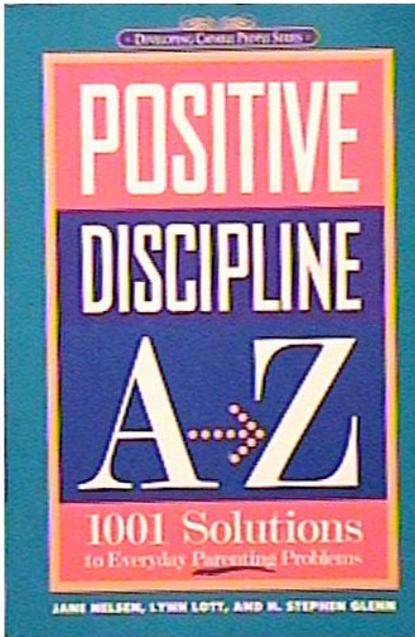


***Positive Discipline, A To Z***  
**Jane Nelson, Lynn Lott, and Stephen Glenn**



The book, *Positive Discipline A to Z, 1001 Solutions to Everyday Parenting Problems*, is written by three individuals, Jane Nelson, Lynn Lott, and H. Stephen Glenn. The dedication at the front of this book suggests the flavor and attitude contained in its pages. It states “To our loved ones and to parents everywhere who want to show their love by empowering their children.” One of the major problems in today’s society is the fact that too many children have been empowered by weak or misinformed parents. These children believe that they have rights that they do not have. These children are convinced that they are in charge. They believe that there is no one who can tell them what to do. They believe that no one has the right to touch them, let alone use physical force against them. These children really believe that they are running the show. As the parent reads through this book, they are encouraged to give up much of their parental authority and to empower their children with the ability to determine their own direction. Unfortunately, that direction is usually destructive. The authors of this book also suggest to parents that they become involved with their children in an activity that is considered a crime in every state in this country, viewing pornographic movies. If a parent follows the advice in this book, they could be charged with a felony offense. I would advise parents who see the term “Positive Discipline,” to be cautious of its content.

Part one of this book is titled *Basic Positive Discipline Parenting Tools*. The authors begin by discussing “family meetings.” Now mind you, I have nothing against family meetings. I believe there should be a family meeting every day, at dinnertime. That is the best time to sit

together, talk over the day's events, express our concerns, and laugh. But this isn't the kind of family meeting that the authors are talking about. They write,

**If we had to choose only one parenting tool, it would be family meetings. Parents can solve many hassles with their children (over four years old) by suggesting that problems be put on the agenda for discussion and/or solutions during the weekly family meetings. The important components for successful family meetings are:**

- **Post an agenda.**
- **Set a regularly scheduled meeting time, once a week, that everyone can count on.**
- **Rotate the chairperson and recorder.**
- **Start with compliments and appreciations so everyone gets an opportunity to give and receive validation.**
- **When solutions are brainstormed, take a vote on all the suggestions. Everyone in the family must agree before a suggestion is implemented.**

**It often takes time for family meetings to be successful (they are never perfect). Parents have to learn to give up lectures and control, and children must realize that they will be listened to and taken seriously.**

What is disturbing about the family meetings suggested by the authors, is the fact that all of the family members, including the children over four years old, have more than an equal say in the operation of the household. Everyone must agree before a rule can be implemented. Each member of the family, including the kids, has equal veto power.

Picture this. Dad and mom have decided that since school has started, the normal bedtime for these elementary school children which has been in effect during summer break should be moved up an hour from ten o'clock to nine o'clock. Naturally, since the decisions on scheduling are voted on, this must be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. The subject is posted and the matter is addressed on the first Monday of the month. Mom and dad give their arguments. The chairperson, nine year old Larry Lawmaker, brings the matter to a vote. Mom and dad vote yes, after giving a great argument for the implementation of the new bedtime. Larry counts the votes. Mom votes yes. Dad votes yes. Ten-year-old Billy Bribe votes yes since he has been promised a new stereo in his room. Eight-year-old Susie Swayed votes yes, since mom has promised to take her to the mall later today. All of the family holds their breath as they wait for the last vote. Mom and dad gaze at Larry Lawmaker with a pleading look in their eyes. Did they raise Larry to be responsible? Have they instilled in the nine-year-old the ability to make decisions that are in his best interest? Larry looks over the table at Dad, whom he is still angry with for buying a station wagon instead of that Mustang convertible. "I vote no," he says, as the other two children smile. Based on the rules of the family meeting, the children cannot be forced to go to bed at nine o'clock. The summer bedtime is still in effect during the school months.

