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# Practical Child Training



## PART 3

HOW TO TEACH  
OBEDIENCE  
TO CHILDREN FROM  
SIX YEARS TO FIFTEEN  
YEARS OF AGE

All that you are entitled to  
is the power to say "no" at  
any time.



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Confidence is lacking. The child hears mother's command but refuses to heed it. Brief simple lessons given the daughter when alone would save the mother embarrassment when entertaining company,

# Practical Child Training

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## *PART 3*

### EASY LESSONS FOR TEACHING OBEDIENCE IN THE HOME

By

RAY C. BEERY

A.B. (Columbia), M.A. (Harvard)



THE PARENTS ASSOCIATION, INC.  
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Gift

Miss Frances S. Hay

July 18, 1931





## FROM SIX TO TEN YEARS

The previous lessons for children between six months and six years of age have been exceedingly definite and detailed and the explanations have been made very clear.

By applying the underlying principles of these lessons to children from six to ten years of age you could in a very short time command obedience without any definite lessons. That is, you should start by giving only those commands which the disobedient child will like to obey, avoiding any which he will dislike to obey until after he gets into the habit of obeying.

Appear to be decidedly on the child's side all the time. Play with him a great deal and in this play encourage him. This will cause the child to realize that you are on his side, to obey minor commands while playing, and to respond to your co-operative attitude with confidence. Therefore you will easily secure obedience to other commands.

But even though you could do this without any definite lessons, to make it easier for you, here is a lesson which will make a very good starting point.

### LESSON 8

#### AIM

To teach obedience to a child between six and ten years of age.

#### PREPARATION

On a carpeted floor where it will do no harm to

have four tacks driven part way in, place three or four articles of furniture, such as two rocking chairs, a straight-back chair and a stool. Be sure the child is out of sight when you do this. On the window-sill in this room, place a ball of twine. In another room on a table, place a hammer and a box of tacks. Have within reach a sack containing about a dozen new marbles.

#### DEFINITE INSTRUCTIONS

Go up to the child, holding the sack of marbles in both hands. Squeeze it to make the marbles rattle just enough to stir up the child's curiosity. Say, "Let's have some fun—let's go into this other room."

Open the door of the room where the chairs are placed, letting the child pass through first. Hold the sack of marbles in your left hand; say, "Now let me see—take the stool and set it in that corner." At the same time, point with your right hand to a corner of the room. Go over to the rocking chair and when the child returns from taking the stool say, "Now pull this chair over to that corner"; at the same time point to another corner of the room. If the chair is heavy for the child, help him slide it back.

As soon as the floor is cleared, look over to the window-sill until the child wonders what you are looking there for, then say, "Bring me the ball of string." In the meantime set the marbles on the floor at your left side and if convenient, sit on the floor yourself. When he comes with the string and gives it to you, say, "Thank you; now you take this end of the string and hold it right there." Show him

exactly where to hold it, then begin to unwind the string from the ball. Stop suddenly, pause about five seconds and say, "On the table in the other room is a box of tacks and a hammer—bring them here, please."

When he brings them say, "Thank you—now open the box and put one tack here." Wait till he does so, then drive it about half way into the floor. Then point to a spot about a foot and a half from that tack and say, "Now put one there." Drive in the other two tacks in the same way a foot and a half apart, so that the four tacks will form the four corners of a square.

Then have the child hold the end of the string again while you wind it around all the tacks.

If the child should refuse to carry out any command you make up to this point, take the sack of marbles and start to leave saying, "I thought that you would like to play marbles." Leave the child entirely, unless he insists that you stay. In that case say, "Oh, I thought you did not want me; all right, do so and so." By "so and so" I mean whatever he refused to do at first.

After the child does everything you suggest, as he probably will, and the playing square is ready for the marbles, reach over, take up the sack of marbles, hold it in both hands while you say, "Now you take these marbles and pour them out into the ring." Hand him the sack and after he spills them and they are all in the ring say, "Now pick out the prettiest one to shoot with." When he picks one out, show him how to shoot.

Put his fingers next to the other marbles so that he will be sure to shoot them outside of the string and each time he shoots one out have him drop it into the sack.

Play with the child for five minutes or longer if he wants you to do so. When he is ready to quit hold the sack while he drops the marbles into it. As each marble drops say, "Plunk," and smile. After the last one is in, hand the sack to the child and say, "Take them over and lay them on the chair." Point to the nearest chair.

When the child puts them there be very busily engaged trying to pry one of the tacks loose. Say, "Can you loosen this tack?" Ask this in such a way that the child will help you loosen it and after quickly pulling out the other three tacks and putting them all in the box quickly, take up the string. Start to put the chairs back where they were at first, telling him to bring the stool and place it about where it was before.

After he does this, let the lesson end as you smile and say, "I'll try to play with you tomorrow again if I have time."

#### COMMENTS

At least two or three more lessons similar to the one just described should follow it daily for the next few days. In giving the lesson to a girl, if you do not care to use marbles the second time, play "Visiting" with dolls. Commands could be given about arranging chairs, etc., getting ready for the play.

Lesson 1, described above, is so devised that, no

matter how spoiled the child is, he is almost sure to obey your commands not only because he realizes that to disobey would be to forfeit his pleasure with the marbles, but because to prepare for the game is interesting in itself. In fact, we have had experience with children who actually took more pleasure in preparing for an event than they did in the event itself.

#### EXAMPLE 1

Mrs. Cooper attended a Mother's Club Meeting in Cleveland and heard there an address on the benefits gained by the mothers who play with their children.

Miss Bliss, the speaker of the day, had said, "Show me a mother who enjoys playing with her children and I will affirm without further proof that her children enjoy obeying her."

Mrs. Cooper recalled how much, as a child, she had enjoyed "playing like" she had callers and decided to play something similar with her five-year-old daughter Clara.

A few days thereafter the following paragraphs appeared in her letter to her mother:

"My own childhood is lived over again as I play 'house' with Clara. At first she was a little shy, but I paid no attention to her bashfulness and soon we were playing like two little girls.

"The best part of it is that she obeys me both before and after the game and we seem like real companions.

"It is when I sit down with Leonard that we usually visit. She cheerfully brings me my footstool and Leonard his rattle and playthings, then goes out and

rings the bell and plays the part of a caller.

“Her talk is so quaint and funny while her actions are like those of ‘grown-ups.’

“After the ‘game’ yesterday, at my request, she brought Leonard a glass of water and said as she handed it to me, ‘We have fun together, don’t we, mother?’

“I knew then that her ready obedience was partly due to our playing together.”

#### COMMENTS

If one were studying children from an arm chair only, he might reason like this: what is the use to command a child to do what he likes to do when even a spoiled child will obey that kind of command? Well, that is just the point exactly. The fact that a child will respond to any kind of command at all is the most encouraging thing about teaching obedience to one who is spoiled. After once getting a child started to obey your commands the rest is easy. This idea is extremely practical.

The secret of success in teaching obedience to children of this age who are disobedient is first to ask obedience to pleasurable commands; then only very gradually bring in more unpleasant commands. In other words, the child must be kept interested all the time he is obeying, especially in the first lesson or two. This is the important thing. Work *with* the child. Do not oppose him at any point while giving the lesson. Even if he should spill the marbles all over the floor when pouring them out, do not scold him. Help him to get them back into the ring. If

he says anything, agree with him if possible. Let there be no doubt in his mind about your being on his side, and, when you once have the child's confidence, give him plenty of easy commands so that obedience will become a habit.

#### EXAMPLE 2

Mr. Henderson worked for a large mail-order house. He managed the workers in the grocery department.

One morning last May his superior, Mr. Bennett, with a letter in hand, accosted him thus:

"Henderson, here's another complaint from a customer that didn't get all he ordered. We get too many of these."

Henderson had glanced at the name at the bottom of the sheet Bennett held and recalled the particular order. "I remember . . .," he began when Bennett cut him short with, "I don't care for the history; you get the orders out right or we'll put somebody in here that *can* deliver the goods. If your help is to blame, fire them, see?" and Bennett passed on down the aisle.

"Jove! If he only knew about that order. He ought to know I'm doing my best. Well, the only good his speech did was to make me shy clear of him, that's all," thought Henderson.

Again and again during the day Bennett's attitude was recalled. It kept Henderson "riled" all day.

That evening in the quiet of his suburban home, stretched out in his Morris chair, Henderson at first was only lazily aware of voices in the next room.

“Now look what you’ve done,” said his wife in a querulous tone. “You’re bound to spoil everything some way or other.” Henderson had heard the sound of marbles falling and rolling around on the hardwood floor.

From his position now he could see the face of his five-year-old son Ralph. He saw that he was choking back his desire to cry as with tear-blinded eyes he reached for the scattered marbles.

“Jove!” said Henderson under his breath. “Jove! I sympathize with the kid. His superior has squelched him too.”

Ralph marvelled at his father’s tenderness with him that night.

After Ralph was asleep, Henderson related the day’s experience to his wife and ended by saying, “He jumped me when it wasn’t fair. It spoilt my work for the whole day. It set me to thinking. Maybe we don’t always give the kid a fair deal.”

## SCOLDING

Scolding is a form of faultfinding, and is therefore a poor method of child training. Since the effect of scolding upon the child is nearly always harmful, it would be well to avoid the use of it altogether.

