



And what about Consequences?

Many adults who learn about Positive Discipline Philosophy and Tools eventually (or immediately) say, "Yes, but what about consequences?"

A brief answer to this question is that **Natural** and **Logical** Consequences as defined by Rudolf Dreikurs are supported by the Positive Discipline Framework and very effective when used in alignment with the Positive Discipline Philosophy in the context of building mutually respectful relationships and focusing on solutions. Traditional consequences are translated in the child as punishments and are not aligned with the Positive Discipline Framework.

According to Ross Greene in *The Explosive Child*, "challenging behavior occurs when the demands being placed upon a child outstrip the skills he [or she] has to respond adaptively to those demands."¹

Being responsible for children's academic and social emotional learning is challenging and demanding work – and we are all doing the best we can with the skills we have, based on our own personal histories and self-regulation in the moment.

Could it be that our reliance on tools that are traditional is because we do not naturally employ proactive and encouraging skills?

In "traditional" discipline, where discipline (from the Latin "disciplis" meaning "to teach") is not distinguished from punishment, adults often want a **traditional consequence** to fit the offense – another way of saying "let the punishment fit the crime." Jane Nelsen, the author of **Positive Discipline** and many other books in the Positive Discipline series, wrote, "Where did we get the crazy idea that in order to make children do better, first we have to make them feel worse?"² The series teaches adults many ways to focus on solutions that build skills without making children pay for their mistakes of the past.

Adults often use traditional consequences, punishment, censure, isolation, and removal of privileges for a variety of reasons:

- 1) Traditional practices are culturally accepted and work for some children in the *short term*.
- 2) Adults often use the short-term traditional practices and may not have explored the long-term effects of punishment³ in children:
 - Resentment ("This is unfair. I can't trust adults.")
 - Revenge ("They are winning now, but I'll get even.")
 - Rebellion ("I'll show them that I can do whatever I want:")
 - Retreat, in the form of sneakiness ("I won't get caught next time.") or reduced self-esteem ("I am a bad person.")
- 3) Adults may not have an understanding between traditional meaning of consequences and the Positive Discipline definitions of Natural and Logical Consequences inspired by Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs:
 - **Natural Consequences** - A natural consequence is anything that happens naturally, without adult interference.⁴

Could it be that we are pulled toward traditional consequences as we learn to use and practice the solution focused mutually respectful tools when we are discouraged?

Where did we get the crazy idea that in order to make children do better, first we have to make them feel worse?

Jane Nelsen, Positive Discipline

Natural Consequences

I GOT WET!

Children develop resiliency and capability by experiencing the natural consequences of their choices.

- 1) Avoid lectures or, "I told you so."
- 2) Show empathy: "You're soaking wet, that must be uncomfortable."
- 3) Be comforting without rescuing: "A warm shower might help."
- 4) Validate feelings: "Sounds like that was very embarrassing."

Quotes from the Positive Discipline books © Jane Nelsen

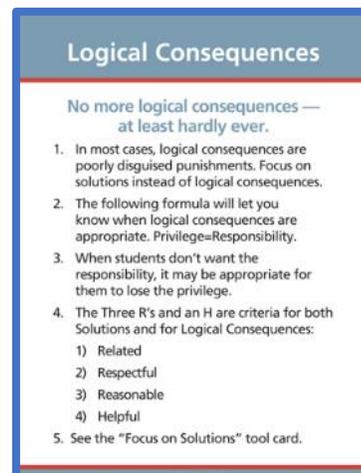
¹ *The Explosive Child*, Ross Greene, Harper Collins, 2014, pp. 11-12

² *Positive Discipline*, Jane Nelsen, Ballantine, 2006, p. 14.

³ *Ibid*, p.13. Read blog post here: <https://www.positivediscipline.com/articles/logical-consequences>

⁴ <https://www.positivediscipline.com/articles/natural-consequences> Note that the tool card says "a warm shower might help." In the school environment, consider "Dry clothes might help." Tool cards available for purchase here: <https://www.positivediscipline.com/catalog/tool-cards-0>

- **Logical Consequences**⁵ – As related in Dreikur's **Discipline without Tears**, logical consequences are "structured and arranged by the adult and must be experienced by the child as logical in nature."⁶ This corrective course to a misbehavior that requires adult intervention and fits all of the following criteria⁷
 - Related -to the misbehavior
 - Respectful – does not involve blame, shame, or pain and is enforced kindly and firmly.
 - Reasonable – from child's AND adult's perspectives
 - Helpful – focuses on solutions rather than blame, shame or punishment and
 - Revealed in Advance or Co-created – allows a child to know what will happen if he/she chooses a certain behavior and is not created by the adult in a moment of dysregulation
- 4) Adults may not understand that natural and logical consequences are effective when applied in line with Dreikur's thinking from **Discipline without Tears**⁸:
- Logical consequences are effective when children are displaying the Mistaken Goal of Undue Attention.
 - Natural consequences are effective when children are displaying the Mistaken Goal of Misguided Power or Revenge
 - Avoid both logical and natural consequences in children displaying the Mistaken Goal of Undue Attention
 - Jane Nelsen has a deep conviction that Logical Consequences, because they are so frequently misused, can be discouraging.
- 5) Adults may be just beginning their practice of modeling of different, proactive tools and are developing skills in this practice, and it's not natural.
- Because of the prevalence of traditional practices, most adults do not have models of mutually respectful parenting or teaching practices in their learning histories
 - Habitual, traditional discipline practices are often repeated in times of adult emotional dysregulation



