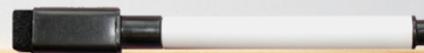


Easy As Pie

Teach Children to Behave
without Yelling, Spanking or Time-outs



Ana
Seidel



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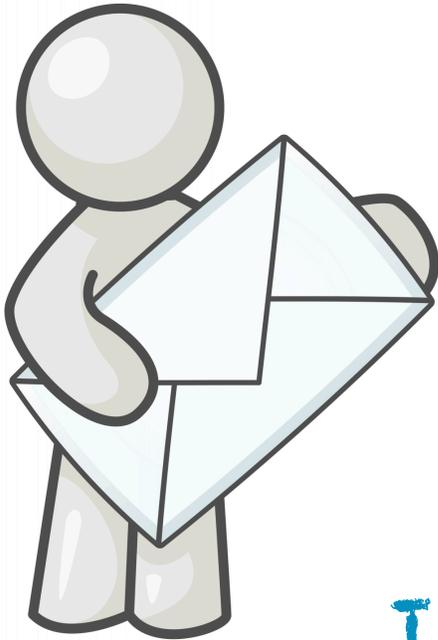
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INTEGRITY

This manual has been a love of labor created over two years.

We would appreciate it if you didn't send this manual to anyone and everyone in your email address book.

Please do share it with one best friend—because best friends share everything—and we're totally ok with that.

If you have other friends who are interested in Easy As Pie, please send them to www.ParentingIsEasyAsPie.com

OUR BACKGROUND

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— Richard Bach (*Illusions*)



My Mother loved parenting; it filled her cup with energy. At a time (late 1960's) when parents believed that “children should be seen and not heard,” “spare the rod, spoil the child, and break the will of the child,” she chose to parent completely differently. Everyone praised her because we were happy, delightful, respectful children. She loved the mental challenge of parenting my brother and me at each level of growth. It was just plain fun to her.

So one would think that I would be a great Mother; I had a great example. Au contraire! I learned that just because you can play a game, doesn't mean that you can design the game; just because you can eat apple pie doesn't mean you know how to make it. I think you get the idea.

I loved my children so much and so deeply that I wanted four more after my first child, Tyler, died of SIDS at 9 weeks old. But as they grew into toddlerhood and beyond, I did not LIKE my children.

Parenting Exhausts Me

Like many people, parenting does not fill my cup; it drains it. I was exhausted by all of the tantrums and arguing. By the time my youngest was talking, I constantly had all four of them talking to me at the same time! Then throw on top of all that Postnatal Depression and PMDD (Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder—the worst PMS a woman can get), and I grew to be a Mother in name only.

Then I spent two years immersed in human development study. I had a “light bulb moment” when I learned that you teach others how to treat you. Ah Ha! I had taught my children to be disrespectful, moody, selfish, lazy, violent and dishonest. I certainly wasn't trying to teach them those behaviors. I was spending all of my time trying to STOP those behaviors, and in doing so, I was unknowingly INCREASING those unwanted behaviors. I have a feeling that you are too.

What Changed?

Now that my children's behavior has changed dramatically, my own Mother recently confessed that she did not like being around my children back then. Ouch!

Let me share with you some background that facilitated the creation of the Easy As Pie parenting method. I have four children ages, 13, 9, 7, and 4, with my High School sweetheart and husband of 20 years.

Starting with Justine's first few temper tantrums 11 years ago, which I felt ill equipped to deal with, I started searching for and reading information to help me understand how to handle these behaviors.

1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children 2-12, by Thomas W. Phelan

The first program I tried was from the book, 1-2-3 Magic. I liked the premise. By using numbers after asking a child to stop a behavior, you give them the opportunity to choose to control their behavior.

#1 is their alert,

#2 is their final decision making opportunity

#3 they've reached the limit and off to time-out

It worked as long as Cory and I worked the system. Over the months we grew weary of counting and felt like our kids were not internally making choices to behave nicely. We were the outside force continually asking them to stop.

Super Nanny

Then the television show, Super Nanny, introduced us to the concept of the Naughty Spot (time-out spot) and creating a consistent family schedule. This show gave us a new perspective on our children because we realized that they were so much better behaved than the children featured on the show!

The family schedule helped our children feel more secure because they were able to predict what was happening next in their lives. This gave our children a lot of comfort.

The Naughty Spot made it so we could do time-outs anywhere. We used their age times 1 minute; i.e. 4 years = 4 minutes. This was usually enough time for my children to get their emotions under control. But, then we started to realize

that most of the time we were focusing only on the undesired behavior. They would return from their time-out and repeat the negative behavior 10 minutes later! It became very clear to us that time-outs don't change children's behavior. They just don't work.

Like we state in our book, *What You Don't Fix... Your Kids Inherit*, what you focus on, expands, and we were experiencing this big-time! We were focused on their negative behavior.

Our kids spent a ***lot of time*** on the Naughty Spot because their poor behavior choices were ***getting worse***. With four children, it always seemed like someone was in time-out, and it was ***exhausting*** to monitor all of their time-outs with up to four different timers!

Star System

Cory and I needed to focus on positive behavior so we added the Star System; Children earn 1 to 5 stars for positive behaviors. We had a star chart at home and we wrote stars on their hands when they earned them while we were away from home. 100 stars earned them a special treat.

This worked great for two weeks! I thought I had hit the mother lode and found the parenting holy grail! I was so proud of myself. Then as soon as Cory and I stopped focusing on dishing out the stars, everyone started migrating back to old behaviors.

But the kids really liked this system and would keep reminding us to start it up again.

Dr. Kevin Leman's book, *Have A New Kid By Friday*.

Although, overall, our children were becoming more delightful, as they grew older, the unacceptable behavior was increasing, even though it occurred less often. I turned to Dr. Kevin Leman's book, *Have A New Kid By Friday*.

I love his premise of real world consequences for children and we realized that we were already doing much of what he taught. The new element for us was that when children are disrespectful, they aren't able to have any of the fun privileges in life, such as watching TV, playing computer games, or even being driven to piano practice.

The key was that the parent had to remember the infraction and the consequence that was going to happen at a later time. "No, I'm not driving you to piano practice today because you were talking back to me this morning."

As much as I liked Dr. Leman's parenting philosophy, I had two problems with it:

- First: with 4 children, I was having A LOT of trouble keeping track of all the infractions.
- Second: children need to know immediately when they have done something that is not acceptable and be given a quick opportunity to make amends. It doesn't make sense to the child to have a consequence happen hours later. In fact it's confusing to them.

In the adult world it might look like this:

You show up 30 minutes late to work on Friday morning. Your boss regularly takes the team out for lunch on Fridays. This time, instead of your boss picking up the tab for the meal, the server hands you a check too. You look up confused. Your boss says, "Since you decided to show up late today, I've decided that I'm not paying for your lunch today." Weird, huh?

Wouldn't it have been better to have your boss tell you immediately that you'll need to make up those 30 minutes during lunch or after work? That would be logical. Right?

Easy As Pie

With this Easy As Pie parenting method, I watched our four children's behavior change dramatically within one week! And I hadn't even perfected all the elements that I would end up creating over the next six weeks.

It works because you're teaching your children in a positive way that shapes their behavior. Children no longer live in fear of punishment that they see as random. Now they have a consistent way to earn back their privileges. Life becomes more predictable and stable.

LOOK INSIDE

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— Richard Bach (*Illusions*)



This parenting method is all about you. Not your children. It will require you to look at what you’ve been doing with your children. How did you get here?

Ask yourself, “What have I been doing, what do I want to change.”

Are you willing to work for it? Because not only will your children change, you will change dramatically while you are parenting with Easy As Pie. You will start to like your children again.

If you’re not ready to put in the work, decide now before you even read any more. If you aren’t ready right now, this may not be the parenting method for you.

There are many different parenting styles. Some work better than others. Some styles lift up and support children. Some send children into decades of therapy when they are adults.

What do you want for your children? Will you change for them? Because it's going to require a lot of work and patience. You aren't used to parenting this way.

The positive results you will see in your children will seem astounding. You are going to learn to control your emotions while you are teaching your children to control theirs.

Did you know that **you choose** to get angry or frustrated? How can this be? Have you ever been in a traffic jam and look to your left and see a driver shaking his fist and cursing at the air in front of him? And you look to your right and the driver looks calm and is smiling? The same situation, two different behavior choices.

Is This Really Too Hard?

So, let me ask you—how hard are you working now? Do you like your results? If your answer is no, would you be willing to put 30 to 60 days into working with this method?

Because the pay-off is amazing. Your children will thank you.

How do I know? Because about four months into using Easy As Pie, my son Dane came up to me said something that stopped me in my tracks.

“I'm really glad you're my Mom.”

“What makes you say that?” I said.

“Ever since you came up with Pie, I like you a whole lot more.”

I smiled, “Aw, thanks buddy. And I like you a whole lot more too.”

And that's what parenting is all about.

EASY AS PIE OVERVIEW

“When you know better you do better.” — Maya Angelou



Easy As Pie is a step-by-step method to shape children’s behavior with out spanking, yelling or time-outs. How is this possible?

Easy As Pie is a parenting tool that removes all punishments. When a child stops living in fear of possible punishment, they choose to behave differently. You behave differently because you no longer become angry at your children when they misbehave.

If I haven’t lost you already—because you can’t believe it’s possible to parent without punishing or discipline—stay with me a bit more.

One of your responsibilities as a parent is to raise children who know how to choose appropriate behaviors in any situation. We get 18 years to accomplish this goal. But until now, there has never been a method that shows you step-by-step how to parent positively. The families who participated in my trial group

proved to me that anyone with focus, persistence and consistency, can parent using Easy As Pie.

Easy As Pie Has Two Components: Physical and Verbal

The Magnetic Pie

The physical part consists of 6 magnetic wedges that fit together to make a circle. Each wedge has a moral or value that you are teaching; Respectful, Responsible, Honest, Cheerful, Kind and Helpful. These “Pie Pieces” live on a magnetic surface like your refrigerator or magnetic board. The “Pie” is a visual tool to help your children learn the meaning of values you are teaching.

Your Dialogue

The verbal part is contained in this manual. It’s the process of how to effectively use the “Pie Pieces” and your dialogue to **label** children’s unwanted behaviors. You will also learn how to tie activities that your children love to those “Pie Pieces.” This in turn will **motivate** your children to **earn** their “Pie Pieces” back so their Pie is “Whole.” You will learn that it is the **entire family’s responsibility** to help any child earn their Pieces back. This creates sibling bonding and teamwork. This is a radically different but effective way to parent.

So, what do you do when you can’t spank anymore? Ah! Now “Time-out” enters the scene and is encouraged by many professionals. My children proved to me over and over, that time-outs just don’t work to change behavior. They are just exactly what they’re named—a time-out. It’s a break that stops the unwanted behavior momentarily, but then easily becomes repeated a few minutes later.

Dramatically Different

Easy As Pie is a parenting method that turns your focus away from punishments and time-outs. Unwanted behaviors are **only** labeled. There is absolutely no punishment or discipline for an unwanted behavior—only labeling. Since your children want their Pie to be Whole, you will be consistently teaching your children positive behaviors by helping them earn their Pie Pieces back. They will be continually practicing positive behavior. Your children quickly learn the positive behaviors you want in your home. The unwanted behaviors naturally go away.

Parenting with Easy As Pie is an extremely rewarding experience because you'll feel like you are really **teaching** your children. The yelling, lecturing, counting to 3, spanking and time-outs will become tools that you dump as quickly as an old typewriter in the computer age. With this manual, you will know better, and parent better.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— Richard Bach (*Illusions*)



I'd like to introduce you to a few words that I use with the Easy As Pie parenting method.

Motivators

A Motivator is anything that will inspire your child to get up and do something they don't want to do at the moment.

For today's technologically advanced children, television and computer time is often a huge Motivator. But for other children, their Motivators may be playing

outside or drawing at their desk. Each one of your children may have similar or different Motivators.

How do you find your children's Motivators? They're usually the things you take away when they misbehave. Later in this manual I will show you how to complete a long list of your child's Motivators.

What makes Motivators so powerful is that you will no longer get mad and take these things away from your children. Instead your children will be earning the **right** to have their Motivators **every day**.

Reinforcement

I will explain this in much more detail in later, but here's a quick overview. A Reinforcement is something that happens to help your child learn a behavior.

Many times it is positive—your child gets to do an activity. It can also be the opposite—your child does NOT get to do an activity. This can be an **equally powerful** reinforcement to change behavior.

What Not To Do

The best way to get your child to repeat a behavior is to reinforce it. Let me give you the classic example of a Positive Reinforcement gone bad. A child is whining at the grocery store for a candy bar and the stressed mother is continually saying "no." But the child persists and the mother can't take it anymore and gives in, buying her child the candy. She has just reinforced that behavior. The child has learned, "I just need to hold out and keep whining. I'll get what I want."

The appropriate teaching moment would be to use the Opposite Reinforcement—the lack of a candy bar. The child will quickly learn that they have to behave differently—whining doesn't work.

Shaping Behavior

Wouldn't it be nice if you could tell your child something and then never have to repeat it? Or once your child learns a positive behavior, you never have to teach it again?

Yeah, well—we'll all keep dreaming—because I haven't figured that out either. But I have figured out the next best thing—a way to make the repetition peaceful and calm!

Do I Really Have to Say it Again?

Since repetition is the first rule of learning, we have to keep repeating things until our children learn them. This is so important when teaching really difficult concepts like Responsibility, Kindness and Honesty.

