



SHANE LYNCH PSYCHOLOGY

Fall is upon us...

All transitions, even ones from season to season create upheaval. It's normal. It will feel like it's passed because we become accustomed to it.

Remember...

Last issue about keeping some routines over the summer? I wonder how well everyone is adjusting now that fall is here?

About Shane

What a great summer with family and friends. Despite the record heat and water restrictions, some real fun was had by all in my circle.

My eldest son really mastered bike-riding without training wheels, and his younger brother even gave it a go with some impressive first try success.

First time tent camping—while sleepless for 1.5 of the two nights we went—was largely a success with a 7, 5, and 2 year old.

What did you get up to?



Crime and Punishment

“Don’t to the crime if you can’t do the time.” Ever hear that one? It’s really interesting to see how discipline as an area of research has shifted and changed over the decades. Child development is such a vast area of research with so many interesting subjects requiring our ability to think critically.

That last part is important. Because of the vastness of child development, thinking critically when we read, see, or are “suggested to view” content online about the subject is very, very important. Whether it’s an influencer who read their first book on parenting they picked up at Indigo, or someone who claims to work with children in some professional capacity, we always need to think critically with regard to any information we find.

Remember, spanking was quite common for a long time. Then when the research quickly showed the detrimental impacts on a child’s healthy development, “time-outs” were all the rage. Then the research on attachment quickly began to question the efficacy



Tips for Dads & Moms

Children are always learning. Punishment teaches kids behaviour is either good or bad. But if we give so much attention and time to what we determine are punishable behaviours, we actually focus more on what we don't want than what we do want. Kids will then start to learn: "If I don't want to be punished, I need to make sure my parents don't find out" instead of knowing an acceptable way to get what they need. Teach them instead what you want them to do, over and over and over again. When they do it, praise them for both *doing* the desired behaviour and for *being* a great kid.

After all, kids make mistakes unknowingly and knowingly, so they can learn. Do you want to be their critic or their teacher?



Shane F. Lynch, MA, CCC, R.Psych

of creating separation from our kids as a form of punishment and the "attachment alarm" it creates, often causing more harm than good.

So what can we do to address behaviour we don't like? This concept applies to more than just parents, we adults punish each other all the time. Adults would probably call a time-out the "silent treatment." No adult I've ever met thinks that's a helpful approach, so what is it about time-outs that parents think is so useful?

What we know about punishment from behavioural and developmental psychology is that it largely doesn't work. This is tough because even I have caught myself threatening to take away 'tablet time' (negative punishment; taking something away) or giving extra chores when they are slow to finish or don't finish the ones they were given in the first place (positive punishment; adding something more).

What I've learned from reading the research, maintaining relationships, working with families, and having my own family, is often our desire to punish comes from a good intention, but using a punitive approach to deliver our good intentions is usually counter productive. Now, I expect you'll think: "I don't know, Shane, when I threaten to take away tablet time, my kids come running." Often times mine do too when I'm exasperated and fall into using punishment, but the problem gets worse not better when we're threatening punishment all of the time. And what's more, the kids learn to threaten, too. "I'm not coming unless you carry me!" Uh oh.

So, think for a moment about a usual sticking point you have with someone in your life, a friend, a family member, a child. When they behave in a way you don't like and you want to address it, what is your intention in doing so? Most of us would say to stop it; however, we might also be motivated by exhaustion, concern for repeated behaviour, and/or a worse consequence the person might face if they don't change their behaviour. Those are all legitimate reasons to give feedback but if we solely rely on punishment, we will have—at best—a temporary impact on behaviour.

Think about how you would want to be addressed. Calmly, clearly, compassionately, even curiously (especially with kids, but with adults too). We want our natural confidence to shine through. This will help to communicate what you are saying is important, well-intended, and from a place of care, not conflict.