Employing Positive Discipline practices allow adults to intentionally create mutually respectful environments, building connection and empathy as we teach and model kindness AND firmness.

Daily practice with all students⁹:

- Proactively Build Positive Relationships
- Teach Self-regulation (Brain in the Palm of the Hand)
- Proactively practice self-regulation with all students up to 2 minutes per time, 4x/day (for middle school or students who are departmentalized, multiple teachers employing this strategy is encouraging for students.)"
- Use Descriptive, Appreciative and Empowering Encouragement¹⁰

When students are misbehaving:

- Get curious:
 - What skill is this student missing that, if learned, would prevent the misbehavior in the future?
- Focus on finding solutions and teaching the life skills necessary to prevent the misbehavior in the future.
- Practice Encouragement 2x/day to build relationship with the student and demonstrate your consistency and reliability
- Know the difference between "Traditional" consequences and Dreikurs/Nelsen's Natural and Logical Consequences
- Reflect on Mistaken Goal Chart to hypothesize child's Mistaken Goal and Private Logic

⁵ Logical Consequences tool card detail from **Positive Discipline Tools for Teachers**. Tool cards are available for physical and app purchase here: <https://www.positivediscipline.com/catalog/tool-cards-0>

⁶ **Discipline Without Tears**, Rudolf Dreikurs and Pearl Cassel, Plume, 2nd Edition, 1990, p. 62.

⁷ Nelsen, p.107. Note that in the printed text, Helpful is a distinction of "Focusing on Solutions," not "Logical Consequences." The PD Tool Card for Teachers, Revealed in Advance is not omitted from the list and helpful is listed. Co-created here is adapted and suggested by Kristin Hovious, SEL Chicago

⁸ Dreikurs and Cassel, p. 63

⁹ **The Sound Discipline School: Administrator's Guide**, Sound Discipline.org, 2017

¹⁰ **Positive Discipline in Schools and Classrooms: Leaders' Guide**, McVittie, LaSalla, Smitha-McPherson, Positive Discipline Association, 2015, p.

- Use Mistaken Goal Chart Encouraging Statements based on the student's Mistaken Goal
- Explore and implement 1 or 2 proactive and encouraging responses from the Mistaken Goal Chart
- Natural and Logical Consequences are suggested by Dreikurs to be used for particular mistaken goal behavior:
 - **Logical consequences** can be effective when children are displaying the Mistaken Goal of Undue Attention.
 - **Natural consequences** can be effective when children are displaying the Mistaken Goal of Misguided Power or Revenge
 - **Avoid** both logical and natural consequences in children displaying the Mistaken Goal of Undue Attention.
- Parents and families won't understand this shift to focus on solutions¹¹ instead of consequences unless schools share this learning
 - Harm and misbehavior happen in communities. Parents and families want to know that their children's needs are being attended to, and often look through the traditional discipline lenses of that value and promote praise, rewards, punishment and traditional consequences.
 - As a school community moves toward focusing on solutions and away from punishment, consequences and censure, families will benefit from information about the shift – it will be new to them too.

Focus On Solutions



Instead of focusing on blame,
focus on solutions.

- 1) Identify a problem.
- 2) Brainstorm for as many solutions as possible.
- 3) Pick one that works for everyone.
- 4) Try the solution for a week.
- 5) In a week, evaluate. If it didn't work start over.

Quotes from the Positive Discipline books © Jane Nelsen

As we build and practice Positive Discipline skills in the classroom with children, consider these conceptual questions when feeling discouraged:

- Do we believe that learning happens in the context of relationships?
- Do we believe that more learning will happen in the context of positive relationships?
- Do we believe that the root word of “discipline” means “to teach?”
- Do we believe that discouragement is at the root of human “misbehavior?”
- Do we agree that misbehavior is a form of communication?
- Do we agree that focusing on solutions is a powerful way to help children (and adults) build skills to do better?

We welcome your questions and are here for your support.

Warmly,



SEL Chicago Founder

¹¹ Focus on Solution tool card detail from Positive Discipline Parenting Toolcards. Article found here: <https://www.positivediscipline.com/articles/focus-solutions>. Toolcard are available for physical and app purchase here: <https://www.positivediscipline.com/catalog/tool-cards-0>