Does anyone realize how utterly impossible it would be to implement a rule in this household? This is not even a democracy, where the majority rules! The authors state "Parents have to learn to give up lectures and control." These terms should sound all too familiar to us by now. Proverbs 29:15, the parenting in a nutshell verse, states "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." This verse directly addresses "lectures

and control.” The rod is the control. Reproof is the lecture. These authors are not only suggesting that the parent relinquish control of the rod and eliminate spanking from their itinerary, they are suggesting that the parent give up the right to lecture their child. They are telling us to stop giving our children advice!

These authors also recommend the use of “time outs.” Almost all of the modern day non-spanking advocates suggest using the time out as a tool to modify a child’s behavior. They write,

**One of the most popular discipline methods used by parents today is some kind of isolation or time out. Time out can be an encouraging and empowering experience for children, instead of punitive and humiliating.**

One of the causes of the defiant attitude in today’s youth is the recent movement to “empower” children. The authors advise against using “punitive” discipline to modify behavior. The movement to eliminate any and all punishment from child rearing is evident in the next paragraph.

**Time out is encouraging when parents are more concerned with long-range benefits to children than short-term control at the expense of children. Punitive time out may stop behavior for the moment. The benefits, however, are short term if the child decides to get even or give up.**

**To set up a time out that is encouraging, explain to children, “This is not meant for punishment, but for a time to calm down until you feel better. As soon as you feel better, and you can decide when that is, you can come out.”**

**This is quite different from the way many parents send their children to their rooms. With a punitive attitude, they say, “Go to your room and think about what you have done.” These parents believe guilt, shame, and suffering will motivate their children to do better. Kids do better when they feel better. We don’t motivate kids to do better by making them feel worse through punitive time out.**

One of the results of this “positive discipline” movement that I have noticed in my work as a police officer is the lack of conscience in many juvenile offenders. Never made to feel guilty when committing an offense, the child never develops the necessary controls on their behavior that have been a common factor in many of our lives. Without guilt, the offense is much easier to commit. This theory, that children should never be made to feel guilty or shameful is extremely dangerous.

The authors also contend that a parent should never use a “punitive” time out, but should always use an “encouraging” time out. The difference, according to these experts, is how you tell your child to go to their room. To suggest to your child that he “think about what he has done” is wrong. To tell your child that “this is not meant for punishment” is the correct approach. I’m not really sure that the child will take either seriously.

The subject of defiance is addressed further on in this section. A question is posed by an unnamed party, apparently someone who has written the authors for advice. This confused parent offers their dilemma,

**If I say yes, my child says no. If I say “Don’t run into the street,” my child looks at me and runs into the street. It’s like this all day. I’m angry and don’t know what to do.**

There are countless parents today who are experiencing this same problem. I can say without question that there is one form of discipline that these parents can incorporate that will be more effective in saving their child’s life. It is corporal punishment. The non-spanking advocate can spew theory till time comes to an end, but the time tested proven form of discipline that results in immediate behavior modification is a spanking. If these parents continue to “reason” with their child, there is a good chance that the child will be struck by a car. These are the type of parents who, if the child survives to the age of thirteen or fourteen, eventually end up in my office in the detective bureau, asking me what they are allowed to do to control their child. Most of these parents have no idea what has caused their child to defy their every instruction. I usually tell them that it is because the child is not afraid of them. The authors, on the other hand, suggest the following reason for the child’s defiance. They write,

**You and your child are in a power struggle that can easily turn to revenge. The more you try to force your will with your child, the more she will defy you and the more discouraged you will both become. Defiant children are a gift sent to parents who need to practice inviting cooperation instead of practicing power over others.**

Here, the authors are implying that if your child is flagrantly defying your rules, they have been sent to you by someone or something (perhaps a higher power) to teach you a lesson. But the lesson you are to learn is certainly not the one that our Creator intended. The solution, according to these experts, is as follows.