The Easy As Pie Magnets are a tool to gently teach your children the positive behaviors that you want in your household.

Like Molding Clay

I will explain this in much more detail later, but the process of moving Pie Pieces and labeling behavior is a way for you to “shape” your child's behavior over time. At first your child may lose several Pie Pieces while you are making a request. With time, your child will lose fewer and fewer Pieces with each request you make. And eventually, you will make a request and your child will cheerfully do it—now that's respect—and it's “shaping behavior” in a nutshell.

WHY DOES IT WORK?

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— Richard Bach (*Illusions*)



Easy As Pie works because your children are **no longer receiving punishments** for negative behavior. Children learn that tasks to earn their Pieces back are really easy, so they willingly do them. Why?

Because they are getting something pleasant and they aren't spending all of their time to figure out how to get out of punishments. Children **love having a complete Pie**, because it means they have **access to all of their Motivators**.

Does this mean they're going to spend the entire day playing the computer because their Pie is Whole? No. It means that they have "access." If you have a

rule of only 60 minutes of computer play per day, that is still in effect. They just **need to have a Whole Pie to play.**

I'll go into this in much more detail later, but with Easy As Pie, everyone else in the family helps a child earn their missing Pieces. This is radically different parenting! It's not the child's responsibility to figure out how to earn their Pieces back. It's the responsibility of the parents and the siblings. Pretty soon your children figure out that their siblings are going to help them when they have lost Pieces. This develops teamwork between family members. Siblings are going out of their way to help each other.

Another reason that makes this system so special and effective is that your children receive an immediate visual trigger (magnetic Pie Piece) of an unacceptable behavior.

If you think about the six words on the Pie Pieces—Respectful, Responsible, Helpful, Cheerful, Kind and Honest—they are difficult concepts to learn. There are hundreds of behaviors that are defined as Respectful (or any of the other virtues). This is why it takes so long to teach these virtues. Every time your child earns back their Pie Piece, they are increasing their understanding of the behaviors that define each virtue.

With traditional parenting, when we impose our authority or take them away from playing, our children feel yanked. They don't like it and they just get mad. When this happens day-in, day-out, week after week, children have a continuous low level of anger building in their body, very similar to a pot simmering on the stove. It doesn't take too much heat to have things boiling out of control.

With Easy As Pie, when a child does a behavior you don't want in your home, a Pie Piece is moved and the behavior is labeled. Let's use the Kind Piece as an example.

Your child trips their sibling and loses their Kind Piece. Since it's the entire family's job to help them get their Piece back, everyone is

looking for a way for that child to be kind. The child can apologize and give a hug, can pick up a book off the floor, put a few dishes in the dishwasher, pull some ingredients out of the refrigerator to help you cook ... the list is endless. As the child's understanding of "Kind" behaviors grows, they start to use them on their own.

Easy As Pie works because there are no more punishments, discipline or harsh consequences. Your children relax. You relax because you are setting your children up for success.

Your Reward

I'm going to take a wild leap and suggest that you most likely did not order this manual because you want to be a better parent. This is neither good nor bad—there's no judgment. You just want your children to behave! And what you've been doing up to this point isn't working.

Easy As Pie will help you experience a dramatic change for you and your children. It even shocked me—because this parenting method is so radically different.

All of us are pleasure driven. We do tasks—even unpleasant tasks—because we derive a benefit or positive reward. It's not always money or candy. Sometimes it's just having a clean kitchen or bedroom. Sometimes it's deciding that as soon as I clean out my email inbox, I can go play on Facebook. Your children are the same. The things that are important to them motivate them to choose their behaviors.

The Easy As Pie parenting method creates the ultimate positive reward for you! As your children's behavior changes positively, you are receiving a positive reward— peaceful, pleasant interactions with your family and maintaining your sanity. Your kids stop being as angry with you, and when they do get upset, they cool off faster. This is every parent's dream and you can have it too. Are you ready?

IT'S YOUR TURN. HOW DID YOU GET HERE?

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— Richard Bach (*Illusions*)



We all want our children to be good. But what does it mean to be “good”? You know what it is when you see it, but you have never learned how to teach it. A well-behaved child is a wondrous delight to be around.

I was always amazed when all of my children’s school teachers would say how delightful my children were. While I was grateful that they seemed to be “pulling it together” out in public, I wondered why I didn’t have the same experience.

On one hand, I felt great that I had created a safe environment where my children felt that they could test out crazy behaviors, but I was exhausted. I finally realized that my children just didn't respect me the same way they respected their teachers and the school principal, and I knew I had created this disrespect.

What Are You Allowing?

Your child presents you with behaviors every day. The behaviors that you don't stop, the child interprets as allowable. You silently gave permission to all of the behaviors your child is currently exhibiting.

Many psychologists teach, "catch them when they're being good and reward them with verbal praise." We did that, but the bad behaviors were outweighing the good. Since we were spending more time trying to stop the bad behaviors with consequences, it felt like a losing battle.

Attracting Bad Behavior

Many of you have probably heard of the Law of Attraction, which is defined as "Like attracts Like," and "What you focus on, expands." Cory and I were spending all of our time focusing on limiting bad behavior, stopping bad behavior, how to get rid of bad behavior, time-outs for bad behavior, etc. Even though we were focused on stopping it, the nature of focusing on bad behavior made it expand.

And when you multiply that times four children all misbehaving at the same time, and the fact that parenting is a 24/7 job for Moms, I was starting to really hate being a Mom. I didn't like my children anymore—I loved them—but I didn't want to be with them anymore. Something had to change and I decided I deserved the same respect that my children gave their teachers. And you do too.

Are You Setting the Example?

It's very important for parents to model the behavior they want their children to choose. And I would imagine that you are very Responsible, Kind, Helpful, Honest, and Respectful. Cheerful is one of those qualities that all of us lose and gain. As you start this parenting method, your children will start to let you know what Pieces you have lost. It always makes me laugh when my children tell me that I have lost my Cheerful Piece.

No You're Not

I am going to take a wild leap here and tell you that you are NOT modeling the behavior that your children need to learn in order to deal with their own daily dramas. You are probably not dealing with a spouse who rips a toy out of your hands while you're playing with it. Most likely, your spouse is not trying to trip you every time you pass each other. Your spouse doesn't wrestle you to the ground when you've made them mad, potentially hurting and bruising you. And your spouse is not sneaking into your room and stealing some of your most precious possessions.

You see, children need different examples to help them choose positive behaviors. Children also need to practice appropriate behavior. They don't magically learn how to say, "May I please have my toy back?" or "You've hurt my feelings. Please don't call me that." This behavior is taught.

It can be as simple as saying to your child, "Instead of screaming S-T-O-P! You need to use your words, and these are the words you could say. Repeat after me, you've hurt my feelings. Please don't call me that." And then have your child repeat those words.

You're Not Raising a Child

This may sound like a lot of work—and it is—but so is the way you're parenting right now. By putting in the hard work the first few months will make parenting your children so much easier and enjoyable until they become adults.

Please realize, you are not raising a child. You are raising an adult! An adult who knows how to cook, clean, do laundry, recognize when someone needs help, shares with others, and respects other people. I could go on and on, but I think you get the idea. Let's move on.

REINFORCEMENTS VERSUS PUNISHMENTS

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— *Richard Bach (Illusions)*



The success of Easy As Pie is the use of Positive and Negative Reinforcements. A reinforcement does exactly what the word says—it reinforces either what you do want or what you don't want.

Your job as a responsible parent is to feed, clothe, house and love your children. As crazy as this may sound, you do not have to provide them with televisions, computer games and other nice things that many of our children often times feel entitled to just because they live in your home.

Those fun “extras” in life become excellent behavior reinforcements. Since every child is different, only you know what will be the best motivators for your child.

Positive Reinforcement List

Something that your child likes is available.

Earning the nice things in life:

Receiving a treat,

Having a story read to them,

Reading a book

Playing outside

Riding their bike

Watching TV,

Playing a computer game,

Spending one-on-one time with you.

Having friends over for a play date

Going to a class like gymnastics or karate

Making pudding or Jell-O

Eating pudding, Jell-O or cookies

Going to Webkinz.com or Lego.com

Motivators

The human brain is always looking for fun, interesting and pleasurable activities. A positive reinforcement is something that your child enjoys and will go out of their way to have it. In fact, they will do an unpleasant task in order to earn the things they like.

You are the same way.

- Why do you take a shower? Because you want to be clean. Cleanliness is your positive reinforcement.
- Why do you eat? Because your body feels better when nourished and the hunger pains go away. Why do you go to work? Because you are

earning a paycheck. You may have a job that you love, like, or hate—it doesn't matter. The paycheck is your positive reinforcement.

- Why do you clean your toilet? Because you feel better when it's clean. Cleanliness is your positive reinforcement.

Do you know someone who doesn't clean their toilet very often? Why? Because they would rather do "something else" than take the time to clean it. The "something else" is their positive reinforcement.

Your children function the same way you do. They are driven toward positive reinforcement.

So essentially, the fun things in life motivate your children. A child will clean the toilet if they are working to earn computer time. They may not like it. They may grumble the entire time. But they'll do it. Is this any different from you? Throughout the rest of this manual, I will refer to any positive reinforcement as a Motivator.

PUNISHMENT, DISCIPLINE AND CONSEQUENCES

I am unsure about other countries, but in the United States, these three words have grown to mean the same thing.

Even though they have truly different meanings in the dictionary, current knowledge—passed on to parents in books, magazines and the media—lumps them all together.

"To find a consequence," "to discipline," and "to punish" a child all mean that in some way the child needs to suffer for their behavior choice.

This parenting method will require you to get out of the “Consequence” frame of mind. Depending where you are in your parenting choices, this may be very difficult.

Punishment

Punishment is PAIN. It’s usually something that actually hurts a child; either their body or psyche. Punishment is always something that children don’t like because it hurts them.

Punishment is causing physical harm, so if you don’t spank your child, this will be an easy choice for you. “I chose not to punish my child.”

Easy As Pie is a constant process of helping children understand that the movement of Pie Pieces and the resulting task to earn the Piece back is not a punishment. It is the result of and a label for, a behavior choice. Punishment is Pain. **Punishment is not part of Easy As Pie.**

Discipline

The word “discipline” in the dictionary has 7 different meanings, ranging from the consistent study of a topic—i.e. You are studying the discipline of parenting—to causing physical harm to force someone to submit to your will (as in punishment!)

Most of the time when discipline is mentioned in relation to children, it actually means some form of punishment or time-out. **Discipline is not part of Easy As Pie.**

Consequences

The dictionary defines “consequence” as something that logically or naturally follows from an action or condition. When most people talk about consequences

for children, though, they are actually thinking of some form of discipline or punishment. This is incorrect.

A consequence is the result of our behavior choices. There are positive and negative consequences to everything we do. Any cause set in motion will have an effect.

If you forget to put gasoline in the car, the negative effect is that you will run out of gas, be stranded on the side of the road, and need to pay for a tow truck. Your friends might tell you, “that’s the consequence for not stopping for gas yesterday.”

If we purchase flowers and give them to someone we love, the **positive effect is love, gratitude and joy**. And you would tell your friends, “My husband did the sweetest thing today!” We do not say, “My husband gave me the sweetest consequence today!” Although technically, that’s exactly what it is.

So you can see, we tend to only use the word “**consequence**” when it is **connected with a negative effect**.

With Easy As Pie, children learn that their behavior choices will have an effect on their life, either **positive or negative**. They learn that when they choose the behaviors that you are teaching, all of their Motivators remain available. And then on the flip side, when they choose behaviors you don’t want, their Motivators are not available. Some of you may be thinking, well that’s a natural consequence, and you’re right.

However, the term consequence is too easily confused with some form of discipline or punishment. So, for the purpose of the teaching in this manual, I’m going to focus on **the movement of Pie Pieces and having children earn them back as an “Effect.”**

CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR MOTIVATIONS

Every moment of the day, children are making decisions about how to behave in ways that benefit them. A child's sole job is to explore and learn about everything in their world.

If they want to jump on the sofa, it benefits them, because it is fun. They do not want to listen to the parent telling them to stop, because it doesn't benefit them in any way. You are ruining the fun.

So then the frustrated parent's only solution appears to be to "punish" or "discipline" the child by yelling at him, putting him in time-out or spanking. You now know from the the Positive Reinforcement List that the time-out is an option that can be used—since it is a negative reinforcement— but it should never be your first option. I'll explain why a little later when I describe the Cool-Off Time.

Doing It Differently

Here's an example of how I was able to stop this behavior in our house, using Easy As Pie, because we have three boys and they love to jump on the sofas! That may be acceptable in some homes, but not in mine.

Any time they jump on the sofa, they lose their Respectful Piece. Our children have always had to earn their screen time. Now their Pies must be "Whole" for them to be able to play a video or computer game.

It didn't take longer than a week with this system for the boys to decide that their screen time is a much more enjoyable benefit than the immediate thrill of jumping on the sofa.

Ok, I'm guessing that if you haven't already jumped ahead, you're chomping at the bit by now. Let's dive into how the Easy As Pie Parenting Method works.

A VISION OF YOUR FUTURE

Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again
and expecting different results.

~ Albert Einstein



Can you imagine a day where you never have to yell or raise your voice to your child? Can you imagine your children sitting at the table, politely asking to be excused from the table and taking their plate to the dishwasher on their own without one prompt from you?

Perhaps you would like your child to consistently do their chores without you nagging and without their whining? What would it feel like if you asked your child to pick up their shoes and their response was, "Ok, Mom," and they did it right away?

