



EMPATHIC PARENTING

Journal of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Volume 24

Issue 3

Summer 2001

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE SPANKED?

WHY IS IT THAT PARENTS WHO ARE WILLING TO SPANK THEIR CHILDREN ARE ALSO MORE LIKELY TO BE ABUSED THEMSELVES?

Being willing and able to put yourself in your child's shoes is one of the most important skills a parent can have. It is this ability that allows parents to understand their children's feelings and needs, and to respond in ways that are sensitive and supportive. This is the essence of empathic parenting. Involving both parents in a cooperative, shared way...

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Discipline

Kids who have their needs met early by loving parents ... are subjected totally and thoroughly to the most severe form of 'discipline' conceivable: *they don't do what you don't want them to do because they love you so much!*

Such kids can comfortably comply with a finite number of "no's" each day. No doubt that number varies from day to day, but it is finite. If you exceed that number there are problems.

The trick is to not use up your "no's" on things that don't really matter. Or things that can be avoided – like leaving your precious china within a young child's reach or insisting on eating this before that, or finishing your spinach etc. etc. Or not doing this or doing that - who can't list a hundred examples with very little thought?

If you haven't used up your quota of no's, then those few situations where it really matters because of safety or impropriety don't need anything approaching the connotation of 'discipline' to ensure appropriate behaviour.

ETB

WHAT IS EMPATHIC PARENTING?

Being willing and able to put yourself in your child's shoes in order to correctly identify his/her feelings, and

Being willing and able to behave toward your child in ways which take those feelings into account.

Empathic Parenting takes an enormous amount of time and energy and fully involves both parents in a co-operative, sharing way.

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Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Volume 24 Issue 3 Summer 2001
(Date of Issue -- July 2001)

Editor: E.T.Barker M.D., D.Psych., F.R.C.P.(C)
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Printed by Midland Printers, Midland, Ontario
on recycled paper

With Vol. 7, Issue 3, Summer '84, EMPATHIC PARENTING became the official title of what was formerly the Journal of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISSN 0705-6591)

EMPATHIC PARENTING, official publication of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, is published four times a year (Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall) and is mailed without charge to all CSPCC members.

- Single copy \$3.00
- Annual Subscription (four issues) \$12.00
- Annual CSPCC Supporting Membership \$25.00
- Annual CSPCC Sustaining Membership \$100.00
- Annual CSPCC Endowing Membership \$250.00

Membership fees and donations in excess of the cost of the journal are income tax deductible. Registration No. 11921 9962 RR0001.

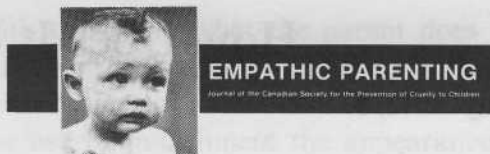
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Subscription orders, undeliverable copies, and change of address notices should be sent to CSPCC, 356 First Street, Box 700, Midland, Ontario, L4R 4P4. Phone: (705) 526-5647 Fax: (705) 526-0214 Email: csppc@look.ca

Indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index, the Canadian Magazine Index, and available on-line and on CD ROM through Canadian Business and Current Affairs.



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Many articles from past issues of Empathic Parenting are available on the Internet at:

<http://www.empathicparenting.org>

There you will find links to all our sites:

- Empathic Parenting
- Crime Prevention
- Psychopathy and Consumerism
- Daycare is for Parents Not Infants and Toddlers
- The Fastest Growing Religion
- Physical Punishment in the Home
- A Certificate for Parenting

How Does It Feel to be Spanked?

Libby Simon, M.S.W., R.S.W.

Sometimes when I do something bad, my mom or dad gets mad at me. I hate when that happens. Sometimes, it's just a little bit mad. Then they yell.

That can feel like a spanking too, because it hurts. When I do something really bad, then I get a real spanking. My friend Joey calls it a 'lickin', but it's the same

thing. He says he gets a slap across the face or head when he does something wrong. Sally says she gets the wooden spoon

when her mom gets really mad at her. Jason gets the belt! That sounds really scary. My dad or mom slaps me on the bum with

a hand more than one time. Really hard! Do you know what that feels like? Well, I'll tell you.

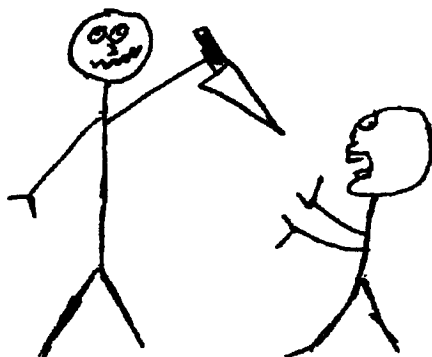
When my mom or dad gets mad at me, I feel

SCARED. They get that look on their face and I know I'm in trouble. I get scared because I'm afraid they're going to hit me and hitting hurts. Sometimes they

look so mad I'm afraid they're going to lose control and kill me!