**This is an opportunity to learn how to invite cooperation. Give limited choices and ask questions instead of giving lectures. Practice letting your child have the last word. (This is harder than you think. Try it.) Some children will push and push until they get a spanking. Then they settle down. They have been trained not to settle down until they are spanked. Instead of spanking, hold the defiant child firmly on your lap. No matter how much she struggles, do not let go until she settles down.**

I was confused about this last statement until I read into the meaning of the paragraph. The authors offer some very subtle deceptions here. They make the statement that when a child is spanked, they will settle down. Instead of admitting that spanking a child causes a positive change in their behavior, they have implied that the child only changes their behavior when they are spanked. Therefore, a spanking is necessary every time a change in behavior is needed. The authors imply that holding a struggling child is a more successful method to control improper behavior. Some psychologists have labeled this method “the wrap.” But the authors have conveniently avoided any indication of the time necessary to get the child to “settle down.” Nor do they indicate if this method is necessary more than once. I would guess that because of the lack of the “fear factor,” the wrap is much less effective than spanking as a disciplinary tool. The “Parenting Pointers” at the end of this section suggest the following.

**Children prefer to cooperate and do what's in their own best interest, but if you treat them disrespectfully, they are willing to suffer great personal pain to show you that you can't boss them around. If you wait and watch before jumping in and controlling, kids will usually do the right thing. Children who defy see punishment as an excuse to defy more. Inviting cooperation works wonders with a defiant child.**

At the risk of being repetitive, I will again ask parents to think hard about mandatory attendance laws for schools. If every child were given the choice to attend school or to stay home, how many children would be in school? You are absolutely right, very few! But if those children are asked if they know what is best for them, going to school or staying home, they will all tell you that school is more important than staying home. My point is this. Even when children know what is in their best interest, most will chose to do the opposite. The author's claim that "kids will usually do the right thing" is dead wrong!

One of the traits that I have observed in children that have never been trained to respect authority is an anger directed at anyone who attempts to force their will on the child. Our human nature comes equipped with plenty of undesirable traits. Matthew 15:19 states "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:" If a child is not trained to control those natural tendencies, the parent ends up constantly dealing with the behavior that comes naturally "out of the heart." The authors, on the other hand, take a different approach.

**QUESTION: "My child loses his temper too quickly, picks on younger children and animals, refuses to cooperate at home or at school, and argues with me constantly. Everyone tells me he is an 'aggressive child,' as if he has some kind of disease. Why does he work this way, and what can I do?"**

**ANSWER: Children aren't born aggressive, but they can become this way when no one asks their opinion or considers their needs. When parents assume they know best for their children, they inadvertently may be inviting a lot of pent-up anger that comes out as aggressive behavior. If parents are aggressive, punitive, or controlling, children may decide unconsciously that this is the way to behave to accomplish things.**

**Instead of focusing on behavior, try to understand the belief behind the behavior. Simply trying to modify the behavior will not solve problems of beliefs or other causes of aggression. Avoid reacting to aggression with a power struggle.**

The authors argue the point that "parents assume they know best for their children." Most people will agree with me that the parent knows more than anyone else what is best for their children. In today's culture, parents are being told that public school administrators, school counselors, psychologists, and social workers are better equipped to deal with the child's needs. The parent is being eliminated from the task of raising the child.

This book encourages parents to ignore backtalk and to walk away from flagrant disrespect for the parent's authority. In the section titled *Disrespect*, it reads,

**QUESTION: My child is often disrespectful to me. She talks back in a sassy**

manner, yells at me, and sometimes calls me names. The more I punish her, the worse it gets.

**ANSWER:** Too many parents expect their children to be respectful when they are not respectful to their children. Punishment is not respectful. In a calm, respectful voice, tell your child, “If I have ever spoken to you that way, I apologize.” Calmly leave the room without saying a word. If your child follows, go for a walk or get into the shower. If you are not too upset, try hugging your child.

The authors have again indicated that the more a parent punishes, the more the offense occurs. This is simply not true. They also state that punishing a child for wrongdoing is disrespectful. When a judge sentences the criminal to prison, it is not considered disrespectful, and we are talking about one adult dealing with another adult who has violated the rules. To claim that a parent who punishes a child for misbehavior is showing disrespect is foolish.

