

Personal Authority Through Self-Care

**Selftimeout Services**

Personal Ownership Through Self-Care



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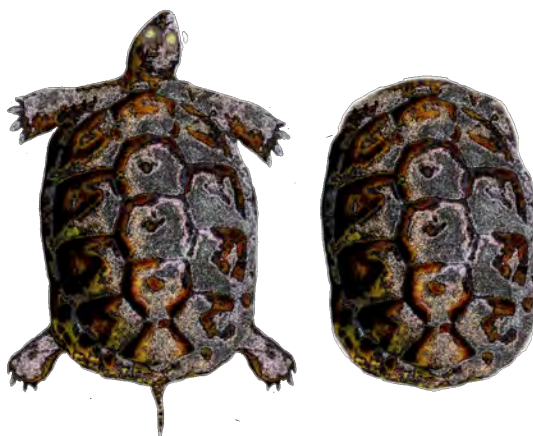
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# THERAPEUTIC PARENTING TOOLS

## For Parents and Professionals

### Transformation and Protection



**Connie Bonner-Britt, MA, LMHC and Chuck Britt, MA, LMFT**

Please check out our free website for a step-by-step tour through a Five Step Self Time Out:

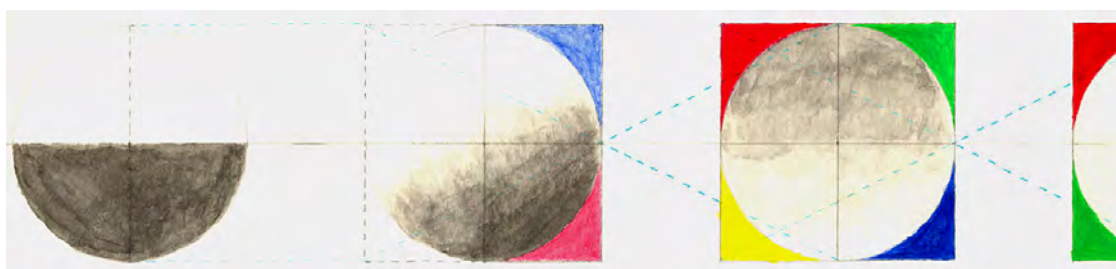
<http://www.selftimeout.org>

To schedule therapy sessions:

<http://www.selftimeout.com>

### Wonderment

The feeling of movement from one stage of development to another.



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### FOUR BASIC IDEAS

Personal Authority Through Self-Care

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Not Calm



1. **MISTAKES ARE PRECIOUS.** Humans (Adults and Children) can learn the most difficult lessons from their mistakes. Guilt and Shame and Fear make learning from our mistakes more complicated. Children are born with the equipment to learn from experience. The parent's job is to keep them (to the extent possible) from being hurt physically or emotionally and to provide structures so that they know they are making a mistake. The Parent's goal is to be supportive of the child's effort to learn from their mistakes by being an adult Model for learning from mistakes.

If an adult in authority is acting out when a child has made a mistake, the child focuses on learning what the adult is up to **not** on learning from whatever mistake the child may have made. The adult will likely escalate in frustration.

Acting out behavior is a natural process for children. Children are struggling to tell us about their feelings and needs without words. Acting out can be viewed as "Bad" but if we choose to do this, the consequence for us will be that our children will continue to act as if they are not being heard. The desired learning will not happen until the adult changes their approach.

If I allow my mood to change when a child is acting out (i.e. seeing the behavior as "Bad") I am drawing the attention of the child to myself; I am choosing to get between the child's consequences and their learning. The child's natural process of development will be delayed.

2. **FIVE STEP TIME OUTS FOR PARENTS.** It is generally thought that the only function of time-outs and privilege loss is to provide a consequence for poor choices. Time outs are thought of as a form of punishment. Parents don't think they deserve punishment so they don't like to time themselves out.

