Discipline for Life: Getting it Right with Children

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Overview: Are you tired of arguing, threatening, and sometimes bribing children to get them to listen or to do what they are supposed to do? Are you concerned by experts changing their minds about how to discipline? Are you struggling with doing things that do not feel right—like giving your child something for doing something he should be doing anyhow? Are you looking for discipline techniques that teach responsibility, really work, and leave your integrity intact? Learn to avoid power struggles and to be effective without getting ugly. Feel right about your parenting.

Practical Parenting Suggestions:

1. **What really works and why.** The root word for discipline is teach. Every time you discipline your child, you are teaching life lessons. We need to be aware of what we are teaching.
   ♦ Control or Power teaches “Who’s going to make me?” or “Who’s going to stop me?”
   ♦ Rewards teach “What will I get?” or “What’s in it for me?”
   ♦ Punishment teaches “If I get caught, am I willing to pay the price?”
   ♦ True Discipline is the only one that leads to self-discipline and teaches “Is this a right or good thing for me to do?” or “What could possibly happen if I choose to do this?”

2. **Learn Investment Discipline.** Discover strategies that are effective in the short term and the long term.
   ♦ Remedy and Amends
   ♦ Conditional Love versus Unconditional Love
   ♦ Related Consequences versus Unrelated Consequences

3. **Experts: The Ideas are Theirs; the Decisions are Yours.** We must believe the things we teach our children. We need to think clearly through any disciplinary action and ensure that it matches our own principles - this is promotes integrity.
   ♦ Separate deed from doer - harmful or helpful?
   ♦ Accountability and Self-esteem - interdependent, essential and interwoven
   ♦ Allowance - do you as the parent get paid to fix dinner? Should your kids get paid to bring their dishes to the sink?

4. **Discipline Techniques.** In order to avoid unending testing and loss of authority, it is imperative that once we have started discipline, we must follow through.
   ♦ Don’t start what you can’t finish
   ♦ Problem solving and conflict resolution skills
   ♦ Outsmart them
   ♦ Use humor
   ♦ Structure: Habit and routine