

Restitution Nuggets

MSES staff is working with the Restitution approach to school discipline. Here are some Restitution questions to ask:

- *What's your job right now?*
- *Is what you're doing helping or hurting?*

Behaviour, positive or negative, is based on people trying to meet their needs.

Restitution describes 4 needs that we all have: love and belonging, power, fun, freedom.

When difficult behaviours occur, our staff tries to work with the child to identify what need he/she is trying to meet. Our goal is to help your children meet their needs without showing inappropriate behaviour.

Restitution thoughts excerpted from Diane Gossen's book My Child is a Pleasure, p. 47-49.

- *All behaviour is purposeful. We all do what we do for a reason.*
- *We behave to meet some need or to avoid disruption of a need.*
- *If behaviour seems irrational, foolish, futile, or destructive, you can believe it was generated as the best attempt at that moment to meet a need.*
- *Children are seldom deliberately setting out to make things difficult for us. Rather, they are focusing on their need, not ours'.*
- *Understanding this about our children's behaviours is useful, much better for us and for them than guilt or shaming.*

Here's some statements to try:

- *I know you're not doing this to hurt me, but it does.*
- *You're not this upset for no reason.*
- *It's OK to make a mistake.*
- *What were you hoping would happen if you did this?*

Restitution thoughts excerpted from Diane Gossen's book My Child is a Pleasure, p. 46.

Behaviour is based on trying to meet one or more of four human needs.

- *Belonging – Children want to be liked. Their peers are important.*
- *Power – Children want to be in control. They are distressed by mistakes so they observe before trying new things. They like to be the best.*
- *Freedom – Children want choices and love to experiment. They are ready to try anything new and engaging.*
- *Fun – Children want to enjoy what they are doing. They are often collectors.*

Here's some statements to try when your child(ren) want something that you're not happy about:

- *What will that give you?*
- *Can I help you figure out a better way of meeting your need?*
- *What do you want? I'll try to help you meet your need.*
- *What is another way to meet your need?*

Diane Gossen speaking about raising her son:

We raised our son to tell us what he needed. From the age of two, when he was upset we'd say, "What do you want? Tell me, I'll help you." We'd prompt him:

"Do you need a hug?" (love need)

"Do you need help figuring that out?" (power need)

"Do you need to be left alone?" (freedom need)

If he whined, fussed, or had a tantrum, we'd say, "That's not how you get what you want, tell me what you want." Slowly these strategies took hold.

Diane Gossen speaking about observing interactions in another family:

Recently I was in the home of another parent who was using the approach with her children. Her five-year-old said, "I need some attention." The mom stopped and asked what she wanted and learned it was to show me, the visitor, her doll. Her mom agreed and the doll was paraded. It all took less than five minutes and the child was happy. Later a three-year-old called from the kitchen, "I need help!" We went to discover what help she needed and helped her. The child said, "Thanks, Mom," and went happily on her way.

Diane says: I reviewed in my mind how it would have been for me as a new mother when my girls were young. I'd have invested much more than five minutes hushing them and telling them, "Don't interrupt" rather than asking their need. I reflected on how simply needs had been met for both my friend's children and for herself with a minimum of fuss.

Here's some statements to try:

- *What do you need?*
- *What are you doing? Is it working?*
- *What do you want? I'll try to help you meet your need.*
- *Can I help you figure out a better way to meet your need?*

Here are some Restitution thoughts excerpted from Diane Gossen's book My Child is a Pleasure, pp. 72-73.

More about behaviours as an attempt to meet needs ...

Adults and children feel okay when they have managed to reach a comfortable balance between their potentially conflicting needs for love, power, freedom, fun, and survival. Successful strategies are ones where people have behaviours that help them meet their needs without hurting others. Some successful strategies are:

- Start the task.
- Work hard.
- Ask for help.
- Be patient.
- Tell others the need you are trying to meet.

Talking about these skills with children in a non-critical way is a good use of quality time.

Here are some Restitution thoughts excerpted from Diane Gossen's book My Child is a Pleasure, pp. 77-78.

Diane Gossen says, "I have been taught a lot by parents who have shared their experiences with me. To talk to children about how we want our relationships to be rather than complaining to them when we aren't satisfied makes a difference. Being proactive, consciously modeling self-evaluation encourages our children to construct their own moral meaning from life's challenges.

Say to your child: **I agree that your need is important. How can you get what you need and be safe?**

Or try saying: **How can we both get our needs met?"**

Here are some Restitution thoughts excerpted from Diane Gossen's book My Child is a Pleasure, pp. 100-101.

Diane Gossen says,

- Children are unique individuals with unique convictions about how they want to satisfy their needs. (Review of needs: People are striving to meet the needs of love, power, fun, freedom. William Glasser)
- Children are building pictures in their heads of the people they want to be; these arise from their experiences of satisfaction.
- Because parents are involved in parenting their children and in helping them to satisfy their needs, children begin to see themselves as the person they wish to become.
- With parental encouragement and assistance, children are almost always willing to behave in ways that make their pictures of the people they want to be come true.
- Children can learn to try again, wait, problem solve, learn, laugh, share, help if parents have assisted them to build these pictures in their heads, if parents have helped their children to want to be people who act in these ways.
- To guide our children in furnishing their internal worlds with quality pictures of themselves, Deepak Chopra suggests that we begin early to prompt our children to think about their purpose in life.
- Even preschoolers, and certainly older children, can begin learning that they have something to give that no one else has. With adult encouragement, children can begin to think about their special gift and develop it for the good of all.

