

# *Parenting from the Heart*

*Jody McVittie, MD and Laurie Prusso*

*Modesto Junior College*

*March 9, 2006*

**Contact Information:**

Jody McVittie, MD  
Certified Positive Discipline Associate  
[jmcvittie@att.net](mailto:jmcvittie@att.net)  
425 335 4460

Laurie Prusso  
Child Development Dept.  
Modesto Junior College  
209-575-6343 [norbyc@mjc.edu](mailto:norbyc@mjc.edu)

For more resources please see last page of handout

# Very Brief Overview of the Adlerian Approach

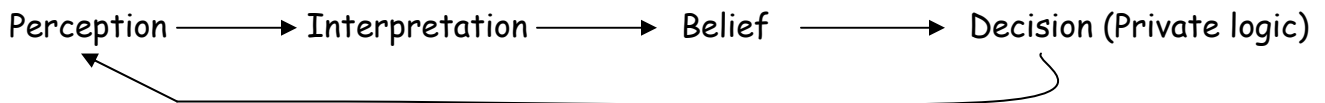
## Theory:

Alfred Adler, Rudolf Dreikurs, Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott.

Behavior is purposive

The goal of behavior is belonging (sense of connection) and meaning (significance).

(Mis-behavior is from "mis"-taken belief about how to find belonging/meaning.)



People (adults, teens, children) are continually making decisions based on how their world is perceived.

Horizontal relationships: Everyone is worthy of equal dignity and respect. (This does not mean people are the same, or that leaders are not necessary.)

Gemeinschaftsgefuehl (Community feeling):

Being part of a community (belonging/connection)

Being able to make a contribution to the community (significance/purpose)

## Basic tools:

Teaching life skills

Understanding the power of perception and interpretation

Encouragement

Kindness and Firmness *at the same time*

Mutual Respect

Respect for yourself and the situation (firmness)

Respect for the needs of the child and others (kindness)

Mistakes are opportunities to learn. (The courage to be imperfect.)

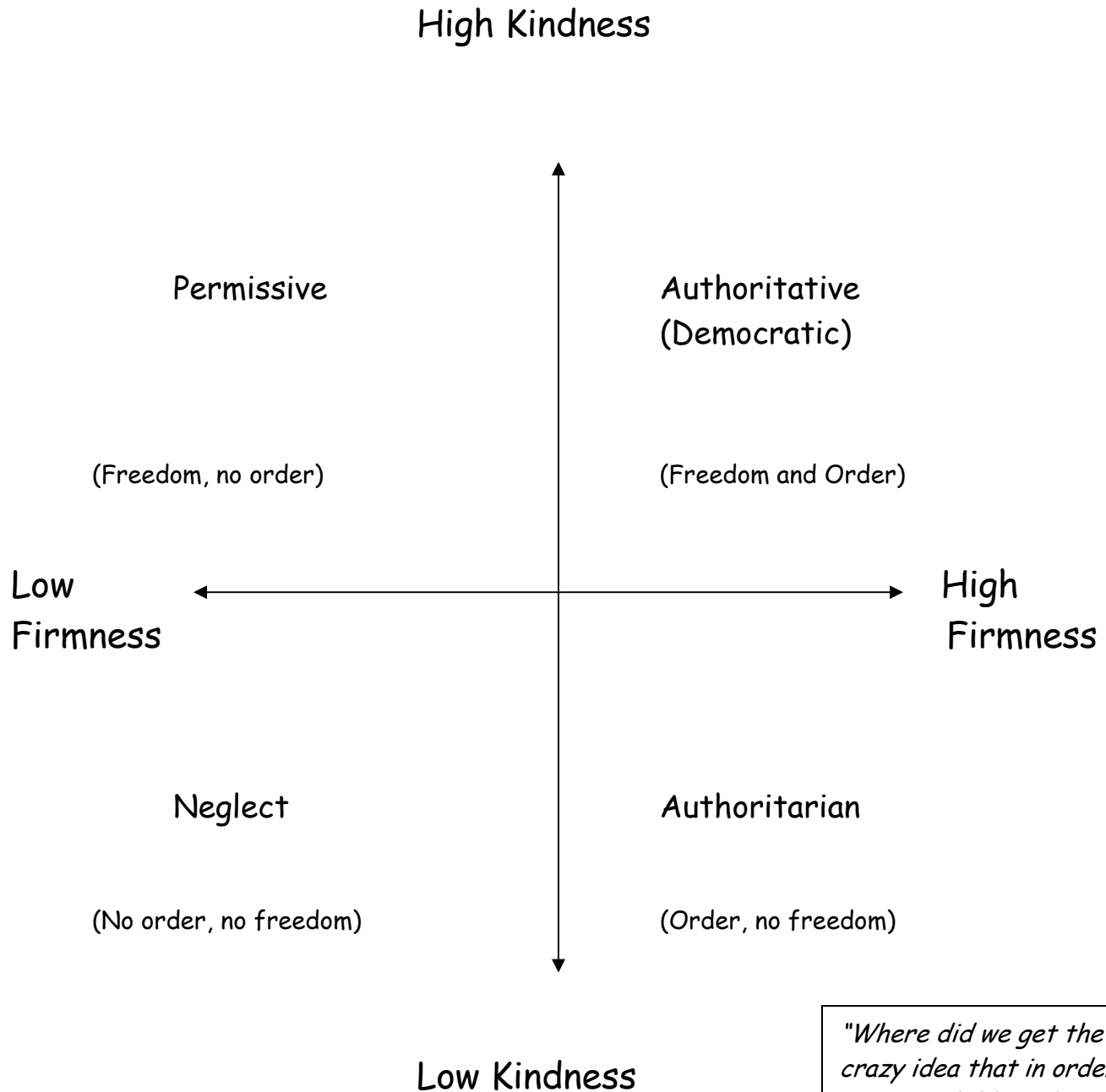
### Four Criteria for Effective Discipline

