

PDF A: Discipline Instincts Chart

What We Think	Typical Reaction	Why It's a Mistake
"I need to control their behavior right now."	Yelling, threats, punitive commands	Discipline becomes about behavior control, not heart formation; damages relationship rather than growing love.
"Their disobedience is disrespect."	Immediate anger and resentment	Reacting to the act, not the heart; misses teaching moments for real transformation.
"I need to respond quickly before it gets worse."	Rush into discipline without pause	Instinctual reactions escalate conflict instead of calming it.
"A big consequence will make them obey next time."	Harsh or unrelated punishments	Consequences unrelated to the action increase distance rather than promote understanding.
"They should already know better."	Frustration or impatience	Assumes knowledge equals obedience and skips teaching.
"If I don't assert authority, they'll walk all over me."	Power struggles	Discipline becomes about asserting control over love and mercy, reinforcing fear instead of trust.
"An angry response will fix this quickly."	Scolding, stern face, punitive tone	Anger conveys rejection and shuts down conversation, harming connection.
"Discipline ends when the behavior changes."	End the moment once a consequence is delivered	Without reconciliation, relationship is left fractured and mistrust grows.

PDF B: 8 Counter-Habits

1. Establish Loving Authority

Lead with authority rooted in love and connection, not mere control.

2. Pause Before Responding

Take a breath or brief prayer before reacting to prevent instinct-driven responses.

3. Pray and Self-Talk

Address your own heart; recognize God may be discipling you as well.

4. Use Body Language & Calm Presence

Eye contact, calm tone, and gentle touch communicate connection before correction.

5. Seek Understanding

Ask why the child acted this way; help them reflect on intentions and motives.

6. Apply Consequences Thoughtfully

Consequences should be relevant to behavior and designed to teach, not punish arbitrarily.

7. Insist on Confession & Apology

Help children acknowledge their actions and commit to change.

8. Always End in Reconciliation

Restore the relationship before ending discipline; use affection, playful touch, and signals of love.

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