Transforming the Difficult Child

Howard Glasser, Executive Director, Children’s Success Foundation
The Nurtured Heart Approach

This is an approach that evolved out of the challenges I faced working with families and teachers of intense and difficult children.
The Nurtured Heart Approach

- Does an approach make a difference? Head Start...Juvenile Court.
- All ages
- All levels of severity...ADHD, ODD, PTSD, etc.
Beliefs

- Intensity is a good thing.
- Medications moderate intensity...
- The message to the child is: “You can’t handle your intensity...nor can anyone else.”
Beliefs

- Normal parenting and teaching methods are designed for the average child and often make the situation worse.
- The harder normal methods are applied the worse the situation can get...despite the best of intentions.
Beliefs

- Children need to be stronger on the inside now than ever before.
- TRANSFORMATION....
The Nurtured Heart Approach

The approach is about how to therapeutically create a profound level of inner strength and transformation.
Helping Every Child to Flourish

- And it’s about having powerful ways of making any moment an opportunity to create success. We have much more opportunity than we think.
- The Horse Whisperer.
QuickTime™ and a DV - NTSC decompressor are needed to see this picture.
The Nurtured Heart Approach

- Creating a world of first hand experiences: “Here you are being successful…”
- Relentlessly reflecting: “This is who you really are... It’s not a question of whether you can or can’t, you are…”
- A new portfolio.
Helping Every Child to Flourish

More than “catching kids being good”...Bigger net

It’s also about how to add new dimension to the opportunity. Finding the success in what IS happening AND in what ISN’T happening.
The Nurtured Heart Approach

- The approach has three basic aspects:
- Super-energizing experiences of success.
- Refusing to energize or accidentally reward negativity.
- While still providing a perfect level of limit-setting and consequences.
Toys R’ Us

- We are by far our children’s most interesting “toy”. We have, by far, more features. We are the ultimate entertainment centers.
Children are in the process of forming impressions of the world and their effect upon the world.
Given traditional ways of parenting, it is remarkably easy for a child, especially an intense child, to form an impression that this “Toy” is much more animated, interesting, and alive in relation to their unacceptable behaviors.
These same “Toys” are relatively boring in relation to positive behaviors.
Children experience the truth of what really gets us going

We operate as if we’re interpreted literally but there’s a current underneath the rational

How much are we radiating?

Thank you & Good Job pale in comparison to the energy radiated in relation to adversity.
Our emotions, our reactions, our level of our involvement...our energies are the prize.

Children have an uncanny way of knowing where “more” is.

Fortunately we get to choose what we radiate and how we radiate.
Nintendo Therapy

- It is not an accident that so many children are attracted to games like Nintendo.
Nintendo Therapy

While the child is playing the game, life truly makes sense.
Nintendo Therapy

- The rules are totally clear and predictable and so are the incentives.
Nintendo Therapy

- Nintendo has a near perfect blend of structure: the positives and the limits are in just the right balance...
- The timing is right...always in the moment.
- The payoffs are not upside down.
Nintendo Therapy

- Traditional models of teaching and parenting aren’t anywhere near as clear or as powerful as Nintendo.
- Kids are confused about what’s an incentive and what’s a consequence.
Nintendo Therapy

- Given the right level of structure, these children can really play life to win. The structure helps them to use their intensity and energies successfully.
Nintendo Therapy

- Wouldn’t it be nice if challenging children applied themselves to the game of life with the same zeal. It can be done.
- Life is a Nintendo game. We can transpose the same near perfect blend of structure to any other environment.
Nintendo Therapy

- No Blame: The existing models, methods and beliefs are the problem...not the parents, teachers or child.
- It’s rarely pathology...and the child’s really not out to get you...
Nintendo Therapy

- My “M.O.” as a therapist is simply to teach an approach that works.
- Then the teacher and parent in effect become the “Therapists/Heroes”.
Nintendo Therapy