A less understood but more important function of time-outs **for parents** is for Parents to see a /self time out as a way to disengage from the mood of the testing child. As a result of this good self care the Parents choose to hold onto their role as Model to their children. they will succeed by learning the following steps: (1) Choose to stop engaging with what is escalating me. (2) Choose to quiet my voice and my body and Focus on my own feelings and needs. (3) Choose to reflect on Identifying, Labeling and Processing my feelings and needs. (4) Choose to make a new plan based on taking responsibility for taking care of my own feelings and needs. (5) Choose to praise myself for taking good care of myself.

An argument can be made that these **FIVE STEPS**, repeated over and over again, provide the Parent with information and experiences that move their development from one stage to another.

As development becomes not just a biological process but a bio-social process, these **FIVE STEPS** give us what we need to continue moving through more and more socially complex stages of development. Choosing to take **FIVE STEP** self time outs is how human beings (parents and children both) learn to become more mature.

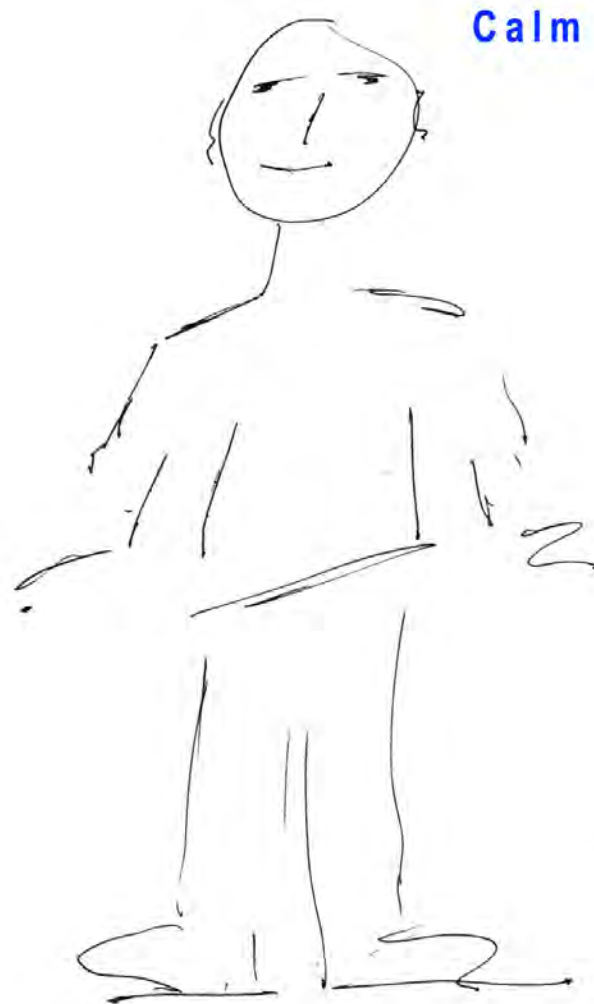
**3. DON'T BE PATIENT.** Parental Delay leads to Parental escalation. Work on consequencing quickly and without escalation. Healthy children act out until their need is met. Delayed consequences escalates everyone involved. Don't miss opportunities to provide the learning structure the child is asking you to give them. When we delay and give children repeated chances to make poor choices before we provide a consequence, we demonstrate confusion which manipulates the child and teaches them to manipulate us. At the same time we risk continued escalation and increasingly complicated power struggles with our children.

**4. ALL REAL CHANGE IS VOLUNTARY. ALL REAL RESPECT IS VOLUNTARY.** Every human has a right to say "no" even if it means they are choosing negative consequences. True choice exists when the parent demonstrates a willingness for the child to choose the negative consequence. We want to teach kids how to make **safe decisions** in the world... not to be **obedient**. When we teach them to be obedient to authority we teach them to be victims to predators. (Children get angry when we do this. It doesn't make sense to them.) Real respect is voluntary.