What about catching a child doing a behavior you don't like and when questioned and prompted to be truthful, your child says, "Yes Mom, I did that and I'm sorry."

I couldn't imagine a life like this a year ago, but I have it now. The behavior that surprised me most was my four children arguing over who got to sit next to me at dinner. It just warmed my heart, and then of course we had to help them through that because I only have two sides!

This happened because I learned that I had created all of my children's behaviors with my previous parenting style. ***In order for them to be different, my parenting had to change.***

During my Easy As Pie Parenting Trial, I discovered that it is the most difficult children who thrive the most with this parenting method, because life suddenly becomes very fair and predictable for them. They are no longer at the mercy of a parent's random decisions to discipline behavior.

I have learned that discipline only makes children angrier, and with this method, it is possible to parent with no discipline; natural consequences by the Law of Cause and Effect—yes—but no discipline.

I pulled together two years of intense human potential study as well as six months of researching parenting methods and human behavior for our book, *What You Don't Fix... Your Kids Inherit*. In doing so, I created a parenting method that was the complete opposite of how I had parented before.

**If I wanted my children to behave differently,
I had to parent differently.**

Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again
and expecting different results.

~ Albert Einstein

WHAT ARE YOUR CHILDREN LEARNING?

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— *Richard Bach (Illusions)*



A parent’s job is to teach our children values and values. Many of these words are abstract concepts that are very difficult for children to understand. How do you teach a child to be respectful?

You can try to explain it, but most children won't understand and within five minutes will do something disrespectful to you, their sibling, the furniture, the walls, toys, etc.

What makes the Easy As Parenting Method so effective is that through real life experiences, and without punishments, a child learns the difference between:

Respectful and Disrespectful

Honest and Dishonest

Cheerful and Grumpy

Kind and Mean (Unkind)

Helpful and Unhelpful

Responsible and Irresponsible

Experience Creates Learning

These values can only be learned with experience. If an adult is around to label the experience, then the word becomes tied to the memory of the experience. Often times, it takes multiple experiences of your child practicing behaviors, both positive and negative, for your child to have a thorough understanding of the value associated with each Pie Piece.

Sometimes as parents who have had a lot of experiences, it's easy to forget that your children really don't understand the values you are teaching. And they may understand at different levels. Let's look at how a child goes through different levels of understanding to learn responsibility through pet ownership.

Acquiring Factual Information

You can **talk** to your child about the chores required to take care of a mouse. They can **read** websites and books about how to care for mice. Your child will gain a **cognitive or mental understanding** of the responsibility.

Applying and Using the Information

Once your child owns the mouse, many **care tasks** are required. They are feeding, watering, playing, and cleaning the cage. They gain an **experiential understanding** of the responsibility.

Feeling the Effect

As long as your child **continues to care** for the mouse properly, the effect they experience is a **healthy mouse**. If they **fail to care** for the mouse, the effect may be a **dead mouse**. Once this happens, your child truly understands the weight that the word Responsibility holds. The life of this small creature hinges on your child's care. They have gained the **deepest understanding of responsibility** by **feeling the effect** of not behaving in a responsible way.

JUST WHO OWNS THOSE TOYS?

Many people feel that their child's toys belong to their children. Are you one of them?

You love your children—you've given them cell phones, computers, iPods, Nintendo DS, Wii, X-Box Kinect, etc—they belong to your children, right? **No! They belong to you!** That means YOU decide when your children can use them.

What if your child used their own money to buy their Nintendo DS? YOU still have the authority to **decide when your children can play them**.

Is Your Child Entitled?

As soon as your child starts to feel that they are “**entitled**” to certain things—like screen time, their pocket video games, etc.—the Negative Reinforcement of not having access to their Motivators appears to the child as a “punishment.” You may even hear them say, “Why are you punishing me?” When this happens, I remind my children “I don’t punish anymore. You just haven’t earned back the right to play on the computer.”

Let me be clear. This parenting method will work with entitled children, but it will be more difficult for you as the parent. Mostly because you are accustomed to your children having control of their toys and you. You’ll be taking your authority back and your children may fight you every step of the way. They don’t see the future and know how much better their family will be using Easy As Pie. They only know their life as it is now, and they don’t want it to change.

But How And When Do You Decide?

Most parents get upset at their children and then in desperation exclaim, “Fine! You’ve lost access to the X-Box for a week!” The child has no way to earn back their gaming time—they are at your mercy. Sound familiar?

The great thing about parenting with Easy As Pie, is that your child comes to understand that they are in control. Even if they’ve lost some of their Pieces for poor behavior, they can quickly earn their Pieces back. This makes it much easier for them to earn their Motivators back. This is 180 degrees from what you may be currently doing. And it works!

Although this manual is for parents of children aged three to ten, I can attest that this method has worked very well with my 13-year-old daughter who had a seriously negative attitude. Her moodiness has disappeared and just recently she surprised me with,

“Mom...I’m so glad that you’re my mom.”

“Thank you sweetie. What makes you say that?”

“Well, I’ve seen some of my friend’s Moms, and they don’t handle it so well.”

That just warms my heart! This is what positive parenting is about! Wouldn’t you like to hear that?

THE HUMAN BRAIN REMEMBERS WHAT?

I have done extensive study on how the human brain works with our thoughts and words. The most important concept to remember is that:

Your brain remembers the last word/phrase you tell it.

When you say; “How could you do that to your sister? You’re supposed to love your sister! Johnny, we don’t hit!”

So here is what your child’s brain hears:

“Blah, blah, blah blah? Blah, blah, blah! Blah, blah... HIT!”

Unfortunately, as a society, the way we speak is not in alignment with the behaviors we want to develop in our children or even ourselves. Pay attention to the way you speak to your children. Most likely, you will hear sentences like this:

“Jane, stop jumping on the chair.” She hears, “jump on the chair.”

“Dave, you are making me so angry!” He hears, “make me angry.”

“Lisa, stop taking the toys away from your sister!” She hears, “take toys from your sister.”

“Josh, don’t be mean!” He hears, “be mean.”

Your requests must change to state what you do want:

“Jane, please sit still.”

“Dave, I need you to choose a better behavior.”

“Lisa, did you ask your sister for permission to hold that toy?”

“Josh, please be kind.”

Now here’s the really cool thing. You can combine the two sentences and still receive the positive effect. You can correct yourself in the middle of speaking and fix it! We still do this frequently when we catch ourselves. All you need to do is add the positive sentence at the end, so that it is the last thing your child hears.

For example:

“Jane stop jumping on the chair. We sit still on chairs.”

“Dave, I am feeling very angry right now. I need you to choose better behaviors.”

I have a funny little illustration of this with my 4-year-old Bradley. When he was first learning to use the toilet, he would tell me, “Mom! I gotta go to the bathroom.” Jokingly, I would say, “Thanks for sharing,” and he thought that was hilarious.

This little scenario kept getting played out day after day and I wondered when he would stop. I even told him to stop, “Bradley, please don’t tell me every time you need to go to the bathroom. I really don’t need to know.” Seems appropriate right?

You’re probably way ahead of me by now; it wasn’t going to stop, because he kept hearing, “Share. Tell me every time. Need to know.” Within 24 hours of me asking him to, “keep the words ‘going to the bathroom’ to himself,” the behavior stopped.

YOUR DIALOGUE

You will find this Method to work very quickly if you start to incorporate these six positive words, which are on the Pie Pieces, into your daily interactions with your children. It will probably seem awkward at first to talk this way, because we are used to ending our reprimand with the name of the behavior we DON'T want, instead of the name of the behavior we DO want.

"That was so mean! Johnny, we don't hit!"

Instead, you will learn to say, "Johnny, that behavior was not respectful," or "Johnny, hitting someone else is not kind."

It took us a few months to feel comfortable talking this way, and we still find ourselves correcting each other. The really fun part is when your children start using the words when they play together. Here are a few examples from the mouths of my babes:

"Ok, everybody. Let's play a game kindly with each other!"

"Andrew, you're not asking me in a very respectful way."

"Dane, it would be really helpful if you could pull these Lego bricks apart."

Banish the Negatives

While developing this method, I fell into the Negative Warning Trap. This happened while I was writing this manual. As your children start to behave better, it seems to be natural to give your children a little warning, "Please stop disrespecting me," rather than "Please be respectful of my request." Strangely, I started using the opposing word to each of the Pie Pieces: Disrespecting, Irresponsible, Not Kind, Grumpy, Not Helpful, etc.

I had fallen in to the “negative warning trap!” Within two days of starting to use the negative word from each Pie Piece, I noticed my children’s behavior getting worse. They were frequently hearing “disrespect me” instead of “please be respectful.”

Be very careful and listen to the words you are choosing while you are using the Easy As Pie Pieces. Remember to use the positive version of the value you are teaching.

Parenting in Bits and Pieces

Children need to learn all of the real life behaviors that make up a moral value like Respectful. The way they learn it best is by breaking their behavior down into little bits. You will be taking very complex behaviors and breaking them down into bite size Pieces that your child can understand, internalize and begin to use on their own. You will only be focusing on the behaviors you want and the behaviors you don't want will just slip away.

You may read some of my descriptions with disbelief. “It can’t possibly work like that”. “This is totally backwards”. If this is your reaction, you’re right. It is backwards from everything we know, but ***it does work***. I invite you to suspend your disbelief for two weeks and just try it.

GETTING STARTED

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— Richard Bach (*Illusions*)



Disclaimer

Note: Please do not start this Parenting Method if there is and major life event happening in your life, i.e.: death in the family, divorce proceedings, moving to a new home or school, etc.

Another very important factor is your mental health. My experience with severe PMS and postpartum depression has taught me that this parenting method is very difficult to accomplish when a parent’s mental health is compromised.

For the sake of your children’s health and happiness, seek medical and emotional support before starting this method. This parenting method requires patience and calmness. Both of these traits fly out the window when you are either hormonally or mentally out of balance.

THE FIRST STEP

The Pies

Each child will have their own Pie of [six magnetic wedges](#) that fit together in a “Whole” Pie. Each Piece contains the word of a moral that you are teaching: Respectful, Responsible, Kind, Cheerful, Honest, and Helpful. Your children pick the color of their Pie, but the real reason for the color is so that you, the parent, can tell who’s Pieces are removed and who’s need to be earned back.

Place all of the Pieces of the Pie on your refrigerator about 4 feet from the floor. The young children should not be able to reach the Pies. Nest all of the Pieces together so the Pie is a complete circle.

When removing Pieces, just slide them out of the Pie and move them above the Pie circles.

The Morals

Every family has their own versions of what behaviors fall into the following categories: Respectful, Responsible, Helpful, Cheerful, and Kind.

But the Honest Piece has a very distinct rule.

The parent or responsible adult may only take the Honest Piece if, and only if, you have caught the child in a lie.

Why? Because in order to earn the Piece back, they have to tell you the truth about the current incident. Because if they are actually telling the truth, and you don’t believe them and remove Honest, then they essentially have to lie in order to earn it back. You never want to reinforce this behavior.

You can't take siblings reports, because they could be teaming up against another sibling. You can't ask a child, "Did you do this?" and assume that they are lying based on the sly face they are exhibiting.

You must be **holding** the report card that is showing a "D" when your child tells you they got straight "A"s. You must **hear** your child say something and then tell you they didn't say that. You must **see** the child hit another sibling and then tell you they did nothing.

I have gone as far as meeting with a teacher to determine if my teen was telling me the truth. I thought she was lying because her story wasn't matching up with what her teacher had told me. The three of us got together and we found out that the teacher's version of giving her the homework she missed was to have it available in a pocket box on the wall. So when I had asked her if her teacher had given her the homework she said, "No." She was being honest, because he had not physically handed it to her.

PHASE ONE

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— *Richard Bach (Illusions)*



I need to be completely honest with you. The first two weeks of parenting with Easy As Pie are going to be extremely difficult.

You're going to do a lot of walking back and forth to the refrigerator to remove and replace Pie Pieces. Taking your child to Cool-Off and focusing on using the key words will be exhausting at times. Things could get especially intense when you want to get somewhere at a specific time and your children aren't cooperating.

Learning to parent using Easy As is a lot like learning a foreign language. Everything gets confusing and difficult until you start to get familiar with key words to help you get around. Easy As Pie is just like that—you're learning a new language—and your children will feel like their world has turned upside down.

But I promise you, if you stick with it, every week will get easier. And you'll really start to enjoy being with your children. Remember, you can always email me if you're feeling stuck.

Start With a Family Meeting

Explain to your children that it is your job as a parent to teach them how to grow up to be wonderful, kind, helpful, loving adults. You realized that there are some things as a Mom/Dad that you could be doing better, so you're going to be trying something new.

Discuss each Piece and role-play a few scenarios by actually walking over to the refrigerator, and removing a Piece. Make sure that you give examples of how they can lose a Piece and how they can earn it back at a level that they can understand. Younger children will need simpler examples, whereas your older children need more complex examples.

For example:

"Johnny decides to hit his sister. Mommy is going to say, "I'm sorry, you chose an unkind behavior. You've lost your Kind.

I'm going to move your Kind Piece out of your Pie. Now Johnny's Pie isn't Whole anymore.

Now, it's the entire family's job to help Johnny get Whole again so we need to find something kind for Johnny to do.

How about if Johnny gives his sister a hug and says I'm sorry?" Johnny apologizes. "That's kind so I'm going to put the Kind Piece back."

Earning Fun

When a child is Whole, they are able to do the extra, fun things in our house. When they are not Whole, those fun things are off limits until they choose to get Whole again.