Here are some Restitution thoughts excerpted from Diane Gossen's book My Child is a Pleasure, pp. 140-141.

Styles to avoid in dealing with problems because they do not develop self-discipline, but that as parents we're used to:

*Punisher
Guilter
Buddy*

Monitor (imposing consequences).

Style of working on behaviour with our children to try because it supports the development of intrinsic self-discipline:

Manager.

The manager creates the best conditions for children to develop self-discipline by

- ensuring our children know and understand our family values and
- continually supporting our children to reach those values by doing the right thing and
- making situations right (restitution) when they make a poor decision.

“What does our family belief? How will you fix this problem?”

Monitoring

While learning self-discipline, however, most children need some external discipline (monitoring).

- While you’re developing your family values with your children, you will need to be a skillful monitor.
- Good monitoring is a matter of appropriate rules combined with a straightforward enforcement process.

“What’s the rule? Can you do that?”

Here are some Restitution thoughts excerpted from Diane Gossen’s book My Child is a Pleasure, pp. 92-94.

Style of working on behaviour with our children to try because it supports the development of intrinsic self-discipline:

The manager role helps create the best conditions for children to develop self-discipline. Managers try to help children meet their needs while also reinforcing the family beliefs. Managers use the “yes, if ...” strategy as much as possible instead of saying “no”.

Examples:

Can I stay at the cabin overnight?

Yes, if there will be a parent there.

Can I have a bigger allowance?

Yes, if you are willing to earn it.

Can I not do my chores today?

Yes, if you can negotiate with your brother or sister to do it for you today in return for a future favour from you.

If you must say no, be sure it’s important and then mean it.

Here are some Restitution thoughts excerpted from Diane Gossen’s book My Child is a Pleasure, pp. 102-104.

When we ask our children “What do we believe?” we are talking about “we, our family”. Together, with parental leadership, the individual members of a family build and remodel their shared visions of how they want to be treating each other, who they want to become.

State your beliefs for them, but learn also to invite their reflection. Say to them, “Don’t answer me now, think about it. I’ll ask you later.” Examples from parents quoted in Diane Gossen’s book:

“I asked my older son what kind of person he wanted to be, being very careful of my non-verbals and tone. He shared lots of ideas: he wants to be healthy, honest, creative, and so on.”

“With my younger son I changed the question: what kind of person don’t you want to be? He knew he did not want to be a thief, cheater, liar, and so forth.”

“I also use this approach when we have disagreements. I ask them if how we are acting fits into our picture of how we want to be.”

Here are some Restitution thoughts excerpted from Diane Gossen's book My Child is a Pleasure, pp. 105.

When our neighbours informed us that our son was among the boys responsible for shooting out a street light with this BB gun, we took the opportunity to work with Restitution. We focused on our family belief: our family believes that it is vital to respect our own property and the property of others. We asked our son, "Is shooting at street lights respectful of property?" Through all of our son's excuses we consistently returned to our family beliefs and asked our son for his self-evaluation. This kept our focus on what was most important and kept us from becoming entangled in the diversion of placing blame. We stood firm and asked him, "How are you going to make it right?" His solution was what we were willing to talk about once our son acknowledged his violation of our family principle of respect for property.

Here are some Restitution thoughts excerpted from Diane Gossen's book My Child is a Pleasure, p.110.

If children struggle with telling the truth, we can make statements such as, "What I notice is that if a child makes things up, after a while people don't listen any more." or "Do you think people will trust you if you don't tell the truth?"

Here are some Restitution thoughts excerpted from Diane Gossen's book My Child is a Pleasure, p.111-123.

Our children need to experience safety, unconditional love, and self-sufficiency. The environment we set and the involvement we sustain go hand in hand with our commitment to help our children learn to meet their needs (power, fun, freedom, belonging) and to change what we do as they learn and grow.

POWER needs: Teach and model self-control for your child to help them develop lasting strength. Children learn power through the following:

- *work hard*
- *keep going when the going gets rough*
- *ask questions; ask for help*
- *learn from mistakes*
- *learn to do a job well.*

These are all qualities teachers encourage and reinforce at school, too.

Here are some Restitution thoughts excerpted from Diane Gossen's book My Child is a Pleasure, p.130-131.

As parents and educators, the environment we set and the involvement we sustain go hand in hand with our commitment to help our children/students learn to meet their needs (power, fun, freedom, belonging) and to change what we do as they learn and grow.

Our need for fun: *Adding fun can generate energy for work. Doing fun things with our children will improve our lives and theirs. It will also model for them the importance of building fun into our days even in adulthood. One father's suggestions:*

"We came up with a list of things we like to do for fun, and then we listed for each how much time we actually spend on it. We found that many of them had zero minutes by them, and others had very little time. Since we made the effort to plan time for some of these fun choices, we have been enjoying ourselves and each other much more."

Remember that conversation is one major form of quality time. A lot of laughter can be generated by a family discussion on fun topics. Being outside can offer a good deal of

free fun. Learning new things is fun, too. It's fun to explore, discover, or research with your child. Creating something is yet another source of fun, e.g. painting, music, cooking, etc. Have fun finding the joy in daily routines. Children have an unlimited capacity for delight in the commonplace.