

## CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCIPLINE

In poverty, discipline is often about penance and forgiveness, the notion that discipline should be instructive and change behavior is not part of the culture in generational poverty. Success in the middle class requires the self-governance of behavior and schools need to teach appropriate behavior. Two anchors of a discipline program are structure and choice, outlining the expected behaviors and the consequences of not choosing those behaviors.

Teachers must first examine the behavior:

- \* What behaviors does the child need to be successful?
- \* Does he have the resources?
- \* How will behaviors be taught?
- \* What other choices could the child make?
- \* What will help the child repeat the successful behavior?

The student must analyze as well:

- \* What did you do?
- \* Why did you do that?
- \* List four other things you could have done?
- \* What will you do next time?
- \* This gives the students access to another way to deal with the situation.

Inside everyone's head are internal voices, child, parent, and adult that guide us: The child voice is defensive, victimized, emotional, whining, strong negative, often non-verbal.

The adult voice allows for negotiation allowing the issues to be examined in a non-threatening way often in question format, an attitude of win-win.

The parent voice is authoritative, directive, judgmental, win-lose mentality, sometimes threatening, demanding, punitive, creating shame and guilt. The parent voice can also be loving and supporting but impedes resolution. Educators tend to speak to students in a parent voice, and to the student who is already functioning as a parent, this is unbearable with the outcome being anger.

Part of the reality of poverty is the language of survival and one must first teach and model phrases with the adult voice with the ability to negotiate seen as a survival skill for the work and school setting.

Students from poverty need to have at least two sets of behaviors from which to choose one for the streets and one for school/work. You need to teach the hidden rules detailing the rules that make the student successful where they are. Discipline should be a form of instruction with structure and choice a part of the approach.

*Randi Connior, Yellville-Summit Elementary, Yellville, AR*