As a family, decide on the things that everyone can do if they are Whole.

- Game night
- Sweet treat
- Screen time
- Parent/child date time
- Play date with friend
- A piece of gum or a mint
- Making pudding or Jell-O
- Eating pudding or Jell-O
- Going out to ride their bike

Have your children repeat back the rules so you know that they understand everything. Try to do this as quickly as possible so you don't lose their interest. The entire family meeting should take 10 to 15 minutes.

This parenting method is not about perfection. You are not asking your children to be perfect by being Whole all the time. You are asking them to learn to make the behavior choices that you want to develop in your children. They are constantly making decisions to choose the behaviors that earn them the privileges in their life.

STEPS TO SHAPE BEHAVIOR

Many parent's perspective is that by removing these things (computers, TV, desserts, scooters, Mom reading to you, Mom putting you to bed, etc.), you are punishing your child. So then, by default, you don't want to remove a Pie Piece, because the underlying belief is that you are punishing. No! Remember, punishment is physical or verbal harm only. Real punishment is not feeding him/her, withdrawing your love, spanking, yelling, verbally belittling to kill their self-esteem, etc.

Change your perspective: these are the **rewards you are GIVING** your child when they are **behaving**. You are trying to help them make sure that they have all of these things in their life. Your job is to help keep your child Whole, but DO NOT fall into the trap of multiple warnings. Kids are too smart. If you give warnings, they have a reason to keep stalling, which will exhaust you, causing you to feel frustrated and angry. My goal is to get you to a point where you just don't get angry at your children anymore and you only feel the need to raise your voice once every 3 months!

For the first two weeks, **do NOT give one warning** to your child's behaviors!

A warning would sound like,

“Johnny, don't do that or you'll lose a Pie Piece.”

“Sarah, you're going to lose Respectful if you keep doing that.”

“That's not Respectful, please stop.”

Can you see with each of these examples, you are the outside force asking the child to stop. The only way to stop needing to tell them to stop is to — stop asking them to stop!

Instead, children need labels for every behavior they do. It is your job to teach them immediately which behaviors are not appropriate and which ones are. But they must be labeled for your child first.

The really cool thing is that you don't have to let your emotions get involved at all. The removal of a Pie Piece is not punishment; it is a label that you are tagging to a behavior. Then to get the Pie Piece back, you are giving your child an opportunity to practice the behavior you want.

Every time he/she practices, that new behavior is now connected to the positive version of the word because they got their Piece back. This is a **teaching process** that is broken into very small steps.

- 1. You make a request.**
- 2. The child refuses.**
- 3. You label the refusal with your words and by removing the Piece.**
- 4. The child wants the Piece back to earn their rewards.**
- 5. You show them the appropriate behavior.**
- 6. They practice the appropriate behavior.**
- 7. You label the behavior with your words and replace the Piece.**

Pretty soon, with enough practice, your child doesn't need the Pie Pieces to be in the middle of their behavior choices. You start with step 1 and they jump straight to step 6. Done.

IS THIS REAL LIFE?

Now, let's bring this level of teaching to your adult life. You actually own a few dozen invisible Pie Pieces and you don't even know it! Let's take one that is easy to for just about everyone to relate to, the privilege of driving.

When you passed your driving test, you earned the right to drive. Did you earn the right to drive however you want, whenever you want, no matter who you harmed along the way? No.... you earned the right as long as you follow a few hundred rules.

One morning, you're running late for work, you don't make a complete stop at a stop sign and you're pulled over by a police officer and given a ticket. You just lost your Respectful Piece because you chose to not respect that rule. In order to maintain your license and privilege to drive you are responsible for paying the fine or showing up for traffic school. By paying the fine, you are choosing to keep your Responsible Piece, and your Respectful Piece is put back. Interesting, huh?

UNBREAKABLE RULES

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— Richard Bach (*Illusions*)



Your Main Priority Is To Keep Your Children Whole

When a child loses a Piece, it is a verbal and visual trigger that they didn't make the best choice. As soon as they demonstrate the desired behavior, give back the Piece. This is an opportunity for you to be extremely generous! You are not punishing your child by trying to withhold Pieces. Your main focus is to help your child get Whole as quickly as possible.

Initially, if your child's behavior is even remotely close to what you want, reward them. There have been many times where I have said, "I'll give it to you this time because you're kind of close, but next time, this is what I expect."

If you're anything like me, you are extremely busy. It is easy to get sidetracked into the computer, television, novel, phone conversation, etc. ***When a child is ready to earn their Pieces, you must drop everything to help them.***

Choosing to stop everything you are doing and shape your child's behavior is a conscious choice. There are times that I have to stop and remind myself, nothing is more important than shaping. There are times I feel too tired, but it's only short term. The intense shaping that happens at the beginning dissipates with time. It gets easier every week.

For the first few weeks though, I made the decision that nothing took priority to Shaping. If I did, I knew my kids would see the inconsistency and play me like a fiddle.

The absolute best time to Shape your kids is out of the house. Then they really know you are being consistent. If this means you make special outings to practice the behaviors you want and the extra time it will take to Shape, then do it.

If it means you buffer in 2 or 3 times the amount of time necessary to get somewhere, then do it. This won't last forever. In a month, you will be able to go back to your normal routine and your children will cooperate delightfully.

Behavior Shaping is a commitment. One time I was at church with my 4 year old. I was singing in our Contemporary Band and he decided to act out right before the service started. He lost all 4 Pieces, was escorted to Cool-Off in the family restroom, and then earned all 4 Pieces before he came back. He apologized, picked up some trash, wiped down the sink and we quietly returned to church. Meanwhile I was supposed to be singing!

I decided the Band would be fine without me for one song and Bradley took priority. I have found over time that people respect me more for making parenting a higher priority than anything else.

Only Parents Move The Pieces

This is the only way to be sure that children aren't moving Pieces back and taking advantage of some parent's faulty memory. This rule also establishes trust between the parents and the children because they know that siblings can't move their Pieces.

Only A Parent Choses To Remove A Piece

Siblings may NOT report (tattle) on another sibling with the intent of having a Piece removed.

Siblings are **only allowed to help** each other earn Pieces back. This creates harmony and support between your children.

As Soon As Your Child Does The Desired Behavior, You Replace Their Piece

A child throws a toy and you ask them to pick it up.

They refuse. You remove their Piece.

You ask the child again to go pick the toy up.

They pick it up. You give back the lost Piece.

Eventually your child will realize that if they respond to your request, then they get to keep their Pieces. This is very empowering to your children because they are making the decisions for their own life. They are consistently choosing to keep the nicer things in life, and this makes your job easier.

At the beginning of starting this parenting method, your children will not have the mental connection that being Not Whole means the Extras in life are not available.

Do not be surprised if they get upset when they ask to play the computer and you say, "Only if you are Whole." As soon as they realize how simple it is to get their Pieces back, they become highly motivated to choose the behaviors that ensure that they stay Whole.

Only One Piece Can Be Removed At A Time

Only one Piece is removed for each poor behavior choice. Although hitting and screaming at parents may be unkind, disrespectful, not helpful, and downright mean (not cheerful), you may only take away one Piece, not four Pieces. It's very important that each separate behavior be tied to a Piece.

You will find with a grand temper tantrum that 4 Pieces in a series can be lost very quickly. But your child must exhibit 4 separate behaviors.

Let me explain:

Johnny decides to hit; Kind is removed.

Then Johnny yells at you, Respectful is removed.

Then he throws a toy; Helpful is removed (because that behavior doesn't help you keep your home tidy.)

Johnny starts crying and stomping his feet, Cheerful is removed.

Stay On Your Original Request

It's very important to stay on your original request for the entire interaction with your child. It is so easy to get sidetracked with all the extra behaviors your child presents while they are angry. Pretty soon they will be losing Pieces and will not have the opportunity to earn them back in the middle of the heated interaction.

Remember what you are trying to teach; you make a request and the child cheerfully complies with the request. This is your ultimate goal! But when you are teaching, you are giving your child 3 or 4 opportunities to comply. If your child is used to tantrums or a lot of drama, your child will lose the 4 key Pieces, need a cool off period to shift their attitude and decide that they want to be Whole again, earn their 4 Pieces back and then go play.

A Real Life Example Of Staying On Your Original Request

Here is an episode I had with 4-year-old Bradley:

“Mom, come here!” Bradley calls from the TV room where he is playing the Wii.

“Mom’s in the bathroom Bradley!” Justine calls from our home office.

“YOU BE QUIET, Justine,” he says.

As I’m heading down the hall, “Bradley, that is not a kind way to speak to your sister. You’ve lost Kind.” By the time I finish removing the Piece he is back in front of the TV. “Bradley, since you’ve lost Kind, please turn off the Wii.”

“No!”

“You’ve just lost Respectful,” I return to the kitchen to remove the Piece then head back to the TV room, “Bradley, please turn off the Wii.”

“No!”

“You’ve just lost Helpful, because this behavior isn’t helping Mommy,” I return to the kitchen to remove the Piece then head back to the TV room, “Bradley, please turn off the Wii.”

“No!”

“You’ve just lost Cheerful,” and I turn off the TV. Then I squat down to get my eyes at the same level as his, “Bradley, you have lost all four Pieces, it’s time for a cool-off period.”

“No! I’m not going!”

I calmly take him by the hand and lead him to his room.

“Shut up!” he blurts out.

As we continue down the stairs, “Bradley, that’s not kind.”

“Shut up!”

“Bradley, that’s not kind.” We continue this interaction a few more times until we reach his bed. “It’s time for a cool-off. When you are ready to earn your Pieces back, you come up and Mommy will help you.”

He tags me in the bum with a toy as I’m leaving, “Bradley, that was not Kind,” and I close the door behind me.

Five minutes later I hear, “Mom, I’m ready to earn my Pieces back,” as he comes up the stairs.

“Did you find your Cheerful?” He flashes me a huge grin.

We both head to the kitchen and I return his Cheerful, “You lost Kind for saying something mean to your sister. It would be very kind to apologize.”

“I’m sorry Justine.”

“Thank you, I accept your apology,” she says and I return the Piece on the refrigerator.

“Ok, all we have left is Respectful and Helpful. Can you think of something that’s respectful or helpful?” I ask.

“No.”

“I see that you need to finish your cereal. Bradley, would you finish your cereal and put your bowl in the dishwasher? Let me know when you’re done,” and I head back to the office.

About four minutes later he comes into the office, “Mom, can I have my Respectful Piece back?”

“Did you finish your cereal?” He nods. “Did you put your bowl in the dishwasher?”

“Ooops,” he says through a sheepish smile.

I head back to the kitchen to return his Respectful, “All you have left is Helpful.” I look around the kitchen and see the oatmeal box, “Bradley, it would be very helpful to me if you would put this back in the pantry.”

He cheerfully does the task, “Now I’m Whole Mommy, can I go back to playing the Wii?”

“Yep.”

Two key things are happening during this teaching example.

1) The act of walking back and forth to the refrigerator is a mini cool off period for you.

If you’re anything like me, the established pattern between you and your child has created a habitual response in you of frustration, elevated blood pressure, elevated speaking volume, and even anger.

The Pie Pieces take you and your emotion completely out of the interaction. You are not forcing a behavior on your child; you are teaching them to choose their own behavior.

The behaviors they learn to choose are the ones that will serve them to rise to great success in our society as an adult, but more importantly, you will like your children; you will enjoy parenting and want to spend more time with them because they respect you.

2) You are teaching your child to respect your requests, and they receive 3 or 4 opportunities to practice compliance.

Everyone needs opportunities to make mistakes and then fix the mistake, or as we say, “**make it right.**” There is a gradual progression while your child learns how to manage their behavior. This is when parenting gets fun! With every teaching moment, you are watching your children learn to succeed.

Cool-Off Time

When your child is angry and they have lost the key 4 Pieces, it is obvious that they are not ready to change their behavior. Your child has essentially lost all of their Pieces. (Responsible and Honest usually don't come into play with a temper-tantrum).

You have nowhere left to turn except to separate the child from the family. If your child continues to throw different behaviors at you or continues the temper-tantrum, you escort your child to their room for a Cool-Off time.

Why do I suggest their room? Have you ever been in a room where someone is extremely angry? It's uncomfortable. The negative energy in the room feels as thick as pea soup. Either you want to leave or you want them to leave.

It's the same way with your children. Just because they are your children doesn't mean you have to stay with them when they are angry. I never tell my children they are being ridiculous or irrational. Just like you, your children are entitled to their feelings and in that moment, those feelings are real.

Technically, your child could do the cool off in another room, like the kitchen or a home office. I have found that it's much easier for my children to follow me like a puppy while they are having a tantrum. Their room is their personal space and helps them focus on cooling down, rather than following you.

There have been times when we have had to move a child out to the front porch for Cool-Off Time because they were too violent in their room; slamming doors, breaking toys, etc.

But for the sake of my sanity, I prefer that my children work through their feelings and calm down in their own room.

Cool-Off Mantra

The rule is that you must say this Cool-Off Mantra sentence every time a child goes into a Cool-Off Time:

“Johnny, I want you to stay in your room until you are ready to come back out and start earning your Pie Pieces back and I will help you.”

This sentence is extremely important because when a child has lost 4 Pieces, it seems like it's going to take forever to earn them back. The last words the child needs to hear from you is that you will help them.

If a child doesn't want to stay in their room, it's because they want to be with you. They keep coming back to you, until you are able to calmly convince them that you're going to keep walking them back to their room, repeating the Cool-Off Mantra until they decide they are ready to earn the Pieces back. Most of us are not able to make decisions when we are upset. It's the same for our children.