In this book, parents who spank their child are made out to be blundering idiots who don't know any better and have made a horrendous mistake. Take for example the section titled *Cruelty to Animals*. The authors state,

**QUESTION:** “My little boy kicked the cat. I was so upset, I spanked him and told him he should never be cruel to animals. The very next day he was squeezing the cat and practically choking it to death. How can I teach him to be kind to animals?”

**ANSWER:** It does not help to treat children with the same kind of cruelty. (Spanking hurts children just as much as kicking hurts animals.) Children often treat animals the way they are treated.

**Allow for a cooling-off period and then apologize to your child for spanking him. Tell the truth. Tell him that you were angry about the way he hurt the cat, but that was not an excuse for you to hurt him.**

**Get into his world and make a guess about how he felt when you spanked him: “I’ll bet you didn’t like it when I spanked you. It probably made you very angry or hurt. I would probably feel the same way.”**

**Decide what you will do. Tell your child, “I won’t hit you any more because I don’t want you, the cat, or anyone to experience that kind of disrespect.”**

**Children can learn that it is not okay to physically abuse animals and that they won’t be physically abused. Children learn what they live. If they live with cruelty, they learn cruelty. Children deserve the same kind of compassion and protection from physical harm that we give animals.**

The authors draw a comparison between a child kicking and choking a cat and a parent disciplining their child for misbehavior. No one will disagree that cruelty to animals is wrong, but to equate animal cruelty with spanking a child is deceptive. First of all, the animal is being harmed when it has done nothing wrong! A child who is spanked knows it is being disciplined for misbehavior. I encourage parents who have spanked their child for wrongdoing to continue to do so, and never apologize for training up their child in the manner prescribed by God.

These authors, like many other non-spanking advocates, attempt to take on the Bible and what it says about spanking. I believe that most of the NSA considers the Bible a formidable

opponent when it comes to the subject of spanking. The NSA fears that parents will discover that the Bible clearly advocates corporal punishment. Because of that fear, the NSA goes on the offensive, attacking the Bible and making an attempt to discredit God's word. One of the areas in which these authors attack the Bible is found in the section labeled *Obedience*. At the beginning of this section is a question posed by what appears to be a confused patient. (As I read further into this book, I began to wonder if these were legitimate questions, or ones posed by the authors to stage their answers.) This question is quoted as such.

**My child is disobedient. I'm worried that if I spare the rod I will spoil the child, but the more I punish him to obey, the more disobedient he becomes.**

One fact that leads me to believe that the question is staged is the comment "the more I punish him to get him to obey, the more disobedient he becomes." I will again appeal to the common sense of those reading this book to think about this claim. For those of us who were spanked when we were young, this comment makes no sense. This very concept is contrary to nature. What this person is saying is that the more we are punished, the more we violate the rules. The more speeding tickets we receive on a certain stretch of highway, the more we accelerate when we drive through that area. I can tell you from experience that the complete opposite is true. When I was a patrolman on the road, I observed first hand the results of a radar trap set up in one location for several days. Even the most defiant motorists, after given one ticket, obeyed the speed limit for days to come. This theory that the more we are punished the more we violate the rules is foolishness. The answer given by the authors is unbelievable. They state,

**Teaching children to be obedient is dangerous in today's society. Rebellious children are often the result of parents who try to force obedience. Children who learn obedience will be obedient to whomever wants to exercise control over them - first family, then peer groups, gangs, cults, and perhaps autocratic spouses.**

Oh my! I hope parents don't fall for this deceitful rhetoric. If you look closely at this last paragraph, you will realize that the authors are contradicting themselves. First, they claim that a parent who attempts to raise an obedient child will end up with a rebellious youngster. Yet the authors claim that the child who is raised to be obedient will be obedient to everyone. You can't be both. You are either obedient or rebellious. It is in the next sentence that the authors attempt to use the Bible as an argument against corporal punishment. They state,

**Biblical scholars tell us that the rod was not used to hit or punish, but to guide. Children need guidance, not punishment. Many people use the biblical admonition, "Spare the rod and spoil the child" as an excuse for spanking. Biblical scholars tell us the rod was never used to hit sheep. The rod was a symbol of authority or leadership, and the staff or crook was used to gently prod and guide. Our children definitely need gentle guidance and prodding, but they do not need to be beaten, struck, or humiliated.**

