

time to time with a young child. With five strategies I will show how these moments can be transformed.

I started my teaching career with special needs students and spent some time working with children with autism and Asperger's syndrome. This experience taught me a lot about children's behaviour (and autistic children can really throw tantrums!). The school I was lucky enough to teach in had a wonderful system when dealing with challenging behaviour, the 'least restrictive first' method. Since this time I have worked as a primary, special needs and Rudolf Steiner trained teacher, run playgroups and had my own two children. I have had ample opportunities to practise on lovely little children. I have since adapted the 'least restrictive first' method and renamed it 'creative discipline'.

Creative discipline is a bag of useful tools for those trying moments that naturally occur with all young children. These techniques can transform challenging moments while parent and child remain connected together. The desired behaviour is achieved or a negative behaviour is stopped, but how you find your way there is a matter of 'creative' choice. There are many pathways in disciplining; I am choosing one that empowers both parent and child, is fun, understanding and loving (well most of the time anyway!).

The following creative discipline tools can transform challenging moments into positive outcomes with a toddler or young child:

CHANGING THE ENVIRONMENT TO TRANSFORM THE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Changing the environment, not the child, can develop a sense of increased fun, understanding and compassion.

Scenario: your child does not want to go to bed

Make sure that children are not overly stimulated by TV or games at bed/bath time

Introduce a lovely rhythm which is fun and special, e.g., a piggy-back ride to the bathroom

While cleaning teeth, play a funny game where each tooth speaks and says his favourite part of the day

Sing a lullaby
Stroke your child's head and say kind words

Say goodnight to three things in the room; let your child choose which toys
Hang a cocoon around the bed, and play a soft classical music CD

Leave on a special night light
Make sure you are connected with your child at these sacred times and be consistent with a fun and loving bedtime rhythm.

RE-DIRECT – A GREAT WAY!

Children's spontaneity and ability to be in the moment allows for the art of re-direction. Isolate the 'action' a child is displaying and re-direct it into a safe and positive play idea.


Scenario: a young child is throwing wooden blocks inside – they do look great flying through the air!

Place a basket nearby, "You throw a ball, not blocks or toys – let's throw the ball together. Throw the ball into the basket: goal! Balls are for throwing, well done!"

Scenario: a young child is running inside at a social gathering

"Can you run to that tree and back three times in the garden? I will watch from the window. Outside is where you can run."

All too often parents fall into the trap of reacting to an inappropriate behaviour by saying (often in a raised voice) 'Don't do that', or 'No shouting', or 'Stop it!' With this type of instruction, the child hears what to not do, but with no real guidance of an appropriate way of behaving. Instead emphasise how you would like your child to behave, 'Be gentle', or 'Hands down', or 'Talk quietly'. Children are more open to being guided in this way. Each time your child displays a negative behaviour is an opportunity to guide your child on how to live in this world. Re-direct by explaining and showing the child the positive way to behave.

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WORLD INVOCATION DAY



Thursday 27th May 2010

THE GREAT INVOCATION

From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.
Let light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let Love stream forth into the hearts of men.
May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men.
The purpose which disciples know and serve.

From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out.
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth.

In building a more just, independent and caring global society, what humanity needs above all, is more light, love and spiritual will.

On World Invocation Day people of goodwill from all parts of the world, and from different religious and spiritual backgrounds unite in invoking these higher energies by using The Great Invocation.

Will you join in this healing work by including The Great Invocation in your thoughts, your prayers or your meditations on Thursday 27th May.

For a free copy of the booklet
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