

Good Inside Parenting is Not Gentle Parenting

30 MIN · YOUTUBE · [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=68H0bPiH05Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=68H0bPiH05Y)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=68H0bPiH05Y>

SUMMARY

Dr. Becky discusses the concept of "gentle parenting" and argues for a more robust approach she terms "sturdy parenting." She emphasizes that effective parenting requires clarity, conviction, and the ability to remain grounded during challenging moments, rather than relying on gentle or punitive measures.

- *"Gentle parenting" may imply softness, but Dr. Becky prefers the term "sturdy" to describe effective parenting.*
- *Sturdiness involves being connected to oneself and others, maintaining boundaries while acknowledging children's feelings.*
- *Critical parenting moments often require a strong, grounded response rather than a gentle or punitive one.*
- *Consequences and punishments do not effectively teach children; instead, parents should focus on skill-building and emotional regulation.*
- *Parents should ask themselves what skills their children need to develop rather than what consequences to impose for bad behavior.*
- *Allowing children to experience natural consequences can foster independence and resilience without the need for punitive measures.*
- *The mindset of parents is crucial; they should aim to support their children in learning and growing rather than viewing them as adversaries needing punishment.*
- *Effective parenting mirrors successful leadership in other fields, focusing on collaboration and skill development rather than punitive measures.*

so here's a question I get asked a lot from reporters from parents tell me about gentle parenting Dr Becky tell me about gentle parenting and you know I often am struck by this question because I don't even exactly know what to say nothing about my approach to Parenting nothing about good inside to me actually reads gentle and to be clear I don't think there's anything wrong with the word gentle and when I say it's not gentle I don't think

the opposite has to be true either it's not harsh it's not mean but when I think about a word that describes good inside parenting and my whole approach it's the word sturdy and I want to go into this a little bit because I think it's really important it's not just semantics that good inside is sturdy not gentle so many of the most critical moments with our kids require intense sturdiness the moment when I have to

pick my kid up because they're out of control at a play dat and all the other parents are around and I carry him to the car and he's screaming I hate you let me down I don't think there's anything gentle about me in that moment there's also nothing punitive there's nothing hurtful but I think to be effective in that moment I need intense grounded sturdiness sturdiness in my role sturdiness in my body sturdiness and my intention it makes me think a lot about

a pilot right if you think about flying through intense turbulence and you think about the pilot you might have I don't want what I would consider a kind of gentle pilot all right everyone we're going to figure it out seems like you're scared that to me is not the fit I'm looking for I also don't want a harsh pilot I definitely don't want a pilot saying what's wrong with you stop screaming you're making a big deal out of

nothing I want a sturdy pilot and to me sturdiness is the ability to be connected to yourself and be connected to others at the same time you see other people's feelings and experiences as real and there's a boundary between their experience and your own so you can see their experience and not be taken over by it a sturdy pilot in that situation would say it's turbulent I hear that you're scared that's okay I know what

I'm doing and I'm going to make sure we get to our destination safely and so I want to talk about sturdiness I want to talk about why good inside parenting isn't gentle it isn't soft and it also to be sturdy does not need consequences or punishments which have never taught anyone anything in the history of the world sturdy leaders don't lead with

punishment they don't lead with consequences they don't lead with flimsiness and in my mind they don't lead with gentleness either they lead with Clarity and conviction and confidence and I really believe that's what our kids need from us and so that's what we're going to be talking about today we'll be back right after this as a parent have you ever thought

to yourself I wish I could press pause right now and remember this exact moment I know I have and yet as a busy parent I can never find the time to sit down and put all of those memories into a book well thanks to Keepsake capturing moments is as easy as answering a text you heard that right just a daily text from Keepsake is all it takes to start saving photos stories and memories of my family it's really that easy it's also a

simple way to connect and bond with my kids especially my dfk who loves to help me respond to the text based Journal prompts and the best part Keepsake then transforms all of your captured memories into a beautiful book whether you have a toddler or a schoolage child every cutely mispronounced word first day of school picture soccer tournament win and family memory is priceless and it's never too late to start visit keepsake.com that's Q