The sort of scolding or nagging of which so many parents are guilty nearly always causes a feeling of resentment. For example, that expression which so many parents use, “Don’t let me tell you again,”



intimates that the child has been disobedient in the past and does not leave the child in a good mood. In case of frequent rebukes the entire nervous system is sometimes greatly disturbed and the child becomes painfully irritable.

Some mothers get into the habit of scolding so much that they do so almost without thinking and too often without taking time to consider the child's intention. Not long ago, I saw a little five-year-old boy step into a flower bed while playing "Hide-and-Go-Seek." His mother not only scolded him once but kept talking about it for two or three minutes afterwards, threatening to make him and all his playmates stop playing if the act were repeated, etc.

**Scolding  
Is a Habit**

The correct procedure in such a case would be first, to discover what was in the child's mind. His thought was about finding a good hiding-place and not for a moment did he think about running in anyone's flower bed. So scolding is altogether out of place. The only logical thing to do is to explain just where the children can play. Point out some new hiding-place, and also request that they do not tread on the flower beds. This caution should not be over-emphasized, but given in such a way that they will remember your caution.

This recalls another case which was even more ridiculous than the one given above. A father came out on to the front porch and discovered that his two-year-old child was playing with a half-empty gasoline can. He began at once to scold the girl and took rapid steps toward her, slapping her, jerking the can

away roughly and sending her into the house crying.

This was his idea of a parent's duty. He probably reasoned that she ought to know better than to play with a gasoline can. Never once did the idea occur to him it would be well to look at the situation from the child's point of view. The daughter, as the result of watching others use a sprinkling can, was pretending to sprinkle the flowers with the gasoline can. But the father was blind to this. The child will probably never know as long as she lives why she was handled roughly and sent into the house, crying.

Since the child meant no harm and did not know that she was doing anything contrary to the wishes of anyone, it would have been better if the father had taken the can away in such a manner as to avoid making her cry.

This is not an exceptional case; it is far too common. We see similar cases of misunderstanding every day, not only in the case of young children but of children of all ages. This misunderstanding is due in most cases to the parent's failure to look through the child's eyes. If the child were older than the parent, the responsibility would naturally rest upon the child, who should be able to see the parent's point of view and act accordingly. But since the parent is older and also wiser because of his broader experience and maturity, it is he who is responsible for seeing the child's viewpoint and co-operating with him in the interest of his development.

There is a great difference between scolding and

speaking tactfully. When anyone tells you his child will receive a scolding with relish, **An Important Distinction** you can be sure he does not mean scolding in the sense in which the term is generally used. He means he has talked frankly and tactfully with his child; he has called attention, first, to certain things in regard to which the child is to be commended, and incidentally alluded to that which might be improved. A "scolding" of this kind is harmless and usually beneficial.

Always talk to your child alone about his behavior. It is better to have no third person present—not even a brother or sister—while interviewing a child about his conduct, **Be Alone** especially if he is timid. Never talk to children about their general bad misbehavior. Such generalities are either meaningless or crushing. Faultfinding will surely creep into a talk of this sort. In no case does it seem wise to convince a child that he is very "bad." Such a charge will tend to drive him further away from you. This will result in worse conduct than before. Be concrete. Be sure that the child understands exactly what you expect of him. The less you talk about moral delinquencies, the better.

Explanation is always in place with your child and should be substituted for the scolding habit. Calmly set forth the things which you expect of him. Neither threaten what would happen if he did not do them nor find fault with what he had done; be frank and let him know for a certainty what you expect in the immediate future. He will be much more likely to

carry out your suggestions than if you merely scold him for not heeding you before.

A good way to give advice without scolding is to deal with the future. For example, if you want a small child to take more interest in keeping his room tidy, instead of calling his attention to past carelessness, talk to him in this fashion: "Now when you grow big and become a man, you will want to have your room in good order. Then when anyone comes to see you, everything will be in its proper place and nothing will be lying around on the floor.

"Would you like to keep your room here at home just as you will want it when you are big? All right, I'll arrange these chairs a little differently and you pick up the clothes over there and hang them up." After the child puts the clothes away, tell him a few other things about arranging articles in his room—points which have no relation to his past behavior. Then as you leave the child say, "Let's keep this room all the time just as you will when you are big."

This method always works better than scolding the child for being neglectful.

If you want to teach obedience to a child who is disobedient do not think of telling him that you are going to turn over a new leaf or find any fault whatever with his conduct in the past. Simply change the habit of disobedience into the habit of obedience by changing the conditions. The mere fact that the child is disobedient indicates that wrong methods have been used. Therefore, change those methods.

## EXAMPLE 3

Eugene Mason at the age of six years was a spoiled child. He had not seemed so much so at home but when they took him to spend Christmas at his grandfather Mason's where a large concourse of relatives were assembled, his parents both felt humiliated on account of his conduct.

"Gimme that," he said, jerking a horn out of his cousin's hands.

"Give it back to Willie," said Mrs. Mason.

Eugene not only paid no heed but blew the horn incessantly. His aunt Mary said, "I can't stand so much noise."

Mr. and Mrs. Mason looked at each other helplessly, each seeming to say, "You undertake to stop him." Finally, Aunt Mary said to Eugene, "Why do they let you keep blowing that horn?"

"Why, Aunt Mary, they can't help it," said Eugene. And everybody laughed.

At dinner time Eugene refused to eat with the other children. His father took him out and spanked him until his cries spoiled the dinner hour for everyone.

The following week Mrs. Mason gladly procured lessons on obedience and planned to give the first lesson to Eugene on Thursday afternoon.

At noon that day Mr. Mason said, "So you're going to teach 'Gene to obey this afternoon, are you? I wish you luck," and he gave Eugene a wink.

Eugene resolved then and there to be wary and not fall easily into any trap of his mother's setting.

At lesson time he simply refused to take interest in anything.

“I don’t want to do it,” he replied to every advance.

Mr. Mason’s remark had antagonized Eugene toward anything his mother might do. If his father had not interfered she could have given a lesson and the boy would not have recognized a corrective measure in anything she proposed.

This is the way in which Mrs. Mason managed the difficult situation. She simply said, “Let’s not have any lesson today. Let’s just play.”

For several days she played with Eugene following his directions entirely.

When she finally began the lessons he was not aware of it. They became boon companions and obedience came naturally to him, as a mutual understanding was established.

#### COMMENTS

It is imprudent for a mother in the presence of two or more children to remind them that they are becoming disobedient. “Wholesale” discipline of this sort is not only always bad but to tell an individual child he is not obedient is useless. In fact the suggestion implied in talking to a child about disobedience tends to provoke more disobedience.

**Expect  
Obedience**      The attitude which most favors obedience is that of expecting obedience without discussing it. In the lessons described above it would be very unwise to tell the child that if he wants to play with the marbles he

must first obey four or five of your commands. This would be "buying obedience" for the time being and would not help win obedience tomorrow or in the future. While it is true the child might not obey those commands were it not for the idea of "marbles" in his mind, yet to state the proposition to him for his option has a very different effect from the method which merely gets the child interested and then gives the commands assuming and expecting them to be obeyed.

If there were no better way of telling how to teach obedience than by giving general rules we should put the above rule at the head of the list. Expect obedience. The child studies the parent more closely than most people realize and the moment he discovers the smallest point of laxness in this regard he will quickly try to take advantage of it. On the other hand, if the same strict attitude is maintained by you at all times, the child will ever respond to it in the same way and not hesitate as long as he has confidence in you.

Your commands should, furthermore, be given only at the time when you want them obeyed and not beforehand. If you allow time to elapse, you cannot expect to be obeyed.

#### EXAMPLE 4

Bennie Johnston was playing with his blocks on the floor. His mother said, "Bennie, I want you to get me my Journal from the library table as soon as you get your blocks put away."

"All right," said Bennie, and went right on playing. Of course he forgot to get the magazine.

"Bennie, you must put your train in its box when you're through with it and not leave it for somebody else to put away."

"Yes, mother," said Bennie, but five minutes later Jack Dawson called for him to play in the yard and he went away forgetting to put the train in its place.

At luncheon time Bennie came to the table with unwashed hands. Mrs. Johnston said, "Now, Bennie, you must wash your hands before you come to the table next time."

"All right," said he. But he forgot before the next meal to attend to his hands.

"Turn the light off when you come out of the kitchen, Bennie," said his mother that night.

Seven minutes later Bennie came out of the kitchen and left the lights on. He had forgotten again.

That night in answer to Mr. Johnston's question, "How has the boy been today?" the answer was,

"Bennie doesn't mind me at all. I'm terribly worried about it."

"Why, he seems a good little kid when I'm here."

"Oh, he's good natured all right. He seems willing enough, but he forgets so much."

"You'll have to come down on him. He's got to learn to mind. A fellow is no good in the business world that doesn't do what he's told," said Mr. Johnston.

His wife sighed. She sincerely wanted to train



Bennie to be obedient. She simply could not understand what was the trouble.

#### COMMENTS

The fault was not Bennie's at all. He was developing in accordance with the teaching his mother, who didn't know that she was training him systematically to be both forgetful and disobedient.

She never should have issued a command until the time came to have it obeyed.

She should have waited until he had his blocks put away and then said, "Bennie, please bring me my Journal from the library table."

She should have noted when he was through with his train and said, "Bennie, put your train in its box."

Five minutes before the dinner hour she should have asked him to wash his hands at once.

As he was coming from the kitchen, she should have asked him to turn off the light then.