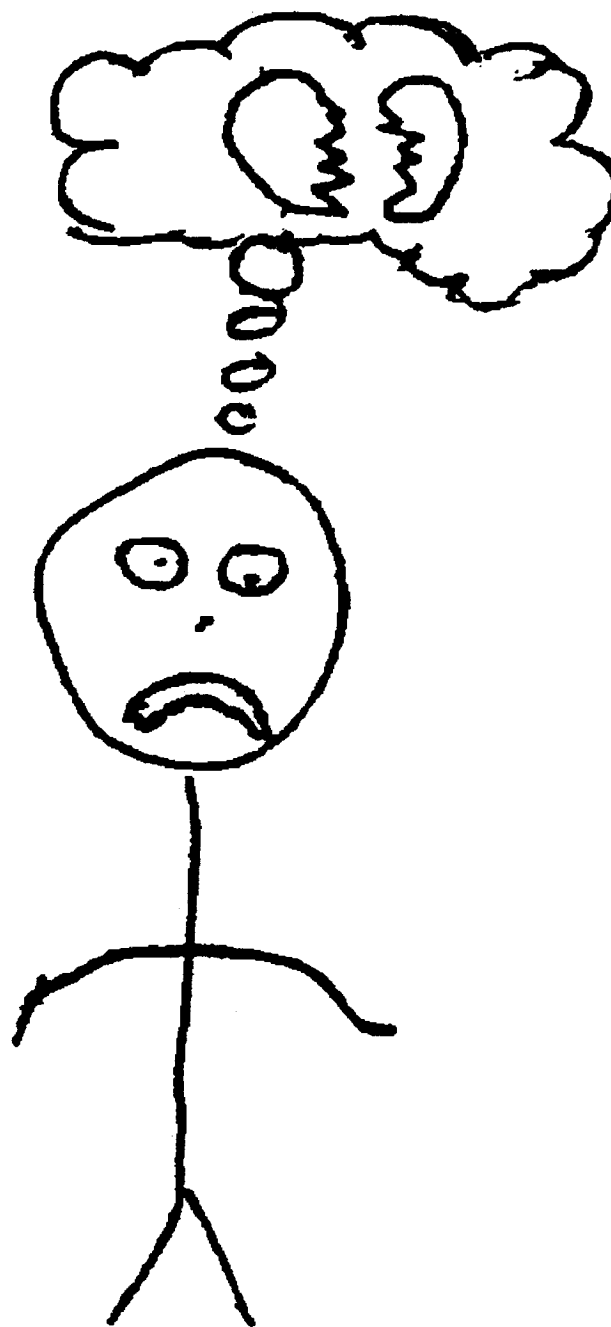
I don't think they really would but that's how it feels. Some-

times they only need to give me that look. My insides get all mixed up and my stomach starts turning upside down.



SCARED

I feel SAD, too. I feel sad because I think they don't love me anymore. They act like they hate me. They act like they want to hurt me. They act like they don't want me around anymore. I guess I must be bad. I know I do everything wrong so I must be stupid, too. I'm not much good at anything. Maybe when I'm grown up I'll be able to do things. When you're little you're not much good for anything. That must be true or they wouldn't get so mad at me. Grown-ups are really smart. They do everything right.