Effective Discipline:

1. Helps children feel a sense of connection. (Belonging and significance.)
2. Is mutually respectful and encouraging. (Kind and firm at the same time.)
3. Is effective long - term. (Considers what the child is thinking, feeling, learning, and deciding about himself and his world - and what to do in the future to survive or to thrive.)
4. Teaches important social and life skills. (Respect, concern for others, problem solving, and cooperation as well as the skills to contribute to the home, school or larger community.)
5. Invites children to discover how capable they are.

Source: Jane Nelsen, [www.positivediscipline.com](http://www.positivediscipline.com)

# Developing Relationships with Children According to the Dimensions of Kindness and Firmness



*"Where did we get the crazy idea that in order to make children do better, first you have to make them feel worse?"*  
Jane Nelsen.

From: Terry Chadsey

## **Encouragement**

1. To inspire with courage  
(courage < Old French corage, < Latin cor heart)
2. To spur on: to stimulate

## **Self-evaluation**

- ("Tell me about it")  
("What do you think?")

## **Addresses Deed**

- Appreciation, Respectful  
("Thank you for helping.")  
("Who can show me the proper way to sit?")

## **Empathy**

- ("What do you think and feel?")  
("I can see that you enjoyed that/")

## **Self disclosing "I" messages**

- ("I appreciate your help")

## **Asks questions**

- ("What is an appropriate noise level for the library?")

## **Effect:**

- Feel worthwhile without the approval of others.  
Self confidence, Self reliance  
Self esteem

## **Questions you might ask:**

- Am I inspiring self evaluation or dependence on the evaluation of others?  
Am I being respectful or patronizing?  
Am I helping them discover how to act or trying to manipulate their behavior?  
Am I seeing the child's point of view or my own?  
Would I make this comment to a friend or neighbor?

Adapted from: Positive Discipline by Jane Nelsen. Ballantine Books.

## **Praise**

1. To express a favorable judgment of
2. To glorify, especially by attribution of perfection.
3. An expression of approval

## **Evaluation by others**

- ("I like it.")

