

have been offended; and (4) relearning appropriate behavior, such as practicing correct behavior for given situations.

Albert says to remember the **Four R's of consequences**—related, reasonable, respectful, and reliably enforced. *Related* means the consequence calls on students to do something related directly to their misbehavior. If Courtney continues to talk disruptively, her consequence is to sit in the back of the room where she can't talk to others. *Reasonable* means the consequence is proportional to the misbehavior. We use consequences to teach students, not to punish them. If Juan fails to turn in an assignment, the consequence should be to redo the assignment. *Respectful* means the consequence is invoked in a friendly but firm manner, with no blaming, shaming, or preaching. *Reliably enforced* means teachers invoke consequences and follow through in a consistent manner.

Resolution of more serious misbehavior or repeated violations should be done in a private conference with the student. The purpose of the conference is never to cast blame, but rather to work out ways for helping the student behave responsibly. Albert presents a **Six-D conflict resolution plan** to help resolve matters under dispute.

1. Define the problem objectively, without blaming or using emotional words.
2. Declare the need; that is, tell what makes the situation a problem.
3. Describe the feelings experienced by both sides.
4. Discuss possible solutions. Consider pros and cons of each.
5. Decide on a plan. Choose the solution with the most support from both sides. Be specific about when it will begin.
6. Determine the plan's effectiveness. A follow-up meeting is arranged after the plan has been in use for a time in order to evaluate its effectiveness.

## **Part 2. Barbara Coloroso INNER SELF-CONTROL**

### **Coloroso's Fundamental Hypothesis**

Discipline occurs best when teachers help students acquire an inner sense of self-control, which is developed through earning trust, assuming responsibility, and acquiring the power to make decisions.

#### **Coloroso's Inner Discipline**

Coloroso's approach to discipline emphasizes helping students develop self-control. Her plan urges teachers to establish classrooms that provide a climate of trust and responsibility, in which students are given power to make decisions about their problems and are required to manage the outcomes of those decisions. She says classrooms are ideal places to learn the process of responsible decision making, but teachers and students must work



### About Barbara Coloroso

Barbara Coloroso has been a Franciscan nun, parent, teacher, workshop leader, author, and affiliate instructor at the University of Northern Colorado. She has expressed her ideas on discipline and child rearing in a number of books, articles, and conference presentations. In recent years, she has emphasized working with students with special needs and talents, with troubled students, and with matters related to bullying (presented in her book *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander: How Parents and Teachers Can Break the Cycle of Violence* (2003)). Her ideas included in this chapter come mostly from her book, *Kids Are Worth It: Giving Your Child the Gift of Inner Discipline* (2002). The *Kids Are Worth It!* series includes videos, audiotapes, and workbooks to help teachers develop a discipline system that creates trust, respect, and success in school. See Coloroso's website: [www.kidsareworthit.com](http://www.kidsareworthit.com).

closely together in the process. Teachers must truly believe students are worth every effort made on their behalf. This requires unconditional commitment to developing needed behavior skills. Teachers must treat students as they, themselves, wish to be treated. When students encounter difficulties, teachers should help by asking how they plan to solve the problems, thus requiring that students take responsibility for resolving problems they encounter.

## Principles of Good Discipline

Discipline should be thought of as a means of teaching students to take positive charge of their lives. Students have the right to be in school, but they also have the responsibility to respect the rights of those around them. Good discipline shows students what they have done wrong, has them assume ownership of the problem that has resulted, and teaches them ways to solve the problem. All of this is done while keeping student dignity intact. The result is **inner discipline** that helps students manage problems they encounter. They learn to think for themselves and believe they are capable solving most of the problems they encounter.

## How Punishment Differs from Discipline

Coloroso describes **punishment** as treatment that is psychologically hurtful to students and likely to provoke anger, resentment, and additional conflict. Students typically respond to punishment with the Three F's—fear, fighting back, or fleeing. Threatened with punishment, they become afraid to make a mistake. Coloroso advises against using punishment because it removes good opportunities for developing integrity, wisdom, compassion, and mercy—all of which contribute to inner discipline.

