

Stop Walking Into the Abyss

Writes Free Your Kids:

The first step is the toughest... Mama told me things had to change. We couldn't continue this way. We had ceased spanking years before. We were still using a combination of yelling, isolation (in the form of a "naughty step"), and shaming to control the children's behavior. We were drowning. Our home was in turmoil. We needed a new way.

So, we made the decision to stop. To just stop. To stop yelling. To stop using the naughty step. To stop physically forcing them to do what we thought they should be doing. We just stopped. And replaced it with nothing, because we didn't know what else to do.

A disaster, right? No. The opposite. Simply by refraining from aggression – in any form – the children gradually became more peaceful themselves. They stopped fighting (as much). They stopped hitting each other (almost completely). They seemed so much happier. Did they run wild? No. Not at all. When they weren't afraid anymore, when they realized we weren't going to snap-out on them, they calmed down themselves. Most of the aggression ended.

Was everything perfect, then? No. Not at all. We still made mistakes. The children still had disagreements. It was no utopia. But it was better. Much better. Just because we stopped punishing them.

In time, after much reading and many late-night discussions, we made some adjustments to our approach, but the basic idea remained. No punishment. No aggression. No fear.

When the path one follows leads only to darkness, stepping off the path and discontinuing the journey is a prudent first step. One must find the light, but first, one must stop walking into the abyss.