My question is this. From what Biblical scholar did the author receive this interpretation of scripture? It was certainly not a Biblical scholar who is well versed in the Biblical teachings of child rearing. Granted, we receive much of our knowledge from “experts” who have studied their area of expertise and have spent considerable hours researching the subject on which they are now purporting themselves to be expert. If the author did indeed receive this advice from a Biblical “scholar,” he should have researched the advice further to determine its validity. Failure to get a “second opinion” has caused the author to appear ignorant in the area of Biblical truths. We have here another attempt by the NSA to convince parents that the “rod” mentioned in the Bible is not an instrument of force.

All non-spanking advocates will attempt to refer to the rod as a stick or a staff such as by shepherds, when the context would actually imply physical pain. Proverbs 23:14 reads “Thou shalt beat him with the rod,” the word rod meaning an instrument of force. This word “rod,” is the same word that is used in Proverbs 29:15 “The rod and reproof gives wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.” We’ve covered this subject before. If the rod means loving guidance as the author suggests, where does the word reproof fit in? The reproof is verbal and the rod is physical. If they meant the same thing, God would not have mentioned both words in the same verse. The authors have stated that the Biblical scholars they have spoken to have advised them that the rod was used “to guide.” The authors are wrong. The rod here is a physical means of bringing discipline to the disobedient child.

Listed in the alphabetical index is the chapter dealing with what the author labels *Hitting (Spanking)*. This title is a subtle but effective way to group together the term “spanking,” which is the act of striking the buttocks or legs of a child in order to modify negative behavior, with the term “hitting,” which conveys the idea of striking an undeserving party. To demonstrate what I am trying to say, imagine if someone were to ask you the question “Does the law permit you to hit another person?” Your initial response would naturally be “Of course not.” Let’s imagine you were asked the question “Does the law allow a parent to spank their children?” Your immediate response would be “Of course they can.” Isn’t a parent “hitting” their children when they are spanking them? Sure they are. Striking something with blows, no matter how forceful, is considered “hitting.” This is one of the tricks used by the NSA to cast a negative shadow on spanking. The section is also listed under “H” for hitting, instead of “S” for spanking.

Again in this chapter, the authors have included a question by an unknown subject. This question states.

**QUESTION: “I have tried everything I can think of to get my child to stop hitting her little brother. Punishment doesn’t work. I have spanked her and made her say she is sorry, but the next day she is hitting again.”**

**ANSWER: How are we ever going to teach our children it is not okay to hurt others when we keep hurting them. After the child has calmed down, ask what and how questions. “What is upsetting you? How are you feeling? What are you thinking? What other things could you do besides hitting to deal with the problem?”**

In the next paragraph, the authors lay out the strategy for future incidents. It is titled *Planning Ahead to Prevent Future Problems*. One of the suggestions given by the authors is,

**Show that hitting is unacceptable by never hitting your child. If you make a mistake and hit your child, use the Three Rs of Recovery to apologize so your child knows hitting is not acceptable for you either. 1) Recognize your mistake, 2) Reconcile by apologizing, and 3) Resolve the problem by working together on a solution.**

Imagine the young parent reading this portion, feeling guilty about making the “mistake” of spanking their child, and planning the apology to the youngster. Sound foolish? There are parents swallowing this garbage hook line and sinker!

This type of argument by the NSA has been extremely successful in convincing parents that spanking is wrong. Are we teaching our children that it is okay to hurt others when we hurt them? Lets expound on this theory just a bit. Using the same argument, we could very easily say that by using force to restrain our child’s movement (the wrap), we are teaching them that kidnapping is okay. Soon our child will be tackling the neighborhood kids, wrestling them to the ground and holding them for hours when they are expected home for supper. The assumption that disciplinary action taken by a parent will be interpreted by the child as condoned activity by the youngster is ludicrous.

Other questions and answers in this book lead me to question the author’s wisdom when it comes to child rearing. Read the following advice and see if you agree with me.

