

Others claim punishment is not effective

"Spare the rod and spoil the child"

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The purpose of these articles is to inform the community about mental health issues.

These articles will cover a variety of mental health issues.

If you would like to comment on this article or any of the other articles that have appeared, feel free to write to the *News* office, P.O. Box 579, Terrace Bay, Ontario, POT 2W0.

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By Hadley Koltun

"Spare the rod and spoil the child." We have all heard that old saying and many people actually believe it. Some adhere to this quote like glue. Others claim that punishment is actually not effective.

When most people think of punishment, they think about "spanking" a child. However, "spanking" is really a more severe form of punishment.

Punishment can be the addition of a negative consequence that results in the decrease of a bad behaviour.

For example, suppose your child broke a window playing ball. By making him pay to replace that window, you will teach your child that every time he breaks a window (bad behaviour) he must pay for it (negative consequence).

This will (hopefully) allow the child to draw a connection

between what he did and the punishment.

This will (hopefully again) make the child think twice before he breaks a window.

As you can see, punishment can be an effective disciplinary tool if used sparingly and fairly.

It is true that children must be shown disapproval of unacceptable behaviour.

However, it would be wise to first use less severe forms of discipline such as speaking to the child or holding the child.

These may be all which is necessary to discipline a child.

If these other forms of discipline are not helpful, then punishment may be necessary.

Some appropriate forms of punishment include the removal of a privilege or the addition of an unpleasant chore.

Here are some guidelines to remember when you are considering punishment for a child:

1) Punishment should never be used to hurt a child- your main intention in punishment is to teach your child the way to behave, not to hurt him.

Avoid spanking. Also, never withhold food from your child. Food is a basic need for survival. Never withhold a basic need as punishment.

2) Punish sparingly and fairly- it is important to be aware of the punishment you are giving to your child. Does it respect his or her rights as a person (remember: children are people as well).

Would it be the type of punishment that would be fair if someone did this to you? Is it too

harsh?

3) Be logical in your approach- let the 'punishment fit the crime' so that the child realizes the connection between what she did wrong and the punishment.

When punishing the child, indicate to her what she has done wrong, what the punishment is and the correct way to behave.

4) Follow through on your warnings and punishment- many parents will decree threats and punishments but will never act on them.

Some parents will bring on a punishment but will only enforce it for a short time. Children catch on to this and their behaviour may become worse because they know they can get away with it.

5) Punish immediately after the bad behaviour- the child must know why he is being punished. If you punish a child for some-

thing he did last week, he may not get the connection between the punishment and the bad behaviour you wish to correct.

As I said earlier, the child must know why he is being punished and what is the correct way to behave. Tell him this in a calm voice but with a firm manner. Get to the point.

6) Remember to punish the behaviour, not the person- always tell the child it is the way she acts that you object to, not the child herself.

A child may not understand this but when she does, she will most likely have a good sense of self-confidence.

7) After the punishment, forgive and forget. Always start a clean slate since the child has already paid his dues. Never bring up the incident again.

It is hard at first to practice all these rules at once, especially if they are new to you.

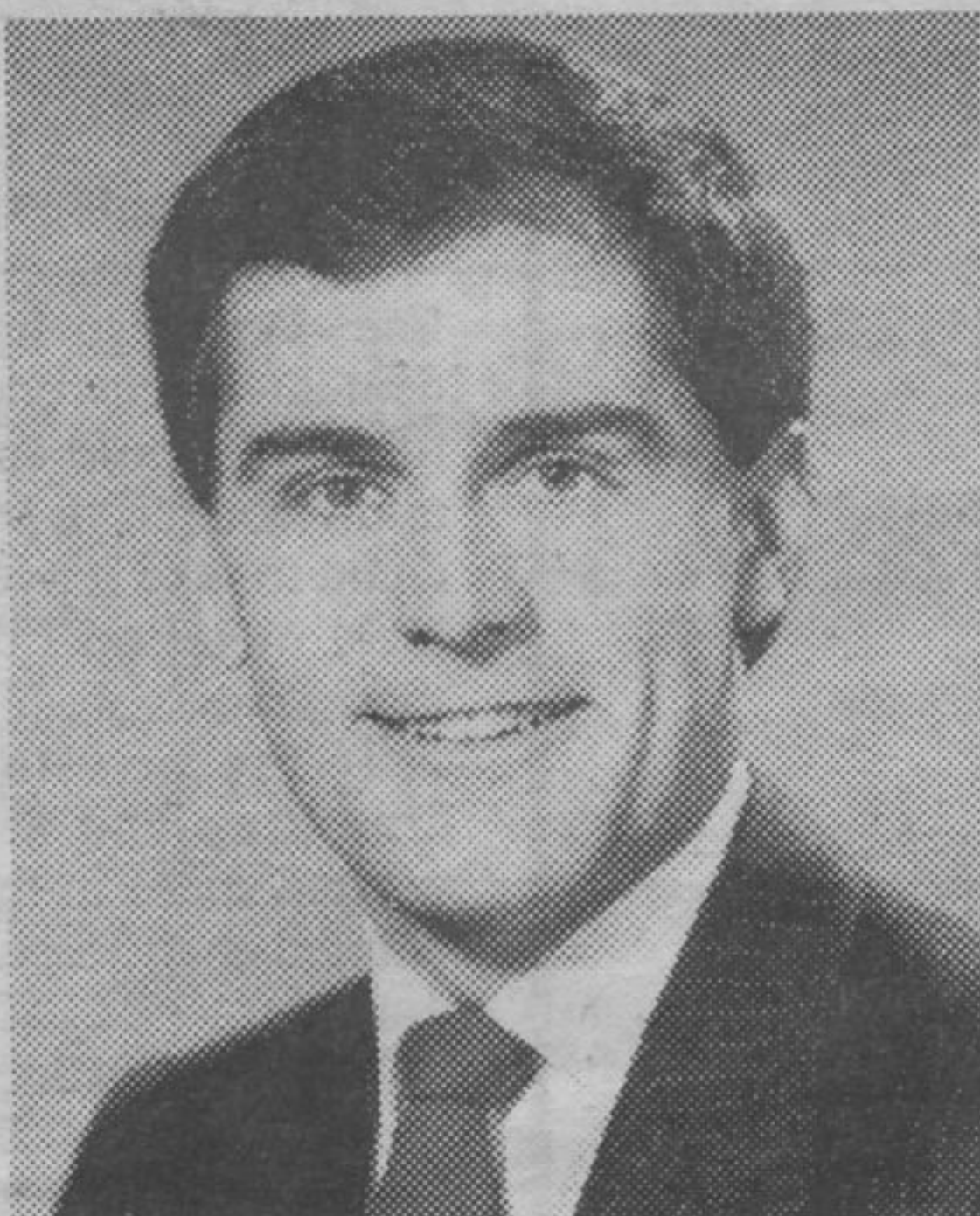
Take them one step at a time. You might have even found that these are rules you have used for a long time.

After all, good discipline is really a matter of common sense.

Next time: Spanking and self-discipline.

Dear reader- we would like to hear your feedback and comments on this and our previous articles. Please write to us care of the *Terrace Bay/Schreiber News*, P.O. Box 579, Terrace Bay, Ontario, POT 2W0. Please let us know how you feel about these articles. They are for you!

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