## **Addresses doer**

- Expectation, Patronizing  
("Your are such a good boy.")  
("Good girl!")  
("I like the way Suzie is sitting." \_

## **Conformity**

- ("You did it right.")  
("I am so proud of you.")

## **Judgmental "I" messages**

- ("I like the way you are sitting.")

## **Should statements**

- ("You should be quiet like your sister.")

- Feel worthwhile only when others approve.  
Dependence on others  
"Other" esteem

## The Language of Firmness

Based upon Positive Discipline for Preschoolers, Chapter 9

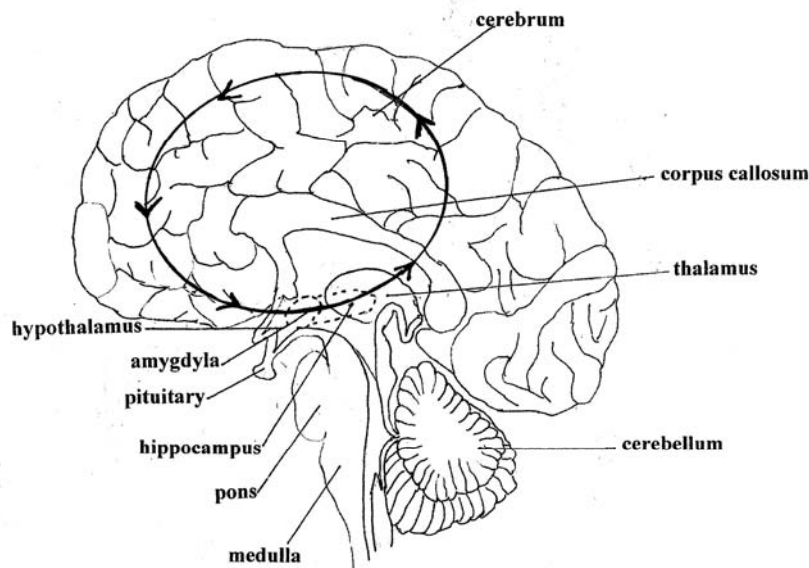
By Jane Nelsen, Cheryl Erwin and Roslyn Duffy

1. **State clear expectations...** “As soon as you finish, you may...”
2. **Respond with a question...** “Would you like to do this yourself, or do you want/need my help?”
3. **State a given (i.e., a rule or condition)...** “In our house we don’t call other people names.” “The balls don’t go above waist level in the house.” “Plates go in the dishwasher after you are done with your snack.”)... “In our house we only watch TV for one hour a day. You have already done that today. It is OK to be disappointed.”
4. **Check the child’s knowledge or understanding...** “What needs to happen before you can \_\_\_\_\_?”
5. **Invite cooperation...** “I need your help...can you figure out the most helpful thing you could do right now?”
6. **Limited choices...** “Would you rather brush your teeth before or after bedtime?”
7. **Say what you want and mean...** “I want you to put the scotch tape back when you are done using it,” or, “The answer is no. (brief pause) It is ok to be upset or feel disappointed.”
8. **Negotiate an agreement...** “Let’s see how we can make this work for both of us.” (Don’t use this when there is an established rule or understanding that you are intending on continuing.)
9. **Use non verbal language...** a gentle touch on the shoulder to redirect, a look with a smile, a pre-agreed upon “secret signal,” etc.
10. **Follow through...** “Time to ...now.” Don’t argue, just repeat the main word, “now.” (A word of caution on this one: if you might get so busy you run the risk of forgetting to follow through, don’t choose this option!)
11. **For very young children: Connection, then redirection and distraction**

Suzanne J. Smitha  
[asmitha@mindspring.com](mailto:asmitha@mindspring.com)  
9/05