**QUESTION: “What can a parent do when a child throws herself on the floor kicking and screaming, especially if it happens in a public place?”**

**ANSWER: One of the best ways to deal with a temper tantrum is to ignore it. Stand quietly and wait till it is over. If the tantrum upsets you, remove yourself from the scene quickly and quietly. If you are in a public place, go as far from the child as possible while keeping her in sight. Once the tantrum is over, say nothing about it. Ask your child what she would like you to do when she is having a tantrum. Give choices, like “Would you like a hug, or would you just like me to wait until you’re over it?”**

**QUESTION: “My daughter threw a ball through her window in a fit of rage. What should I do?”**

**ANSWER: Occasionally, children may seek revenge or express their anger by damaging property. It is up to the parents to help their children repair or replace the damaged property without piggybacking additional punishment. If it costs money to repair damaged property, you could advance the money and collect payments. You may wish to cover part of the cost and let her cover the rest. If your children are feeling hurt and destroying property to hurt you back, give them lots of hugs along with the cleanup time.**

**QUESTION: “Money has been disappearing from my purse and from the kids’ piggy banks. My twelve-year-old daughter insists she hasn’t taken it, but I notice she is buying lipstick, nail polish, and treats for her friends that she couldn’t possibly afford from her allowance.”**

**ANSWER: Parents often take extreme measures like spanking, grounding, and other punitive solutions, so their children don’t grow up to be thieves. Judging and**

**punishing kids only makes the situation worse. Sometimes stealing occurs because money is laying out and is too tempting. Keep your money and valuables out of sight. If something has been stolen, focus on a plan for replacing the item or money rather than on pointing fingers or calling names. If necessary, advance her the money to replace it.**

**QUESTION: “My toddler is always saying no. It doesn’t matter if I ask him to do something nicely or yell, he says no. He even says no when I ask him to pick out a story book. I’ve heard of the terrible twos, but this is ridiculous.”**

**ANSWER: During this time, if children are hindered through excessive control or punishment when they try to assert their autonomy, they develop a sense of doubt and shame about themselves. Ignore it when your child says the word. When possible, simply leave the scene. (or) Celebrate. “Hooray! You are starting to think for yourself and deciding you don’t want to be controlled by others all the time.” Never say “bad boy” or “naughty boy.” Children may do unacceptable things, but they are never bad. Think of your child as cute and adorable as he seeks autonomy. This will help you avoid reacting and provoking a power struggle.**

**QUESTION: “All of a sudden my thirteen-year-old is telling me I’m too controlling. He refuses to come home for dinner and says it’s not fair that he has to come in at dark when all his friends can stay out later. When I say, “You’ll do as I say because I’m the parent,” the words stick in my throat as I recall how angry I felt when my parents said that to me.”**

**ANSWER: From the day children are born, we must begin the letting-go process. We foster co-dependence and then complain because our children aren’t more dependence. Ask yourself, “What is the worst thing that can happen if I let go?” Letting go requires facing our fears as well as believing that it is our job to empower our children to build their inner resources instead of trying to control or mold them.**

You will notice that there is a common theme amongst these “questions” asked by confused parents. The parents attempt to punish their child, but the misbehavior gets worse. This alone, is not believable. The authors suggest that the parent ignore the offense or talk about it. This approach has never worked, nor will work in the future. Throughout this book, there is more information that is downright destructive. The authors state,

**Placing too much emphasis on children being consistently “good” has some potential dangers. It is easy for these children to create the belief, “I’m worthwhile only if I’m always good.” The extreme danger of this belief is suicide.**

Can you imagine an expert in child development suggesting that if we expect our children to behave responsibly the child will kill himself? This is total irresponsibility.

In an area of the book titled *Short Tips to Avoid Common Problems*, the authors state,

**Research shows that the three main reasons kids join gangs are for a sense of**

**belonging, a sense of power or security, and for protection. Children are less likely to join gangs if they believe they are respected and accepted at home for who they are and if they experience authority as someone designed to help them do better rather than to hurt, punish, shame, or rescue them.**

You will notice that this last paragraph starts with the ever more familiar “research shows.” Here, the authors contend that “research shows” kids join gangs for power. The exact opposite is true. I would guess that the author has never interviewed a gang member, and has little idea of the psychology involved in gang activity. I have personally been involved with the arrest of gang members, and have attended numerous law enforcement schools on outlaw juvenile gangs. I have personally conducted seminars that addressed the gang mentality. A former gang member in Los Angeles, now grown and practicing psychology in the Los Angeles area, recently released a study regarding the psychology of gang members. He points out that a gang does not provide its members with a home, food, or clothing. There are two major reasons why kids join gangs. It certainly isn’t power. When a kid joins a gang, he is subject to many forms of authority over him. He is subject to a captain, lieutenant, and others in the gang that govern his actions.