Mothers complain that they cannot hold in mind a situation until the exact time comes to issue the command. If this be true they should not expect a five-year-old child to remember it after the command is given.

When you send your child off to school or to play with other children, he will easily learn disobedience if you do not apply the principle of expectancy. The child will observe other children who have not been properly trained and will imitate them at home in so far as you allow him to do so.

Do not start the habit of giving reasons for carry-

ing out commands. It will give you trouble sooner or later and there is nothing to be gained by it. The child's confidence is gained better by other ways than merely giving him reasons why you want certain things done. In fact, this is the way it generally works out: the parent who continually gives his child reasons for requiring him to obey certain commands has won so small an amount of confidence from the child that the latter gets to demanding a reason for everything before he is willing to obey. The parent, on his part, therefore, cannot have very much confidence in the child, since it depends upon how the reason sounds to the child as to how he will respond.

The trouble with this habit of giving reasons lies in the implications. It reveals the parent's lack of confidence in the child's obeying without encouraging him with a reason. The opposite attitude is the better one—simply expect obedience and let it be taken for granted that you have a good reason for asking it.

Many times the only reason which the parent may offer is one that does not appeal to the inexperienced child. Another very important point is that when a child is doing something he likes to do and is told to stop, the reason is looked at "with only one eye." The child in such a case does not want to be reasonable. He is prejudiced.

For instance, Mrs. Darrah's daughter, Lelia, was enjoying herself outdoors with other children at dusk. Her mother said, "Come on in. It's cold.

You'll be sick if you stand out there. That grass is so wet—it's just the same as standing in a creek. Come on. Come on." What Mrs. Darrah said might be perfectly true, yet Lelia was enjoying a situation in which she did not care to be reasonable.

If you ever do have occasion to give a reason for anything, be sure that the child will agree with the premises. For instance, it would have been better for Mrs. Darrah to speak of the wet grass merely as being damp, when the child could easily see, instead of comparing it with a creek. But it would have been still better simply to give the command, "Come here," first without giving any reason, at least until after the child had come to her. If the child does not obey, "Come here," at once he needs to be taught obedience correctly and the mother should begin to teach him to stop immediately.

The correct idea about giving reasons is this: when a child has once set his mind upon doing a certain thing or is already enjoyably and appropriately engaged, it is unwise to give reasons why he should stop. The child would either consider the reasons worthless or say to himself, "I'll risk it," and continue his play. So it is your command, "Stop," based on the child's confidence in you, which will have effect if anything will. If the child is undecided about something and is willing and anxious to hear your reasons, then you should say just what you think, of course, but this is altogether different from reasoning about commands. When you once give a command to be carried out immediately do not offer your reasons.

## EXAMPLE 5

Four women in a group were walking through the best residence section of Boyleston on a pleasant summer evening. They had just attended a Mother's Club meeting and were discussing the topic of the day: viz., Reasoning with Children.

Mrs. Phillips, the banker's wife, a large, benevolent-looking woman, said, "Oh, yes, I always believed in giving my children reasons. I never could stand over them with a club and make them do a thing just because I said so."

Mrs. Chapman, wife of the chief merchant, a spare, nervous, hard-faced woman, said, "I believe in authority; my children have got to mind me, reason or no reason." All remembered with pity that her seventeen-year-old son had gone against her wishes to join the navy.

To relieve the situation quickly Mrs. King, the preacher's wife, said, "You're both right. I try to make mine mind and I always take pains to answer them when they say, 'Why, mother?'"

The other three women knew that the minister's children often did say, "Why, mother?" but always in a way that meant, "You surely can't mean it, mother," and taking it for granted that she didn't really mean it, they dismissed all thought of the command by the time she finished her explanation.

Little Mrs. Lane, the doctor's wife, said nothing, but smiled knowingly.

Every one in the village knew that she had the best mannered children in Boyleston.

Presently Mrs. Phillips said, "What do you think, Mrs. Lane? You never seem to ask your children to do anything, and yet they always behave well. Do you give them reasons?"

"My children and I are great chums," said the little mother. "They like to do what I want them to because they know I'd rather have them happy than anything else. We talk together about everything. They often say, 'Talk to us, mother. Talk to us.' I think they almost know without asking all my reasons. When the time comes to ask them to do anything, they're glad to do it, believing it must be right because I ask it. Oh, they're a loyal little crew!"

"You have the results," said Mrs. Phillips. "So you must have the right method."

## COMMENTS

It is a mistaken notion that to give a child reasons for everything will thereby make him reasonable. On the contrary, the most capricious and unreasonable children we have known are those who were forever saying, "Why do I have to do that?" not for information but as a complaint against being asked to do that particular thing. There are other and far better ways of teaching a child to get at the causes of things. Never allow a child to get into the habit of asking, "Why?" in response to commands.

If a spoiled child is already accustomed to saying, "Why?" to every command you give, change your

way of answering him. Pay less attention to him than before. The habit of asking "Why?" is started in the first place because the parent **The "Why" Habit** has been too careful about explaining things that did not need to be discussed. We have visited homes in which parents were in the habit of explaining matters even to children of only two or three years old and very often the habit begins with children of that age.

In changing your attitude in regard to the child's "Why?" do not say, "Because papa said so." Pay no attention to the question. The child will soon discontinue his questioning.

Not only should the child not be allowed to ask, "Why?" when a command is given, but the parents should not openly ask the child why he did not obey. That is their problem and needs careful thought. The child in answering finds defense for disobedience.

#### EXAMPLE 6

Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Green live with their two children, George, aged eight, and Gertrude, aged four, near Grand Boulevard in Chicago.

The children have been taught to fear automobiles and are never allowed to cross the boulevard unescorted, for on the east side of this driveway there is often an unbroken line of machines going north while on the west side they follow each other in rapid succession going south.

If the children were walking ahead of their parents when they came to such a street-crossing, the command, "Wait," would be given and the parents, each

taking a child by the hand, when the opportunity came, would guide them across the street.

Last July Mrs. Green took the children with her to visit her sister at the little village of M—— in Indiana.

They were perfectly obedient, as usual, and enjoyed the restfulness of the village.

One day Mrs. Green was walking about one of these quiet streets with George. The boy was running along ahead of his mother when a single automobile was seen coming down the street they were about to cross.

“Wait, George,” called Mrs. Green, but to her surprise George ran on and quickly crossed the street just in front of the car.

Mrs. Green was astonished that George did not heed her at once. She attributed this to the fact that the situation was quite different from that in which George was accustomed to wait for guidance across the street. Here was only one auto instead of a jam of them. Nevertheless she knew it would be unwise to ignore the fact that he had openly disobeyed her. When she caught up with George she said, “Why didn’t you stop when I said, ‘Wait’?”

“Because I saw there was no danger,” said George.

#### COMMENTS

The mother made a mistake in giving any command at all in the situation as described, and blundered further in asking why the child did not heed her. Mothers should make it a rule to give no commands that are likely to be disobeyed.

When a child has already started to run away from a person and the care-taker says, "Wait," there is not one chance in ten that the child will stop immediately unless he has been drilled on that particular point.

If he has never been given a lesson on, "Wait," there would probably not be much gained by ever calling attention to the disobeyed command at all. Simply be more careful about giving commands the next time.

If the child has been taught to obey the command, "Wait," the mother might say to him as they are preparing for their next walk through the village something like this, "George, you like to take these walks, don't you?"

His answer will be in the affirmative, naturally.

"Very well, then," says the mother, "I shall ask you to stay with me when we cross streets. Will you be quick to do any favors I ask of you? That's well. Which way would you like to go today?"

Note this point in the method just given. The question relative to the child's liking to take walks suggests to his mind that his mother primarily is doing him a favor. When the mother then makes a simple request of him, the chances are much in favor of her getting his coöperation.

The mother should then do all in her power to help the boy to have the very best sort of a time on this trip. When she returns, she should approve of the boy's obedience in words like these: "My! I enjoyed that walk. I want to go often with you. You are so kind to me."



Never laugh at disobedience. This rule should have no exceptions. Nothing makes a spoiled child quite so bad as to give him an idea that it is "smart" to disobey. If a child is spoiled in this particular, it is best not to pay any attention to him when he laughs. Many mothers, realizing that to laugh is not a good thing, go to the extreme and get very serious and say, "Oh, don't think for a minute that is funny." It is better not to notice him at all; be very interested in something which you see out of the window or somewhere else.

**Laughing at  
Disobedience**

EXAMPLE 7

Donald and Charles Jarvis, aged seven and five years, had received new drums for Christmas presents. On Christmas day guests were invited to dinner and while Mr. and Mrs. Jarvis were attending to the entertainment of their guests at dinner, Donald and Charles, who were seated at a small table in the same room with the elders, left their places at the table and went to the drawing-room to get their drums and returned to their table where they beat the drums noisily.

As the din broke upon them, Mr. Jarvis said, "Quit. Stop it. Now, that's enough of that. Dry that up!"

To one of these commands Donald made a "cute" reply and Mr. Jarvis joined the guests in laughing at the boy's wit.

COMMENTS

This was entirely wrong. Laughing at the child

put a premium upon both disobedience and disrespect. The father should have paid no heed to the remark at all but should have instantly called the attention of his guests to something else.

The repeated commands were wholly wrong.

If the first command is not obeyed, a second will likely be unheeded.

Mr. Jarvis should have called the older of the boys to him when they first brought their drums to the dining-room and looking him in the eye should have said in a low, confident tone, "Take both of the drums back to the drawing-room until after dinner." Then he should have kept his attention on the boy until after the command was obeyed.