In contrast to punishment, proper discipline does four things that lead students toward positive behavior: (1) shows students what they have done wrong; (2) gives them ownership of the problems involved; (3) provides them strategies for solving the problems; and (4) leaves their dignity intact. Discipline, unlike punishment, helps students

learn how to handle problems they will encounter throughout life. The following case illustrates these points:

Alexis is a starting player on the high school basketball team, but because she received a detention from her chemistry teacher for being tardy several times, Coach Stein informs her she will have to sit out the next game. Even though this is school policy, Alexis thinks the chemistry teacher holds a grudge against her. Alexis is upset that Coach Stein doesn't back her up. While angry, Alexis writes some unacceptable comments on the locker room wall. When Coach Stein finds the damage, she knows other girls have seen it, and she feels hurt, disappointed, and angry. Her first reaction is to call Alexis in and suspend her for another game, but after considering the situation further she realizes punishment of that sort would be unproductive and might not help Alexis make better choices in the future. Coach Stein decides to encourage Alexis to accept ownership of the problem and deal constructively with the turmoil she has created. Coach Stein realizes she must show compassion, kindness, gentleness, and patience. This will make it easier for Alexis to repair the damage she did to the locker room, make a plan to ensure it won't happen again, and mend fences with her coach, teammates, and the chemistry teacher. Coach Stein makes plans to meet with Alexis to help her acknowledge what she has done wrong, assume ownership of the problem, and identify options for dealing with the problem. Coach Stein knows all this must be done in a way that preserves Alexis's sense of personal dignity.

## Misbehavior and How to Deal with It

Coloroso describes behavior as falling into three categories—mistakes, mischief, and mayhem—which are addressed in different ways. Mistakes are simple errors that provide opportunity for learning better choices. Mischief, although not necessarily serious, is intentional misbehavior. It provides an opportunity to help students find ways to fix what they did wrong and learn how to avoid doing it again. Mayhem, which is willfully serious misbehavior, calls for application of the **Three R's of reconciliatory justice**—restitution, resolution, and reconciliation.

**Restitution** means doing what is necessary to repair damage that occurred. **Resolution** means identifying and correcting whatever caused the misbehavior so it won't happen again. **Reconciliation** entails healing relationships with people who were hurt by the misbehavior. In all cases, students are allowed to experience natural discomfort associated with their misbehavior. They are not bribed, rewarded, or punished. Bribes make them dependent on others for approval. Rewards cause students to behave in certain ways only to please the teacher. Punishment only makes students think about how to avoid getting caught the next time they misbehave.

The best way to help students who misbehave is to allow them to make decisions and grow from the results, whatever the results may be. The main caution is to make sure that student decisions do not lead to situations that are physically dangerous, morally threatening, or unhealthy. Otherwise, encourage students to face situations that require decisions and, without making judgments, let them proceed through the process. When they are in situations that call for decisions, ask them to make the

decision (you may need to provide guidance without expressing judgments) and let them experience the results. This process may seem inefficient, but it produces rapid growth in ability to solve problems. Mistakes and poor choices become the students' responsibility. If they experience discomfort, they have the power to behave more responsibly in the future.

Coloroso believes that teachers should never rescue students by solving thorny problems for them. Doing so sends the message that students don't have power in their lives and another person must take care of them. When students make mistakes, as they will, teachers should not lecture them with comments such as, "If you had studied more, you wouldn't have failed the test." Students already know this. What they now need is opportunity to correct the situation they have created. It is best for the teacher to say, "You have a problem. What is your plan for dealing with it?"

When students take on **ownership of the problem** and situation they have created, they know it is up to them to make matters better. Teachers are there to offer advice and support, but not provide solutions. Rather than telling a student, "You can't go to the library during choice time until you finish your math assignment" (punishment), a teacher should say, "You can go to the library during choice time when you finish your math assignment" (discipline). This simple response difference helps students take responsibility for their actions.

### **How Classroom Discipline Leads to Inner Discipline**

As you have seen, Coloroso believes the ultimate purpose of discipline is to enable students to make intelligent decisions, accept the consequences of their decisions, and use the consequences to help them make better decisions in the future. Coloroso advises teachers to prepare for their role in this process by asking themselves two questions and answering them honestly: "What is my goal in teaching?" and "What is my teaching philosophy?" The first has to do with what teachers hope to achieve with learners, and the second with how they think they can best accomplish the task. Because teachers act in accordance with their beliefs, it is important for them to clarify those beliefs: "Do I want to empower students to take care of themselves, or do I want to make them wait for teachers and other adults to tell them what to do and think?" Teachers who feel they must control students turn to bribes, rewards, threats, and punishment to restrict and coerce behavior. Those who want to empower students to make decisions and resolve their own problems give students opportunities to think, act, and take responsibility.

