

# Video Highlights

## ***“Using ‘Village Helpers’ to Teach Discipline”***

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### **I. Introduction**

- Discipline = controlled behavior that is age appropriate and doesn't pose a threat to others.
- The disciplined child has learned to curb or re-channel impulsive inclinations into behaviors that are socially acceptable
- In fairness to parents, it must be said that it's easier to teach discipline to some kids than it is to others
- The old African proverb, “It Takes a Village to Raise a Child.” as a metaphor to suggest that there are other adults in a child's extended community or village, these I call village helpers
- Important to note that I am not suggesting parents abdicate their responsibilities for disciplining their children
- Alas, sometimes it falls on one parent to be “the bad guy”

### **II. What we know about kids and discipline**

- They are very adaptable and flexible to rules and expectations of wide variety of people, even in same family or school
- Kids often behave better for others
- Home is the lab and place for kids pushing back, experimenting and acting out
- Kids can be really tough when young, and typically they turn out just fine!
- Can get stuck with primary disciplinarians in power struggle cycles; need to break the cycle, re-frame it in a way that removes the negative emotion and is face-saving for all

### **III. Examples of already using “village helpers”**

- Doctors, dentists, teachers
  - “I don't want to go to bed” (call upon the pediatrician to set the rules)
  - “I don't want to brush my teeth” (call upon the child's dentist)

- “I don’t want to get dressed for school” (call upon your child’s teacher)
- When grandparents and others are being village helpers: stay out of their way; don’t over rule or interfere

#### **IV. Using the Village: Summary**

- The African proverb “It takes a village to raise a child” is used as a metaphor to illustrate the value of a parent purposefully recruiting someone outside the usual cadre of disciplinarians to help discipline their child.
- It is not uncommon for a parent to get locked into a repetitious cycle where the child is misbehaving, the parent tries various interventions, nothing changes except, perhaps, the emotional pitch becomes more intense
- What started as an annoying situation often escalates to one of anger and increased acting out.
- In these situations, a parent deferring to someone with authority for clarification can get the parent out of the futile role of being “the bad guy or gal”
- And refocus the issue for both the parent and the child on what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Many times a child who is getting emotionally stuck, e.g., having a tantrum, welcomes the presence of someone new, different and in a position of authority.
- Even if these “village helpers” are strangers, if they are scripted correctly by the parent, they can be effective de facto disciplinarians.