Never joke at all about any command when you wish it to be taken seriously. A child likes to joke and he may disobey just for the sake of joking about it. To tell a child to stop doing something and then laugh is positively absurd.

Laughing at disobedience operates the same with children that are either older or younger than those we are now considering. For example, when a thoughtless mother tells a very young child—say from six months to a year old—not to put something in his mouth, if she puts on a broad smile, giggles and says, "Don't you put that in your mouth, you little rascal," she will find her child will seem to take great delight in putting things into his mouth. But if she looks serious just for the moment that she is telling him to keep the object away from his mouth, insisting firmly upon the point until the child begins to play correctly with the object, and

then smiles, she will find that her child will not be nearly so much inclined to put things into his mouth constantly.

Be careful about giving commands in the presence of guests until after you have the child trained to be perfectly obedient at home.

#### EXAMPLE 8

Lawrence Wilson was an only child whose father and mother talked little to him.

His father was engrossed in business and his mother in social life. The child was bashful and uncommunicative. His grandmother Wilson lived a long way off and he very seldom saw her. She had sent him a box of handkerchiefs, and later came to make Lawrence's parents a visit.

While they were seated at the dinner table, Lawrence's father remembered the handkerchiefs and said, "Lawrence, thank your grandmother for the handkerchiefs she sent you."

Lawrence stared at his father and then at his grandmother and said nothing. His father repeated the command and the boy said nothing.

Mr. Wilson took Lawrence from the table, spanked him, and said, "Now go and thank your grandmother for the handkerchiefs." Lawrence still disobeyed.

Two or three times he took the boy out and spanked him, but each time, when they returned to the dining-room, the child refused to say a word. At last the father said, after a spanking, "Now, will you say, 'Thank you,' to your grandmother?"

This time when they returned to the table, Law-

rence in a low voice said, as he hung his head and looked at the floor, "Thank you."

His father considered that he had acted wisely with the boy, who was habitually obedient.

#### COMMENTS

The father indeed acted very unwisely. In the first place, he asked the boy to do something which he had not been taught definitely how to do. There are various ways in which adults thank others for doing favors and this very fact may be the principal cause why the boy did not know what to say in that new situation.

If Lawrence had known definitely that certain words would adequately meet his father's demand and at the same time express his appreciation to his grandmother, it would have been only natural for the boy to obey at once.

In the second place, even after the father allowed the boy to disobey, he did not realize the reason, and therefore did the worst thing possible in attempting to force an expression of kindness. After the boy had been spanked, he did not have a very kind feeling for either his father or his grandmother.

The father's aim at first was to have the boy show kindness, but by his misunderstanding and untactful method, he reduced his purpose to the lower plane of securing obedience and employed the worst method in trying to obtain even that. It might possibly be that even the spanking would not have induced the child to thank his grandmother had it not been that the father accidentally told the child defi-

nately what words to say, namely, "Thank you."

This is the tactful method: suppose the father has already made the mistake of asking the child to say something which he did not know exactly how to say, and he saw that the child was not going to respond at once. The father should have turned his head toward the boy's grandmother, saying, "I am sure Lawrence is grateful for your gift." Then turning attention to Lawrence, "You used one of the handkerchiefs the very first day you had them, didn't you, Lawrence?" The chances are that Lawrence would say, "Yes," in response to this definite question, and he would have a kind feeling toward his grandmother.

Here is an important point often neglected: *do not give a child a command when a powerful impulse to act in a different direction has mastery over him.*

Many parents have been so untactful as to embarrass a child, and then when he starts to run away and has accumulated the highest speed, they cry, "Come back here." This is just like calling, "Whoa," to a runaway horse; it is not a whit more effective.

In your dealings with children of all ages, you will find many places where you can observe to advantage the ill effects of antagonism. Coöperation, like most other principles, can be applied in two ways. The positive way is to encourage and help the child in what he is already doing, giving commands which aid rather than hinder his progress, and you will thereby strengthen your power to command in the future. The negative way is to avoid giving commands which oppose what the child has already started to do and which would tend to weaken your power to command.

## General Cautions

The points which we shall discuss below apply not only to children between six and ten but to children of all ages. By violating any one of them you will weaken your power to command.

In the first place, demands should not be made upon the child beyond his physical, mental or moral strength. For example, do not say to a small child, "Keep your apron clean." Such a command almost invariably makes a transgressor and renders it just a little easier for the child to disobey other commands. Neither should you attempt to make a command influence a small child for more than a few seconds. To say, "Sit in your chair," means merely sit there a moment, with no order as to the next moment. You should never say, "Be quiet all the forenoon." You may in the same way command a boy of ten to go out to the garden, but to get him to stick to his job of hoeing must be done by other means. The influence of fatigue must be considered. The fact that a child likes a change of activity must also be noted.

Duty to the child must always be expressed concretely. It must mean a simple, definite task and one that is to be carried out the moment it is given. The use of "Never" is meaningless to a young child. He can be taught never to do certain things, but not by using the word "Never." This word may be used

to advantage in the case of an older child and one who has already been taught obedience.

You should not attempt to break up a habit by the use of commands. For example, commands to a child not to suck his thumb will be sure to result in disobedience, after he has formed the thumb-sucking habit.

If a child is given a task to be accomplished, not at the moment, but at some time in the near future, and he forgets to do it, with not the slightest intention of disobeying, do not imply even by suggestion that the child has disobeyed. Assume that the command had slipped from his mind, if any notice is taken of it at all.

Be careful not to give commands when you do not have the child's entire attention. If a parent does this very often, the child becomes "hard of hearing." He will let the parent call several times before he appears to notice the summons. If a child already has this habit it would be a good thing for the mother to call the child by his name very distinctly and insist that he look her in the eye while she gives her command. It is worse than useless to try to give a command while a child is dominated by some distracting idea or feeling and has his attention elsewhere.

**Gain  
Child's  
Attention**

If a child is thoroughly absorbed in some occupation, you might well think twice before asking him to leave it in order to run some errand. The quality of concentration is an excellent trait; it should be carefully guarded. Moreover you will find it an aid in

teaching obedience to wait if possible until the child is more nearly in the right mood to obey.

It does not take any fine instruments to discover what mood a child is in. His humor will reveal itself without questioning on the part of the parent. If the child is not feeling well physically, avoid the use of any difficult commands. This is an important point. Many a parent has failed just here.

Do not command a child to do anything in the dark if he is afraid of darkness. If you have already given a command and he refuses, excuse him for the time being. Go with him this time and then give a lesson on fear at the first opportunity. (See Book II for lessons on fear.)

It is always important to consider the child's lack of experience and ignorance of material properties and laws. Suppose a boy, for example, is given a new knife and told to be careful with it. If he starts to bore into a piece of wood and the blade breaks, the boy should not be criticized because he did not intend to break it. But if he had been ordered not to bore at all with his knife and he did so, regardless of the command, this would of course be an act of disobedience.

**Consider  
Child's  
Inexperience**

In the same way, if a child cuts his finger with a forbidden knife, the fault, morally speaking, is disobedience, and the child would be equally guilty, whether he cut his finger or not. Generally speaking, it is a good thing to ignore the results of accidents in dealing with children. Consider only their intentions. If your child breaks some costly dish,



the one question for you to ask yourself is, "Did my child intentionally do it?" If not, then put yourself in your child's shoes and it will be easier for you to decide what to do about it. Certainly nothing will be worse from the standpoint of obedience than to treat a child unkindly for some accident which he did not foresee.

Even though it is tempting sometimes when our feelings are aroused to make excuses for ourselves

when punishing the child, such as,

**Be Reasonable** "Well, he was too careless; a whipping will make him more careful,"

yet if we want to succeed we must put reason before feeling and act with intelligence. It is almost useless to try to teach either carefulness or obedience by punishing past misdeeds. If the method were effective it would not need to be used very long, but as a matter of fact, those who use the method find almost continual need of punishment from the time their children are babies until they are grown.

One can easily see why this is true. Suppose I were to say spiteful things to my child and so arouse his anger and then punish him for becoming angry. Now if this method were kept up would I cure my child? Never! If I want to benefit that child I must deal not with the act after it has been brought about by the usual conditions, but I must make note of those "usual conditions"; I must change them. I must make the conditions more favorable to the end I desire. In other words, instead of saying annoying things, I must say pleasing things, and a child's response will be entirely different, in fact, so very

different that there will be no occasion for punishment.

This very same idea applies to obedience. If we deal only with the act of disobedience after it has been brought about by the usual conditions, we will never teach obedience. We must, as in the case of anger, change the circumstances.

Suppose we have a child who is badly spoiled: if we want him to do something for us, it will make some difference, of course, how we ask him to do it, but he might refuse, no matter how we ask him, just now, because of our wrong methods in the past. So when we speak of changing the conditions we mean not merely to modify the particular mode in which we ask the child to do certain things, but also our general method. We must adopt some different method. We must lay a different foundation. We must win the child's confidence and establish him in the habit of obeying all of our commands. To do this, we must begin by commanding things that are easy to do and at the same time pleasurable. As in forming any habit, we must avoid exceptions until the habit is fixed. To do this, we must be careful about giving commands difficult to carry out, or that have often been disobeyed before, until after the child is won entirely over to our side.