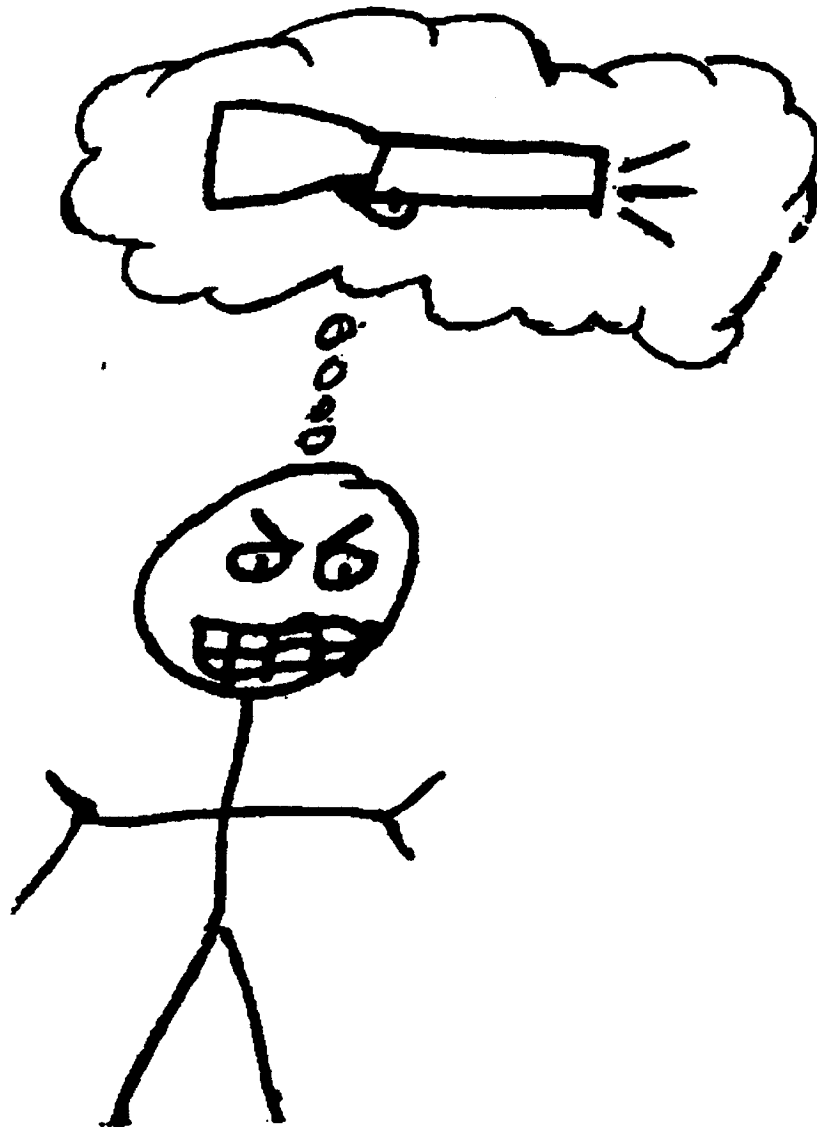


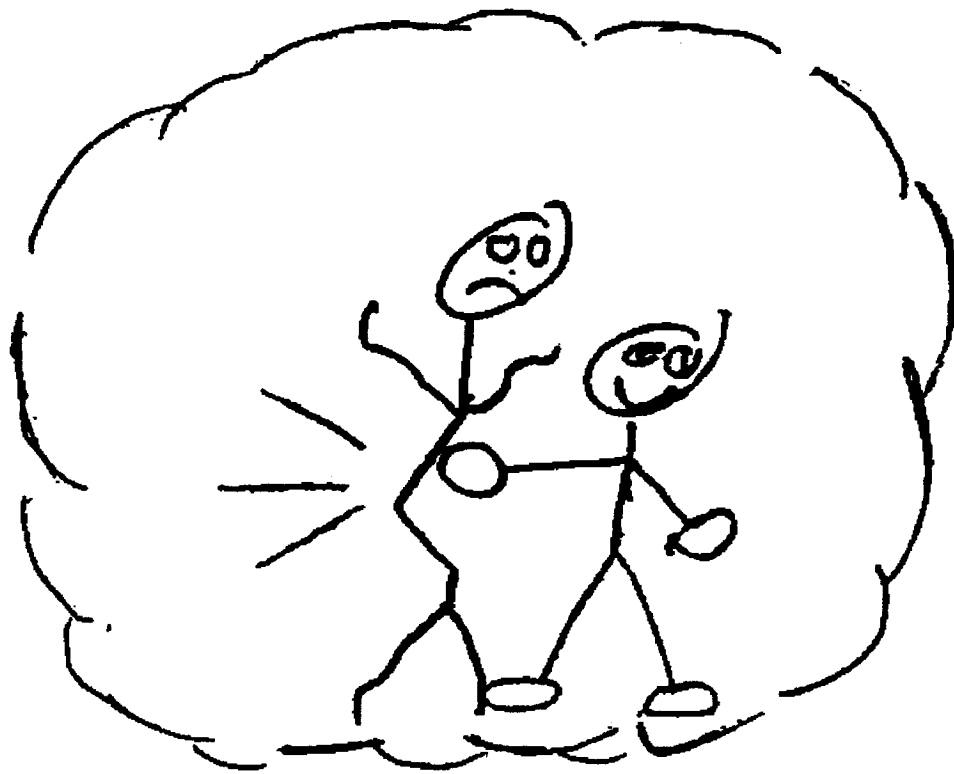
SAD

But then I get MAD! I try hard to do what's right. Just because they're bigger and stronger, they can scream at me and hit

me! That's not fair! They tell me I shouldn't be a bully and push smaller kids around but isn't that what they're doing? I don't

dare talk back or say anything because they will get even madder. So I keep quiet and keep all my feelings in. Sometimes it's really hard to do. I get so mad I could explode!