Instead of feeling condemned, the parent or teacher can feel great about having turned their child around.
#1: “I refuse to be drawn into accidentally energizing and rewarding negativity.”
Taking a Stand

#2: “I refuse to not purposefully energize and nurture successes.”
Taking a Stand

#3: “Here’s the rules, and this is what happens when you choose to break a rule. I refuse to not provide a true consequence when a rule is broken”.”
Taking a Stand

Unfortunately, starting with the stand on rules and consequences can actually make things worse.
Taking a Stand

Negative attention is like junk food: No nutritional value. Although not intended that way, it makes children weaker on the inside and downloads as failures.
Normal attempts to be positive get defended against. The child inwardly braces with words or thoughts along the lines of “I can’t hear that compliment...It’s not the truth...I’m not a good kid...” They are basing this on the evidence of what has been energized.
Taking a Stand

- New ways of being positive are necessary...
- that get around the defenses...
- that provide excellent emotional and psychological nutrition...
- and that get felt and digested as successes.
Transforming the Difficult Child

Howard Glasser, Executive Director, Children’s Success Foundation
Believe in the Miraculous

- Genetic and bio-chemical differences create real propensities.
- Propensities can be overcome.
- Weakened pathways can be strengthened.
- New pathways can be constructed.
Believe in the Miraculous

- It’s all about intention...
Shamu
Shamu

- Lowering the Rope.
- Creating successes that would not otherwise exist.
The Toll Booth Man

- It’s all how you choose to see things
Energizing Success
and refusing to energize negativity

PHASE 1
Kodak Moments

Watch, describe and document what you see out loud...as if for a blind companion.
Kodak Moments

- Ordinary moments are windows of opportunity.
- Notice both actions and emotions.
- Go with the flow.
Kodak Moments

- Esteem
- Self-Worth
- Felt As A Success
Polaroids

Children often do not know how to evaluate their experiences. They need our help.
Polaroids

- When do we typically choose to teach the qualities and life skills that we value?
- How receptive are children to this type of learning?
Polaroids

- Highlight the healthy aspects of the qualities that you wish to enhance.
- Teaching values is like polishing a gem...find the facet and nurture it.
Canons

- Proactive Recognition. What is proactive really about?
Canons

- When do we normally choose to teach rules?
- How receptive are children to hearing our words of wisdom under those circumstances?
We often give out energy to the rules at the worst possible time...we can easily accidentally reward the child for breaking the rule.
Canons

- A fresh look at rules: Old rules and new rules.
- What kind of rules best helps intense and challenging children.
- Clarity...and more success opportunities.
Canons

- Creating more experiences of success.
- Recognition and appreciation when rules are not being broken.
Canons

- Recognition to self-control and healthy power.
- There's always an underlying effort when rules are not being broken.
Canons

- These begin to clarify the limits and set the stage for rules and consequences to really have an effect.
Creative Recognition

- How do we normally make requests of our children?
Creative Recognition

- Advertising Options: traditional requests imply a choice.
Creative Recognition

Children with pre-existing patterns of negativity will frequently make a choice based on where they can find the bigger payoff.
Creative Recognition

* Eliminate the options and the confusion. Use requests like: “I need you to..”
Creative Recognition

- Joseph’s Story: create success that wouldn’t otherwise exist by starting with very doable requests.
Creative Recognition

- Always remember to reinforce with recognition and appreciation.
Making a Fuss

- Instead of making a big deal over negativity, make a fuss over the good stuff.
- Why water the weeds.
- Radiating energy and creating success is the secret.
Multiplying Successes

Comments that play both ends of the opportunity:

What **IS** happening that can be held up as a success, **AND**.

