Things to Consider". Star the ideas that are most helpful to you.
3. Add your ideas to the list.
4. Keep the list and add to it as you discover more helpful guidelines.

### "Things to Consider"

1. Is this information helpful for the person?
2. What is my relationship with this person? Is it part of my role to give feedback? If I am the boss, parent, child, nurse, teacher, AA colleague, friend or lover, the answer is "Yes". If I am a stranger, the answer may be "No".
3. Will I accept any responsibility I may have in this matter?
4. Has this person asked me for information?
5. Has this person heard this information many times before and ignored it? Is there some way I can present it so the person will hear?
6. Can this person do anything about this information?
7. Am I willing to give the information about behavior only and not attack the person?

## Back Issues of WE

Volume 1, Number 1	<b>Suggestion Circle</b>
2	<b>Group Meetings</b>
3	<b>Support Groups</b>
4	<b>Leading a Group</b>
5	<b>Meeting Structure</b>
6	<b>5 Dot Activity—Team Building</b>
Volume 2, Number 1	<b>Leader Language</b>
2	<b>Support Group News</b>
3	<b>Ground Rules</b>
4	<b>3 P's of Leadership</b>
5	<b>4 Ways of Separating</b>
6	<b>Listening, Seeing, Doing Exercise</b>
Volume 3, Number 1	<b>Birth Order Theory</b>
2	<b>Generation Game</b>
3	<b>Affirmations</b>
4	<b>Successful Families</b>
5	<b>5 Levels of Power</b>
6	<b>Winners—Change Change</b>
Volume 4, Number 1	<b>Fuss Box</b>
2	<b>Holiday Fantasy</b>
3	<b>Criticism</b>
4	<b>Various Activities</b>
5	<b>Networking</b>
6	<b>Change Chain</b>
Volume 5, Number 1	<b>Planning Wheel</b>
2	<b>(Not available)</b>
3	<b>Play Seriously, Live Playfully</b>
4	<b>Potency, Protection and Permission</b>
5	<b>House Rules</b>
6	<b>Suggestion Circle</b>
Volume 6, Number 1	<b>Rituals</b>
2	<b>Contracts</b>

**Notice:** A limited supply of back issues is available at \$1 each. Send money and issue desired to Jean Clarke, 16535 9th Avenue N., Plymouth, MN 55447.



8. Am I willing to be clear about my position? If I state a wish or a hope and the person chooses not to respond, will I hold a grudge?
9. Am I willing to offer support if the person feels devastated by the information?
10. Does this seem to be a time when the person would receive the information and make constructive use of it?
- 11.
- 12.

from **Ouch, That Hurts! A Handbook for People Who Hate Criticism.** Jean Illsley Clarke, Daisy Press, order from WE.

## **Suggestion Circle**

# **DISCIPLINE and PUNISHMENT**

Discipline is often thought of as requiring the use of negative messages. The *American Heritage Dictionary* says discipline is, "To train by instruction and control." The same dictionary lists the informal meaning of punishment as, "Rough handling, mistreatment." Try thinking of *discipline* as *positive* and *punishment* as *negative*.

With these ideas in mind, Marilyn Grevstad of Seattle, Washington asked a group of parents to tell her what they consider to be the differences between discipline and punishment. They came up with the following Suggestion Circle.

### **What is the difference between discipline and punishment?**

- Discipline says, "Stop. Do something else instead." Punishment says, "You did something wrong and you are bad!"
- Discipline sets the person up for success next time; punishment focuses on failure.
- If there is physical hurt, it is punishment.
- Discipline feels O.K.; punishment hurts.
- Discipline builds self-esteem. Punishment destroys self-esteem.
- Discipline is learning the right and wrong of life in a positive experience. Punishment is the negative side of discipline.
- Discipline means you made a mistake. Punishment means you are awful.
- Discipline has a good chance of being effective. The results of punishment are unpredictable.
- Discipline comes from thought and punishment comes from anger.

- When you are disciplined without knowing what was expected of you, it is punishment.
- If you, the discipliner, feel gleeful or vengeful, it is punishment.

### **Suggested Activity**

Think about ways you use positive and negative messages as part of discipline toward others or yourself. Add your ideas to this list.

This and ninety other circles will be published by Winston Press in February in a book titled, ***The HELP! Book for Parents of Six to Twelve Year Old Children***.

### **Opening Activity for Thinking About The Positive Uses of Negative Messages**

Hand out name tags. Choose a partner. Make a name tag for him and ask him to tell you one time someone gave him a negative message that was helpful to him.

Introduce your partner and tell the group how his negative message was helpful, if he is willing for you to share that information.

### **Closing Activity that Offers Everyone a Positive Personal Message**

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

- Ask each person to say one positive thing about himself.
- Ask for resentments about the meeting. Listen. Do not defend.
- Ask for appreciations.

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**WE**  
16535 9th Avenue N.  
Plymouth, MN 55447

- Suggested activities
- Thoughts on theory and purpose of support groups
- News from other support groups

**newsletter for nurturing support groups**

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