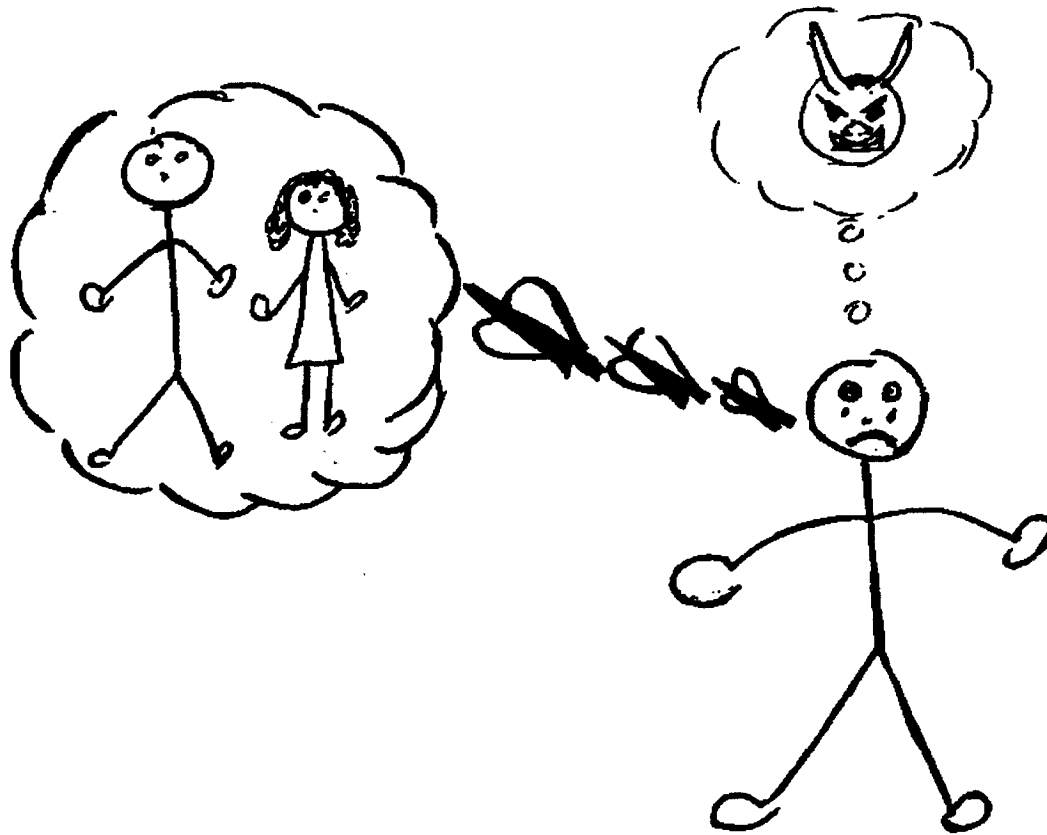
GET EVEN

I want to GET EVEN! I want to hurt them like they hurt me. That's why I don't listen sometimes. Why should I? I'm mad at them! I'll show them! I don't have to do what they tell me! That really bugs them. Sometimes I get even by teasing my brother. He's

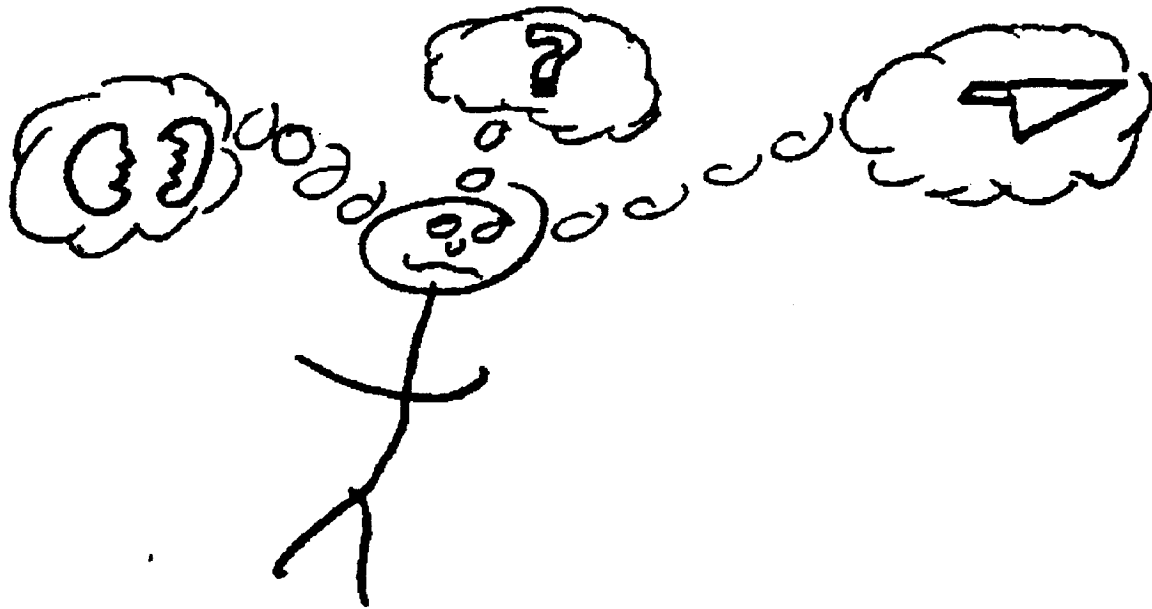
smaller than I am so it's pretty easy. Sometimes I get even when I'm at school by breaking down the girls' snow fort or punching Joey. I don't know why, but those things make me feel better (except when I get in trouble for it).

Funny thing is, I still love my mom and dad even when I'm so mad at them I feel like I hate them. How can you love and hate a person at the same time? Besides, they're my mom and dad. You shouldn't really think bad

things about them. After all, they do lots of nice things for you too. Then I feel bad for thinking bad things about them. My teacher told me that's called feeling GUILTY. I hate feeling guilty.



