

Punishment in the form of artificial natural consequences, or intentional consequences does have a place in raising healthy children. However, it should be used sparingly and with good judgment. There is almost always a natural consequence if you don't protect your children from it. Here are a couple of examples of using intentional or artificial consequences.

1. Your 3-year-old runs into the street without looking. (A place for intentional consequences) The solution might be: Grab the child firmly and carry him to the curb. Hold him by the shoulders with your hands and look directly into his eyes. In a commanding, firm voice say, "STOP HERE! DON'T GO ONTO THE STREET WITHOUT LOOKING!" Command, do not ask! Then repeat the appropriate behavior, walking up to the street, stopping at the curb, looking both ways, and then crossing several times, thus re-enforcing the desired behavior in the child.

Double consequences here might include: the parent continuing to fuss about the "mistake," having the other parent punish or admonish when they get home, or even worse, humiliating the child by talking about it at dinner or in front of others. This is important, because if you humiliate a child they might try to block out the emotional pain and then they often block out the lesson with it. Another rule to learn here is: Humiliation is the most long-lasting, most destructive to the child's spirit, most difficult to overcome, of all behaviors parents use abusively to control their children!

2. Your 12-year-old doesn't do the dishes. Artificial natural consequence here is: The child does not have a clean plate to eat on. Wash your dish and possibly the others, with the exception of the offender's, or leave the rest. At the next meal, serve the meal for the offender on his dirty dish, or at least offer to, if he doesn't wash it. It is essential here that you be totally prepared to feed your uncooperative child off a dirty plate. They will try to break your intervention. To be an effective parent one must remember that the rule is: **Discomfort = motivation.**

Double jeopardy here would be any other means of pressure the parent may try to use to strengthen their position, after the initial intervention. **More is not always better.** Examples would be teasing after dinner, humiliating by public announcement, etc. Remember, when a situation gets too painful or distressing, children tend to block it out. By doing so, they block out the potential learning.

Please hear this story, learn the lesson in it, and if your parenting is not working with your child, get help. Do not punish **more and harder.** That doesn't work. Find a new way! Become your child's most trusted ally.