### SAFETY

**We at [Selftimeout Services](#) believe that safety is the most important thing. Change will be resisted and learning will be stunted until safety is established for each individual. In order to increase safety we believe the following commitments are the highest priorities:**

1. When adults or children make choices that create danger for themselves or others the question is not whether they have the right to choose danger. People sometimes choose danger whether they think they have a right to or not. The problem is that when one person chooses danger they choose other consequences for themselves, and they create consequences for others. Choosing to live in an unsafe situation is damaging to the psychological development of every adult and child touched by the situation. When a person is not connected to their feelings they are unaware of how much danger they are living in. As individuals learn cognitive-behavioral self care skills they begin to be more aware of the way their moods can become dangerous to themselves and the family they love.
2. When anyone acts in a dangerous way it is important that they be given consequences that are clearly connected with their actions and with little, if any, drama to distract them from learning. When people are not given the consequence they ask for (by making dangerous choices like a traffic ticket or hitting their sister) the level of safety decreases until, eventually, someone gets physically hurt. Learning from mistakes can only happen when the learner is willing to learn from their mistakes voluntarily. Adult or child.
3. Sometimes a dangerous choice creates unsafety but is not necessarily illegal. For example, emotional abuse, reckless behavior and intimidating behavior. In these situations it is important to invite the person to get help,



or to get help in dealing with them, or to form a team of caring people to support the person who is making dangerous choices. The team must not force the acting out person to do anything, but the team can offer support and resources to the person and to family members. The team can also feel empowered if necessary to document the legal but dangerous choices so that eventual legal consequences are more likely to happen before anyone is hurt.

4. Sometimes a dangerous choice is illegal and requires official involvement and consequences NOW to increase safety and decrease consequences for others. (Violence, threats of violence, substance abuse, violations of the physical boundaries of others and physical destructiveness.)

5. These days some police officers are more truly “Peace Officers”. More police officers are trained and skilled in de-escalating domestic situations and creating safety. **Many of us have no good reasons and many tragic examples in our own lives to distrust police officers.** At a time when many parents are isolated and have little outside support, it is important for parents to know they can utilize the skills of local police and social service organizations to prevent unsafe situations from turning into tragedies. If you encounter a police officer who does not have these skills it is OK to seek clarification of the situation with local officials, social services staff, medical providers and your religious community. Many local organizations are willing to help responsible parents and spouses establish good relations with local police to get urgent help for their family members in need. Those with undiagnosed conditions who are trying their best don’t want their needs and moods to become tragedies. When I am unable to find safe help outside the family to help me create safety I am in deepening trouble. **Each community member deserves all the support they need to create successful outcomes. Each community is responsible for serving everyone in this way.** When I have found enough help or the right help I will notice that unsafe choices in my family begin to decrease.

## CHOICE BASED STRUCTURE vs COERCIVE STRUCTURE

See the SELF CARE AND PARENTING LANGUAGE GLOSSARY under: **Structure**

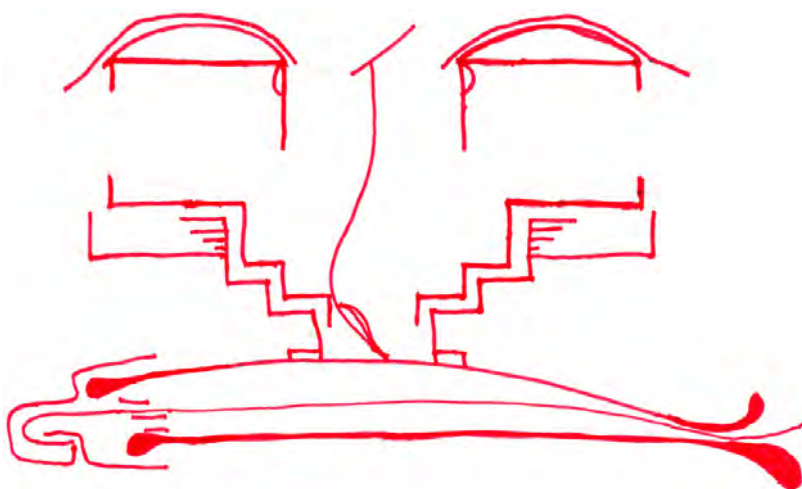
**Structure is the social contract we present to a child and how we present it.**