Should you hold the door shut? No. A parent can hold the door shut, but why? What are you teaching your child? When you can't handle your emotions, Mommy needs to force you to stay in your room. This is not what you want.

What Cool-Off Time is really doing is giving your child an opportunity to cool down until they decide they're ready to earn the Pieces back.

Remember, your child wants to be with you. And if they can be with you in a bratty attitude, they will! By sending them to their room for Cool-Off, what you are teaching them is that it is ok to have their heated emotions. They just need to do that behavior in their room because you can't help them make their attitude shift. They need to learn to do it on their own.

Only One Piece Can Be Returned At A Time

One excellent behavior can NOT earn multiple Pieces. A series of excellent behaviors can earn several Pieces back quickly.

Remember, it's your responsibility to help them get the Pieces back...but only when they are ready. The sign that they are ready is Cheerful. Cheerful should always be the first Piece returned if your child has come back from a Cool-Off. This is their sign to you that they have internally made the attitude shift.

So let's take the above example with Johnny. Johnny comes back from Cool-Off Time and says,

“Mom, I've found my Cheerful.” You return Cheerful.

“You lost Kind for hitting. When we do something like that, it's very Kind to apologize.”

This is what you say when something like this happens, “I'm sorry I hit you and next time I'll use my words.”

When Johnny repeats your words, put Kind back. This is a great time to also teach the other child to say, “Thank you, I accept your apology.” You are teaching forgiveness.

“You lost Helpful because you threw that toy. It would be very helpful to me if you would put the toy back where it belongs.” Put Helpful back.

“Now Respectful...humm...Johnny could you pick up that pillow and put it on the sofa?”

As soon as that's done, return Respectful.

“Yeah, you're Whole again! See—that was very easy.”

Don't Try To Force Or Encourage Your Child To Earn Pieces Back

If your child is missing Pieces, let them decide when it's important to earn them back. (It's usually when they have the desire to watch TV or play a computer game.) I try to help my children earn their Pieces back within four hours. I'll explain more on the next page.

It's totally fine if your child isn't interested in earning their Pieces for half a day. But they are also more likely to keep misbehaving. A great idea is to make sure that fun stuff is happening and if they want to participate, they need a Whole Pie. You may need to create a motivator that your child will want.

This means, you make pudding that Whole kids can have or you decide to sit down and read a beloved book, but you have to be Whole to listen. Maybe it's doing a special craft cause Mommy is feeling crafty, but you have to be Whole, etc. Now, you've created a worthwhile Motivator that your child wants. As soon as they say they're ready, you immediately help them earn their Pie Pieces.

With this situation, it is not your intent to have your child miss out on something fun. That would be disciplining, right? Your intent is to help your child have a Whole Pie.

Try To Help Your Child Earn Their Pieces Back Within Four (4) Hours

This rule can be flexible to make it work with your family. I established this rule to remind me that I need to help my children earn their Pieces back quickly. It also keeps me focused on looking for ways to help them earn their Pieces back. If your children are not Whole for too many hours of the day, earning the Pieces starts to feel impossible. You don't want to let this happen. So the four-hour guideline is to keep me focused on what my child needs.

Just periodically remind them that when they are ready to earn their Pieces, to come to you and you will help them.

If you find your child doesn't care to earn their Pieces back for long periods of time, then you need to go out of your way to create an activity that they would want to do. Make popcorn and watch a movie, bake cupcakes or cookies and eat them, play a board game, etc. I think you get the idea.

A Child Can't Get a Piece Returned For Something they DID NOT DO.

This gets back to my earlier discussion of “we think and speak in negative thoughts.” At some point in your teaching, a child will ask for a Piece back for a behavior they wanted to do—that they have learned you do not want—and they chose not to do it.

For example, “Mom, I didn't jump on the sofa, so can I have my Respectful Piece back?”

“No, because you can't get a Piece for something you did not do. But you can get it back if you tell me what you did instead.”

“Mom, I sat respectfully on the sofa, can I have my Respectful Piece back?”

“Yes.”

Your Children Are Individuals

I **do not recommend** the practice of requiring **ALL** of your children to be Whole for iPad time, TV, etc. (Extras). This could work with your younger children because you are actually manufacturing ways for the children to practice positive behaviors to earn their Pieces back.

But as they get older, you will not be coming up with all of the ideas; they will. Your older children will be quick to earn their Pieces back. Little one's can take longer to earn Pieces back—sometimes up to a few hours—especially if they don't feel like earning their Pieces back right now.

Requiring all children to be Whole will result in one child (usually the older one) feeling held hostage by the other child's behavior (usually the younger one).

I tried to implement this one time and my wise 13-year-old daughter corrected me, "Mom, that's not fair. Bradley can hardly hold on to all of his Pieces for an hour and that means that I'll never have my Extras. I'm staying Whole all day and since he can't yet, that means I am getting punished for his behavior." Touché. Needless to say, I didn't implement that as a standard rule.

As a side note, we do require our children to be Whole for Friday Family Night. They have the entire afternoon after school to get Whole. Anyone missing Pieces by 6 p.m. loses out on the opportunity to participate in Family Night. Notice the difference? Family Night continues with or without them—not everyone is required to be Whole before Family Night starts.

Change Is Tough

Realize that you are turning your child's world upside down. No one likes change. It's uncomfortable. They've gotten very comfortable with the way things are, so they will push and push to try to get you to cave in and go back to the old ways.

Eventually, your children will find comfort in you sticking to what you are doing. But they have to push over and over until they realize that you aren't breaking. This is why the first two weeks of implementing this Parenting Method will be the most difficult. Your children are extremely smart and they need your strength. They need to feel the safety of Mom's rules. They need consistency in their life.

Easy As Pie will help your children learn that **they**, not you, are completely **in control of their behavior**. Eventually this will be very freeing to your children and you'll get to relax more.

IT'S A TEAM EFFORT

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— Richard Bach (*Illusions*)



Parent's Role

Your job is to show your child immediately when a behavior is unacceptable and then calmly remove a Pie Piece. Your next step is to stay focused on helping your child earn that Piece back as quickly as possible. Most of the time it takes somewhere between 20 seconds and 60 minutes. But as I mentioned earlier, it's up to the child to decide when.

Remember, your focus is to help them get Whole as quickly as possible. It's easy to get sidetracked and forget your focus to help your children immediately

when they are ready. Try to get them Whole within four hours. Occasionally gently remind them, “I’m ready to help you earn your Pieces when you’re ready”.

This system only works if you are consciously focusing on helping children stay Whole every day. It needs to become your predominant thought through out the entire day. Remember, this intense focus doesn’t last forever! All of the moms from my testing group around the world universally agreed—the first week is the hardest—but every week after got easier.

Children are very comforted when they hear you say, “We need to help you get your Pieces back,” several times a day. They feel that you are on their side.

With small children (4 to 7), parents need to help the children find ways to earn their Piece back and it is best to guide them through different ideas. I will even come up with things to do right away.

About 7 weeks into this parenting method, I came home from a trip to the grocery store and I needed to help Bradley get his 4 primary Pieces back (Respectful, Cheerful, Kind, Helpful). As I started to take his hand to lead him to his room, he started laughing. He earned Cheerful back.

I said, “We only have 3 more to earn back. What can we do?”

He looked around and saw a container of popcorn, picked it up and started to put it in the pantry.

“Ooo, that’s very kind. You get your Kind Piece back. Hey, Bradley. Let’s fill up our popcorn container. Will you help me?”

He brought the popcorn over and helped hold the smaller container. “That was very helpful. Now, can you put this smaller container in the pantry please?”

And he cheerfully did it. “You’ve earned your Respectful back. Thank you.”

Older children will learn very quickly how to earn their Pieces back on their own, but if you find they are struggling, you need to give them several ideas from which they can choose.

You will need to decide if your children need to be given the opportunity to start Whole every morning or continue from yesterday's result. Our children continue tomorrow with the previous day's end result. As soon as they wake up, we're working on earning the Pieces back.

You Must Stay Calm At All Times

Yelling is a punishment—psychological pain—and is not necessary with this parenting method. You will find that you don't need to yell, because the Pieces create the natural cause and effect change of behavior you are looking for.

This Method is successful because you, as a parent reward the behaviors you desire your children to have, and you must remain COMPLETELY NEUTRAL regarding any behaviors you don't want. This means no anger, no lecturing, and no emotion whatsoever. Is it easy for you to stay calm? Probably not, but learning how will be so worth it!

The Pie Pieces take you and your emotions completely out of the equation. As you already know, your child is fully capable of creating his/her own negative behaviors that you don't want. This parenting method teaches your child to know how to manifest the behaviors you desire, in order for them to get the good things that they want.

Are you going to be perfect all the time? Heck no! You're human—I'm human. We have bad days and shaping behavior takes time and energy. Some days you may not have the energy and resort to your old parenting methods. That's ok. I find that taking several deep breaths and counting the breaths helps me calm down. And it actually startles my kids, because it's not a behavior that they are used to seeing from me.

When I've had a bad day, I focus on waking up the next morning saying, "Today, I have all the energy I need to shape my children's behavior."

Tattling; Phase 1

Tattling is not allowed. Children usually tattle because they want someone else to get in trouble. Keep reminding your children that they can only report on their siblings for nice behaviors.

If a child continues to tattle, each time remove the Respectful Piece. They are not respecting the No Tattling Rule.

You'll know it's working when you hear, "Mom!!!!!!..... Oh, never mind."

Reporting on Themselves

We use the term Reporting to represent *tattling for good behaviors*. Your children are allowed to report on themselves by asking you if a behavior that they did earns them back a particular Piece. About 99% of the time I accept my child's request.

This is extremely beneficial because it keeps your children focused on the behaviors you want and it helps your children learn how to explain their behavior to you and demonstrate that they earned the Piece back.

There have been many times a child has done something and even though I didn't see or hear it, they deserve to earn their Piece back. Often times, a child will tell me something they did, "Mom, would that be good enough to earn a star?"

Sibling's Role

What makes this parenting method completely different is that your family members really start to work together as a team. Encourage your children to report on each other to help each other earn Pieces back. I will often double-check with the sibling to validate the child who is reporting on itself:

“Mom, can I have Kind back because I helped Bradley by serving him a bowl of fruit?”

“Bradley, did Dane get you a bowl of fruit? Do you think you should report on him?”

“Mmm, hmmm. I think Dane should get his Kind back.”

You're Yelling!

***Yelling is my instant trigger that I'm not shaping any longer—
I'm not using the Pie Pieces.***

I do not claim to be perfect with this parenting method. There are many days when I think it would just be so much easier to yell at them and force them to go to their room.

But your children respect you so much more and are happier when they feel that they are in charge of the decisions they make. Easy As Pie gives them the control.

When You Get Angry & Mess Up

I have to give credit to my amazing husband. He has learned Easy As Pie without reading one word of this manual—because it didn't exist! He has gracefully supported the dozens of technique changes as I fine-tuned this parenting method.

But like all parents working on change, Cory can get so frustrated that he'll resort to old parenting ways. He'll crack down with some harsh, crazy consequence that really doesn't fit the misbehavior—"Go to your room for the entire weekend!"

I keep reminding him that, "We don't punish in this family anymore. Are you using the Pie Pieces?" 100% of the time he'll say, "No." We all get frustrated and tired. It's so much easier to send our children to their room rather than take the time and energy to shape their behavior.

The best thing to do when you or a spouse starts yelling or disciplining, is to focus on the Pie Pieces. Calmly start labeling and removing Pie Pieces. Your children are learning that **they**—not you— need to control their behavior.

Are There Some Things Just Too Terrible?

You will have challenges. Parenting with Easy As Pie will require you to think. Sometimes there will be events that seem like they are just beyond Easy As Pie —getting expelled from school, stealing, breaking something valuable, etc.—but they actually aren't. Easy As Pie can be used but may require some additional tasks to earn the Piece back.

Every time one of the following events happened with our children, I had to stop and really think, “Ok, we don't punish anymore. So how can I come up with an ‘effect’ that works with this parenting method? How can I use the Pie Pieces?”

Expulsion

For example, when 10-year-old Andrew was expelled for swearing at school, he lost his Respectful Piece only. He needed to “make it right”. He wrote an apology to the school principal. We requested that he clean a very dirty, cluttered play room, and write 50 sentences of, “I only use respectful words when I speak,” to earn his Respectful back. It took him the better part of a day to complete and computer play was off limits until he was Whole.

As you can see, certain situations may require a stronger “effect” than just labeling the behavior with a Pie Piece. Your kids are going to make you think—and be creative—to have the “effects” compliment the poor behavior choice. And if you get stuck, I'm always available on [Facebook](#) , by [e-mail](#) and personal coaching.

Lying

One behavior you want to reinforce is being honest. Like I mentioned earlier under Morals, you have to be absolutely sure that your child is lying. Either the parents or other responsible adults need to have caught the child in the lie.

The only “effect” that ever happens when a child lies is losing Honest. The only way they can earn it back is to tell you the truth about that particular incident where you caught them lying.

If you further discipline a child who has lied, they will continue to lie more to avoid the negative consequences. When consequences are completely gone, it becomes painless for your child to be honest.

It’s taken a long time to see consistent results with my children. They had spent several years getting used to lying. Now, when they’ve done something I won’t approve, they tell the truth, knowing that they may lose a different Piece and need to earn it back.