### Helpful Suggestions

If your child is very much interested in his play and you want him to run some errand in a little

while, it is well to give the child notice beforehand. Say, "In a minute or two I shall want you to come here." In a few minutes get the child's attention by pronouncing his name and then say, "Come here." Say this only once and say it as though you expect the child to come. Wait until he does come, keeping your entire attention on him. When he comes to you tell him in a low and "expectant" tone of voice what you want done.

If the child has school lessons to learn and she is busy playing, say, "Mary, it is almost time for your lessons. You had better put Dolly to sleep and lay her in the little bed." After you have thus made obedience easier by allowing time, be firm after you once tell the child to come. Do not allow any extension of time after you once say, "Come here." That often leads the child into the habit of asking for more time and when you refuse, it is likely to cause friction. But you will have no trouble if you are firm from the start.

In the case of a boy who would play all night if let alone, stop his play naturally by entering into his imaginary world. Say, "It's getting late and you will have to close up shop and go to bed. You know stores close at nine o'clock."

See to it that there is unity of authority in your family. Each parent should have equal authority, but no one else should have authority unless you leave the house or for some special reason care to give some one else authority for a short time. In that case let the younger children understand this, saying, "Mabel will show you how to play a new game

this afternoon," or something of that sort. Give the older brother or sister or whoever is in charge very definite instructions as to how to handle the children—how to keep them in a good humor, etc.

It is not wise to require children to obey servants or older brothers or sisters except on special occasions.

### FROM TEN TO FIFTEEN YEARS

Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. —*The Bible.*

Most parents consider this a difficult period in child training. And there are reasons for the opinion. The normal child is undergoing rapid changes, both physical and mental.

The most important matter to consider is the child's feeling of "grown-upness." No matter how much parents are inclined to look upon him as a "mere child," the child does not look upon himself in that way. He now begins to think of himself as a man who is entitled to the same kind of treatment as adults.

The fact that children in the 'teens do not see any grown persons being flogged largely accounts for the fact that they rebel at the idea of being whipped. Of course no child at any age really likes to be punished, but for the average youth of fifteen there is a voice from within which speaks like this: "Rebel against that painful whipping method. It is unjust; other grown persons don't have to endure it. Why

should you? You have power now. Why not show it?" Most children do show it if this wrong method is used.

Every normal grown person can recall listening to a voice similar to the above at some time or other during his 'teens. It is natural. All who have been punished very often pass through that stage.

But what of it? What if children do have these thoughts; does it hurt them? Yes, emphatically. If they could show their power in some way other than directing it against their parents it might be helpful, but to oppose their parents, who should have their confidence, is a very bad thing. They can not receive the help from their parents that they should have.

So in training a child of this age, confidence is your watchword. *Get your child's confidence.* Do not give that "rebellious voice" a chance to make a sound if you can help it. You positively cannot train a child right and work against him; you must work with him.

In saying, "work with him," we mean not merely to refrain from trying to rule your child by force, or physical pain of any sort, but also to refrain from antagonistic words. The child must consider you his friend in every sense of the word. In the case of a child just entering the 'teens, if you use the same caution in what you say for the purpose of keeping on good terms with him as you use in keeping your best grown-up friend thinking well of you, then you will have gone a long way toward success in dealing with your child.

While this policy of treating the child as a grown

person will be used more exclusively in the next period, yet you should begin to follow it at once. Authority should be relaxed gradually. Commands should be fewer, but a firm, expectant attitude should still be maintained. This does not mean a haughty attitude, but implies that you have the child's confidence, and give your commands accordingly.

The time to reduce the number of your commands is when the child first shows a dislike for them. Your rule should always be, "Consider the effect on the child." If one method fails, try another. And you will find that when you drop off your commands and begin treating your child more as a grown-up friend you will have just as firm a grip on him as when you ruled him by authority.

When you ask an adult friend of yours to do something for you, you do not command him to do it; you request it. You ask him if he will do it, implying that if he consents, it will be through his own kindness; it is left entirely to him to decide as to whether he does it or not. But you can count on your friend assisting you if you first do him a favor, or if in the past you have proven yourself to be his friend.

From this we secure a working principle. Grant a favor, then ask a favor. Work on this principle in dealing with children from ten to fifteen years or in fact with children or adults of any age and you will not only get things accomplished, but they will be done in the right spirit. Look out for the interest of the child or other person first and he will come back and go the "second mile with you. In other words, first show the child that you have the right attitude

toward him, even though what you actually do is very small, and the child will do for you great things out of all proportion to the service you have rendered him.

The idea is not merely to trade favors, but rather to do the child some slight favor, first, in order to secure his confidence; then, this confidence will tend to make the child willing to do anything you ask.

To illustrate the idea just mentioned, suppose I tell "John" that if he does me the favor of bringing my mail up from downstairs I will do him the favor of reaching on the top of my desk and handing him a newspaper. John would certainly look upon this as a one-sided favor and if he were inclined to be disobedient he would very likely refuse to make the trade. But suppose I say to John: "John, here's a pretty good cartoon in the evening paper, you'll like to see it." I rise from my chair, reach up to get the paper, fold it so that the cartoon appears on the outside, and then hand it to him. One minute or five minutes or a half an hour later I can say, "John, I left my mail on the table downstairs, will you bring it to me?" And John will very likely do so because I first showed interest in him.

It is not only an advantage to get the child's confidence and obedience just for a particular time by first doing some small act for his profit, but it is exceedingly important that you establish a general basis of confidence so that a command at any time will be carried out willingly on the strength of past confidence.

In dealing with a child who has been in the habit of disobeying, you should determine first to win his

entire confidence. To do this you must have a starting point. Nothing is better for a beginning than to make use of the girl's favorite play or the boy's favorite sport. For example, if the boy likes to fish let the father take an afternoon off and go on a little fishing trip. Let him give the boy many minor commands to carry out in preparation which he will like to do, such as fixing the tackle, getting bait, etc.

Or, if he likes baseball better, tell him to go to the store and buy you a certain priced ball and a certain priced mitt, etc. Say, "Here is a two dollar bill—bring me back the change." After he returns, play ball with him. Tell him to put on the mitt and stand at a certain place, etc.

In carrying out this suggestion you are killing two birds with one stone. You are getting the child's confidence and you are also getting obedience.

Immediately below is a lesson written out in detail which will make a good starting point and is suitable for teaching obedience to either a boy or a girl and can be given by either the father or the mother.

## LESSON 9

### AIM

To teach obedience to a child between ten and fifteen years of age.

### PREPARATION

Near the corner of a room place a small table. In another room, near the door, set an old straight



chair. In still another room place an empty trash basket near the window. Procure three tennis balls,

#### DEFINITE INSTRUCTIONS

Go up to the child having in your hands the three tennis balls, two in one hand and one in the other. Tap them together a few times and bounce one on the floor and catch it as you approach. Say, "Let's see if you can hit a basket as many times as I can. Let's go into this other room."

After entering the room, in which the table stands near the corner, put all three tennis balls in your left hand and reach out your right hand to lift one side of the table, saying, "We will put the table far back in the corner. Now bring the chair that stands just inside the door in the other room." After the child brings it to you say, "That's it. We'll put it right up on top of the table." With your right hand place it on top of the table clear back in the corner.

After placing the chair properly, say, "Do you know where the trash basket is? I believe I left it near the window in the kitchen. Bring it here, please."

The child will not likely refuse to do any of these things that you propose, but in case he should, leave at once without saying a word; appear not to be angry in the least, but perfectly calm. Be independent and keep the balls to yourself until the child asks for them. Then say, "Are you sure you are ready to play?" When the child says, "Yes," smile, and as you start into the other room say, "All right. You may bring the basket."

When the child brings it, take it in your right hand and place it on top of the chair. Then go back about six or eight feet and while still holding the tennis balls in both your hands, say, "Now I want you to take these three balls and see if you can make any of them stay in the basket. If one goes in and bounces out right away, it doesn't count. It must stay in. All right, here you are." Give them to the child and then go within two or three feet of the table, ready to get the balls as they miss the basket. Become very enthusiastic when a ball comes very near going in, and when one actually stays in, say, "Good."

Let the child keep on pitching until all three of the balls remain in the basket. Then take down the basket and empty it out, saying, "Now let me see if I can hit it as well as you did. You bring the balls back to me when I miss."

If you miss the basket, say, "I guess you will have to show me how, won't you?" Keep the child in a good humor by smiling and when a ball goes into the basket say, "There, I threw one in, at last. Now you try it again."

Get the ball out of the basket and give all three to the child. As before, be very much interested in the child's ability as he throws for the basket. Whether the ball goes into the basket or not, continue to use such expressions as: "Almost!" "My, that was a close one!"

As soon as the child gets all three in the basket, say, "That's good! We'll have some of your friends come in and play, too, one of these days, won't we?"

Pause a moment, then say, "Is that enough for this time?"

If the child says, "No," and wants to play more, play with him longer and then ask, "Now, have we played long enough?" Continue this until the child says he has had enough.

Then set the basket down on the floor, leaving the tennis balls in it, and immediately give the chair to the child, saying, "You may put this chair just inside the other room."

When the child returns, take hold of one side of the table and wait for him to take hold of the other, saying, "Let's set this out from the corner a little."

Next, take up the trash basket, reach down and get the tennis balls, and before giving them to the child say, "Now I will put the basket away; you may take care of the tennis balls."

