

# THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DISCIPLINE AND PUNISHMENT



**DISCIPLINE TEACHES. PUNISHMENT CONTROLS.**

## Discipline

- Focuses on teaching
- Driven by calm and intention
- Goal is growth and responsibility
- Uses guidance, reflection, and repair
- Asks: “What skill is missing?”
- Long-term results

## Punishment

- Focuses on control
- Driven by emotion (anger/frustration)
- Goal is compliance
- Uses fear, shame, or consequences
- Asks: “What rule was broken?”
- Short-term results

## Student learns:

- Accountability
  - Problem-solving
  - Trust
- “How to do better next time”

## Student learns:

- Sneakiness
  - Adults = control
  - Mistakes = danger
- “Just don’t get caught”

## Quick Strategies

- Pause before reacting  
→ 3 seconds = better decisions
- Lower your voice, don’t raise it  
→ Calm = control
- Give a simple redirect  
→ “Try that again the right way.”
- Move closer (proximity)  
→ Often fixes behavior without words
- Use the student’s name quietly  
→ Personal, not public

*Discipline is helping a child solve a problem.  
Punishment is making a child suffer for having a problem.*