Only moving the Honest Piece is probably going to feel really difficult. It’s going to be hard to let it go. You’re used to disciplining this behavior. Just LET IT GO—and your children will start telling you the truth.

Stealing

Very simply, your child loses Respectful and needs to return the item to earn it back. I don’t force my children to apologize. They naturally do it on their own. Returning the item will be a very uncomfortable “effect.” They will remember the humiliation every time they feel like stealing.

Recently my 14-year-old daughter stole a bunch of my colored Sharpie® markers to draw with at school.

I looked at her, “Did you take them?”

I saw the desire to lie flash through her eyes. She swallowed and blurted, “Yep, I did. I love the colors, Mom.”

“Excellent! You kept your Honest Piece. I’d like them back please.”

As she returned them I said, “Thank you. Why don’t we get you your own set in the Fall, when they’re on sale before school starts?”

“Yes! Thank you Mom!” and she joyfully scooted off. As I write this, the Fall is five months away! Easy As Pie works. You just need to use it consistently.

READY, SET, GO!

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— Richard Bach (*Illusions*)



How to Work the Easy As Pie Method

After your family meeting to explain the new rules, you're your repeat back to you all of the rules. Although they may repeat the concepts, they won't truly understand them until they start to experience the Pie Pieces moving in real life. So—it's time to get started.

Remember, don't get sidetracked by your child's different behaviors and change your requests as you're labeling behaviors and moving Pie Pieces. That is confusing to your child. **They need you to stay on your original request.**

First unacceptable behavior: Child steals a toy from sibling who then retaliates by hitting.

"I'm sorry. Both of you have lost your "Kind" Piece. Now we need to help each other earn them back."

"But I don't know what to do Mom!!!!"

"Ok. Let's see...Sarah, you can apologize, because that's a Kind thing to do when you hurt someone. And James, you can give the toy back and ask Sarah for permission to hold the toy because that's much Kinder than ripping it out of her hands."

As you watch your children follow the ideas, "Excellent job guys, you both earned your Kind Piece back."

But what if it doesn't go that nicely? Let's play out the scenario further.

"I'm sorry. Both of you have lost your "Kind" Piece. Now we need to help each other earn them back."

Second unacceptable behavior: James' anger continues and he throws the toy across the room.

"James, you seem very angry, but this is not the way to handle it, you have now lost your Cheerful Piece. Would you please go pick up the toy so we can work this out together?"

Third unacceptable behavior: James continues and screams at Sarah, "This is all your fault! I hate you!"

"James, you are not being very helpful to me so you've lost your Helpful Piece. Would you please go pick up the toy so we can work this out together?"

Fourth unacceptable behavior: "No!!!!!"

"I'm sorry, but that is not a respectful way to speak to your mother, you have lost your Respectful Piece."

At this point, you are most likely feeling frustrated by now, and the only two Pieces left are Honest and Responsible. They aren't really applicable to this situation, but your child isn't cooling down. So now it's time for a cooling off period.

"James, I see that all of this has made you very angry and it's very difficult to make things better when you're angry. You need a cool-off time in your room."

Cool-Off Time

If your child will not go on their own or walk with you, you may have to resort to picking the child up and taking them to their room.

Over time, this behavior will stop. This is why it is best to start using Easy As Pie with young children. They are much easier to pick up.

I need to pause a bit to talk about violence. Since young children are always copying their parents, it's important to understand that if your child is screaming, hitting, or kicking it's usually because you have yelled, slapped or spanked them in the past.

If like me, you have resorted to these behaviors when you are angry, your child has learned that screaming and hitting is what you're supposed to do when angry.

I'm not making any judgment, because I've been there. It's important to look at your behavior when you don't like your children's behavior.

Your children are the canvas where you have painted the history of your life.

OK. Now back to Cool-Off Time. Your child needs to know what you expect even though you think they may not be able to hear it through all of the screaming and crying.

Cool-Off Mantra

"James, I want you to stay in your room until you are ready to come back out and start earning your Pie Pieces back and I will help you."

This sentence is extremely important because when a child has lost 4 Pieces, it seems like it's going to take forever to earn them back. The last words your child needs to hear from you is that **you will help them.**

As soon as your child returns, "James, have you found your Cheerful?"

If you don't see the attitude shift, walk your child right back down and start the process over again, repeating the same sentence,

"James, I want you to stay in your room until you are ready to come back out and start earning your Pie Pieces back and I will help you."

When your child comes back up with the attitude shift, give them their Cheerful Piece back.

"Ok, everyone. We need to help James earn Respectful, Helpful and Kind back. James, you could earn your Respectful back by picking up that toy you threw."

James will most likely happily pick it up when he realizes that that's all that's required to get the Piece back.

"James, you can get your Kind back, by giving the toy back to Sarah and apologizing."

"Hum, we just need Helpful, can you think of something?"

"I don't know."

"That's ok, it's my job to help you. Let's walk around the house and find something. Ooo, I see crayons left on the floor. That would be very helpful to me if you would pick them up and put them in the crayon box."

While James completes that task, give him his Helpful Piece back."

"Congratulations James, you did it! You earned all of your Pieces back."

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

I Hate You

No Piece removed

Your child is learning to control and manage their behavior. Everyone is entitled to their feelings and in the heat of a temper tantrum, your child is angry! At that very moment they do hate you. Let them be angry.

Any time your child expresses a feeling with the word "I" in front of it is a personal feeling that they are entitled to have.

Either don't respond at all by turning away from them, or tell them that you love them. Eventually they will start to make the connection that they are really angry with themselves for making poor behavior choices. Then they will gradually start to choose the appropriate behavior on their own.

Swear Words

Families have huge differences about their beliefs surrounding swear words. Some people don't have any trouble with them. Other people find them disrespectful.

If you don't use swear words in your home, your children are learning them from other children at school.

If you do not permit swear words in your home, then a Piece is always removed when you hear a swear word. Your child is choosing to not respect you. These types of sentences contain the word "you" or "you're."

"You're a Bitch!"

"That is not Respectful to me. You have lost Respectful. I deserve respect."

"Damn it! That's not fair! This is stupid!"

"Those are not Kind words. You've lost Kind. I deserve respect."

"This is so stupid!"

"This behavior is not very Helpful to me, you've lost Helpful. I deserve respect."

He starts to pick up a toy to throw at me,

"I see that you are very angry. You've lost your Cheerful. It's time for you to go cool-off. When you are ready to earn your Pieces back, I will help you."

Calling Names

Remove a Piece

Lately Bradley has taken to calling people NutHeads and ButtHeads. Every time he loses his Kind Piece. He instantly gets it back when he apologizes because that is a kind thing to do.

Just today he asked, “But what if I call myself the NutHead? Not you?”

“Well, then, I guess you need to apologize to Bradley because you’re not being very kind to Bradley.”

He found this highly amusing, but it brings me to an important point. To build a child’s self esteem, you need to speak kindly about your children all the time. Also, they need to speak kindly of themselves. Do not let them say out loud, “I’m stupid. I’m an idiot, etc.” You can’t have an affect on the thoughts going on in their head, but you can teach your children to be kind to themselves. Do not accept any unkind words in your home, for any reason, even if they say they are joking.

WORKING EASY AS PIE WHEN AWAY FROM HOME

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— Richard Bach (*Illusions*)



This is about the time you might start thinking, “What about when we leave the house? We can’t take the refrigerator with us.”

As I write this we’re working on a much-needed smart phone application. But in the mean time, I have a few techniques I use.

1. Always check the refrigerator before you leave. Rely on your children’s memories because they’ll usually be highly motivated to earn their Pieces back.

2. Try to have them earn their Pieces as fast as possible, by getting into the car quickly and respectfully. My children usually have all their Pieces back by the time we reach our destination.
3. If children start losing Pieces while out, either make a mental note or write on a note pad. **Do not be afraid to label behavior, remove Pieces, and return Pieces while away from home!** Do not give warnings— “If you don’t stop that, you’re going to lose a Piece!”—Nope, nope, nope.
4. If a child loses all four key Pieces find an isolated place for Cool-Off Time. Perhaps your car or a park bench. If necessary, you may need to leave your destination and return home immediately. (SEE MORE DETAILED INFO IN THE FAQ SECTION)

Children need consistency. The rules can’t be different when away. If you are at a friend’s home, you still need to be consistent. If they have to go to Cool-Off, then you decide whether the front porch will work or if you need to go home.

If your rules change away from home, your children will play you like the best bluegrass fiddler on a hot summer day.

REWARDING GOOD BEHAVIOR

Rewarding Others During One Child’s MeltDown

This has been highly effective with my children, because a small reward is given to the children that are, and the unWhole child has to miss the reward and wait until next time.

And if your other children have been behaving sweetly, and have all of their Pieces, through all of this, it’s time to reward them with mint or a piece of special

gum. I love the new flavor line by Extra—Key Lime Pie, Strawberry Shortcake or Chocolate Mint Ice Cream. We call this a “**Random Act of Sweetness.**”

Since the upset child is not ready to be Whole at the moment, they do not get to earn this reward when they get their Pieces back.

The upset child will either watch you give the other child a treat or the well behaved child will most likely let their sibling know that they got a piece of Mom’s special gum.

You can also bring out a pen and piece of paper or an iPhone app to play Tic-Tac-Toe with the other child while you’re waiting. So, not only has the child lost out on a piece of gum, but also some playtime with Mom. It’s a simple, yet very strong motivator.

After the misbehaving child earns back all of their Pieces, they will ask for the gum. Just gently remind them that Mom gets to give out rewards whenever she wants. It’s the child’s responsibility to choose nice behaviors so they are Whole when Mom feels like giving out rewards.

After you have purchased the gum or mints, I would highly recommend that you let your children know in advance that this is a new rule for Easy As Pie. Children don’t get to ask for the gum or mints. This is your way of randomly showing your children how much you appreciate their positive behavior choices when they are Whole.

STARS SPRINKLED ON TOP

This step should be started at week two or three. Your children need to have learned to control their behavior for four to six hours without any pie pieces moving.

What do you do when your child is Whole and they keep doing positive behaviors? We still use the Star System. Our children receive one star for each desirable behavior they demonstrate AFTER they are Whole. Children can **not** earn stars if they aren't Whole—they should be earning a Piece back instead.

When a child earns 50 stars, they can get something for \$2.00 or less. They have chosen Matchbox cars, iPhone game applications, and packs of gum or candy. It usually takes them about two weeks to earn 50 stars.

The rules are the same as for Easy As Pie: siblings can report on them and they can report on themselves to earn stars. Remember that your children can only earn stars when they are Whole. If they are not Whole, then their good behavior earns back one of their Pieces.

Occasionally, when our children do something positive that we wouldn't expect, we offer more stars (up to 5). Those stars have to be extremely well earned.

Once, we lost a library book somewhere in the house and had everyone searching for 4 days. Dane found it. We were so grateful that he earned 4 stars. He had gone out of his way to help us.

Another time my two eldest children decided on their own to go out and pick up all the trash along the roadside near our home. They returned with a kitchen trash bag busting at the seams! This is the type of behavior I want to reinforce. I made an exception to my star limit and gave each of them 10 stars!

I started out by giving stars for behaviors that they usually did to earn Pie Pieces back. This reinforced the idea of doing those behaviors spontaneously. Then my children would move on to trying other helpful things spontaneously, just to see if THAT will get them stars too.

Once they are doing that, you can stop rewarding the behaviors that used to earn them stars consistently.

For example, you want your child to clean up their place at the dinner table without you asking. When they do this (and are Whole), you reward them with a star. Keep doing this for a few weeks.

Once your child has gotten the hang of cleaning up after themselves for a few weeks, you can move to periodically rewarding that behavior and focus on them helping cleanup in the kitchen. Start rewarding “helping in the kitchen” liberally, and focus on the new behaviors. They will continue to look for more new stuff that will earn stars ... it works extremely well!

As your child gets to around 42 stars, they may request lots of tasks or do nice things around the house and ask to earn the stars. They are not manipulating you; they are just seeing themselves very close to a fun reward and want to get there quickly.

The rules of the Star System are totally up to you and your family. This is what has worked for our family.

Shower your children with stars for the behaviors you like and they start to think of new ideas. I’ve had my kiddos volunteer to fill up my water bottle, serve me food, clean up my dishes, etc. so they can earn extra stars. After helping Andrew install a computer program, he said, “thank you for helping me, Mom.” He wasn’t trying to earn a star, but it was so kind and genuine that I gave him one. **Keep rewarding what you want more of.**

Remember, you’re keeping your children focused on the behaviors you want, so if your children are constantly reporting on each other, they are earning stars

like crazy and you feel like you spend all of your time walking back and forth to the Star Chart; this is a very good problem to have!

EASY AS PIE OVER TIME

Let's look at the stages you can expect your child to move through over the next several weeks.

1. You make a request and your child refuses.

- At first your child will continue to refuse and go through the entire cycle of losing 4 Key Pieces, taking a Cool Off, and then earning the Pieces back.

2. You make three separate requests and your child refuses.

- After your child loses the **4th Piece**, and they suddenly turn off the tantrum; they may give you a fake grin or cheesy laugh and tell you, "I've found my Cheerful Mom!" At this moment, you are watching them practice an attitude shift without going to their room. This is the beginning of them learning to control their behavior.
- Although it *seems forced, immediately reward* it by giving Cheerful back, and go through earning the remaining 3 Pieces.

3. You make a request and your child refuses.

- Your child will lose **3 Pieces** and then decide to comply. Immediately give them Respectful back.
- Go through earning the remaining 2 Pieces.