#### COMMENTS

This lesson is only a starting point in teaching obedience. It would be absurd to think that only one or two lessons of this sort would instantly turn a disobedient child into an obedient one. As a matter of fact, a child who has not been properly trained, but allowed to be disobedient up to the age of ten or fifteen years, is a serious problem. Especially is it a difficult matter for the parents, whom the child had so often disobeyed.

An "outsider," using the right methods, would at first seem to make much better headway than the parent himself. The reason is that the only association the child forms with the outsider is that which

the latter chooses, while in the other case the child knows just what he can do and how he can take advantage of the parent; this is a great difficulty to be overcome.

But the obstacle can be surmounted finally. A child, after all, responds to present treatment. If this management is of the proper sort, continually calling forth desirable responses from him, it will not be long before the good habit will take the place of the bad one.

In commencing to displace the habit of disobedience by the habit of obedience, there is no better way than to give a lesson similar to the lesson described here. I do not mean that it is necessary to use tennis balls in this lesson, but I do mean that a method similar to that described must be used. In other words, the idea back of the lesson—the idea of getting the child's confidence and beginning with easy, pleasurable commands—must be applied in order to teach obedience properly.

In giving these easy commands, make use of that important principle of expectancy. Give the commands as though you expect them to be obeyed willingly. The child must not know that you are giving a lesson on obedience at all. Keep him interested in the game and he will begin the habit of obeying without knowing it. The element of competition in tossing the tennis balls makes the lesson interesting to either boys or girls of this age. The practice in muscular control and accuracy also adds pleasure.

Now, whether you give this particular lesson or not, the important point is to convince the child that

you are on his side—not by telling him so but by showing it in your actions. Do not oppose the child at any time either in the lesson itself or outside the lesson. Do not give commands at first which he would be likely to disobey, but give him many small tasks to do which he will willingly perform and then later he will obey any number of reasonable commands.

What was said about “wasting ammunition” in the case of younger children applies also to children of this age. For example, do not ask a child to do things immediately or “quickly” very often when speed is not necessary. The child would become disobedient under such circumstances.

In case a child has obeyed up to the present time through fear of punishment, begin at once to use right methods. Do not, of course, tell the child that he will never be punished again, but be sure to change the mood back of your commands before he begins to give you trouble.

It is not a question of whether or not you are able to manage the child by physical force. In fact, most parents are strong enough to handle their boy when he is anywhere in the 'teens, but here is the rub—they can't control his feelings. They may whip him to the verge of cruelty, but instead of the boy's becoming meek and assuming a respectful attitude toward the parent, he generally does just the opposite. He thinks of his parent, in a sense, as an obstacle to be avoided. He is able to reason now and is keen enough to deceive in ways that father and mother do not suspect.

What is true of the boy in this respect is equally

true of the girl. A girl responds very quickly to the kind of treatment she receives. When she is treated wrongly for an action, she is especially quick to deceive relative to that action in the future. She finds that there is protection in falsifying. This leads her to keep secrets from her mother; now is a time above all others when the mother should have her daughter's entire confidence.

After you have made your beginning in teaching obedience correctly, that is, after following for a time the plan of giving very few commands and making them agreeable at first, then keep the child obedient by observing the following additional points on giving commands.

### HOW TO GIVE COMMANDS

Avoid the use of hints when you intend to give a command. Do not say, "I wish I had a little wood," or, "I wish the beds were made." Say instead, "John, you may bring me five sticks of wood," or "Mary, you may make the bed in the south room."

Avoid whining. Just as the attitude of expectancy favors obedience, so a *doubting or a hesitating tone of voice favors disobedience.*

Avoid giving a command in a loud, threatening tone of voice. It is irritating to the child and generally puts him into a combative mood. To speak in loud tones does not carry out the principle of expectancy. Speak to your child in a quiet, even, per-

**Speaking  
Gruffly**

fectly controlled, yet firm voice, and this will not only be favorable to obedience but to the development of a "good" disposition as well.

When you really want a task done, do not ask your child if he would like it or if he has time to do it. Express, in a few words, precisely what you want done and just when you want it done and speak as though you expect it to be done just as you order.

Stating exactly what he is to do not only makes the child obey more readily, but it actually renders it easier for him to obey. You should have unquestioning obedience until your child is at least fifteen years old. Any other plan would be weak and dangerous because when a child once commences to question your commands there is no end to it unless you take measures to cultivate a different attitude.

When your child once gets into the habit of making remarks about commands which you give, there is a great likelihood that he will become impertinent. A gruff answer from you calls forth a blunt answer from him and almost before you know it the child seems to be "against you" instead of "with you." Make your commands definite and your child will be obedient as a matter of course, without feeling imposed upon.

Do not argue with the child. It would be exceedingly imprudent to discuss whether or not he should obey some command which you have given him. Make up your mind not to argue with the child, even though he is already in the habit of arguing. Do not tell him, of course, that you are not going to argue with

**Arguing**

him any more. Ignore what he says when he begins an argument. Be silent for a few seconds, then calmly and very slowly repeat the command in a low voice.

We have now outlined the correct policy as to the manner in which to give commands and to carry them out after they are already given. Next, we shall outline the correct policy about deciding what to command beforehand.

One of the greatest opportunities you have for gaining and keeping the confidence of children of this age is afforded by dealing properly with their various requests. The following points are important.

### What to Do and What to Avoid

When your child asks a favor, do not reply, "No," at first and then later say, "Yes." If you do not heed this warning the child will believe that you do not have much sympathy with him. For you later to say, "Yes," would give him the idea that his talking or teasing caused you to say, "Yes."

Do not reply, "Yes," and then say, "No," because the child will get his mind set upon the act and the "No" will give him a shock. This will antagonize him.

So the thing to do when your child asks permission to go to a party or any other favor of you is to decide as quickly as possible whether your answer will be, "Yes," or, "No," and then immediately give it. It may take you ten seconds or ten minutes to



decide. Be sure that the child has said all that he has to say before you reply.

Do not let the child think that what he says, outside of the facts and conditions in the case, has much to do with your decision. Do not let him run into an argument. In case you have to make any modifications of his request in order to grant it, do not discuss them until after your decision is given, so that all idea of argument will be avoided.

#### EXAMPLE 1

“Mother, Alf is getting ready to go somewhere,” announced Jennie Chappel to her mother one evening after supper.

“Where’s he going?”

“I don’t know, but he’s changed his clothes to go somewhere.”

Soon after this Alfred appeared in the Chappel living-room, dressed in his best suit.

“Where are you going, Alf?” asked his mother.

“Betty Morris has a party tonight and I’m going over there.”

“Now, Alf, you know your father said you weren’t to go to parties while you are in school.”

“Aw! Everybody’s going; I can get my lessons in the morning.”

Mr. Chappel, hearing that his wife was using her loud, argumentative tones, came in from the next room and said, “What’s the matter, mother?”

“Why, Alf says he’s going to a party!”

“See here, young man, didn’t I tell you you weren’t to go to parties while you’re in school?”

"All the boys are going; if they can get their lessons I guess I can, too; I'm not the greenest one in the bunch."

Mr. Chappel winked at his wife and said:

"But I told you you weren't to go."

"See here, dad, a fellow can't grind all the time. Now, honor bright, didn't you use to go to parties? Aren't you the fellow that used to lead in the games?"

Mr. Chappel smiled reminiscently and Alfred knew his cause had won. He started for the door.

"Don't you dare stay out too late," said his mother, "if you do you'll find the door locked."

"All right. I'll come home early," said Alfred. He knew that his mother would open the door whenever he returned and that he could argue his father into silence, for he had done so time after time.

#### COMMENTS

Why didn't Alfred talk about the party before he dressed for it? The fact that he did not is a point in his favor. His father had antagonized him when, in a commanding way, he said Alfred was to go to no more parties. The boy knew he could "talk his parents over" to his side, but he actually showed good sense in wishing to avoid a "scene."

He knew his parents did not mean what they said when they prohibited him from going. He would gladly have avoided a clash. Parents would do well to understand that when a boy seems not to heed them he is often suffering as keenly as they are from the situation.

It might be argued that when some form of punish-

ment is apparently soon to be required in managing a stubborn child, a threat may be used to avoid it. But a threat has about as many bad consequences as a punishment of some sort. It can scarcely be made without exhibiting antagonism. Hostile words are sure to provoke rankling and bitter thoughts. Threats arise from low impulses and appeal to low motives. A thinking child who governs his conduct by punishment or fear of punishment is never able to work out his character problems on a high moral basis; and when he becomes an adult his moral standards will be such as to keep him out of "trouble" rather than those which make for greatness of soul.

**Threats**

In particular, one must avoid threats of corporal punishment, as this is the least desirable mode of punishment; threats of the same are correspondingly condemnable.

Such threats are usually introduced by, "If you do this I will do so and so." On the little word "if" hangs all the oncoming thunder of denunciation. This is fault-finding with a bomb attached.

Banish all such expressions as, "If you do that naughty thing again I'll punish you." It is worse than useless to discuss or even mention a possible future occasion on which punishment may be needed.

Threats nearly always stimulate the thought that the one in authority takes delight in inflicting punishment. This thought no one wants to convey. Instead, assume that no punishments will be needed, that conduct is going to be of the right sort.

Be sure that servants or employees make no threats to your child. No servant should be allowed to frighten a child for any purpose whatever. One parent should not threaten a child with punishment at the hands of the other parent. The threatener loses much strength in managing his child. One parent should not do all the petting and the other all the punishing or correcting.