What **ISN’T** happening that can be held up as a success.
Tolson
QuickTime™ and a H.263 decompressor are needed to see this picture.
QuickTime™ and a H.263 decompressor are needed to see this picture.
QuickTime™ and a H.263 decompressor are needed to see this picture.
QuickTime™ and a H.263 decompressor are needed to see this picture.
Jordy & Austin
QuickTime™ and a H.263 decompressor are needed to see this picture.
QuickTime™ and a H.263 decompressor are needed to see this picture.
QuickTime™ and a H.263 decompressor are needed to see this picture.
Zack
QuickTime™ and a H.263 decompressor are needed to see this picture.
QuickTime™ and a DV/DVCPRO - NTSC decompressor are needed to see this picture.
Transforming the Difficult Child

Howard Glasser, Executive Director, Children’s Success Foundation
Setting Limits

And not giving energy to negativity

PHASE 2/3
Setting Limits

The stage is set: your child now knows exactly what happens when rules are not broken.
Setting Limits

- Most every consequence is really a form of time-out.
- Most attempts to implement a time-out are done under less than optimal conditions.
- They are contaminated with rewards.
- And the level of energy for successes isn’t nearly high enough.
Setting Limits

- Time-Ins: The payoff of excitement, success, and emotional-psychological nutrition when things are going right
- Time-Outs: Missing out on life’s payoffs and options.
The Speed Limit Story: How to get out of the way and let your child discover the solution of how to be more aware, use more self-control, and stay clear of the limits.
Setting Limits

- You can’t really stop someone from breaking a rule, but you can give a consequence.
- Children already know the truth.
- It gets old trying to stop them and it communicates fear and inability while further rewarding poor choices.
Setting Limits

Children are relieved to realize that they don’t have to be perfect and if they break a rule it’s not a big deal.
Setting Limits

- If you put a new roof on a house, you want it to rain....How breaking rules NOW leads to a new impression.
- Children need to see what happens.
Setting Limits

- There’s no longer anything to be gained by breaking rules. The big reactions are for the positives. Breaking a rule only gets a true consequence, not a payoff.
Setting Limits

- Like in Nintendo, the child becomes much more interested in not breaking rules.
- Like in Nintendo, the attraction to positive forms of success becomes an overriding force.
QuickTime™ and a H.263 decompressor are needed to see this picture.
QuickTime™ and a H.263 decompressor are needed to see this picture.
IT’S ALL ABOUT NURTURING THE HEARTS OF OUR CHILDREN.
Transforming the Difficult Child

Howard Glasser, Executive Director, Children’s Success Foundation
Advanced Techniques
The Credit System
The Credit System

- We are all on credit systems. Rich, poor or retired, we rely on our resources to get the things we need and want.
The Credit System

This is a first-hand experience for us.
Our children have a secondhand experience of our credit system.
The Credit System

Many challenging children have an incongruent view of the way things work.
The Credit System

They are not necessarily prepared for the real life credit system they will inevitably be on.
The Credit System

- The modern day apprenticeship: learning how the world really works.
The Credit System

- It serves as a built-in reminder system to do recognition and appreciation as a way of giving credit.
The Credit System

- **Drip irrigation**: an organized and steady stream of successes leads to trust and a strong level of emotional nutrition.
The Credit System

- Examples: Ways to Earn.
Ways to Earn

- Rules Not Broken
- Positive Behaviors
- Chores/Responsibilities
# Ways to Earn Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pts</th>
<th>Rules</th>
<th>Pts</th>
<th>Rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>No lying</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>No arguing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>No stealing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>No being disrespectful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>No aggression</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>No teasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>No yelling</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>No whining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>No name calling</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>No bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>No bad language</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>No disobeying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bonuses for Positive Behaviors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Chores/Responsibilities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Being polite - respectful</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Putting dirty dishes in sink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Doing things when asked</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Washing the dishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Taking criticism well</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Good daily hygiene (brushing teeth,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Handling strong feelings well</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>combing hair, etc...)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Expressing feelings without hurting</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Doing daily homework &amp; turning it in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Good attitude</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Good grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Bonus points</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Extra helpful efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Chores/Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good bus stop and bus behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Making bed</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Good day at school</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Good behavior at sitter or after school</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>program</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Keep room clean</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Taking the trash out</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Feeding the dog</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Clearing the table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>= bonus points</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