4. You make a request and your child refuses.

- Your child will lose **2 Pieces** and then decide to comply.
- Immediately give them Respectful back and go through earning the remaining Piece.

5. You make a request and your child refuses.

- Your child will lose **1 Piece** and then decide to comply.

- Immediately give them the Piece back.

6. You make a request and *your child complies.*

You say, “thank you.”

7. You make a request

Your child says something similar to, “Yes Mom,” and ***cheerfully complies.***

You praise them and give them a Star.

Does this sound too good to be true? I might have thought the same thing if I was reading this manual for the first time like you are. But I have experienced it with all four of my children!

Do they always stay in stage G? Heck, NO! Children grow and constantly try new behaviors. I will say that they do spend most of their time in stages E through G though. Won't that be nice when your children get there?

With Easy As Pie, children don't choose their behavior because you're going to put them in timeout.

They choose the behavior because they learn; “I'm going to need to do a bunch of extra tasks that mom gives me to earn back my Pieces so I can be Whole.” Eventually children decide, “I might as well just do what Mom is asking now, so I don't have to spend more time earning my Pieces back later.”

It doesn't matter whether you let your children watch TV for 30 minutes or 4 hours, children always want to have constant access to their Motivators. They aren't necessarily going to do them all the time. Just like when you want a shower—you like to be clean—so you want to have access to a shower when you are ready for it. How do you feel when camping for 7 days at a remote location that doesn't have showers? See what I mean?

Children choose the virtues you are teaching because they want to keep their “paycheck.” The Motivators work, because they are your child's Motivators, not yours.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— Richard Bach (*Illusions*)



1. Question: Does this mean that my child has to be happy all of the time? Aren't children allowed to get upset?

Answer:

Yes, your children are entitled to their feelings. These feelings are real and they need to learn how to manage them, just like you as an adult have learned to manage your feelings.

You can tell the difference between a child being actually upset or hurt compared to the intentionally dramatic behavior of a temper-tantrum. And it is

your responsibility to be paying attention so you don't accidentally remove the Cheerful Piece when a child is truly sad or hurt and in need of comfort and consolation.

This distinction became very clear to me when 4-year-old Bradley started crying when he could no longer watch a favorite Scooby Doo movie on Netflix. They just stopped carrying it and it was no longer available for instant streaming or DVD in the mail. He was clearly sad and angry, so I coached him through his feelings. If he started to take his sadness/anger out on me verbally or physically though, it would be considered a temper-tantrum and I would have started labeling behavior and moving Pie Pieces.

2. Question: What do I do when one child can watch TV and the other child isn't Whole but keeps sneaking in to watch?

Answer:

They primarily lose Respectful, because they aren't respecting the Rules of the Method. If they've already lost Respectful, they can also lose Helpful or Kind (it's not helpful/kind to Mommy to have to keep correcting your behavior all the time).

In our family, our children usually lose Responsible, because when they come home from school, they need to complete their responsibilities of homework and chores before they play. As soon as they have completed their tasks, their Responsible Piece is returned.

3. Question: What if my child has lost Respectful and continues to not respect me?

Answer:

You've probably noticed in my illustrations, that there is a flexible interpretation between Respectful, Kind and Helpful. At the beginning of this Parenting Method, your child's behavior may get worse at first. They are used to a particular pattern

of behavior with you. You are now changing that pattern and they might throw every behavior they can think of, at you to see if you really mean business.

The Pie Pieces give a word to every single behavior your child chooses. First, you have to connect the word to each of their behaviors. Once they know the labels that fit with each behavior, they will quickly start to learn which one's you prefer and which one's you don't want.

Occasionally, some time has passed, a child is missing Respectful, they chose another non-respectful behavior, I say, "I'm sorry, you've lost Respectful," and go to the refrigerator only to find their Respectful Piece already removed. I return to the child saying, "Well, you've already lost your Respectful. Your last behavior choice is not helping you earn it back. So you've lost Helpful."

4. Question: Can my children lose a Piece overnight? That's more than 4 hours.

Answer:

For the most part, my children lose Respectful right before bed because they are stalling. They don't want to go to bed. They want to hang out with Mom and Dad.

As soon as they go to bed and stay there, I return their Respectful Piece.

If they've lost 2 or 3 Pieces right before bed, going to bed earns their Respectful Piece. But they will need to earn the other Pieces in the morning.

5. Question: What if my child won't stay in their room during cool-off time?

Answer:

When children are having a temper-tantrum, they want to engage you. They want you to give in to their whim. So often times they will follow you back from their room.

This happens to me a lot with the younger boys. I just go through the cool off process and walk back to the kitchen. When they get to the kitchen I ask if they are ready to earn their Pieces back. If they aren't then I escort them back to their room, and repeat the process.

I've never had to do this more than four times in a row. With the last escort, my son realized that I was just going to keep repeating myself. He stayed in his room for 10 minutes, then came up with a very happy attitude and earned all of his Pieces in less than five minutes.

6. Question: What do I do if my child gets violent?

Answer:

As I've mentioned before, if your child is violent, they are most likely mirroring back your behavior. They learned it from you, so they are going to need to un-learn it from you.

It's important to start Easy As Pie when children are still small enough to be carried to their room. This will make your life much easier.

Just pick them up and carry them. Continue to follow the Cool-Off Process. These episodes will be fewer and farther between as the weeks progress.

If you are finding after a few weeks that the Easy As Pie Method isn't helping at all with your child's level of violence, then it's time to bring in a professional.

There may be some other family dynamics affecting your child that needs to be resolved with therapy.

7. Question: Can this work with Tweens and Teens?

Answer:

Tweens and teens are in process of separating from you. They are trying to figure out “who they are.” The process can be painful and filled with angst or it can more peaceful.

If you start Easy As Pie early enough, it can work into the tween years. I started creating Easy As Pie when Justine was 12. Now she’s 14 and her Pie will stay Whole for days and weeks. When she does make poor decisions, I will still label her behavior with the removal of a Pie Piece, but we are also able to have really deep discussions to solve the problem.

Teenagers will have well-established patterns with you. They may rebel or become violent if you start Easy As Pie. I’m not saying it can’t be done, but the parent is going to have to stay incredibly strong and be consistent.

I do not recommend starting Easy As Pie if you are dealing with a violent teen. The family interaction behaviors are etched as deeply as the Grand Canyon. You need to bring in a professional to source out why your child is so angry. After you have been through some therapy, you may want to discuss this positive parenting method with your therapist. They will be able to decide if it will be helpful.

8. Question: What do I do when we leave home and don't have the Pies with us?

Answer:

If you are concerned that you can't keep track, get a sticky note, write the children's names and write the first letter representing the Piece on the paper (R=Respect, K=Kind...), When they earn it back, cross it out. Your children need to experience the same process at home and out about town. Give them a 5-minute warning that you'll be leaving, then when it's time to go:

"James, it's time to go. Come on down."

"No."

"James, you are not respecting Mommy. You've lost Respectful."

"James, please come down."

"No."

"James, you are not being helpful to Mommy right now. You've lost Helpful."

"James, please come down. Let's go."

"No."

"It is not kind to make me come up there and get you. You've lost Kind."

Now, go up and get him. Take him by the hand or pick him up if he resists. The odds are pretty high that now James is crying or screaming at you.

"James, I see that you have also lost your Cheerful. It's time for a Cool-Off."

If you know your child will Cool-Off quickly, you could use the car. Remember, you have to be the one in control through the entire interaction.

If your child takes a while to Cool-Off, then you need to go home—even if it means leaving a full cart of groceries at the store! You cannot use the car with

this type of child, because your child will take the power from you by making you wait a long time.

So let's assume that James dislikes doing Cool-Off Time in the car—he doesn't like being alone. This is key because if he likes being alone in the car, you have lost the power to him and he could make you wait for hours. This is not what you want.

If James doesn't like being in the car alone, then it will work as an effective Cool-Off location.

As he climbs into his seat, “James, you need to Cool-Off. When you are ready to earn your Pieces back let me know and I will help you.”

You and your other children sit on the curb and wait. This is a perfect opportunity to reward the other children with a Piece of gum or a mint.

7. Question: I was hoping to be home as I tried to implement this program, but I am going full-speed ahead right now workwise and barely have time for anything. How do you implement Easy As Pie when you have both parents working or you travel a lot?

Answer: You may want to get a small magnetic dry-erase board from an office-supply store that can fit into a small bag while traveling. We're working on a smartphone application.

The most important thing is your consistency with your child when you are home from work. And if you can get your caregiver on board during the day, all the better.

When you're out and about in town, you can verbally take the Piece away and remove it when you get home. However, unless you are on your way home, there should be opportunities for them to earn the Piece(s) back while you are still out.

Your focus is to get those Pieces back as soon as possible. As soon as you take a Piece away and they are calm enough to want to earn it back, give a reminder, “Well, you've lost your Kind. How is Mommy going to help you get it back? (give them about 15 to 20 seconds to think of an idea for you. If they can't think of one, then you offer something.) “Let's see, you lost your Kind for yelling at Mommy. It would be very kind if you apologized to Mommy and gave me a hug. How about that?” You will often receive a huge heartwarming smile as well.

9. Question: Is it just me or can this system be abused? If one brother punches the other and makes him cry and loses his Kind Piece and then says sorry right after to get the Piece back, is that working? It could be a free pass to do whatever you want, say sorry and get the Pie Whole again.

Answer:

My experience is that the little ones just don't think that far ahead to abuse it and in reality, they haven't learned how to authentically apologize from the heart. After they have had enough practice (you'll start hearing them do it on their own), you'll be able to sense when they are starting to abuse it.

Some of you with the 5 year olds and up may already be there. The easiest way to tell if they have started to abuse it is that the behavior is not changing and continues to be repeated.

At one point, we were having an issue with open mouth belching. They'd lose Respectful, "oh, sorry Mom," but the behavior would continue and they weren't trying to restrain themselves.

So this is where you do get to make the Easy As Pie Method yours and make an exception where you need it. We've changed some occasions of disrespect to require an apology and a separate respectful act.

Make sure you sit down with them, explain the behavior you are seeing and why just an apology isn't enough any longer.

This also may be another indication that your child is ready to move into Phase Two's "Increasing the Criteria" in the last section of this manual.

1. Question: I was wondering how is the best way to handle my boys' bedtime. I have boys that keep getting up for tiny things and keep themselves up for about an hour+ after they are originally tucked in. I like the idea of them being Whole to begin the next morning, but am not sure how they can earn back their Piece without me going in and disturbing them once they are quiet and getting close to sleep. I guess I could give it back to them once they are quiet and stay in their beds and let them know in the morning. Any suggestions for keeping kids in bed?

Answer:

My suggestion would be to let them wake up in the morning missing Pieces for two weeks. My children don't start out Whole in the morning if they lost Pieces the night before. But as soon as they're awake and cheerful, I focus on helping them earn the Pieces back. Breakfast preparation is an excellent time to have them help out.

Kids are very smart and they start to figure out how to get around systems. A lot will depend on how they behave when losing Pieces in the evening.

If a child is determined about earning a Piece back before bed then the best way is, "Absolutely! The best way for you to earn Respectful/Kind/Helpful is to go to bed and stay in bed. If you go right to sleep, Mommy will put your Piece back before I go to bed."

Remember to stay on the original request of, "Please go to bed." between each Piece lost. Stay on your Original Request. Your objective is to give them the opportunity over and over to make the decision to listen to you and go to bed.

Also remember that if they have lost all 4 Pieces, the act of finally going to sleep earns them back a Piece so they will wake up to only 3 Pieces missing.

FINAL THOUGHTS

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— Richard Bach (*Illusions*)



You have a right to enjoy your children. Your children sense your discomfort and dislike of certain behaviors. They really do want you to be happy because happy parents are much more fun to be around.

It's been over a year since I developed this parenting method, and over six months since I've written the majority of this manual and tested it with a group of mom's all over the world.

I've learned much and have had to create many solutions for challenges that come up. The success of parenting with Easy As Pie lies completely on your shoulders and your consistent follow through. Easy As Pie works, but you have to work it daily.

Every day I wake up and tell myself that I have enough energy to shape my children's behavior—I do have four—and it takes a lot of energy. And you know, we're all human. Somedays I just don't have the energy or the patience. I find myself resorting to yelling more. ***Yelling is my instant trigger that I'm not shaping any longer—I'm not using the Pie Pieces.***

I take a deep breath and actually start counting out loud. The first time I did this, my kids actually stopped and looked at me with their heads tipped like adorable puppies! Now they know it's a sign that they've pushed a little too far. Once I've gained my focus, I start quietly labeling behaviors and Pie Pieces start moving quickly.

Ok. So you've made it to the end of this manual and you are about to start a new beginning with your children. It will take time and patience.

Your home should be your sanctuary, not an exhausting battle zone. You deserve to be comfortable with your children. You deserve to hear, "Your children are so delightful!"

Always know that if you get into a situation and you're still stumped, please [email me](#) or find me on [FaceBook](#). I'm also available for coaching if you need more personal guidance.

You're going to love being a mom. You can do this!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ana Seidel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent loop at the end of the last name.