With the reckless and vicious use of threats so often in vogue in homes, many parents will find it a monstrous task to conquer this wretched habit. But the gain is worth the effort. The best method will be to adopt an altogether new basis for the government of children and to adjust the matter of scolding and threats to this better method.

Avoid saying anything about a request after your final decision is given, especially if it is "No." But in case your child's request is reasonable and the answer, "Yes," could not possibly cause him any harm, say, "Yes," at once and get his confidence by speaking of the good time you hope he will have, etc. Give him a good "send off." Help him to get ready. If by changing a certain condition in your child's request you would be able to grant it, say, "Yes," at once and after a short pause, give your own request in the form of a command. Say, "Get back by ten o'clock." Expect the answer, "All right." An important point in getting a particular answer is to expect just that answer and no other. But if the child does not say, "All right," do not ask him to state whether or not he will get back by ten. Give the command in the

**Refrain from  
Discussion**

first place as though you mean what you say and expect him to obey.

Parents should never differ on any point in the child's presence. For instance, if the child wants permission to do anything, both parents must either say, "Yes," or, "No."

#### EXAMPLE 2

Marcia Kraft rushed into her father's real estate office on her way home from school and said, "Daddy, a hack load of us are going to Wild Cat Glen next Saturday to spend the day.

"The girls are going to take the lunches and the boys are going to pay for the hack. Won't it be fun? You want me to go, don't you, daddy?"

"Of course, Marcia, nothing pleases me better than to see you have a good time."

"I knew you'd want me to go. Come home early to supper, Daddy."

It was not simply a whim of Marcia's to stop and see her father on the way home from school. She knew it would be easy for her to get her father's consent to go on the picnic and that her mother would oppose it. It was always easier to bring her mother over to her side when her father agreed with her. And after once giving consent he didn't like to change.

Arriving at home she said, "Daddy says I can go to the picnic next Saturday. The girls are to take lunches. What shall I take, mother?"

"Why, you can't go, Marcia. You know the dress-maker is coming here to start your new dress on Saturday."

"Oh, bother the dress. I want to go to the picnic. Mrs. Drake can fit me of evenings, can't she?"

"She can't wait for you that way. She is rushed with work and needs all she can earn. Besides, I had planned to spend the afternoon at Aunt Jane's and thought you'd be here with Clifton."

"Oh, you can take Clif along with you. He likes to go. I'm going to run over and see what Ruth is going to take. I'll soon be back."

Marcia was gone until supper time, arriving home just as her father got there from his office.

"Ruth is going to take sandwiches and—"

"Marcia, you can't go, I say. I have Saturday all planned and I can't spare you."

"What's the matter, mother? Why can't she go?" said Mr. Kraft.

Mrs. Kraft stated her reason:

"I've engaged Mrs. Drake to come here and sew for Marcia and I want to go to Jane's in the afternoon and leave Clifton with Marcia."

"Let Clif come to the office. I'll take care of him."

"But the men there tease him and spoil him. I can't do that."

"Why don't you take him with you, then? Marcia has got to have some fun."

Mrs. Kraft didn't say that she herself needed "fun" and that to get away from home a while without the care of three-year-old Clifton was a needed recreation for her. She simply said:

"I can't disappoint Mrs. Drake."

"Give her something else to sew on, can't you, and let her make Marcia's dress next week."

"I can't afford to pay her for so long a time."

"I'll attend to that."

### COMMENTS

Marcia went to the picnic, knowing that she was thereby discommoding her mother and Mrs. Drake and even causing extra expense for her idolized father. She thereby cultivated selfishness knowingly.

When she first went to her father's office to get his permission to go he should have said, "I'll see your mother about it."

Then he and Mrs. Kraft should have discussed the matter privately and come to a decision to which both were agreed.

This decision should then have been announced to Marcia and both parents should expect her to follow their recommendation.

If parents would respect each other's judgment in the presence of their children, their sons and daughters would rely more implicitly upon them for advice.

Do not say, "I guess you can go this time," implying that the child will probably not be permitted to go next time. Do not say, "I'll see," or, "Maybe," because the child will get to taking this for "Yes" and he will be disappointed in case it does not mean "Yes." So always say either, "Yes," or, "No," or, "I will decide and let you know at six o'clock this evening." The point is, *never be indecisive*.

In case you ever say, "No," to a request and find

out later that you did not fully understand the matter, tell the child so at once and grant the favor. There is nothing to be gained by holding out for a decision just because you have once made it. A child is exceedingly quick in perceiving injustice. The better policy is to let the child know that your decision was based on certain supposed conditions and when you discover that the conditions are different, you are justified in changing your decision. Your child will understand this.

**Changing  
Decisions**

The only condition under which your decision should be iron-clad is a positive belief that the decision is unmistakably the best thing for the child. In all cases relating to your child's health, you should decide and be very firm. When you know at first that your answer will be, "No," in response to a request in which these things are involved, do not say, "No," too sharply or too quickly. Pause a few seconds so that the child will realize that you are not answering hastily or because you are not in the right mood; this would antagonize him. However, when you do say, "No," say it firmly in a low tone, implying that there is no question in your mind but that you are right.

It is important to note this point: after refusing to grant a favor, don't ask a favor of your child until after he has given you some evidence that he is in the proper mood. It is all right to talk naturally, after refusing, just as though nothing had been asked, but even in talking, be careful not to say anything which the child will answer with irritation.



In case your child asks to do something that you know he would not succeed in, do not say, "No," and then explain why you forbade him. Do just the opposite. Imply that you are in favor of anything that will give your child pleasure. First say, "Why, yes," "All right," or something of that sort. Then you can follow it up by indicating certain practical difficulties which the child will have to overcome in carrying it out.

### EXAMPLE 3

Don and John Hill, twin brothers, eleven years old, had been out to their uncle's farm where a well was being dug. The next day the following conversation occurred between them:

"Let's dig a well ourselves."

"Where?"

"In the garden. It'll be easy to start one there."

"All right. You ask mama and I'll be getting the shovel."

John sought his mother while Don went for the shovel.

"Say, mama, we want to dig a well in the garden."

Mrs. Hill smiled and said enthusiastically, "Wouldn't that be fine exercise!"

"I knew you'd let us. Can't we put water in it when we get it made?"

"Certainly, but you know the water wouldn't stay in it."

"Why, mother?"

"The ground there is too loose. The water would spread out in every direction."

"That's so. Can't you think of a way to keep the water in?"

"We'll all try to think it out. I already have an idea. When you get tired digging come in and we'll talk it over."

While this conversation was going on Teddy Blake from the adjoining back yard saw Don with a shovel in his hand and said, "What are you going to do, Don?"

"John and I are going to dig a well in the garden. We saw a man digging one yesterday at Uncle Jake's. Ask your mother if you can't come and help us."

At mention of his mother, the eagerness in Teddy's face changed to painful doubt.

"All right," he said without enthusiasm. "If she'll let me I'll come right over."

Teddy ran into the house and said, "Mama, Don and John are going to dig a well in their garden. Can't I go over and help them?"

"No, of course not. What a silly idea. They can't dig a well that'll hold water. Besides, you'll get all dirty."

"Their mother's going to let them," said Teddy. He as well as Don was reasoning from precedent here. Teddy hadn't actually heard what Mrs. Hill's decision was, but he knew her usual attitude.

"Oh, well, she lets those boys do anything they want to."

"They have awfully good times," said Teddy.

"That's because there are two of them," said Mrs. Blake. "Goodness knows, I don't know how I'd live if there were two of you."

Judging from Teddy's face, they would certainly have been two miserable little boys.

That evening Mrs. Blake stepped over to borrow a pattern of Mrs. Hill. While she was there Mrs. Blake said, "Don, I wish you'd run to the store and get me some matches."

"All right, mama. I'll be back in a jiffy," said Don cheerfully.

"I wish Teddy was like your boys. He never does a single thing I tell him to without a terrible fuss."

"My boys enjoy doing what I want them to as well as I enjoy doing what they like," answered Mrs. Hill. She hoped that Mrs. Blake would see that the reason her boys obeyed her was because there was a feeling of comradeship between herself and her children. "I hardly ever say, 'No,' to anything they propose. After saying, 'Yes,' we talk over the difficulties and this often causes them to abandon their proposed idea altogether. It makes them think, too, and it fosters the companionship idea that all wise mothers cultivate."

#### COMMENTS

So whenever your child asks a favor, never consider whether or not he will enjoy or succeed in his plan. Consider whether or not there is any real and important objection to it. If there is no harm or danger from the standpoint of health or character, then grant it quickly.

A parent who is continually saying, "No" and "Don't" in regard to unimportant affairs robs him-

self of the influence which he would otherwise have in regard to more essential matters. Give the child all the harmless liberties you possibly can and show him by your actions that you are positively interested in his having a good time. Then, when he asks for something that you think might be harmful, you can refuse and he will be more willing to concede that you are right because he has confidence in you and knows that you are not refusing just to oppose him.

Whenever a child is spoiled by "being indulged," it is because he is indulged in things that are harmful. For example, a child who is allowed to eat anything he wishes is being indulged in a very important matter because it conflicts with health. Often children are given things to eat between meals, and allowed to eat sweets nearly every time they ask for them. This not only establishes a mental habit, but the entire system demands gratification. He becomes irritable as a result, and the fact that the child is not in good health makes him hard to manage; he soon becomes a spoiled child.