### COERCIVE STRUCTURES

The consequence of using Coercive Structure is that any child will resist in some way.  
**Safety will decrease.**

Examples of Coercive Structures:

- Forming the thought, “How can I **get** my child to \_\_\_\_\_?”
- Spanking and the threat of spanking. Attempting to get a child to move by grabbing them and moving them. Any threat. Reminding them of last time.
- Inviting them to feel guilt, shame or labeling them in negative or teasing ways.
- Disappointment, escalation and drama of any kind on the part of the parenting person. The consequence of using drama is that the attention of the child is drawn away from the poor choice of the child and the child’s need for a simple gentle consequence. Instead, the child’s focus is drawn by the confusing adult behavior.





- Changing body language, tone of voice, volume of voice, intensity of voice draws the attention of the child away from their poor choices and their need for a simple gentle consequence.

### CHOICE BASED STRUCTURES

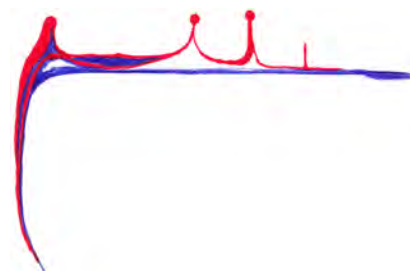
The consequence of using Choice Based Structures is that resistance will decline and be less intense. **Safety increases.**

- Forming the thought, “How can I create a choice based structure for my child?”
- Always respecting their physical and emotional boundaries and consequence them with a quiet, calm, non-physical choice structure promptly when they violate the boundaries of others.
- The difference between Coercion and Choice boils down to whether I am willing to accept my child choosing negative consequences.
- Keeping faith in the child's ability to learn when I keep the consequences clear and avoid drawing attention to myself.

#### Notes on privileges:

Everything the child does or has is a potential privilege loss except safety, boundaries, food, shelter, love and education. (Safety, boundaries, food, shelter, love and education are rights not privileges.) Privileges the child values most today are probably the most effective consequence today. It is wise to choose not to listen the child who says, “I don't care what you take away.” Find ways to provide earned privileges for any movement in the right direction. Be generous with earn-backs. Always make sure there is something that your child can choose to earn quickly. Always be sure you'r love is observant enough to notice any little thing that your child is doing a bit better. Children lost in a complex mood have given up on simple love, so when they do anything simple and functional, praise them for small successes and begin an earn-back process. Being generous with earned privileges encourages the child to invest in their families goodness and invest in their own goodness. When Parent's choose to frame the future of their child's life negatively, their child will of course frame their whole family negatively. Where will self-respect and respect for their parents take root?

#### Selfcare



## SAMPLE CHOICE STRUCTURES

### Sample Structure Number 1:

Four-year-old, Gabriella takes a step toward learning about processing feelings and the nature of negative consequences with mom's help when she refuses to follow the direction to stop kicking the leg of the table:

**Mom:** "Gabby, I see that you have **chosen** not to follow directions. You have **chosen** a two minute time-out."

**After Gabriella finishes the two-minute time-out:**

**Mom:** "Gabby, good job taking your time-out. Do you remember what you were doing when you **chose** a time-out?"

**Sally:** "Yes mom. I was kicking the table leg."

**Mom:** "Do you remember what you were feeling when you kicked the table leg?"

**Gabby:** "No."

**Mom:** "Well Gabby, I remember when I was about your age I used to get so angry that I would stamp my feet. I found out later that I could get some attention by just asking my mom or dad for help. It worked better than feeling hurt then acting angry. Can you try to ask for help next time you feel like kicking something?"

**Gabby:** "I don't think so mom."

**Mom:** "Well that's OK Gabby, you may need to **choose** quite a few time-outs before you learn to ask for help. Sometimes it takes a long time for me to learn something. Good job taking a time out, being honest and sharing your feelings. Well done!"

