



Five Weeks to Lasting Peace with Your Intense, Difficult Child

Week 4 Handout:

Limit Setting and Consequences

All kids thrive with clarity. However, the more intense the child, the more clarity there needs to be. This sets the child up for success and makes your job easier.

The rules need to start with “No...” for maximum clarity. For example, instead of the rule, “Be respectful” you would say, “No rolling your eyes at me.” Imagine all the times you can super-energize your child when he is NOT rolling his eyes! This becomes yet another way of “high-jacking” your child into a success that might not otherwise be there or be noticed.

Warnings, lectures, threats and yelling all send a message to the wrong portfolio! These are habits and habits can be changed. We ALL have some of the behaviors to work on so we’re in good company! No shame or blame—just notice and move on to the next better choice (just like with your child).

Since we don’t want to energize negativity (by yelling, threatening, etc.) when your child breaks a rule, what DO we do?

The myth is that the perfect consequence is harsh and punitive. Howard Glasser says people often think that if the consequence is “long enough, strong enough, or tough enough” that the child will have his “awakening” and never do the dreaded deed again.

A “true” consequence is a momentary interruption of energy when a problem is happening. This is what a “time-out” means.

Time out does NOT mean:

1. think about the bad thing you did.
2. promise you’ll never do it again when time-out is over.
3. that you’ll feel so miserable about yourself you’ll see the error of your ways.

All consequences are really a form of time-out; they are based on missing out on privileges, relationships, experiences, energy. The NHA time-out is a separation of

connection and relationships (shifting into neutral). Your child is in time-in when she's not in time-out!

Successful consequences:

1. are simple
2. are consistent
3. do not accidentally energize/reward negativity

The new time-out or "reset" is counter to what you've been taught: it's not about a place, a timer, or the amount of time. ***It's about a quick and unceremonious break in your energy. It's also a "starting over" place for kids to regain control and get "back into the game."***

The moment kids pull themselves to a different energy it's a reset. It's like rebooting the computer when it's not functioning properly. It's also like playing basketball, breaking a rule, and having to sit outside the game for a few. No lectures. But since you really want to be "back at the game" (or at the computer, as the case may be), you start over and try again.

Is this permissive? ***Giving clear structure and boundaries is MORE strict than intermittent punishment and inconsistent warnings that keep kids off-balance.***

Where do you fall on the permissive/strict continuum? The more permissive you are, the harder it may be for you to put rules and consequences into place. The more strict you are, the harder it may be for you to connect emotionally and nurture. Yes, these are generalizations; they just help to normalize possible areas of temporary difficulty!

GOOD NEWS! You know NHA is working when kids test the rules and refuse to reset! They are looking to see if you are serious about changing how and when the energy flows. Are you? 😊

Consistently resetting takes work. It will sometimes get worse before it gets better. This is the "last hurrah" and sticking it out will pay dividends. It's also the time to get support.

Stay in your power no matter what happens. You are in your authentic power when you don't lecture, even when they're in your face!