You have probably heard people make this general statement: most children are spoiled by being indulged too much. But that declaration does not mean anything. The question is, in what are the children indulged? A correct generalization would be this, "Spoiled children are indulged too much in harmful things or not enough in harmless things."

Practice indulging your children more in permissible activities and firmly stand against things that are objectionable and you will have gained one of the greatest points of success in child training.

## GETTING OTHER CHILDREN TO OBEY YOU

Sometimes you will be with a child and not have time to train him as you would your own, but you will want him to obey just while you are with him. The following suggestions you can apply to a child of any age above one year.

Watch for your first opportunity to help the child in what he is already doing. Do not command him to do anything until after you have done something for him. Do not wait to render some large favor.

For instance, if someone asks you to take charge of two youngsters for a while in church, or in any place where quietness is desired, you will be at a great disadvantage unless you can be with the children at least five minutes before time, because merely to say at once, "Be quiet," might not work. Of course, you should apply the principle of expectancy—that is, you should tell them to be quiet in a way that suggests firmness and obedience. After requesting a child not to do something, do not watch him; appear to trust him; this indicates to the child that you expect him to obey, a fact which always favors obedience. When the child starts to look up to you, have your glance turned away, and then while the child is gazing at you, turn your head down to look at him and smile.

But, if possible, be with the children a little time beforehand; talk to them and get on the "good side" of them, by agreeing with nearly everything they say. This idea of agreeing with them is of the great-

est importance. Keep expressing your assent continually while either one of them is talking, in order to make the children doubly sure that you are interested in them. In case you have time, draw something on paper for them and talk about the pictures as you draw; this is always interesting to young children. As stated above, however, it makes no essential difference in what degree you indulge the children or in what object you interest them, but some occasion for coöperation must be found.

The next point, after you have shown the child that you are interested in helping him, is to ask some small favor of him. Make a positive suggestion. For example, reach out your hand toward an object and say, "Hand me the —." Give other minor, easy commands that the child will be sure to obey. It is not necessary even to thank him for what he does for you. Keep his mind entirely off of the fact that he is obeying, by simply expecting him to do whatever you request. After he does the favor, treat it as though it were a natural thing for him to do.

The only thing you need to be careful about is that you do not oppose the child in your first dealings with him. In case you see he is determined to do something that you would rather not have him do, divert his thought from that thing by talking about something else that he can do. Do not appear to oppose the child at all if you can help it.

The idea of winning the child's confidence is fundamental in teaching obedience and applies to children of all ages. There are other ways, of course, in which you can appeal to children of certain ages, in





Induging a child in the very thing which it wants to do, which often does not take more than a minute, gets its confidence and then the firm negative command will have more effect.

*Illustration A*



order to get particular commands carried out.

For example, it gives a boy pleasure to obey a command if you use these words: "Are you strong enough to hold this for me?" No matter how little the child does for you give him plenty of encouragement. Say, "My! you're strong." And it will also aid you to say to someone else, if he can overhear you, "Why, he can do anything I ask him." Encouragement is always useful. In case you want a small child to run several errands for you, ask him first to perform some easy task. Then when he does so, compliment him on his speed and you will have no trouble getting him to run other errands.

**Encourage  
the Child**

One way of leading a child to heed a particular command is to give him a small piece of money, but this is not obedience at all; it is simply hiring the child, and there is no reason for it. There are better ways which not only influence the doing of particular acts, but tend to make the child obedient to you afterward.

Use right methods of securing obedience in the present, and it will be easy for you to get obedience in the future. The idea of doing some little thing for the child first, in order to secure his confidence and coöperation is a broad principle and can never be safely neglected.

This principle might be stated in different ways. A fisherman might state it like this: "Play with the fish and get it on your hook before pulling," or, in the case of negative obedience, it might be put in this form: "First indulge, then prohibit or direct."

But it makes no difference how we phrase it, the application is always the thing that holds our interest. Let us return to a case cited on a previous page of this volume. An entire electric light system was removed because parents did not know how to teach their children to keep from wasting electricity by playing with the electric light buttons.

Of course most parents would threaten and perhaps actually employ very drastic measures before they would sacrifice their electric lights, but there is a way of getting a child to keep his hands off without any violent actions or even antagonism. This is the way: when you see the child is about to touch the button, or even after he has already touched it, appear to be just as unconcerned as if the child had not touched it at all. Look up toward the light bulb and hold your attention on it for a few seconds (until the child wonders what you are going to say), then look over to the child, saying, "Turn on the light," and immediately look up to the light again. [See Illustration A.] When the child turns it on, keep looking at it for about five seconds, and say, "Now turn it off." All the time appear to be interested in how the light is working and not at all in the child. While looking up at the light say, "Now turn it on." "Now turn it off." Then look straight at the child and say, "That's enough—don't turn it any more." (Say this as though you expect the child not to touch it again.)

You could apply this method while sitting in the center of the room, with the child standing far away from you over by the wall, because the method is

correct. But to be absolutely sure of success with any child, go over to where the child is, stand and give your commands at his side. Then when you say, "That's enough," he will be sure to keep his hands off.

Commanding the child to do what he wishes to do gets his confidence and shows him that you are not working against him. By first giving four commands which he obeys, you get him started your way; he forms the habit, for the time being, at least, of carrying out your suggestions; then, when you give the fifth command requesting him not to turn the button, he more naturally obeys than if the "Don't" had been the first command.

You will always find that the one who favors children and offers them little privileges whenever possible, has greater control over them than the person who does not indulge them, but who merely says, "Don't."

If some one in your presence were to command a child not to do something and you were to speak up and arrange it so that the child could enjoy the privilege which he was at first forbidden to have, you would have more control over that child in the future than the other person because whenever you tell the child not to do something after this, he will know that you are not merely trying to oppose him.

Of course, it would be unjust to the other person to interrupt him after he had forbidden the child to do something, but the point of the illustration is the important thing. There are, to be sure, many ways of applying this principle of coöperation in the pres-

ence of another person or even a parent without being unkind to any one.

On one occasion, I visited the home of some children who were very disobedient. I laid a large envelope containing some manuscripts on the table and it was only a short time before the children began to finger them. The mother kept telling them one time after another to keep their hands off, but they acted just as if they were deaf.

In a minute or two I turned my chair around facing the children, so that they wondered what I was going to do. I did not appear to notice them but kept my attention on the manuscripts for a few seconds. Then I reached over, fumbled over the papers and incidentally left a few of them part way out. I looked at one child and said, "Will you push in that corner?" To another one, I said, "Will you push in this corner?" [See Illustration B.] I pointed out to each child a few more edges that were protruding from the envelope and told him to push them farther in. Then I said, "That's enough—let it be now." The children looked up at me as though that word was final, and they did not touch them any more.

Even if one of the children had fumbled them again later, I should not have scolded him. I should have simply continued the application of the principle of coöperation. I should have turned around in my chair again, appeared to have my entire attention on the envelope, and said, "Will you hand it to me a minute?" After pulling out some papers and letting the child put one back in, while I looked at the others,



This illustrates the Principle of Co-operation as opposed to the "Don't" method. Children respond to those who first show consideration to them.  
Principles involved: Co-operation and Expectancy.



I should say, "Now, take this and put it on the table. That's it—now let it alone."

Another very important point is to anticipate a child's action. Consider beforehand what he will likely want to do. There may be some things in your house that a child will want to touch and you do not care to indulge him to the extent of allowing him to touch them at all. Suppose, for example, you have a large bear rug in the front room with mouth wide open. Two children, aged three and five, come to visit you.

You may well expect that as soon as they catch sight of it, they will want to touch it. So prepare.

**Anticipate  
the Child's  
Action**

Do not wait, as so many people do, until the child has touched it to say, "Don't touch it," or after giving the command, let the child get closer and closer until he touches it. But let the indulgence come in by telling the children just where they can stand (or sit). Say to one child, "You may stand right here." Place the child just where you want him, perhaps about two feet from the bear's mouth; say to the other, "And you may stand right there." Then you get back even with them in a squatting posture and begin to talk in a low voice about the big bear, its tongue, nose, teeth, etc. Say, "We can get a little closer, but we must not touch it." Let the children get a few inches nearer it, but each time either of the children makes the slightest move to touch it say, "We mustn't touch it." Speak this slowly; this will fill the child with wonder.

The principle of coöperation is applied in the

given illustration when you assume that it is a great privilege even to stand near the bear and look at it. The fact that the children are forbidden to touch it should not be emphasized.

You do not need to wait for an occasion on which to apply this principle of coöperation in order to teach a child to obey you; you can make the occasion yourself at any time. As an illustration, take a child under six years of age, remove a ring from your finger and say, "I wonder if this ring will fit your middle finger." Appear to have your attention on the child's hand (not on his eyes). When the child is close enough to you, take hold of his finger and place the ring on it. Then after removing it say, "It's pretty big for that finger; you take it and try it on this finger." Help the child to put it on another finger. Then close his hand tightly, saying, "Hold it tight so that it can't fall." In the meantime take your hands entirely away for three or four seconds. Then say, "Give it to me a minute." As soon as he hands it to you, immediately try it on the child's other hand, then say, "Give it to me." Hand the ring back and forth three or four times before putting it back on your own finger to stay.

In going through the very simple procedure, described above, requiring only a few minutes, you will have given the child an effective lesson on obedience.





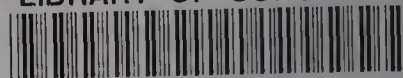








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