☆ = bonus points
Ways to Spend

- What’s really a privilege under the microscope of grounding
Ways to Spend

- Examples: Ways to spend. Be Creative!
- From TV time to Maid Service to buying an argument.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Privilege</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>½ hour of acceptable TV show (2 hour max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>½ hour of desirable/educational TV show (2 hour max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>½ hr. of TV containing bad attitudes/violence (1 hour max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>extra treat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>soda (3 per week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>rent acceptable video game or movie (2 hours max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>Go to movie theater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>rollerskating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>½ hour of skateboarding or bike riding time (2 hours max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>½ hour staying up late (weekends only, 1 hour max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>allowance per dollar ($5 max every two weeks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>allowance per dollar (purchase up to $2 bonus per week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>15 minutes maid services (only when available)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>1 hour chauffer service, pro-rated (only when available)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>1 hour trip to store to spend earned money, pro-rated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>1 hour friend time (max to be determined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>1 hour computer or computer game time (2 hour max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>sleep over (once per quarter max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>meal at fast food restaurant (twice per month max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>trip to fun-type of amusement park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>ice cream (only when available)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Credit System

- How to present the system to your child.
- How to include them in the process.
- How to keep track of credits
The Credit System

* What to do if your child resists.
The Credit System

- DO NOT TAKE POINTS AWAY FOR NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS
- Always stay with using the unceremonious time-out when necessary.
- For larger transgressions: Time-out plus community service.
Implementation

- Be generous with recognition and in awarding full and partial credits.
Extending the System
Flourishing at School

- God is watching: A belief that helps many people manage their lives while walking the straight and narrow.
- Can intense children use more self-control when they perceive that we are watching.
Flourishing at School

How can you get your child to feel you are observing in a benevolent, but accountable way, without you having to actually be in the classroom?
Flourishing at School

- Creating a simple communication system with the teacher.
# The Credit System for Elementary Schools
## Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>poor</th>
<th>fair</th>
<th>good</th>
<th>very good</th>
<th>excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>paying attention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>following directions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completing assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no aggression or bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no teasing or name calling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no bad words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**comments**

credit conversion: poor = 0, fair = 10, good = 15, very good = 20, excellent = 30
# The Credit System
**For Middle or High Schools**

**Sample**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name ____________________________</th>
<th>Date __________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Mrs. T</th>
<th>Mr. M</th>
<th>Ms. P</th>
<th>Mrs. F</th>
<th>Mr. W</th>
<th>Ms. D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>following directions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completing classwork</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no aggression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no put downs or teasing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no swearing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ignoring provocation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>initials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

Please assign a number to each listed behavior as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>poor: poor effort, persistent problem behaviors, poor recovery following consequence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>fair: fair effort, some behavior problems. Fair recovery following class consequence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>good: good to very good effort, minimal or no problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>excellent: excellent effort, no problems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Optimal Conditions

- Refueling: Accountability & Nutrition.
- Now it’s a better fit: Most teachers work beautifully with normalized behaviors.
- Teachers can use similar notes and strategies to help shift parents to applauding more successes.
Suggested Action

- Collaborate.
- Discuss the strategies of the approach with the key people at the school.
- Ask for what you need.
Resources

- Handout: Examples of the Techniques
- Creating and Continuing Successes.
- Feel free to copy and use these materials.
Resources

- DifficultChild.Com
- Advanced Training
- Newsletter / Discussion Forum
- The Children’s Success Foundation
Remember

- Shamu: The art of creating successes that wouldn’t otherwise exist...
- The Toll Booth Attendant: The art of the way we choose to see things.
Remember

- IT’S ALL ABOUT NURTURING
  THE HEARTS OF OUR CHILDREN
THE END

Howard Glasser
The Children’s Success Foundation
adhddoc@theriver.com