

# The Agony Principle



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## The Agony Principle

Parenting today has become a stressful "vocation". Why is this so? This is because the wrong person is agonizing over the misbehavior! There was a 10-year old boy who constantly woke up late every morning causing the mother to be late for work. The routine was the same every day, mother would scream and little Ronnie would just take his own sweet time to move from the bed to the car. Guess who is agonizing over a misbehavior that does not belong to her in the first place? You got it – the mother!

Why are we parents carrying the "sins" of our children and then we expect them to be miraculously transformed when they witness acts of sacrificial "martyrdom"! This is absurd. The child will never change based on your inspirational selfless acts – if they do, then having them watch "Ghandi" would change their lives forever!

**The Agony Principle** (by John Rosemond) :

*Parents should not agonize over anything a child does or fails to do if the child is perfectly capable of agonizing over it himself.*

So, what did Ronnie's mother do? One night, the mother calmly proclaimed – "My dear child, from tomorrow onwards – I will never be late for work again. To help me do that, you will have to wake up at this particular time." The next morning's scene was predictable with one notable difference – the mother was driving in the direction of her office and not the school! Ronnie ended up having to agonize one full-day in his mother's office with nothing to do! Isn't it such a great stress relief when the criminal is carrying the weight of his own sins....

There are three parenting mindsets for executing the *Agony Principle* :

### **Mindset 1 : Ask what, not why?**

Do not, I repeat, do not try to understand why there is the misbehavior. Accept it as a fact of life that your child *will* misbehave. The effective parent is the one who has decided beforehand what needs to be done when the misbehavior occurs rather than analyze the family tree whenever the child misbehaves.

### **Mindset 2 : The child must suffer**

Do not believe the myth that a child can be transformed by positive affirmation alone. In fact, the reverse is true – the child with high self-esteem is likely to be the one with low self-control and a self-entitlement mentality because he is so used to things *always* turning out to his favor. Suffering produces humility. When a child *experiences* the link between choices and consequences, he is being trained for real life.

### **Mindset 3 : Love and authority are two sides of the same coin**

When we love too much to implement compelling consequences, then the love which we display is a selfish type because we do not take the consistent effort needed to mean what we say. Let's face it : consistent disciplinary measures is hard work but if it is done properly – the fruit of the labor will be sweet. You cannot be an effective source of love without being an effective source of authority.

Do you have a "little Ronnie" at home who is escaping scot-free whenever a crime is committed because you are standing in for him? Know your rights as a parent and transfer the agony to the perpetrator and stop suffering in silence.

Think about it.

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