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**What effect does punishment has on behavior?**

Punishment is a measure of control that is used since the birth of the human race, but it is in recent years that the study of its short and long term consequences have generated an enriching debate that is surprising society in general and parents in particular.

When we prevent our child from going to the concert of his favorite singer or we forbid him to use his computer for a couple of days because of his behavior, we try to penalize bad conduct. In fact, punishment in children tries to suppress a series of unwanted actions. There are two main benefits to punishment. On the one hand, it has a very rapid effect and on the other hand, it eliminates inappropriate behaviors and reorganizes the desired behaviors.

However, the punishment of children produces a series of later side effects that are often not identified by adults. This series of reactions, mainly of an emotional and behavioral nature, makes us think that punishment may not be the best way to eliminate or reduce the frequency of bad behavior.

**Effects of punishment on behavior**

People act motivated and repeat behaviors or attitudes for which they receive rewards. Nevertheless, when this philosophy is transferred to infant learning, the punishment of children is not always the best way to educate them. Some disadvantages are as follows.

**Emotional responses**

The emotional state of a person who has just been punished is usually very frustrating. It is associated with negative thoughts against the person who administers or generates this feeling of helplessness. For this, we can produce a series of emotional responses such as pons, screams, kicks, anger and even aggressive behavior. These answers are not only directed to the person who administered the punishment, but also to the rest of the people involved.

**Emotional response in punished children**

**Stimulation of signals**

The person who gives the punishment as well as the other stimulations of the environment can be converted into unpleasant stimuli for the child or in warning signals being associated with unpleasant consequences. For this, the punished behavior will no longer appear in his presence, but in his absence. This side effect is the prototype of classroom behavior: children behave badly when there is no teacher in class and behave better when it enters.

**Substitution by other inappropriate behaviors**

The punishment of children can promote the substitution of behaviors punished by other inappropriate behaviors. It is therefore important to apply the sanction with an alternative so that the child can be made to understand what is needed and what not to do. Although the punishment allows to suppress certain behaviors, its application causes behaviors of flight or removal of the own consequences of these.

**"No" to physical punishment**

The person giving a lesson can get carried away. Of course, when the physical punishment involves the administration of a slap or a spanking, the effect is doubly negative. First, it is punishable by law because parents must be an example to children and the example is not to hit. Children learn everything that is shown to them. Bad habits and bad behavior are therefore not favorable, even when they are intended to correct their behavior.

**Moderation and discipline**

When there are several alternative responses, and one of them is the one that should not be performed, one can reward the achievement of the other responses if they are incompatible with the unwanted action. This method known as differential reinforcement of incompatible behaviors gives better results in the long term than the punishment for undesirable response.

**Discipline instead of punishments**

It is important not to educate children in a constant exchange of rewards and prohibitions. They will not learn to value the discipline. In fact, they will not do it because they consider it important for the future, but because they know they can go out on weekends with their friends. This will yield results, but they will have intrinsic motivation and memorizing without learning and only seeking to reach the price. Hence, the punishment must be applied with care and moderation because it’s excess can turn the child into an anti-social being.

**Conclusion**

Punishments are therefore not only ineffective for a change in behavior, but counterproductive. The parent has natural authority. If this authority is recognized, no need to be authoritarian (Baumrind, 887-907). We have spent enough time trying to counteract our children and teenagers, this only leads to daily battles and multiple breaks in connection. Considering situations from the paradigm of attachment, we will get much better results.

**References**

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