

Positive reinforcement



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The concept of positive reinforcement is the most powerful and practical tool ever devised in the history of applied psychology. Positive reinforcement is defined precisely in keeping with how it works. Its definition is actually as straight forward and simple as it is counterintuitive (Cappa & Kahn, 2011). Positive reinforcement in my opinion can't fail to profile and maintain positive behavior and to replace negative or problem behavior. If parents don't harness this simple but powerful technique, it's very likely that a negative peer culture or some other influential source will.

Positive Reinforcement works because it gives children positive goals to work towards instead of only focusing on negative consequences to avoid. Positive reinforcement fulfills strong basic psychological needs of every child as well as setting a more positive and healthy tone for the parent, child relationships. I have many examples of positive reinforcement that I use with my children. Every person and every child is different; this is true by definition about my two children. My kids are 15 and 10. They are two totally different children.

My 15 year is very carefree, athletic, and tends to care little about school; my 10 year old is very cautious of everything and think about what can happen if he does something, and has always done better in school and does not enjoy sports. Report cards come home. My oldest son has C's and my youngest son has all A's. Both were very proud of themselves. For my oldest son C's kept him on the football team, and earns him money. For my youngest it gives him more money than his brother and his name is in the local newspaper for honor roll that gets hung on our fridge next to Caleb's athletic endeavors.

Point being: My oldest son tries his best and school has never come easy to him and with my youngest son school is his strength. The positive reinforcement in this scenario is that for one child receiving high marks come easier; however, it does not mean that my oldest didn't put forth the same effort as his younger brother. Children like adults have strengths and weaknesses. It is important not to compare children and to praise them for their strengths rather than point out their flaws.

In my situation my oldest son struggles and has dyslexia therefore he struggles in school, yet I see the effort he puts forth and it should be rewarded all the same. So my positive enforcement is money, an A gets you \$5, a B gets you \$3, and a C gets you \$2. With this in place it gives them a reason to want to do well in school. Negative reinforcement is a term described by B. F. Skinner in his theory of operant conditioning. In negative reinforcement, a response or behavior is strengthened by stopping, removing or avoiding a negative outcome or aversive stimulus (Luman, Van Meel, Oosterlaan, & Geurts, 2012).

One of the best ways to remember negative reinforcement is to think of it as something being deducted from the situation. When you look at it in this way, it may be easier to identify examples of negative reinforcement in the real-world. An example that I have used on my children would be, they should clean their rooms before going out to play on Saturday. However, they did not clean their rooms. The consequence for them not cleaning their rooms would be more chores. Like helping their dad mow the grass or cleaning the base boards.

Negative reinforcement can be an effective way to strengthen a desired behavior. However, it is most effective when reinforcers are presented immediately following a behavior. When a long period of time elapses between the behavior and the reinforcer, the response is likely to be weaker. Positive punishment is used in reinforcing behaviors; it is the addition of an aversive stimulus or activity as opposed to negative punishment which removes an incentive as a result of the problem behavior (such as time out).

As such, spanking specifically is not condoned in the field of psychology as there are other methods found to be more effective and pose less risk. There are other forms of positive punishment that don't involve physically aversive stimuli that could be looked into like 'time out'. However, there is a difference in spanking and beatings. A spanking in my opinion is 3-5 swift firm pops to the bottom when a child has misbehaved and has been told repeatedly that he/she is to stop doing whatever they are doing.

I can honestly say that I can count on one hand the times I have spanked my children, and it has been if one of them could have caused harm to themselves. Example of one incident is when my oldest crossed the street and his younger brother just ran after him without looking both ways. He received a spanking, because he could have been hit by a car and it was so he would know not to do it again. I am a fan of punishment by removal, always have been in raising my children. I would rather remove a toy, or take away TV or game privileges rather than hit.

To be honest my kids would rather take a spanking than lose their games. So in my household it is more effective to punish by removal. When my children were younger it was a matter of minutes or hours and now it is a few days to a week. My children respond to punishment by removal. The only exception to spanking might be a child who is unable to comprehend verbal reprimanding who has done something severely dangerous. If parents choose to spank their children, I can only hope that they do so after containing their anger.

To discipline out of anger makes the discipline more about the parent's lack of emotional control rather than about teaching their children how to mature into well-functioning adults. If parents are not going to spank their children when their children are big and strong enough to physically overpower their parents, it seems to me that choosing to spank them when they are small is somewhat thoughtless, and perhaps even cowardly. I believe that every human being can be thoughtless and spineless at times, so I am not condemning people who spank their children; I am condemning the act of hitting another human being out of rage or anger.

Traditionally, punishment is something that someone in authority imposes on someone else as a penalty for a misdeed. It is something that is done to people to make them feel punished enough to pay for their misdeed. We all know that traditional punishments are not always effective in changing behavior. Traditional punishments make children feel punished even when having little or no effect on their behavior. Punishment affects how children view themselves. When children see themselves as deserving the punishment then behaviors that merit punishment do not feel out of place.

Children who are serving long restrictions have little to feel good about.

Children who have been spanked feel that they have paid for their misbehavior and are free to misbehave again. In other words, spanking frees the child from feelings of remorse which are needed to prevent future misbehavior. Because, in my opinion most spankings (and I am guilty of this) come out of fear, anger, therefore the child is then angered and the feelings of doing something wrong only harbor anger and do not allow the child to reflect on his/her behaviors.

Parents who use physical punishment are setting an example of using violence to settle problems or solve conflicts; Children imitate their parents' behavior. When parents use physical punishment, children are more likely to use violent acts to settle their conflicts with others. Another disadvantage of using physical punishment is that parents have to find other discipline methods when the child becomes as tall and as strong as the parent!

Because eventually the child will hit back, because as I said earlier it is a learned behavior, and example I will you use with my 1 year old nephew. He is one and he likes to poke his fingers in electrical outlets in my home, my sister smacks his hand lightly and he smacks her back.

Not only has he learned that electrical sockets are bad, but he has also learned to hit. However, he is too young to understand using methods of removal, or 'time outs', therefore to keep him from hurting himself he is smacked or tapped on the hand and told 'No'. I have read and understand the section on what constitutes plagiarism for this assignment, as listed on the PSY 101 web site Assignments page. Further, I have read and understand the Indiana University page on plagiarism. I attest that I have listed all

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sources used for this paper, and that I have attributed all quotations and paraphrases used in this paper. I attest that all work not represented as belonging to someone else is my own. I understand that any amount of plagiarism on this assignment will lead to a recommended grade of zero for the assignment. “