Why do kids join gangs? First, they are given a strict set of rules to follow. They are told unequivocally, “You are allowed to do this, you are not allowed to do that.” It’s in black and white. The absolutes in the code of conduct of all outlaw juvenile gangs are very evident to the gang member.

Second, there are swift and severe consequences for violating the rules, up to, and including, death. Your own gang will kill you if you violate certain rules. There are some rules, when violated, result in a beating. So why would a kid join an organization that puts limitations on your freedom, regulates your behavior, and punishes you when you violated the rules?

It doesn’t take a genius to figure it out. It is INHERENT in children to look upon restrictions on their behavior as love. When a parent says “I cannot allow you to do this, it is not in your best interest,” the child is assured that the person restricting their behavior is genuinely concerned about their safety. How does a parent cement that feeling of security? That is accomplished by following through with the consequence when the rule is violated. The parent has stated that they are concerned about the child by restricting their freedom. They re-enforce that concern by punishing the child when they step over the line. EVERY child who joins an outlaw juvenile gang does not receive that structure and discipline in the home. What these authors have claimed about the reason kids join gangs is simply not true.

The author concludes this portion of the book by making a suggestion to the parent about how to save their child from a gang. They state,

**Children are less likely to join gangs if they believe they are respected and accepted at home for who they are and if they experience authority as something designed to help them do better rather than to hurt, punish, shame, or rescue them. You may need to move to a neighborhood where gangs aren’t prevalent.**

This may be a solution to the authors who are making thousands of dollars from their book. To the parent stranded in the inner city who is unable to move to a more affluent neighborhood, I would offer a more plausible solution. Be diligent in your discipline. Don’t be afraid to set

limitations on your child's behavior, especially those actions which are dangerous to their well being. And when your child disobeys the rules, punish them. Your child will not only interpret your actions as love, he will also develop a fear of violating your rules, enhancing the chance that he will survive in a world filled with peer pressure. Fear of parents should always be stronger than the fear of peers.

Some of the advice in this book should be evident to all of us as destructive. Parents who have experienced costly dental bills involving their children's teeth should be suspicious about this advice. The authors write,

**If your children resist brushing teeth, instead of nagging have the dentist use a fluoride treatment regularly to help prevent decay. It is better to treat tooth decay than live with power struggles.**

Okay folks, I shouldn't have to include many more examples from this book to convince you that these "experts" are not considering what is in the best interest of the parent or the child. But there is one more example that I will point out. If I wasn't already convinced that this book was filled with harmful information, the very last paragraph did it for me. This suggestion is listed in the *Short Tips to Avoid Common Problems* section. The authors state,

**Within the boundaries of your values you may wish to allow your children to watch X-rated movies or you may wish to prohibit them from doing so. If you see X-rated movies as useful for sex education, watch them together or view them first so that you can discuss your ideas and attitudes about the movie and listen to your children's conclusions.**

Hard to believe? The authors are suggesting that the family watch pornographic movies together. If you are about to take the author's advice, you should first check with your district attorney or your state's attorney general's office. Allowing children to view obscene pornography is illegal in every state in the union. In fact, any person, parents included, who allow a child to view obscene material, is guilty of a felony. There is no quicker way to have your children removed from your custody than by showing them pornographic material. A parent who unwittingly falls for this "expert advice" will probably be receiving a visit from the local child abuse investigators and law enforcement officers.

Although not all of the advice given in this book by Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott, and H. Stephen Glenn will result in the immediate consequence I have just described, the suggestions in this book will definitely reshape your family unit. The authors have stated that their intent is to "empower" the child, and for the parent to "give up control." I trust that parents will realize the totally ludicrous nature of the advice in this book, and will continue to follow the traditional child rearing techniques that have been so successful for thousands of years.