When given this opportunity, students will not always make the best choices. For that reason they must be provided a safe, nurturing environment in which to learn to deal with consequences. Teachers should allow and respect student decisions, even those clearly in error, and let students experience the consequences. Even when consequences are unpleasant, students learn from them and at the same time learn that they have control over their lives through the decisions they make. When teachers understand this process, they realize it is counterproductive to nag, warn, and constantly remind students of what they ought to be doing.

## Mistakes, Reality, and Problem Solving

Students learn problem solving better and more quickly when they know it is all right to make mistakes. They should begin by distinguishing between reality and problem, with *reality* being an accurate appraisal of what has occurred and *problem* being the discomfort caused by the reality. In learning to solve problems, we first accept the realities, then we solve the problems that come from them. As students make the distinction between reality and problem they begin to see that there is no problem too great to be solved. But when faced with a problem, students need a way of dealing with it, which they should formalize into a plan similar to the following:

1. *Identify the reality and define the problem.* Josh asks Melissa to return the book he checked out from the library and then lent to Melissa. Melissa can't find the book, but remembers she left it on the kitchen table near the books her mother was donating to the library. The *reality* is, she cannot find the book. The associated *problem* is discomfort for Melissa, and later for Josh, as well, because Josh has a report due on the book. From Melissa's perspective, how is the problem to be resolved?

2. *List possible solutions for dealing with the problem.* Melissa's first thought is to say she left the book on Josh's desk or avoid Josh as long as possible. After she thinks about it, she identifies three more options: see if she can find the book at the library, buy a new book for Josh, or borrow Randy's copy of the book for Josh to use.

3. *Evaluate the options.* Melissa considers the options. She rejects lying because she is unwilling to think of herself in those terms. She does not want to avoid Josh, either, because they usually do homework together and avoidance would only prolong the problem. She doesn't want to purchase a replacement book for Randy—she borrowed the book in the first place because she didn't have money for a new one.

Melissa's teacher has taught her to ask herself four questions about each of the options she has identified: Is it unkind? Is it hurtful? Is it unfair? Is it dishonest? Melissa recognizes that the options she first considered would be dishonest, unfair, and maybe hurtful to Josh. She is in the process of learning that negative actions lead to further trouble. That leaves her two options: check with the library, and if they can't find it, buy a replacement book.

4. *Select the option that seems most promising.* The best options seem to be to check with the library or, if necessary, purchase a new book.

5. *Make a plan and carry it out.* Melissa decides go to the library, tell them what happened, and see if the book can be found. If it is located, she will ask for its return. If it can't be found, she will purchase a new copy. Admitting to and owning a problem, making a plan, and following through are difficult things to do, for adults as well as children. Excuses are not acceptable. If the plan does not work, then a new option must be tried. Melissa may have to borrow money from her parents to replace the book. That will mean taking on extra chores to repay them, but she must accept that responsibility.

6. *In retrospect, reevaluate the problem and the solution.* This step is very important in learning and involves three questions:

- What caused the problem in the first place?
- How can a similar problem be avoided in the future?
- Was the problem solution satisfactory?

As she ponders these questions, Melissa's self-esteem remains intact and her ability to solve problems has grown stronger.

## Part 3. Jane Nelsen and Lynn Lott ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

### Nelsen and Lott's Fundamental Hypothesis

Discipline occurs best when teachers provide classrooms that are accepting, encouraging, respectful, and supportive. Such classrooms enable students to behave with dignity, self-control, and concern for others.

### Nelsen and Lott's Positive Discipline

Jane Nelsen and Lynn Lott contend that almost all students can learn to behave with dignity, self-control, and concern for others. The key to fostering this development is providing structure that allows students to see themselves as capable, significant, and able to control their own lives.



#### About Jane Nelsen and Lynn Lott

Jane Nelsen and Lynn Lott are educators who share their views on discipline through lectures, workshops, printed material, and video material. Their goal is to help adults and children learn to respect themselves and others, behave responsibly, and contribute to the betterment of the groups of which they are members. Their book *Positive Discipline in the Classroom* (1993, 2000, 2006) explains how to establish classroom climates that foster responsibility, mutual respect, and cooperation. They believe such climates do away with most discipline problems because they teach students the value of respect and helpfulness. Nelsen and Lott have authored a number of books and teaching materials that can be viewed on the Positive Discipline website, [www.positivediscipline.com](http://www.positivediscipline.com), and the Empowering People website, [www.empoweringpeople.com](http://www.empoweringpeople.com). Their former coauthor H. Stephen Glenn died in 2002.