[p.com](https://keepsake.com) and try it free for a week plus you can use 20% off your annual or any gift subscription when you use code Dr Becky Dr be C KY at keepsake.com that's Q ak.com to start preserving your family's memories today I reive so many questions about consequences and punishments and I get

it we've been raised with this idea that if you're not giving a kid consequences you're approving of their behavior if you want your kid to grow up into an upstanding adult they have to understand they're going to get punished because in real life there are punishments and consequences I see this very differently and I want to go through your questions to illustrate a couple of really important points so let's hear from a couple different parents hi Dr Becky I

have a three-year-old daughter and a six-year-old son and I have a question about what a consequence might be for when my younger daughter calls her older brother names I tell her that I won't let her call him names and that it's unkind and that she can be mad but not me but I don't know what a natural consequence is when I can't control the words that are coming out of her mouth this is such a good question I

hear this all the time and actually I think the first thing we need to do is what I'm going to call kind of upgrade this question there's not many things that matter more in parenting than noticing the questions we're asking I know that sounds odd you might think no isn't it important to answer the questions it's not it's actually first important to wonder am I asking myself the right question here's a question what consequence do I give my kid well I

guess I'm already assuming in that question I'm giving a consequence to me a question we need to ask ourselves is what does my daughter need and what skills does my daughter need to build so that she can feel frustrated or maybe jealous toward her brother and not call him names those are very different questions the question what consequence can I give doesn't really in my mind have any understanding of the progress or change we even want to make is a

consequence going to give a kid a new skill that they can use the next time it would be like if I didn't do a project well at work and my boss said what consequence should I give Becky what's a natural consequence I would hope someone would say to my boss who don't you want Becky to do better the next time like how are we just teaching her what she missed how are we helping her develop so she

can do better that's a much more empowering question so let's answer that question a little bit together what's going on for a three-year-old when they say meanw and what skill does a kid need so that they might feel a distressing feeling but the feeling not explode out of them in mean words so what I would do here first with my daughter is talk to her outside the moment that's always when we build skills for adults and kids I might just

say something like it's really hard to have a brother right it's amazing how much that can diffuse kids are just so desperate to feel seen and saying it's so hard to have a brother speaks to your kids need to feel understood that there's a lot of tricky moments with siblings I might go a little further I might say I have a tricky question H sometimes we feel mad at our brother I get that me too it's okay to feel mad

it's not okay to say mean words hm okay to feel mad I might put my hand out not okay to say mean words I might look at my other hand what could we do and then I can work with my kid to brainstorm and yes if you're wondering is my three-year-old going to be able to participate in that they will kids love to activate their problem solving when we scaffold that ability so I think the key thing here is that consequences

don't teach skills that's really what it's all about I'm not saying avoid the consequence because quote it's not nice I mean it's not but I'm a pragmatist giving a kid a consequence doesn't help them do better the next time and if we're really invested in change we have to be invested in teaching our kids skills all right let's go to the next question from a different parent hi I have an 8-year-old dfk and I've been using Dr Becky's approach and trying

to

be the sturdy pilot during disregulated moments during those times my son will often hit me and tell me I am stupid and dumb I try to hold his hand and stop him from hitting and ask him not to hit me and not to use mean words after years of doing it the wrong way I've learned that addressing those issues in the moment only escalates things I believe our new method is helping him move through those times much quicker and prevent a

complete explosion but here's my question how do I see Circle back to addressing those behaviors I feel that we need consequences so he knows those behaviors are not okay but it also feels so ineffective to come back to them later in calmer moments and it doesn't feel right giving consequences when he is calm and doing well later on in the meantime it feels like we're just overlooking and giving into bad behavior another excellent question I think to me you know the thing that

strikes me is how embedded the idea of consequences are in our ideas about parenting it's like we've taken them for granted I know that we weren't born thinking when I become a parent consequences are going to be the thing I do to my kids or give to my kids like no one was born thinking that way we've just absorbed it as if it's fact and so that's the first thing I want to question consequences are an idea it's

something someone put out there we should give consequences just because people have been saying that forever does doesn't mean it was ever effective in fact if we look at the struggles so many teens and adults have it all has to do with not being able to regulate your emotions feeling bad feeling not worthy feeling like too much or not enough well guess what so many of those adult struggles come from our childhood when no one helped us when we were vulnerable

and instead judged us and gave us consequences for the behaviors we were engaging which were just a sign of our Desperation and need for help so when your kid is out of control your deeply feeling kid or your non- deeply feeling kid you're right when they're in this out of control 10 out of 10 disregulated State the words that are coming out of their mouth are a sign that they are in total threat mode they are in the most