### Sample Structure Number 2:

Fourteen-year-old, Malik takes a step toward learning about processing feelings and the nature of negative consequences with dad's help. Malik makes a poor choice and then refuses to accept the negative consequences. He discovers what happens when he tries to manipulate dad into a power struggle and then tries to split mom and dad. He also learns how to do a better job of self care and understanding earn-backs.

Small consequences are much more effective than big consequences. Punishment creates power struggles. When kids learn that they are not being intimidated or manipulated in any way they want to collaborate.

**Dad:** "Malik, I see you have **chosen** to bring your muddy shoes into the house. You have **chosen** a two minute time out."

**Malik:** "NO! YOU ARE JUST STUPID! I DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING! YOU CAN'T MAKE ME!! I'LL TELL MOM YOU HIT ME!!"

**Dad:** "Malik, I see you are choosing additional consequences. For every minute you refuse to take your time out you are choosing ten minutes of early bed time."

**Twenty minutes have gone by and Malik has chosen over three hours of early bedtime. His dad has spent the time in another room timing himself out and having a talk with his wife. Malik was stewing in his room playing a video game. He let his dad know that he was starting his time out.**

**Now he is finished.**

**Dad:** "Malik, good job taking your time-out. Do you remember what you were doing when you **chose** a time-out?"

**Malik:** "No!"

**Dad:** "You **chose** to bring your muddy shoes into the house. You refused to follow directions. Then you refused a time out." Do you remember what you were feeling when you came in the house?"

**Malik:** "I was angry because Jordan hit me and I didn't hit him back."

**Dad:** "Good job sharing your story Malik. So you were angry because you didn't hit Jordan back?"

**Malik:** "Yes."

**Dad:** "Well I can understand you being angry. What do you think you can do next time you are angry that won't be a choice for consequences?"

**Malik:** "Well, I guess I could ask for help."

**Dad:** "Good job Malik! Good job taking a time out. You have chosen over three hours of early bedtime because you took twenty minutes to take your time out. You also had a whale of a tantrum. We can set up an earn back. For every hour you follow directions first time asked and accept consequences immediately you will earn back 30 minutes toward regular bed time."

**Malik:** "OK dad."

**Dad:** "Now I need you to take your dirty shoes out on the porch, brush the dirt off of them and vacuum the floor here in the entry way."

**Malik:** "OK dad."

**Dad:** "Good job, Malik. Great job not hitting Jordan back. I will have a talk with Jordan's parents."

## **ROLES OF PARENT AND CHILD**

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF ROLES**

All humans need to play particular roles at different times in their development. When we choose to be in the role of Parent, the child we invite into our arms will need us to be open to and ready for their attempts to attach to us. Children communicate with us, what Love is to them, in any given moment. Their Parent's response tells the child what the parent's capacity and willingness is in any given moment.

Sometimes your child will need to be genuinely comforted or consoled, but sometimes they will need to TEST you to discover or separate out the difference between genuine needs to be comforted and consoled, and manipulative needs, in order to feel safe and trust your help. Both of these attempts by the child to relate to you are "attachment". They are both "True and Honest". They are both "Love". They are both the "Disengagement of Ever growing Autonomy". All of this is normal development. These events are necessary tests of our genuineness and authenticity and necessary for the child who needs to find the real limits of our manipulative complexity, as well as our ability to be simple and honest. The child is always testing our ability to do self care effectively so that they can feel safe enough to learn to grow beyond us. The way we do our self care as the child is testing us, is very closely watched by our child. The Parent's role is to be openly learning how to be effective enough with their own self care, as they are being tested by the child, so that the child feels safe enough and motivated enough to learn and grow. This effort requires continued testing of the parent by the child over time.

The Child's role is to attach to the parent with relentless testing (which is all LOVE) so that she learns all you know until she finds all the courage she will need to leave you, attach to the world, and then someday suddenly realize she needs to come home and tell you her story from time to time. With enough self love and self care Parents can Model for their children that it's OK to face the naturally terrifying tensions created by their need to take their next steps and joyfully move along in accomplishments from one developmental milestone to the next.

