

Immigrants and Their Unbroken Cycle

Immigrants are a strong group of people. I can prove that because I have first-hand experience. And while, of course, I'm thankful for everything my parents have sacrificed to be able to live here, there are some things that I find questionable. Let's face it. Parents get fed up dealing with their children. They're a lot of work, and, as they grow up, they're not small powerless children anymore. They start to become more and more stubborn about their own ways. As they turn into teenagers, this evolves more, and they start having more solid opinions and ideas and, unfortunately, most immigrant parents start seeing this as disrespectful. Immigrant parents find that in order to keep the child disciplined, physical punishments must come into play. A small slap on the wrist or pulling the ear seems harmless, but if we look at the facts, physical discipline affects the child more than an immigrant parent might realize.

Most parents who were born and grew up in America might be horrified at the fact that some immigrant parents hit their children, but it's important to consider that many immigrant parents grow up on the idea of respect, and they value that over keeping a balanced relationship with their child, even if they don't realize it. Hitting a child makes them scared, and, while this may seem effective to keep the child in check, it hurts them in unseen ways. This greatly differs from American methods which are more aimed towards keeping a good relationship with the child rather than making the child scared of the parent (Skin). Other cultures may look down on American discipline methods, as it's more laid-back, but American parents typically have a great bond with their child. If we take a look at other cultures, you'll find that corporal punishments are used more. In a *New York Times* article written by Didi Kirsten Tatlow, a journalist for China, she talks about a conversation between her and another Chinese father. The father advised her to

slap her child followed by a slapping motion. She argues that it wouldn't work, but he's unswayed, and she mentions how she believes that he most likely followed that Chinese saying "a dutiful son is made by the rod." Coming to America is culturally shocking to someone who grew up surrounded by harsh punishments that are so casually tossed around. Another cause of this is stress and the loss of familiarity when moving to a new country, which will lead to them hitting their children to regain power and a sense of dominance (Fontes). Though, these reasons don't excuse the actions, it does make it easier to understand why they're okay with it.

Hitting a child is only effective if a parent values having power and control over them. If a parent is looking to help nurture and raise a child to be the best they can be, then hitting a child should be the last thing they do. Doing this actually does the opposite of what you want. If you think about it, hitting your child means that you've lost control of them instead of gaining more control (Divecha). If a parent has to go to such extremes just to get their child to listen, then does the parent really have control over them? The bottom line is that hitting your child will not get a parent the results they want. It just does not work, and, as the parent realizes this, they start to make the corporal punishments worse each time (Smith). Not to compare them in an offensive way, but a pet trainer would never, ever advise owners to hit their pets if it didn't do what it wanted. Even without that knowledge, a lot of people would be horrified at the fact someone would hit their own pet. They would, instead, encourage and teach the pet trick over and over until it was learned. If people treat pets this way, why wouldn't it be the same for a small human? People often discourage hitting pets because they don't understand discipline, so taking that same idea and applying it to children wouldn't be such a bad idea. If the child knows that their parents will hit them if they mess up, then they're more scared to make mistakes around the house. They're more likely to sneak and hide things just so they can avoid being hit. The child is

supposed to grow into an adult, and parents are supposed to help them learn from their mistakes. The child can't just learn right away how something is properly done. Instead of hitting a child and assuming they'll understand not to do something again, a parent must talk and explain why something is wrong. This is the proper way to help and raise a child into a successful adult.

As mentioned many times, hitting a child makes them scared of the parent. This isn't the only consequence. Many studies have shown that any act of physical punishment towards a child can lead to “increased aggression, antisocial behavior, physical injury and mental health problems” (Smith). Not to mention that, children often mimic what the adults in their life do, and if the parent hits the child, then the child will think it's okay to hit other people if they don't get what they want. These are just some of the effects on a child, but in a country like America, this can backfire onto the parent as well. Corporal punishment is looked down upon and even illegal in some places. What would someone think if they heard that a grown adult was hitting a defenseless child who's unable to protect themselves? It's pretty bad. A grown adult who is already bigger than the child in size and more powerful is hitting a child just because they wouldn't listen. This, of course, isn't always the case, but it can be simmered down to just that and used against the parent who uses corporal punishments. This is even worse for immigrant parents, who aren't familiar with American customs, if they ever would need to explain themselves to authorities like CPS. One might think that an adult who was hit as a child would want to change their ways and never hurt their own child the way they were hurt before, but that sadly isn't always the case. The way they were treated can, and will often, be passed down. Thus, creating a never ending-cycle of children and corporal punishments.

So what have we learned about corporal punishment for a child? It's the worst way a parent can punish a child. Before becoming a parent, one has to think about if they're truly ready

to face the challenges of raising a child. They have to think about whether they're prepared and have the right tools to deal with their child. Sometimes we need to face the facts; Parenting isn't just something you can learn in a day. Just like everything else, it's something valuable that needs to be learned. I believe that with the right change of mindset we can raise children to be the best they can be.

Works Cited

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