

Protection Through Strictness

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A mother was talking about her son. "My son never troubles me. He eats anything he wants by himself." Her fat son eats his supper at McDonald's every day. She said it is because he likes such food. Occasionally she makes him some "onigiri" or rice balls.

This mother spends afternoons napping and going to a swimming school. She spends most evenings barhopping. "How does she raise her son," you ask? Actually, she hardly does. Besides spending almost no time preparing his meals, he has never been disciplined at home.

This sounds like fiction, but it is a true story.

What is the result? Her son goes to school, but because he has received no discipline and does whatever he likes at home, he cannot control his own behavior and causes all sorts of problems in the classroom.

In the past, such a problem pupil might have received physical or corporal punishment. But because of the sensational incidents involving corporal punishment picked up by the mass media, corporal punishment has been criticized and there is a large number of people against it.

Of course, the teacher might reprimand the pupil and tell him why what he is doing is wrong, but, in today's educational system, there is so much to teach that teachers cannot spend too much time on a single pupil. The result is a pupil who receives no discipline in the home or in the classroom.

At this point, let us take a look into the future. When this pupil has grown up and has children of his own, he will probably raise his children in the same way because it is the only way he knows. Thus, we have a vicious circle.

There are two causes to the problem.

The first is a lack of time and tools for teachers. As I have said, there is so much to teach and so little time, that teachers cannot spend a great deal of time with a single pupil.

The second is the lack of discipline in the home. Parents spend too little time with and on their children. According to a survey conducted by a nursery school, 50 percent of the children wake up just in time for school and leave without breakfast. They are allowed to stay up at night watching television or reading comics.

At a police station, nearly 90 percent of the parents who come to get their children who have been caught shoplifting never scold them and rarely apologize. They simply say, "I'm sorry for having kept you waiting in such a place."

This is a recent trend, the lack of parents who will not or cannot scold their own children.

Were you every spanked by your father when you were small? I was, and not only by my own father, but by my friend's father as well. In the past, all people living in a community cooperated in raising children. Today, parents tend to rely on teachers not only for teaching, but for discipline, too. It seems that parents are too busy living and enjoying their own lives, such as the mother I gave in my example.

Ladies and gentlemen, under the present circumstances, I believe that corporal punishment is necessary. If we prohibit it completely, all we will be doing is creating well-educated monsters. We will end up with a society which is full of rude brats. Worst of all, we will be creating a generation which does not understand a basic survival trait; how to raise children.

Of course, teachers must use corporal punishment in the manner expressed by the maxim, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." That is, they must use it with love and sincerity; to teach a child right from wrong. It must never be used in a spiteful or sadistic manner.

We must examine the motives teachers have for using corporal punishment and the methods used. If a pupil is doing something wrong and is slapped on the hand or spanked, fine. If justified, let's support such teachers. Conversely, hitting a child on the head for no justifiable reason cannot be allowed.

In order to prevent excessive use, we can and should set up guidelines for corporal punishment. For instance, Boards of Education might establish such guidelines or set up committees to judge incidents. Principals of schools might be given the authority to reprimand unjustified corporal punishment or defend the use of appropriate corporal punishment.

Finally, and this is more fundamental, let us reexamine the way children should be raised. Let us think about the kind of parents we want to be and the kind of adults we want our future children to become. Let us be a role model for the children of tomorrow.