### **MATURITY AND PARENTAL MODELING**

Our children are constantly expanding their need to master skills to calm their own anxieties so that they can face the next levels of tensions, unknowns, contradictions and complexities of development. When Parents and Elders falter in modeling these self care skills, children falter in their attempts to master them. The child will continue using the convoluted self care plans that are not working for their faltering parents. The child will feel increasing fear and anxiety until the parent shows them a pathway to adequate self care to calm their own feelings, needs, emotions and impulses. These skills will reduce the young person's consequences and help them gain confidence, reducing their anxiety. The child knows they need help in order to face the larger and larger changes coming at them. They feel in their body an unfilled emptiness. They look for opportunities to complete themselves. It is a major victory for the family and the child when parents can find their own completeness by mastering new skills that fill a void in the family.

A loving, mature, responsible, developing parent, who models healthy emotionally secure self care, is the crucial fuel needed for the child to learn and grow into a healthy and emotionally secure young person.

### **Parent Role**

Parents have immense power when viewed from the child's point of view. That power is identified by the deep love and attachment developed through the parent-child relationships. The parent's role, through their love of the child, is to keep kids safe and model self care skills in front of them. Children are anxious to learn how to keep themselves safe as they get older and spend more

time away from Parents, facing more risks with less adult support. Children depend on their parents to know what to do with difficult emotions and feelings that challenging decision-making brings. It is the parent's job to either have the abilities their children need them to have or to get help from other family members, the community or professionals in order to meet the needs of the children. It is the job of parents to model for their children how to Identify, Label and Process feelings by providing clear rules, structure, consequences and clear un-escalated communication. The parenting adults can set up their own choice/consequence and *Five Step Self Time Out* care structures to help their children deal with the ever increasing stresses of life. If what the parent builds works for them, the child feels safe and secure enough to value that plan of self care, to learn it voluntarily and prosper from it.

It is natural that when the Parent's are actively practicing cognitive-behavioral based self care in front of their children a strong bond of love and safety between the parent and child is created in such a way that the child begins to feel and show motivation. Traumatic injuries begin to loose power as the young person gradually integrates these new skills they are learning voluntarily. This process creates a reduction in anxiety and acting out behaviors. The child develops a bond of love, security, and safety with their learning parents. This bond of the attachment/detachment process is the developmental means for healthy transformation and mutual growth and development for both parent and child. This bond of love is the power of Parental Modeling.

### **Child Role**

Young children are very vulnerable. They are very tough. They are very resilient. Children naturally form dependent relationships with the adults responsible for them. It is natural for children to be in a process of learning how to be safe in the world. The Child's role is to learn from their mistakes and successes to be safe in the world.

If parents model manipulation and coercion, children will try to keep themselves safe in the world by manipulating the people and situations around them, as a person would play chess. This creates a great burden on the child and contributes to a child's acting out behaviors and leads to deep anxiety. The more complicated and controlling the child behaves the more guilt and shame they carry.

On the other hand when we can model a loving, safe and structured learning situation our children can learn how to be fully empowered, respected and respectful members of their family and their community. It is the role of children in the family to learn how to be safe in the world. This means learning through testing their learning parents, how to give themselves self-time-outs and use them to learn how to identify, label and process feelings for themselves and with their family. These children will become adults skilled at life.

## **QUICK DO'S AND DONT'S**

### **Strategies That Will Work**

- Taking a time-out when you are starting to see your red flags.
- Not trying to be patient. Consequences given quickly and without escalation.
- Consequencing with a quiet voice and a quiet body.
- Choosing not to be in power struggles, by giving yourself a five step self time out.
- Consequences short and small but more frequently the first time the child makes a poor choice.
- Consequences with one warning after rules are established or clear directions have been given.
- Small consequences with earn backs.
- Earn backs used at the time consequences were chosen.