GUILTY



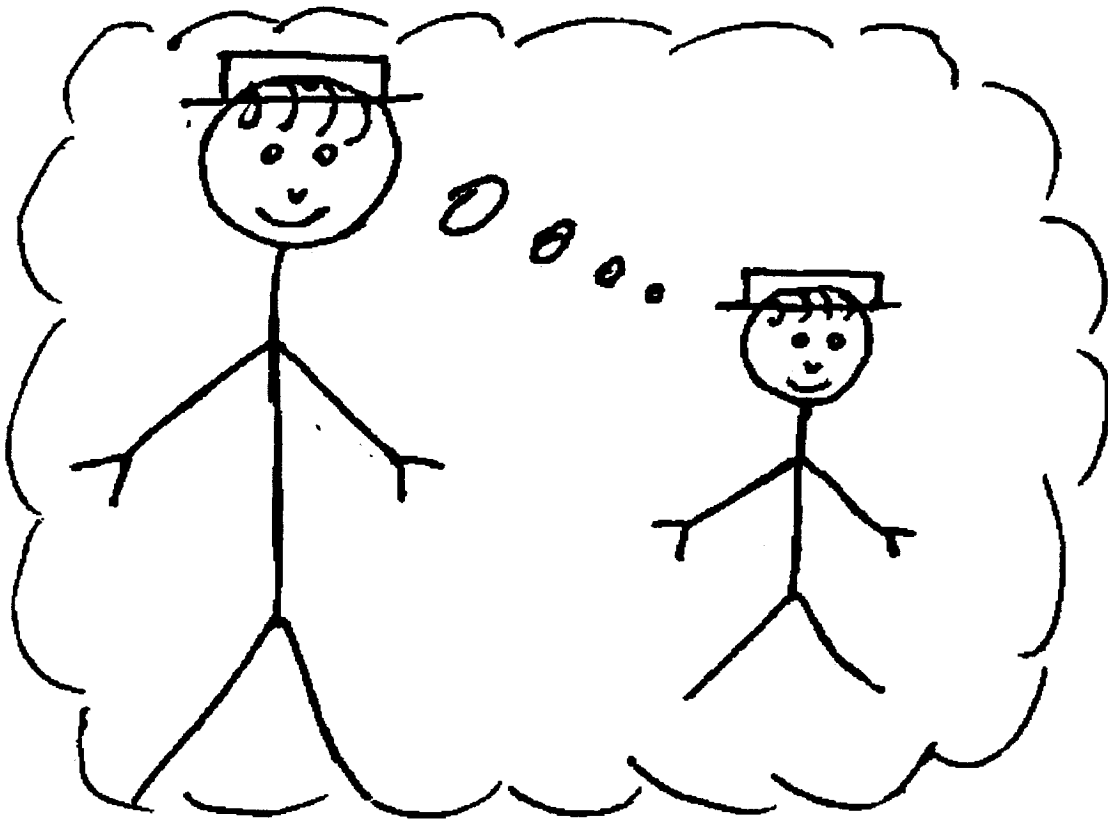
ANXIOUS

I hate feeling kinda' scared all the time too. I'm not even sure why I have this scary feeling. It makes it hard to sit still like everybody wants me to. Something inside me keeps jumping around. It's like I have a Mexican jumping bean inside my stomach. It feels like something might attack

me at any time. I don't know when. I don't know where. And I don't know why. So I have to be ready all the time. My teacher says that 'jumping bean' feeling is like 'butterflies in your stomach'. It's called feeling ANXIOUS or worried. Whatever it's called, I sure wish it would go away.

My mom and dad are very special people. I love them very much. I just want them to love me too. I'm trying hard to do what they want. Maybe I should just tell them that. Don't get mad when I make mistakes. I need time to learn.

I'm getting bigger and smarter everyday. After all, you're teaching me everything I know. And don't forget, mom and dad. Someday, I'm going to grow up and be JUST LIKE YOU.



JUST LIKE YOU

Understanding Spanking as a Method of Discipline

Libby Simon, M.S.W., R.S.W.

This story illustrates the effects of spanking from the child's point of view. Several powerful emotions can be identified which can impact negatively on a child's emotional well being long after the threat is over. These are: FEAR, SADNESS, ANGER, REVENGE, GUILT and ANXIETY.

These feelings have been separated in order to simplify understanding. The important point to be made, however, is that the young child is attempting to cope with emotions not yet understood related to fear of parents, need for parents, and love for parents. We need to minimize such conflicts if we are to help our children grow strong and healthy.

FEAR

The first immediate and spontaneous reaction described by children is fear. This is because the body's natural defense mechanism is triggered by an impending threat to its well being, activating the biological and psychological systems into a defense mode. Increased adrenaline flow, heart rate and blood flow help to prepare the organism for fight or flight, neither of which children are able to do because of their dependency and immature development. They are therefore vulnerable to the perceived or real attack and can do nothing but experience it.

SADNESS

Once the immediate attack or threat of attack subsides, rational thoughts begin to emerge and feelings of sadness take over. Children feel a loss of parental love, a loss of self-esteem and a loss of self-confidence. The message sent, albeit unintentionally, is that the child is bad, inadequate, unworthy and unlovable.

ANGER

Anger sets in as feelings of helplessness and powerlessness take over. The adult has greater physical and psychological power over the less developed child. The adult also holds all the resources that the child needs in order to survive. This puts the child in a dependent position over which they have no control. Feelings of having no control have a very powerful, negative effect on a developing child.

Adults might better appreciate these feelings of anger by imagining themselves in a comparable situation. The boss in the workplace, for example, holds the power to crucial resources, i.e. money, which profoundly affects an adult's life. If the job means survival, compliance is forced but not without a great deal of hidden anger and resentment. At a more extreme level, imagine finding yourself being threatened with assault by a person much larger and more powerful than yourself who may even be wielding an object as a weapon. What

would your reactions be under these circumstances?

Power is abused when fear and intimidation are used to control another human being, and the result is anger. Anger triggers a desire for revenge, a desire to "get even," often with accompanying feelings of guilt.

REVENGE

One can readily observe a phenomenon of human behaviour that seems to be universal. When pain is inflicted, be it emotional or physical, a desire for retaliation or revenge is aroused. It then spreads like an infectious disease, seeking vengeance. And whether open or subtle, direct or indirect, it will find its expression in some form, sooner or later. We see it expressed daily from the sandbox, to the playground, to the home, school and community, to the killing fields of war. It is only a matter of degree.

At this point a distinction must be made. Occasionally any parent is capable of losing control and may slap a child in the heat of the moment. Children can tolerate and even forgive our transgressions without major negative effects. It is when spanking or threats of spanking are used as a regular method of discipline that a desire to get even is more likely to be triggered.

Hitting is often merely a venting of parental anger. Others rationalize and justify it as a legitimate method of discipline. In this case, an assumption is being made that it is necessary to inflict pain in order to correct behaviour. Punishment is based

on this principle. Observations and experience teach otherwise. When the meaning of discipline becomes synonymous with teaching and not with punishment, a new beginning will emerge which is gentler and more caring.

