

Excerpt about Discipline From Book:  
*Motivation Messages to Mothers of Teenage Daughters*  
Written in 2003 by Frankie Jackson

**DISCIPLINE IS THE LINK BETWEEN GOALS AND RESULTS**

Instilling discipline in your daughter's character is like building an inner guidance system that will last a lifetime. Discipline is the determining factor of success and accomplishment. These messages are based on building a true relationship with her so that a disciplined mindset will flourish.

**Agree Upon Boundaries**

Many types of addictive behaviors such as obsessive dieting, taking drugs, drinking, or staying in abusive relationships, can be linked to a lack of boundaries. A boundary is not about telling her what to do. It is about telling her what you, or others, will do if she acts in an undesirable way. You may not be able to fully control her behavior, but you can control your response to her behavior.

An example might be when she criticizes something you do. This especially hurts when you are in public, or when you think you are doing the right thing. Your response to her might be, "When you criticize me, it hurts my feelings. From this point forward, when you do this, I will leave your presence regardless where we are." You have set a boundary. If she does this again, you must act and do what you said you were going to do. Otherwise, the boundary loses its power. Here are some simple suggestions to help you set boundaries for her.

- Avoid controlling her actions. Allow her to suffer the consequences of learning experiences.
- Give her choices. This teaches her decision-making skills.
- Identify your personal boundaries and have consequences if she crosses them.
- Set boundaries for yourself. She will see you as a role model. If you tolerate disrespectful treatment, you are letting her, and others know that it is okay to treat you with disrespect.
- Recognize and respect her boundaries. Try knocking on her closed bedroom door instead of just walking in.
- Set an example and take responsibility for when things go wrong.
- Share your opinions with her. Listen to her opinions. Recognize that opinions are not right or wrong. This will help her to think for herself.
- Talk to her about how you decided on the choices you made in your life.
- When a boundary needs to be set, do it in a way that is simple, matter of fact, and without anger.

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### **Discipline with Unconditional Love**

Discipline is one of the most complex responsibilities that we face as mothers. It is planned acts that teach her what is acceptable, how to correct faults, how to make good decisions, and how to avoid problems. It can take many forms, such as the setting of boundaries, providing space for her to suffer the natural consequences, limiting her choices, appreciating a desired behavior, or giving her an incentive. Discipline is not punishment. Punishment is an act of frustration when we do not know what else to do. Discipline is intended to help, not harm. Think of your role as a disciplinarian as one of teaching her self-discipline.

To be effective, discipline must take place within the framework of an unconditional loving relationship. It will be easy to find a balance between being too strict or too lenient. That is why only unconditional love will give you the confidence to know where you stand with her. Inherently, you will know how to handle any circumstance, including discipline. Effective discipline is most likely to occur when there is attentive listening, understanding, reasonable limits, realistic expectations, open communication, and equal emphasis on privileges and responsibility.

When disciplining, remember her behavior and its development are your responsibility. If you love her when she makes you happy (conditional love) or you tell her that you love her only during those times, she will not feel truly loved. This will result in insecurity and low self-esteem and may prevent her from developing self-discipline and self-control. Discipline is not only about today, but about her future. By taking time to discipline her today, you are making a long-term investment in her future, which will result in a self-disciplined adult.

To discipline your daughter requires a tremendous amount of self-discipline on your part. Effective discipline requires that you not take her behavior personally. You must remain calm. Use a firm, but controlled, voice. If you get out of control, then she will get out of control. As you discipline her, keep these concepts in mind:

- Discipline accepts mistakes as an opportunity to learn and grow.
- Discipline is most effective when you model the behavior you expect from her.
- Sometimes her behavior will be unpredictable and unpleasant. Prepare yourself for this and plan how you will respond.
- Teenage girls are still children and will often act like it. Just accept it.
- The form of discipline will change over time, depending on her special needs.

Your job as a mother is to love her despite her behavior.

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**Restrict Behaviors with Conditions**

A condition is a requirement, stipulation, circumstance, or prerequisite. When your relationship has conditions, it is not based on pure unconditional love. She already has enough pressure living with the conditions placed on her at school, in social environments, and with her friends. The last place she should feel this pressure is with you. If you are placing conditions on her, you may be subconsciously creating negative behaviors such as these:

- Believing she cannot fail or make a mistake because she may not be loved or accepted.
- Creating the need for approval, not only from you but from others in her life.
- Feelings of guilt if the conditions placed on her are not met.
- Feeling like she is being manipulated.
- Feeling powerless and dependent on others.
- Living her life to please others rather than herself.
- Making her feel that she must meet your standards in order to be accepted and loved.
- Working harder at meeting conditions and expectations than being self-reliant, self-sufficient, and self-directed.

If these behaviors are surfacing in her personality, start now to restrict the conditions in your relationship. It's not too late. To remove the conditions, you must let go. Give up your attempt to control her life. When we give unconditional love freely, pleasure comes from giving, not from what we get in return. Communicate a positive message that you always love her unconditionally.

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**Value Failure**

Sometimes, failing at something offers more learning opportunities than succeeding. As mothers, we have a hard time letting our daughters struggle. When you let her fail, you show her that she is capable of learning. There are many character-building experiences wrapped up in the feelings that result from failure. Teach her that failure is just a steppingstone to achieving her goals.

When you value failure, there will be no guilt. Guilt is a form of weakness that comes from regret or shame. Most things that you feel guilty about are merely rules that other people created. Guilt is wasted energy. Teach her that when she has failed, she should forgive herself and release it, learn from it, and move on to the next challenge. Failure is the first step to success. It is success if there is something to learn from it.

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**Motivating message:** *When I think of the word discipline, I think of you. Have you ever thought about what this word means? Discipline means a system of rules that develops self-control, character, orderliness, and efficiency. When I break this word down into letters, I think of you!*

**Dependable** – you do what you say you are going to do

**Intelligent** – you are smart, clever, and bright

**Sweet** – you think with your heart and treat others well

**Committed** – you dedicate yourself to your goals

**Infinite** – you realize your own potential

**Persistent** – if you don't at first succeed, you try again

**Loving** – love is all that really matters to you

**Inner-discipline** – within yourself, you make things happen

**Non-conformist** – you do our own thing, if it's right

**Enthusiastic** – you are excited to be alive!

**Love, Mom**