animalistic part of their brain they feel like they're being attacked by their feelings Everything feels like a threat their words are not a statement of some truth their words words are a sign of their overwhelm and feeling of being totally out of control so if we reframe the question that way when my kid is overwhelmed and totally out of control and in the purely animalistic part of their brain what consequence should I give to them when they're

calm I'm pausing and I wonder if you are too because I feel like when we say it that way we shake our heads like what why are we talking about consequences you know we conflate things a lot well if you don't give your kid a consequence they're going to think that you think it was okay that they treated you that way again and I mean this it's made up I mean I think about myself let's say I'm not at my best with my

husband and I say some words that you know I really don't mean again probably because I'm in a state of threat

and feeling like a 10 out of 10 let's say we get through the moment maybe he says in the moment some version of look we've got to get through this we'll talk about this when we're both calm I don't know later if we're calm and he says to me something skill building like hey you were really upset earlier and I don't

know maybe I could help you or maybe you could get help yourself now that you're an adult to really figure out how to manage whatever feeling you were having so it doesn't come out in those words you were talking to me and maybe if he continues and says and I love you I know you're a good person and I know you can work on this I want to know are you thinking wow Becky your husband basically said to you

that it's okay for you to talk to him like that like what human actually feels that way no when we're at our worst and when we're overwhelmed we are so desperate for the people who love us to reflect back our goodness because we've temporarily lost it ourselves and when instead they reflect our Badness what's wrong with you no TV for a week even though it's like kind of totally arbitrary what we take in is I really am

as bad and awful and toxic and overpowering as I worried I was which guess what only makes all of those disregulated moments more likely what I would suggest doing after those moments with your dfk is one of what I call the side door strategies that deeply feeling kids need I know this is going to sound paradoxical but I'm going to say it anyway because I've watched it be one of the most powerful things I do with my

own kid definitely my dfk after some of her quote worst moments when things of calm I'll say to her something like this that I ever tell you about this thing that happened to me when I was eight did I oh I can't tell you oh my goodness did I okay well saw my brother riding a bike he was younger than me and I was so I don't know I was so jealous and do you think I stayed

calm no I didn't oh my goodness my mom mom had to carry me to my room and you don't even want to know the things I said to her you don't even want to know then I'll keep going I'll sh I screamed I hate you you're the worst right what am I doing here and why is this helpful because you might be thinking wow so instead of giving her a consequence you're telling her you've done the same

thing yes yes yes a million perc yes I'm Des shaming the moment think about yourself think about your worst moment think about your most embarrassing moment think about you know a moment I don't know you are in a work meeting and instead of doing a good presentation I don't know you got super embarrassed your pants fell down or you said something that was just awful that you didn't even mean and you're talking to a friend if you're like me there's only

one thing that's going to help in this moment it's if they tell you they basically had the same type of experience because what they're really saying to you is you're not so bad after all you're not alone I'm right there with you and when we dhame a situation when we connect to someone after their struggle we actually give them the connection they need to start digging their way out of that hole and so again it's not just about helping a kid feel

good it's actually building the foundation they need to incorporate new skills and make positive [Music] change most of us have been taught to take punishments and timeouts and consequences as a given it's embedded in so many messages around parenting well if hearing this conversation is starting to make you skeptical is making you wonder huh punishments and timeouts

really might not be so effective and that doesn't mean I'm soft it actually just means I want to be effective but wait if I'm not giving punishments and timeouts and consequences what am I doing what am I doing instead how can I make sure my kids are getting what they need today to actually make the changes they need to make I've got you covered I am so excited to be hosting a live Workshop focused on exactly this

why punishments and timeouts and consequences don't work and what to do instead that last part really matters here's what to do instead so your kids can stop hitting are rude less often do actually listen to you I actually do have a road map from where their behavior is today to the outcomes we're all looking for and I cannot wait to share it all with you for more information check the links in my show notes or go to good

inside.com and also yes it will be recorded So if you can't make it live no big deal it's all there for you hi Dr Becky my 8-year-old daughter who is also a dfk just has the hardest time staying on top of her stuff but putting her school laptop on the charger putting her gloves back in her basket or her ping tights for

ballet we have invested time and money in setting up structures and routines creating places for everything that she needs for her activities and for school but she doesn't use them unless we walk her through the entire process so we are starting to feel like okay there needs to just be consequences if she forgets her water bottle if she forgets to plug in her laptop she doesn't have her