GUILT

Feeling badly for doing or even thinking things children feel they shouldn't causes feelings of guilt. Children generally feel guilty about the anger they feel towards their parents, their caregivers and providers. It is a particularly difficult emotion for them to understand. They invariably have a more difficult time defining or identifying this emotion because it is more abstract but it needs to be recognized and clarified to enable the child to deal with her or her emotional experience. Excessive feelings of guilt have been shown to be the source of many psychological problems in adulthood such as depression or suicidal tendencies. It therefore becomes very important to deal with guilt at its source.

ANXIETY

Anxiety is another abstract emotion that is difficult to identify, especially for young children. They are generally unaware of its existence but is manifested behaviourally. Adults may recognize childhood anxiety in sleep disturbances, eating disorders, learning problems and behavioural difficulties. Anxiety differs from fear in that in fear the person knows its source, which may be avoidable. In anxiety, however, there is a feeling of some impending threat, which is unpredictable and unavoidable.

The Impact of Spanking on Society

Libby Simon, M.S.W., R.S.W.

The foregoing illustrates that most aggression and violence have their roots in the family. Once developed they have characteristics of both a communicable as well as a genetic disease. They spread, not only across humanity regardless of race, colour or creed, but also across generations. On closer analysis, it becomes apparent that what starts out innocently enough as simple parental 'discipline' may well be the germ for family violence.

Further research in Canada and the United States since this booklet was originally published lends further support to the observations.

For example, one longitudinal study by Strassberg et al (1994) found that spanking fails to promote prosocial development and, instead, is associated with higher rates of aggression toward peers.

In a 1995 study from the University of Manitoba, Drs. Joan Durrant and Linda Rose-Krasnor showed that, at times, corporal punishment has escalated into abuse because, as a method of discipline, its impact is temporary. The degree of punishment often grows in intensity as its effectiveness diminishes. In addition, it showed that spanking not only increases the risk of abuse, but that it also increases aggressive behaviours in children. "Across methodologies, studies have consistently shown that the experience of corporal punishment is associated with increased levels of aggression in childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Its frequency and intensity are predictors of delinquency, violence and crime in later life". There is "a significant positive association between parental use of physical punishment and the develop-

ment of aggressive behaviour." (CORPORAL PUNISHMENT - Research Review and Policy Recommendations, p3).

Similarly, in a recent U.S. study, researchers found that "the harsher the physical discipline during the preschool years the greater the likelihood of the child developing assaultive behaviours in late adolescence (American Journal of Psychiatry, 67, 422-432, winter, 1997).

And a study released in 1999 by the Canadian Center for Studies of Children at Risk and McMaster's Department of Psychiatry, found frequent spanking to be harmful. The study of nearly 10,000 Ontarians ages 15 to 65 compared half that said they were rarely or never spanked with those who reported they were often or sometimes spanked. They found that those who fell into the latter category were twice as likely to report alcohol, drug abuse or anti-social behaviours.

Unharnessed aggression and violence is so widespread in our world that if it were a medical disease, it would be considered epidemic. Millions of dollars would be spent on research to find the vaccine so we would immunize everyone because of its great danger to the individual and to society. Medical research has not always found a cure but more often has developed a vaccine to prevent the spread of disease. For example, tuberculosis and diphtheria which were once epidemic, are now rare in our society.

Social science can learn from medicine. Enough research evidence exists which tells us that aggression breeds aggression and violence breeds violence. The intensity depends on a number of factors

but can best be delineated on a continuum from mild aggressive tendencies to extreme violence. What does not seem to be apparent is that we already have the 'vaccine' available in our hands, and the cost is absolutely nothing! It is simply to STOP THE HITTING! and STOP THE HURTING! While this may sound like an oversimplification, remember that mothers stopped dying in childbirth when doctors simply started washing their hands. A simple solution to a serious problem. We need to 'wash our hands' of this social disease.

But spanking sounds so benign. The connotation it carries has a positive motive, i.e. to teach our children appropriate discipline and it therefore becomes a socially acceptable method. How can that be wrong? The intent and the method must be separated. The intent is good; the method is not. Spanking is nothing more than an assault on the body of another person under the guise of discipline and education. It is not benign. It is malignant. We know that people have devised a variety of ways of causing hurt to children under the legitimacy of discipline.

We need to 'wash our hands' of this social disease.

Spanking is only one of them. However, spanking is the most common and the most readily identifiable.

We have the 'vaccine' in our hands to immunize the general population and halt this epidemic. It can be a beginning to the end of the spread of violence and keep it from infecting the next generation. Education and legislating are two key elements in the fight against violence. The teaching of parenting skills needs to become part of the fabric of our society much as is the acceptance of schooling for children. Information needs to be disseminated in a comprehensive way through a coordinated social structure and

reinforced in our social institutions such as the media, which has the power to reach large masses of people at all socioeconomic levels. The legal system is another powerful social institution that needs to re-examine its role in child welfare. There is a great deal of work to be done if we are to move this massive mountain of machinery called Mankind towards a "kinder and gentler" humanity. Let's stop the violence! ☺

The three articles by Libby Simon have been reprinted with kind permission from her 1993 booklet HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE SPANKED. For information address Libby Simon, #1-2655 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2V 4V8 or e-mail libby@escape.ca. Copyright © 1993 by Libby Simon Revised 2001. Illustrations Copyright © 1993 by Libby and Sharon Simon. Libby Simon holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology; a Pre-Master's in Educational Psychology and a Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Manitoba. She has worked extensively with children and families in the former Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg. She has also worked for 20 years as a School Social Worker with the Child Guidance Clinic in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Libby is a freelance writer who has been published numerous times in newspapers, magazines and journals. Her most recent work is a K-3 Violence Prevention Kit for schools called 'Don't Fight, It's Not Right' which is presently distributed through the Manitoba Textbook Bureau in Altona, Manitoba.