REFRIGERATOR REMINDERS

Five Most Important Things to Do

1. Your Sole Objective is to Help Your Children Stay Whole
2. Speak Calmly at All Times
3. Remove One Piece for Each Negative Behavior
4. Return Piece Immediately as the Positive Behavior is Demonstrated
5. Encourage Siblings to Report On Each Other

Five Most Important Things to Avoid

1. No Warnings! Immediately Label Behavior
2. No Yelling
3. Removing More Than One Piece at a Time
4. Removing Several Pieces for One Behavior
5. Asking a Child to Move Another Child's Piece

Steps To Removing and Returning Pieces

1. Whole Child—Access to All Motivators
2. Negative Behavior Exhibited
 - Label and Remove Piece
3. Make Request
 - Positive Behavior Exhibited
 - Congratulate and Replace Piece
 -

Cool-Off Mantra

"Name, I want you to stay in your room until you are ready to come back out and start earning your Pie Pieces back and I will help you."

THE PIES

“We teach best what we most need to learn.”

— Richard Bach (*Illusions*)

Directions for Construction

Each child will have their own Magnetic Pie that you put on the refrigerator. Each child needs to pick a different colored Pie. This is so that you—the parent—will know which child is missing a Piece. I've included a White Pie in case you have a child who would like to color their own pie.

Supplies:

- Printer
- Scissors
- [Self Adhesive Magnetic Sheets](#) (available at craft supply stores and Amazon.com)

1. Print out chosen Pies

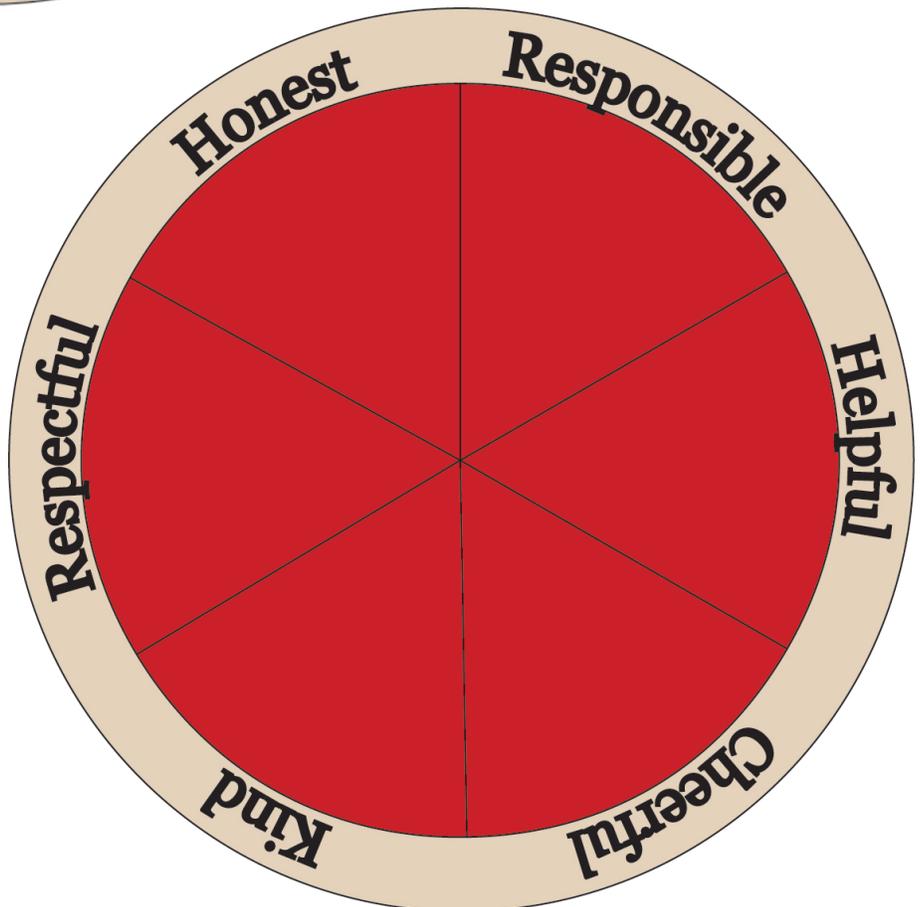
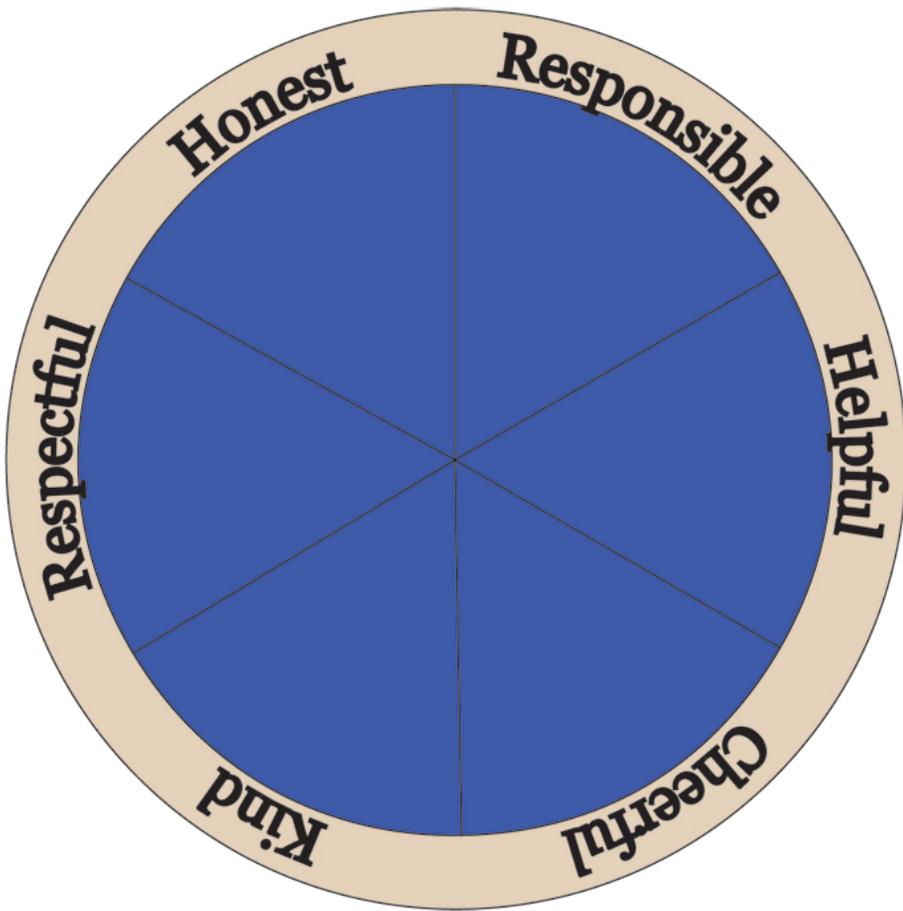
To save paper, you can print one pie, turn paper around and put back in printer tray and print a second pie of a different color.

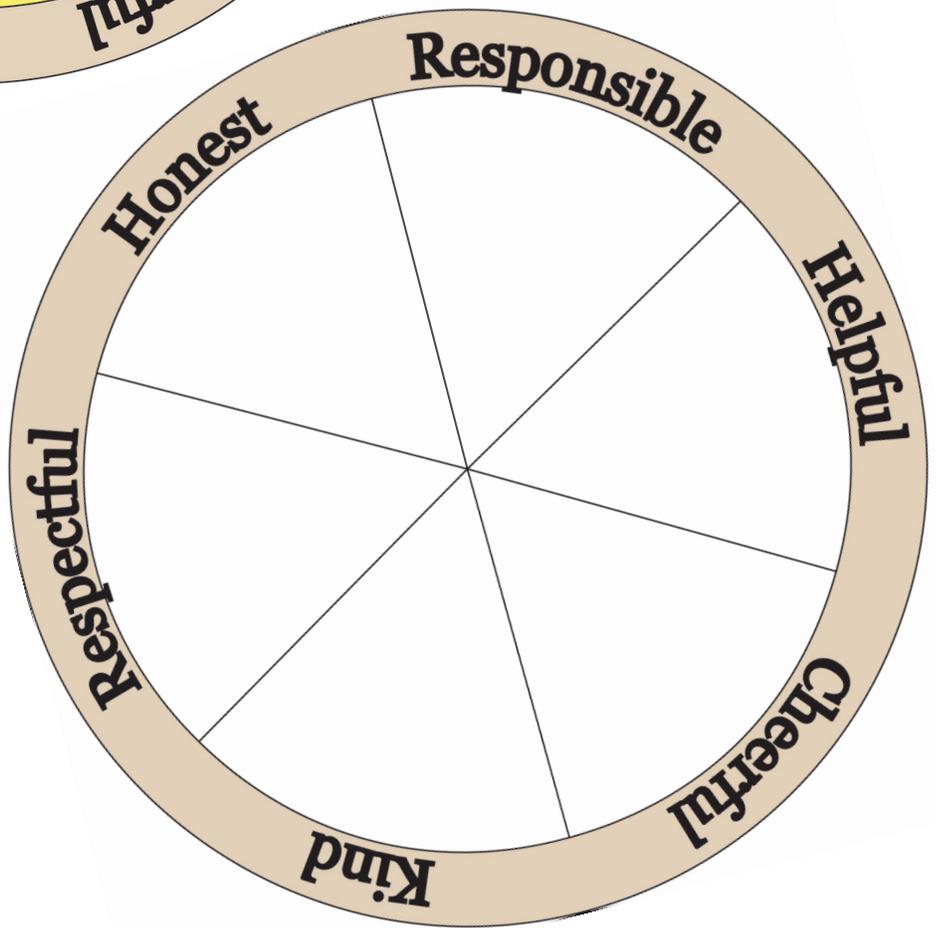
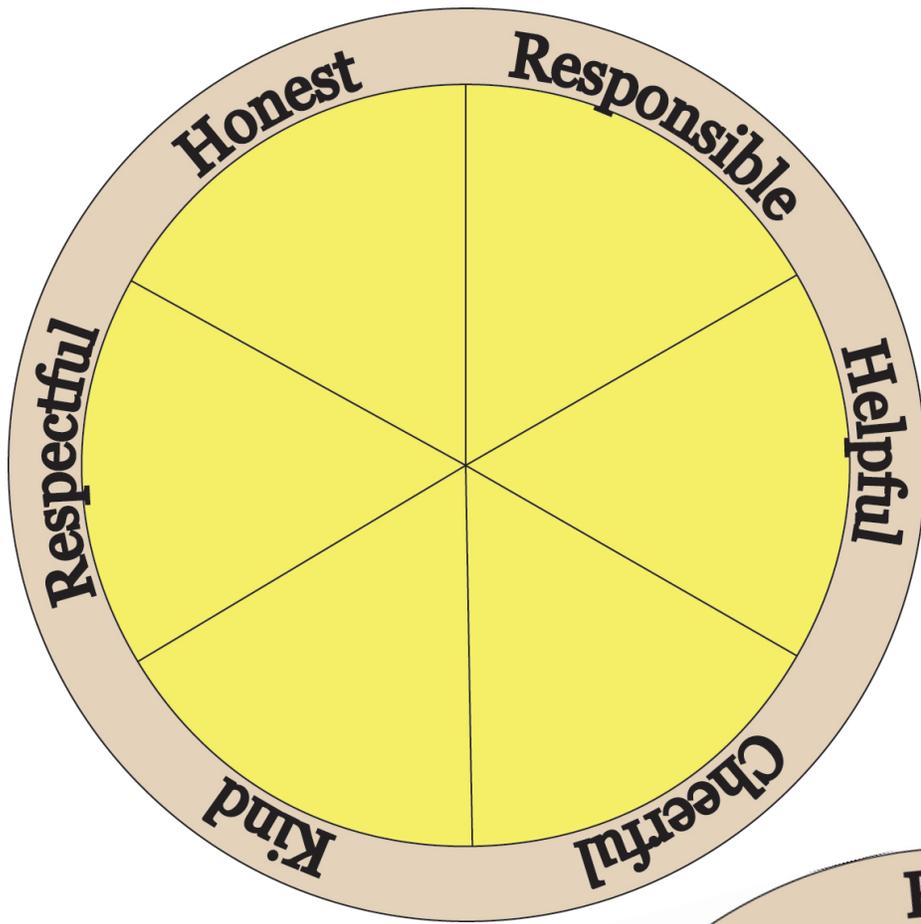
2. Cut each Pie on the magnetic sheet around the outside border.

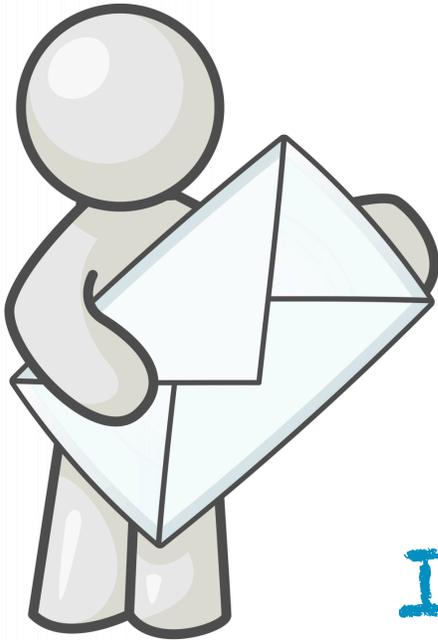
3. Cut your circular Pies along the lines into 6 Pieces.

4. Stick them to your refrigerator.

If your fridge isn't magnetic, there are many magnetic dry erase boards available at office supply stores and Target.







INTEGRITY

This manual has been a love of labor created over two years.

We would appreciate it if you didn't send this manual to anyone and everyone in your email address book.

Please do share it with one best friend—because best friends share everything—and we're totally ok with that.

If you have other friends who are interested in Easy As Pie, please send them to www.ParentingIsEasyAsPie.com