uniform for dance she should just experience that consequence how do we prepare her to take the safety net out and say okay if you don't use these things and you don't do these things you're going to feel the consequences thank you so this brings up a general kind of struggle I have with the word consequences because people say okay is there a difference you're giving a kid consequence which is kind of like a

punishment or you're letting them experience natural consequences which is the feeling you have when you want your water bottle but you forgot it and your parent didn't put it in your backpack for you so here's my general perspective about consequences and then we're going to get to this question I think the mindset we're in is the most important thing when it comes to our interactions with our kid the mindset we're in determines the interventions we use and here's how I

think about mindset I think you probably heard me say I think a lot about how there's a good kid having a hard time not a bad kid doing bad things there's a difference between a good kid's identity and there sometimes bad behavior that has to do with mindset but here's another version of findet I just sometimes say myself the language I'm using about my kid and the question I'm asking myself does it make me like my

kid and make me want to feel closer to them or does it make me not really like my kid and it makes me want to distance myself so then I say to myself the word consequence what consequence should I give my kid well for me and this might not be true for you but for me if I'm using the word consequence I just don't like my kid like I don't really like anyone I'm giving consequences to that

word just for me Alys it's like a sense of antagonism and like this is my enemy and it makes me think if I don't know I was going to show up late or make some mistake and my husband was around he's like I'm just going to let Becky have that consequence again I it just feel like we're we're at against each other so what I think this question is really talking about isn't really consequences in that way letting my kid have

consequences to me we're just talking about letting life transpire like that's really what we're talking about just letting I think that word is really important and it's something I've been thinking about with my kids a lot as they get older letting what do I mean my kid doesn't remember his water bottle I'm going to let let that happen I'm just going to let it happen I'm not going to change the course of events my kid doesn't plug in her laptop before

school and I know it's going to die I'm going to let that happen I'm just going to let things transpire not because there's a quote consequence but because it's important for my kid to live through the kind of natural Arc of events so that they can feel empowered to change that Arc of events what what what Arc am I talking about here's an example from this parent my kid doesn't charge their laptop maybe I've had a

history of saying okay I said you should do it I guess I'm going to do it I'm going to charge your laptop okay now it's charged I'm putting it in your backpack and now it's good until the next day what's the arc here's the arc kid forgets to charge parent seems annoyed parent charges the laptop kid has charged laptop now when I think about an arc of events and I would encourage you to do this too I often

think I am trying to work myself out of a job I don't think I want my kid when they're 18 to associate me in their Arc of having their laptop charged so if I don't want that for myself and frankly I don't think that's good for my kid either right to be 18 and be dependent on me to charge their laptop then I have to ask myself not what consequence should my kid experience but what is my role here and

how am I preparing or not preparing my kid for you know the rest of their life same thing with a water bottle my kid forgets a water bottle I put the water bottle in their backpack my kid has a water bottle if that's not the arc that I think is helpful for my kid which I think we'd all agree not so helpful because the arc we want is I have to have a water bottle I remember my water

bottle I fill up my water bottle I put my water bottle in the backpack my parent isn't really involved well then I have to take myself out of the arc and again consequence for me just doesn't come into the equation resilience does Independence planning skills so if this is a shift for you and this is what a parent's asking too I have kind of inserted myself into that Arc so it's no wonder why my kid isn't gaining these

skills because we're just practicing the arc over and over that involves my Solutions can I give my kid a heads up and can I do it in a way that doesn't feel punitive because again I think that's really not the purpose the purpose is actually doing our job as a parent and helping our kids prepare for life so yeah I think what we could say to our kid there is some version of hey you know what I'm thinking about there

have been a couple different things you know your laptop being charged your water bottle maybe it's remembering your homework here's the thing I really mean this sweetie I I'm actually doing you a to surface in the short term I'm doing a lot of the remembering for you I'm remembering the charging I'm remembering the water bottle I'm remembering the homework in the folder and I know you're capable of the remembering it's like any other skill it's hard before becomes

easy but the more I do that skill for you the less likely you're going to be able to practice it yourself and sweetie I'm also in some ways telling you that I don't think you're capable of doing it by doing it for you and I really do think you're capable so I just want to be very clear starting tomorrow if I notice your water bottle isn't in your bag I'm not going to get it if I notice

