

USE OF BOREDOM

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My children are grown; they are in their late 30's. I have taught parenting for 28 years. What is clear to me is that today's child needs lots of guidance, nurturing and life skills training in order to weather the storms of childhood and adolescence.

If a parent chooses to parent without threatening, bribing, yelling or spanking that parent must have a tool to use that works, makes sense to them and is relatively easy to figure out. When I taught elementary school, I saw how much children hate to be bored. Lower than an "F" grade is being bored.

Children detest being bored. Since I've never heard of a child being taken to a psychologist for being bored, the number one advantage to using boredom is that it doesn't harm the child. The number two advantage is that it actually works! Let's take a look at how it works:

WHINING

The child soon figures out that creating a loud, obnoxious noise or sound will turn a calm, rational parent into an increasingly irrational human being who is now threatening all sorts of things to stop the noise. Instead of getting angry when a child whines, try using boredom: "I really want to hear what you have to say and I have the funniest ears; they can't hear when you use that tone of voice. When you want to talk to me, come and find me."

The parent then walks across the room (not down the hall or out of the room as that sets up abandonment or rejection issues). When the child follows still whining, the parent turns around, bends down and says EXACTLY the same words that were said before. If the child follows the parent a third time, the parent bends down and says EXACTLY the same words that were said before.

The trick is to be like oatmeal--bland and boring. You are not angry. The child is asking, "Is this how I use power?" and you are saying no. The child will stop whining because it is extremely boring to hear the same diatribe over and over again. Should the child forget the next day and begin to whine use exactly the same words used in the training session; the child will stop you and talk in a normal voice. Why will the child stop the behavior? A child hates to be bored!

MAKING YOUR NO'S COUNT

It is important that no means no. If you constantly take your no's back, your child decides that whittling, begging, temper tantrums will get you to change your mind. One way to stop this constant battle for power is mean no when you say no. A key to doing this is to get all the information from your child when he or she asks for something. For instance, your child comes running in asking if he/she can go to the show.

You respond, (boring part is first) "That sounds like a really fun thing to do. The problem is that I don't have enough information to be a responsible parent. This

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parenting job is tougher than you can imagine. (Teaching part): What I need from you is:

- (1) Where you are going,
- (2) What time you are leaving and what time you are coming home,
- (3) Who are you going with?
- (4) Do I need to drive you anywhere?
- (5) Do you need money?

With all this information I can make a responsible decision. " Any time the child asks to do something, go into your little talk. Children soon learn to give you all the information you need up-front! Remember the formula: Be a little boring and then teach!

For more on boring, read my book, *Recipes from Parenting*.