- Adult consistency. Adult constancy.
- Point systems that are closely watched and adjusted. Earn backs applied as needed.
- No threats.
- Clear rules and directions. Parents or caregivers who cannot be spilt or mood shifted by others.
- When things are not working, consider that you may not be parenting in a way that makes success possible for the child. (Restudy and get more opinions about the developmental needs of the child.)
- Supervision and feedback tuned to the actual needs of the child, not the needs of the parent.
- Structured and unstructured time tuned to the needs of the child, not the needs of the parent.
- Time-out used by modeling for kids how to Identify, Label and Process parental feelings so they can learn to care for their own feelings and to differentiate between positive and negative consequences.
- Negative consequences seen as only part of a process of modeling necessary self care skills for parents as well as children.
- Reward/reinforcement used for even very small or incremental progress. (The goal is to celebrate **progress** not perfection.)
- Short term and incremental rewards are more effective than long-term rewards.
- Choosing to play the role of parent to model skills by properly administering praise and celebration. We can understand consequences as invitations **not** strategies to achieve control.
- Avoid using “Disappointment” as a tool. Try structuring a consequence instead. If you are feeling disappointed it is time to get more support.
- Use a minimum number of rules. One rule can be, “Follow directions first time asked.”
- Thinking, “How can I create a choice structure so my child can learn how to \_\_\_\_\_?”
- Encourage the child to take credit for **all** their accomplishments even if you helped a whole lot!!!
- If you feel like you are praising too much try to get more specific about what you are praising them for. Praise some more!

### **Strategies That Will Fail**

- Not taking a time out when you are starting to see your red flags.
- Patience leading to frustration or anger.
- Yelling. Raising your voice.
- Power struggles both emotional and physical.
- Consequences too big or too long.
- Consequences without warnings, or without established rules or clear directions.
- Big or any consequences without earn backs.
- Earn backs used impulsively or as part of power struggles or after the consequence has been in effect for too long. Notice and then declare a victory instead.
- Adult inconsistency. Adult inconstancy.
- Point systems that allow children to go too far into a hole.
- Idle threats. Any threats.
- Lack of clear directions or rules. Parents or adults that can be split or mood shifted.
- Warnings given repeatedly without consequences even when a rule or direction is established.

- Expectations that are below or above the current demonstrated voluntary abilities of the child.
- Lack of non-judgmental supervision and loving feedback.
- Excessive, unstructured time.
- Inappropriate use of Time-out as emotional or physical punishment.
- Too much reliance on negative consequences.
- Not enough (or not sufficiently motivating) reward/reinforcement.
- Imbalance between short-term and long-term rewards.
- Using blame, guilt and shame to try to achieve power or control.
- Disappointment.
- Too many rules.
- Thinking, “How can I get my child to do \_\_\_\_\_?”
- Taking credit for the child’s accomplishments.
- Not enough praise and celebration.

### **A Self Time-Out Is...**

- the process through which humans learn to identify, label and learn from feelings and needs. Along this same path and at the same time we learn to choose between positive and negative consequences.
- an adult directed or self directed **but always voluntarily chosen or self-initiated** aloneness and quiet reflection time.
- when a person begins to take Self-Time-Outs it is the first sign that a person is learning to behave in a more emotionally mature way. They are learning to take care of their own moods. They are learning how their moods are separate from the moods of others. They are giving themselves an opportunity to choose to calm themselves so they can stay out of someone else’s escalating situation.
- an opportunity to create safety or move out of an unsafe situation.
- a far more effective alternative to physical or emotional coercion.
- a way for a parent to choose to take care of their own needs and have more positive consequences by choosing to use simple tools to separate their own mood from the moods of others. By doing this they keep their Role as Model to their children.
- an effective modeling/learning tool.
- using choice based structures to teach the essential skills of: 1. Taking responsibility for one’s own behavior. 2. Respecting the boundaries of others. 3. Standing up for ones own boundaries.
- an effective way to intervene to extinguish acting-out behavior and model alternatives that feel good
- for children **and** adults to practice. As we practice we build skills that are powerful.
- most effective when all adults working with a child use the same approach.
- most effective when there is a specific, parent determined place for a time out that is in the same area the family is in.
- most effective when brief and frequent instead of long and rarely or impulsively applied.
- the process of learning that only I can calm me. And learning only they can calm them.