your laptop isn't charged I'm not going to charge it and if I notice your homework is still on your desk in your room I'm not going to put it in your folder and I know that means there's going to be moments like I don't have my homework my laptop's not charged and I don't have my water bottle and I promise you when you come home after those moments at school here's what I'm not going to say

told you well you got to remember I'm really not because this is going to be new for you and learning any new skill independently is actually hard and always has bumps in the road so what I'm going to say to you is a what was that like not to have your water bottle or oh you didn't have your laptop charged oh must have been so annoying I really will show up in that way for you because I

promise I'll have patience with you as we help you develop these skills that is a completely different mentality to me it's again it's a completely different mindset then should my kid experience that Consequence the other thing just because I can't help myself that I think is really important in this conversation is it is so hard for us to not charge the laptop and not fill up that water bottle and not put the homework in the folder right I think

it's so hard we worry H I'm I'm kind of knowing my kid is going into this bad situation or am I a bad parent right if my kid doesn't have their homework is everyone going to think I'm a bad mom so first of all I just want to ground ourselves again in our job so much of our job is making sure our kids develop the skills when they're young that they really need when they're old when the

stakes are so much higher and no matter how old your kid is right now as you're listening to this maybe you're thinking my kid is four my kid is seven oh no my kid is actually 18 and I've been doing this all wrong no you haven't your timing is impeccable no matter how old your kid is now they're going to be older in years and the stakes will only be higher and so this is the perfect

time to peel back not to give your kid consequences but to let them experience what they need to experience so they can develop those independent skills that they're going to need I just want to wrap up with some final thoughts about consequences about punishments and making sure that you know if you don't give consequences if you don't give punishments that doesn't mean you're a soft parent that definitely doesn't mean you're approving

of your kids's behavior in fact one of the things that really strikes me is parenting is in some ways one of the later fields to kind of modernize with respect to our thoughts right if we think about management consulting if we think about business psychology logical leadership if we think about coaching okay in the workplace if you have an employee who's I don't know forgetting that their project is due or showing up late to work I think we know that going

to that employee and giving them a punishment is not going to be the thing that makes them more engaged it also means that if you go to your employee and you say hey you've been really late to work and we're on the same team here and I know you know how important it is to be here and so there must be things that get in your way let's figure that out together and I'm happy to help you

to make sure you know you can do the things you need to do to get here at nine I don't think any employee walks out of that conversation saying my boss really lets me get away with things my boss just so soft you know what people say what an effective boss if you are a basketball coach and your star player or any player is continually missing layups I don't know one coach who says go to your room go to

your room and you come back when you can make layups from this team oh if you don't make the next layup I'm going to bench you for the next game I don't think any of us find that coach inspiring you know what coach we want for our kids or for even a professional team is the coach that says hey you know I'm going to sit you down for this game I'm going to kind of keep you here with

me you're not in trouble you're having a hard time that's okay we're going to really work on some things in practice and I'm saying that to you because I believe in you and I know something's off and I know I can be the one with you to help figure this out we're going to get there I don't think anyone's saying what if soft Cod uh that coach is really kind of saying to the player that it's okay that

they're missing all those layups what that doesn't even make sense so let's bring the thinking that we've already incorporated into Athletics into the workplace into parenting where we're talking about our small children I promise it doesn't lead to things going off the rails it doesn't lead to spoiled entitled kids who feel like they can act the way they want to act of course our kids need boundaries they need us to step in with sturdiness they need us to stop them from engaging

in behaviors that are dangerous and then they need us to help them build skills they need practice and they always always always need us to see the good kid under the bad behavior let's revolutionize parenting together thanks for listening to share a story or ask me a question go to goodinside.com podcast you could also write

me at podcast atg good inside.com parenting is the hardest and most important job in the world and parents deserve resources and support so they feel empowered confident and connected I'm so excited to share good inside membership the first platform that brings together content and experts you trust with a global community of like valued parents it's totally gamechanging good inside with Dr Becky

is produced by Jesse Baker and Eric newsum at magnificent noise our production staff includes Sabrina fary Julia Nat and Kristen Mueller I would also like to thank Erica abelski Mary Panico and the rest of the good inside team and One Last Thing Before I Let You Go let's end by placing our hands on our hearts and reminding ourselves even as I struggle and even as I have a hard time on the outside I

remain good [Music] inside