Libby is married and lives in Winnipeg with her husband, Harold and they have one married daughter, Sharon.

The Real Danger of Permissiveness

Sidney Craig, Ph.D.

It is the average parent, guided primarily by the fear of being permissive who produces unknowingly a degree of hostile feelings in the child which in turn produces various forms of antisocial behavior...

People have never been surprised to find that many irresponsible, delinquent, drug-addicted, or otherwise troubled children have been raised in very poor home environments. This relationship between the "sick" home and the "sick" child has been known for centuries. It is entirely reasonable to expect, and repeated experience has confirmed, that children raised by parents who are morally defective, infantile, indolent, irresponsible, incompetent, or criminal should turn "bad." (Like father, like son.) We may infer safely that in such families the parents set a poor example, failed to teach proper ethical standards and paid insufficient attention to the child's physical and emotional needs. We may even suspect that such parents did not really want or love their children. Common sense tells us that problem children should arise within such a family context.

However, what has been extremely puzzling to parents for centuries is the problem of how to explain those "wild," irresponsible, delinquent children who were reared by parents believed to be honest, responsible, and hard-working citizens. This opposition between the parents' mo-

rality and that of the child has occurred so regularly throughout the period of man's recorded history that it has become part of our folklore. Numerous novels and stage plays center around a prominent person whose son becomes the town's ne'er-do-well or the clergyman's daughter who becomes the town harlot.

Historically, in their attempts to explain this phenomenon, the public has utilized three major theories.

ONE

The oldest of the three held that the bad child had been **possessed by the devil** or some other evil spirit. Common sense then dictated that the proper course of action to cure the condition was to "beat the devil" out of the child. As mankind turned away from this primitive demonology, a new idea more compatible with modern, scientific thinking developed.

TWO

This was the theory of the **hereditary transmission of behavioral or personality traits**. According to this theory,

Edited excerpts from Chapter Three of the book *Raising Your Child, Not by Force but by Love*, by Sidney D. Craig, Ph.D. Copyright © MCMLXXIII The Westminster Press, Philadelphia (Now out of print) Originally reprinted by permission in *Empathic Parenting* Vol. 2, Iss 1, 1979.

if a "bad" child suddenly showed up in the middle of a "good" family, it was suspected that one of his ancestors had possessed a defective gene. Presumably then, this gene suddenly manifested itself in the child who was the carrier of the "bad seed." Gradually this idea, too, came to be discredited by twentieth-century geneticists, biologists, and psychologists. There remained, then, but one widely accepted explanation for this phenomenon which has not been refuted by more advanced thinking.

THREE

This third explanation places the blame for delinquent children on **permissive treatment by the parents**. This theory has always coexisted with the other two. But now, since the other two theories have passed from the scene, this one has emerged as the overwhelming favorite.

Specifically, according to this explanation, the parents of delinquent children have been either too ignorant or too irresponsible to have punished their children for various of the child's minor and major transgressions. Accordingly, it is the parents' failure or refusal to have used firm, fair, consistent, and even harsh punishment that permitted the child to develop a wild, irresponsible, or antisocial pattern of behavior. Since, according to this theory, the parents' aversion to using punishment as a restraining force permitted

the child to develop his delinquent pattern, this particular form of parental failure is known today as permissiveness...

Currently, then, warnings against parental permissiveness represent the major theoretical guideline available to parents and responsible authorities in their efforts to understand, prevent, and treat behavioral disorders, including prominently, today, the excessive use of dangerous drugs...

Yet, what I hope to convince the reader is that the "enemy" of the child is not permissiveness, but rather the fear of being permissive. It is this fear which drives good, middle-class American parents to behave toward their children in those callous, unsympathetic, insensitive ways which ultimately result in youthful delinquency. It is this fear of permissiveness which frightens parents away from demonstrating those humane, constructive, conciliatory forms of behavior which would enhance rather than destroy their relationship with their children. It is the parents' fear of permissiveness that forces them to abandon as the major child-rearing resource their own legitimate Judeo-Christian heritage [and that of many other religions] which stresses gentleness, kindness, trust, faith, and forgiveness in one's relationship with others. Having been forced by an antiquated theory to abandon those forms of behavior which could produce loving feelings in their children, the parents must inevitably produce angry feelings with tragic consequences.

Having been forced by an antiquated theory to abandon those forms of behavior which could produce loving feelings in their children, the parents must inevitably produce angry feelings with tragic consequences.

The new insight I am trying to present to the reader is that, contrary to what you may now believe, vast numbers of children who become delinquent and turn to the use of dangerous drugs have not been raised permissively. Nor do they come from homes in which the parents have been irresponsible, incompetent, or otherwise derelict in meeting their responsibilities to their children. Rather, these drug-using children have been reared by parents who are the most well-organized, highly informed, sincere, intelligent, dedicated, and responsible members of the community. It is the average, middle-class parent, being guided primarily by the fear of being permissive, who, during the normal process of responsible child-rearing, produces unknowingly a degree of hostile feelings in the child which in turn produces various forms of antisocial behavior...

