

ON AGING – DISCIPLINE

By Donna Deos

One thing we usually learn early on in life is discipline. Some of us have a fear of discipline – primarily based on how we learned it, while some of us love to inflict it on others (hence the bullying phenomenon these days). Really, the point of discipline is to use it guide your own way in life so that you achieve what you wish to.

Discipline is often thought of as a punishment. We are taught as young children right from wrong based on the consequences we are given when we do a supposed wrong.

Discipline is about control.

You can discipline yourself to do things a certain way. To learn something, to experience something and to perfect it as much as possible. For example, to learn to play the piano requires discipline. You need to learn the scales, how to read music, what each note is supposed to sound like and how to use the keys and pedals to make other effects that fully round out the abilities of the instrument and the musician.

Our whole life is like this really. We come into this life open. What we experience either expands us or shuts us down. Good forms of discipline help us to stay open and learn and grow more. Other forms of discipline teach us not to even try as no good will come from it. That's a shame, but it does happen.

What types of discipline are you imparting on yourself and others? What types were imparted on you as you grew up? When I was a child we were taught to respect our elders and the consequences to go against that were severe. So severe that entire generations held that model. Which, as you reached elder hood turned out to benefit you as people listened to you and respected your lifelong learning as something to be revered and appreciated.

Over the years we have gotten softer in our discipline and teachings. So much so that now it seems there is little to no discipline to be found. There is little to no respect either. You see, the two go hand in hand. If you are disciplined, you have respect for people, places and things. You know that great effort went into them and that there is a loving concern at the heart of it all. Without discipline there is no way of teaching the respect and therefore there is an overall lack or inability to reach completion on things.

A lot of what is wrong with our situation these days is due to the lack of discipline that exists these days. Now I'm not saying the way I was raised was better than any other time, I can only use it to relate you to the point I am making. When we were growing up, adults worked together to instill values in children. Parents, teachers, neighbors, store owners, etc. any adult really, had the ability to right a wrong or at least point one out – and they weren't sued, threatened or bullied when they did it. People weren't afraid of being sued or arrested. Rather, it was the duty of every adult to do what was right and help instill the common good in all of the youth.



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Somewhere along the way this changed. Teachers only teach what is on the syllabus or in the stated curriculum. They no longer are able to teach morals, ethics, good citizenship and how to be part of the greater community. At the same time, parents aren't doing it much either. They got used to teachers being the ones to teach, but they also enabled society to handicap those teachers from being able to discipline the kids who clearly needed it.

If you've raised children, you know that they look for boundaries along the way. When you give them the boundary, they settle in and behave well again for a while. Then, they test another boundary and are given another response and the pattern repeats. This is how they grow and learn. It's not always comfortable, but it is part of the job. If you always let them test you but don't instill any boundaries, you end up with a hellion. A little brat that nobody wants around. In my estimation, you just failed as a parent. Your job is to raise them to be happy and successful. By not showing them how to do that, you failed. They didn't. They looked for the boundary, you didn't give it. It's your fault. None of us want our kid to be the little brat others don't want around.

How many of us can think of some little kid that our children were in school with who could really use a stern parenting moment? How many of us would love to have the opportunity to set that straight? How many of us actually would though? Right, none of us can because society has decided that everyone is basically untouchable because everything has to be fair and right. Which is making things the exact opposite of that. Everyone gets to have unlimited time outs that don't amount to anything because we are simply acting like discipline exists, when it really doesn't. If there are no consequences, there is no way to learn discipline. The consequence of not learning and practicing the scales means you don't become a great pianist. You don't even become mediocre.

It's time we realized that looking the other way, or being too scared of the consequence of speaking up comes at a much greater cost. Let's work more on disciplining ourselves and our loved ones that true goodness, growth and perhaps even perfection comes from routinely practicing doing the right things. Not from looking the other way hoping someone else will step up and do it for us. If we want our children to respect us and others, to work hard and earn results then we need to show them that through our own deeds and stop handing them trophies for showing up versus working at actually achieving something.

Here's hoping you are loved, respected and revered for the wonderful human you are. It's not too late for us to turn this ship around.

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