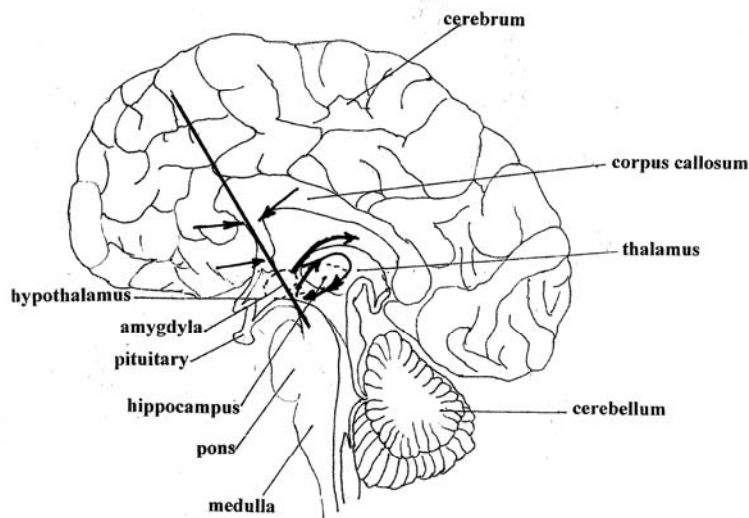
**The documented functions of the prefrontal cortex:** regulation of body through autonomic nervous system, emotion regulation, regulation of interpersonal relationships, response flexibility, intuition, mind-sight - social cognition, self awareness - auto-noesis, letting go of fears, morality

Integrative functioning (the high road)



Integrative functioning: “A form of processing information that involves the higher, rational, reflective thought process of the mind. High-road processing allows for mindfulness, flexibility in our responses and an integrating sense of self awareness. The high road involves the prefrontal cortex in its processes.” Siegel and Hartzell, *Parenting from the Inside Out*.

Non-integrated function (flipping your lid, the low road)



“Low road functioning involves the shutting down of the higher processes of the mind and leaves the individual in a state of intense emotions, impulsive reactions, rigid and repetitive responses and lacking in self reflection and the consideration of another’s point of view. Involvement of the prefrontal cortex is shut off when one is on the low road.” Siegel and Hartzell, *Parenting from the Inside Out*.

Drawings adapted from Siegel and Hartzell, Parenting from the Inside Out. P. 157

Courage (from the root word: cor - latin, heart) is the very small step you take in the direction to be more of who you truly are when it might be easier to take a step in another direction. (This is not an official definition!) So when you encourage someone, you are creating a space for him or her to take that step. It is that simple.

### Mistakes

What is a mistake? What makes it a big mistake, or a small mistake?

How is life different when we really understand that mistakes are opportunities to learn? Who would you be without all of the mistakes you have learned from?

Recovery from a mistake (*repair is critical!*): (adapted from Jane Nelsen, *Positive Discipline*)

**Regather:** *Make sure both of you have calmed down. Even if it means waiting.*

**Recognize:** *"Whoops, I made a mistake."*

**Reconcile:** *"I'm sorry."*

**Resolve:** (Re-Solve): *"How can we work on this together to make it better?" (or some variation)*

Results of Punishment (from Jane Nelsen, *Positive Discipline*)

**Resentment** *"This is unfair. I can't trust adults"*

**Revenge** *"They are winning now, but I'll get even"*

**Rebellion** *"I'll do just the opposite to prove I don't have to do it their way"*

**Retreat**

from others: *"I won't get caught next time"*

or from one's self: *"I'm a bad person"*

Solutions: Reasonable, Respectful, Related AND Helpful

### ***Resources:***

Available at your local library or bookstore:

Positive Discipline by Jane Nelsen

Children the Challenge by Rudolf Dreikurs

Punished by Rewards by Alfie Kohn

Parenting from the Inside Out by Daniel Siegel and Mary Hartzel

Available online:

[www.posdis.org](http://www.posdis.org) Positive Discipline Association. Tips and Q and A.

[www.positiveparenting.com](http://www.positiveparenting.com) Another Adlerian based parenting website.

*"A misbehaving child is  
a discouraged child."  
Rudolf Dreikurs*