Punishment Works! (in the short run)

The primary reason for the persistence of public confidence in the effectiveness of punishment is that punishment does affect behavior and the results are almost immediate. Particularly when the child is young, punishment produces the immediately observable changes in behavior the parent desires. As any parent knows, if a young child's hand is slapped often enough and hard enough, the child will stop doing

with that hand what the parent does not want him to do with it. This immediately observable cause-and-effect sequence gives the use of punishment the appearance of indisputable validity. The common sense of the parent inclines him to accept the evidence of his own senses. Thus, logic and common sense backed up by widespread social approval dictate that parents continue to depend on the theory that demands punishment for misbehavior rather than gamble on some more abstract theory which promises good behavior later but provides less immediately observable results in controlling the child's behavior here and now.

Let us look at a case history and see how the parents become increasingly confident that their technique of child-rearing is the correct one.

The parents were able to eliminate their child's tendency at age two and one half, to open certain cabinet doors by slapping his hands. (Punishment worked.) When he was three and one half, they were able to put a stop to his temper tantrums by spanking him. Occasionally, they used a long stick if the bare hand alone was insufficient. (Punishment worked.) When he was five years old, they put a stop to his using "dirty" words by washing his mouth with soap. (Punishment worked.) He presented no problem at the dinner table because he was punished if he showed poor manners. If he "ate like a pig" or refused to try new foods, or if he didn't

The child turns toward drugs and delinquency as the relative strength of his feelings of anger gradually comes to outweigh the feelings of love he holds toward his parents.

The real "enemy" is the theory and approach to child-rearing prevalent in this country which forces parents to interact with their children in ways that inevitably accentuate angry rather than loving feelings and thereby produces youthful delinquency.

finish all the food on his plate, he was sent to his room. (Again punishment worked.) At age nine the parents stopped his tendency to come home late for dinner by "grounding" him for one week each time he was late. Thus, all the child's behavior problems were "solved" by the consistent use of mild to moderate degrees of punishment...

As you can see, the fact that punishment appeared to work successfully every time it was used makes it impossible for the parent to conceive of using any other technique. Thus, the immediately demonstrable effect of punishment has seduced generations of sensible adults into embracing it as the technique of choice in raising children...

...We should all graciously, generously and compassionately accept the idea that the majority of those parents whose children turn away from parental values or toward the use of dangerous drugs are just as intelligent, informed, sincere, conscientious, moral, and responsible as we ourselves. If we could grant them these virtues instead of attempting to assign blame, we could focus our attention on the real "enemy": the theory and approach to child-rearing prevalent in this country which forces parents to interact with their children in ways that inevitably accentuate angry rather than loving feelings and thereby produce youthful delinquency. Moreover, we could more readily com-

prehend the apparent paradox that has been a source of perplexity for centuries: why it is that the most conscientious parents would be so highly prone to producing rebellious, delinquent children...

In various discussions in this book I have attempted to persuade the reader that delinquency is a "disease" which is produced by mismanaged feelings. I have said that the child turns toward drugs and delinquency as the relative strength of his feelings of anger gradually comes to outweigh the feelings of love he holds toward his parents... ☺

It is not sufficient for the parent merely to love the child "inwardly" but that love has to be demonstrated overtly through specific actions which reveal the love.

Sidney Craig

In a day when we are all obsessed with promoting self-esteem in our children, does our behaviour leave them feeling that our ambitions and comforts always come ahead of their needs?

Deborah Maes

The Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

The CSPCC is working to change those things in Canadian society that are making it difficult for parents to give their children the care they need to grow into healthy, confident, non-violent, loving adults.

In general we are working for:

- ◆ a shift from arbitrary male dominance to no-one's arbitrary dominance
- ◆ a shift from the essential beliefs of our society's consumer religion -- envy, selfishness and greed -- to trust, empathy and affection in a community-centred, sustainable society
- ◆ a shift from violence and sexism as the warp and woof of entertainment
- ◆ a shift from treating children as sinful or stupid to empathizing with them and fulfilling their expanding and particular needs

In particular we are working to:

- ◆ raise the status of parenting
- ◆ implement universal parenting education from kindergarten to grade eight
- ◆ encourage parents to make their children's emotional needs their highest priority during the critical first three years
- ◆ facilitate a positive birthing experience for every father, mother and baby
- ◆ promote extended breastfeeding with child-led weaning
- ◆ make it easier for parents to meet the emotional needs of each child by encouraging a minimum three year spacing between siblings
- ◆ increase awareness of the potential long term hazards of separations between children under three and their mothers.



Recognizing that the capacity to give and receive trust, affection and empathy is fundamental to being human.

Knowing that all of us suffer the consequences when children are raised in a way that makes them affectionless and violent, and;

Realizing that for the first time in History we have definite knowledge that these qualities are determined by the way a child is cared for in the very early years.

CREDO



WE BELIEVE THAT:

- The necessity that every new human being develop the capacity for trust, affection and empathy dictates that potential parents re-order their priorities with this in mind.
- Most parents are willing and able to provide their children with the necessary loving empathic care, given support from others, appropriate understanding of the task and the conviction of its absolute importance.
- It is unutterably cruel to permanently maim a human being by failing to provide this quality of care during the first three years of life.

THERE IS AN URGENCY THEREFORE TO:

- Re-evaluate all our institutions, traditions and beliefs from this perspective.
- Oppose and weaken all forces which undermine the desire or ability of parents to successfully carry out a task which ultimately affects us all.
- Support and strengthen all aspects of family and community life which assist parents to meet their obligation to each new member of the human race.