### **A Time-Out Must Not Be...**

- a form of punishment or judgment or coercion.
- a way to avoid relationship with my child.
- a tool to avoid finding out what I am feeling, taking care of my own feeling and finding out that I am feeling better.
- a way to withdraw love.

- a way to impose guilt or shame.
- a way to make the other individual feel "bad" about what has happened.
- a way "to get someone to do something".
- like jail (trying to use parental authority to exclude a family member from the group.
- an opportunity to **control** a situation.
- an involuntary process. (If it is in any way involuntary the healthy child will resist.
- part of a process of physical or emotional coercion.
- part of a power struggle.
- just for children.
- expected to work when only one parent is invested in using them properly.
- too long or too isolated.
- expected to work effectively by a single adult in isolation.

## **HOW TO FEEL LESS PANIC**

**When you feel stressed take a self time out, look at your Tool Box and see the options you have created.**

### **You can build a big Tool Box.**

- Be willing to choose to take time outs sooner rather than later.
- Be willing to choose **not** to "Get that kid to do \_\_\_\_\_"
- Be willing to choose to create structures so that the child has a clear choice between following the rule (or the direction) and choosing to have a negative consequence.
- Be willing to develop at least a three person deep support system. Be willing to use it.
- Connect with your co-parent. (If this isn't possible get help!)
- When things get dangerous or if threats are being made be willing to increase the size and professionalism of your support team now to help you de-escalate the situation.
- Be willing to stop buying excuses for unsafe behavior by get the needed help to make an effective plan to increase safety.
- Remember that everything is a potential removable privilege loss except safety, boundaries, food, shelter, love and education. (Safety, boundaries, food, shelter, love and education are rights not privileges.)
- Remember that the privileges the child values most today may be the most effective consequence today.
- Be willing to consequence now and every time the child makes a poor choice instead of being patient. (Patience leads to escalation and panic in all involved.)
- If a direction or a consequence is refused set up a clocked consequence. "For every minute you refuse to start with the dishes (start your time out etc.) you are choosing 5 minutes of early bedtime tomorrow." If they choose hours and hours of consequence provide a generous praise and earn-back for small improvements in the child's behavior.

## **ROLE OF SUPPORT PERSON**

**When a person asks for support the support person can choose to...**

- listen. Check with the person asking for support to make sure you are hearing accurately. (People who feel heard feel supported.) Repeat back exactly what they say to you then check in with them to see if they feel listened to.
- avoid being critical, blaming or shaming of anyone.
- remind them to take Self Time Outs.
- remind them that their awareness of danger comes from being increasingly aware of how they feel. Support their child in taking care of the feelings they are having that they believe are the highest priority right now.

- remind them that their information about solving problems comes from their feelings. Feelings lead to Needs. When you know what you are Feeling and Needing the Plan that will work is in the room with you.
- be willing to sit and listen while they identify, label and talk about their feelings.
- respect them by being confident that they can resolve their problems using their inner resources and communicating and processing their feelings.
- remind them that they will feel more competent and powerful when they respect the boundaries of others and demand respect for their own boundaries.

**Please Remember:**

- Support people have no right to judge or criticize the person needing support, other family members (or anyone for that matter).
- Support people have no right to force or coerce or pressure any family member to do anything.
- Support people must avoid causing more trouble than already exists.

### **WHEN TO GET ADDITIONAL SUPPORT**

**It is time to get additional help from support people when you are feeling...**

- angry at your co-parent and feel hopeless about sharing your feelings with them.
- you don't need to change in order to meet the needs of your kids.
- fearful and having trouble creating safety.
- frustrated and having trouble taking a time-out your self.
- depressed and having trouble paying attention.
- tired and having trouble getting rest.
- like a victim and don't know how to get your needs met.
- angry and don't want to stop blaming others.
- disappointed and feel like it is OK to make the other person feel bad.
- like you are doing the best you can and still feel like you are failing as a parent.
- unsafe.



Art by Chuck Britt