

# 10 Points that the Pro-Spanking Crowd Totally Missed

Last week I wrote an article outlining the fifty-year-long study on spanking conducted by the Universities of Texas and Michigan. This post got real popular, real fast. As in, it went viral in like three days. Apparently, spanking is a hot topic. I think that is because it attracts people from both sides. You are either for spanking or you are against it, and no one comes to the defense of their cause quite as fast as a pro-spanker. People put a lot of energy into defending their “right” to hit their kids. I can hear it now.

“It’s not hitting, it’s spanking! Huge difference.”

Yea, yea. I’ll get to that in a bit. As I opened my email, the comments were pouring in. At first, it was all praise and in agreement with the sentiment that hitting is abusive (shocker), but as the post spread like wildfire, it inevitably began to reach...everyone else. And everyone else had something to say. Which, I get. Who likes being told that what they do is harming and hurting people? I started sifting through the comments and there was just no way to get through all of them. There are about 1000+ of them and I don’t really have the time or energy to do it, so I came up with an idea. Instead of addressing everyone’s comment individually, I will just write a post responding to all the defenses of spanking children. Which is pretty easy because there are only a handful that I hear over and over again. My hope is that I can shed a little more light on this topic and help radically shift the mindset that these people seem to be deeply conditioned in.

If you want to read the article I am referring to first, [\[click here\]](#) to do that.

*Here are 10 things that those who are defending non-consensual spanking of young children are not considering:*

## **Argument #1: “I was spanked and I turned out fine.”**

To be blunt, no you didn’t. Do you have social anxiety? Any relationship dysfunctions? Eating disorders (this includes overeating)? Learning disorders? Anxiety? Hard time expressing emotions? Serial dater? I mean, really, the list could go on and on. We all have something. In my experience, those who are quick to insist on how fine they turned out are actually the least fine of most people I know. Being unaware of your patterns that stem from trauma doesn’t make you fine. Someone once told me they turned out fine who was on anti-anxiety meds. The thing with being raised in a trauma-based culture is that the things that are a result of the trauma are normalized to those who have been traumatized. In many people’s reality, these things are normal and not even self-inquired about. But it is not normal that a large percentage of people have mental health problems, weight problems, and chronic disease. It is not normal that most marriages end in divorce (or the

whole modern day relationship paradigm, but I digress). It is not normal that you think a child needs to be hit to learn. You did not turn out fine. I agree that maybe you can function really well in society, but that is no measure of your well-being. Humans raised in a culture rooted in trauma often have no idea how good it is all meant to be and feel.

### **Argument #2: “I’ve tried everything and spanking is the only thing that works.”**

The problem with this argument is that it implies that the only goal here is to stop the current behavior. It implies an agenda of control. Actually, I heard this argument when referring to a tantrum. “Spanking is the only thing to make a tantrum stop.” Listen, the problem isn’t the tantrum. The problem is that you think there is something wrong with a child having a tantrum. You think there is something wrong because you were taught that the full expression of your emotions were not okay. Your discomfort of your child’s emotions are a reflection of your discomfort for your own. Tantrums are developmentally normal. Your job is not to stop a tantrum. Your job is to be a present and loving adult who can help guide a child through their emotions. Not go on their ride with them.

Secondly, when parents say they have tried everything else, they start to list off, “I’ve tried saying ‘no’ over and over, I have done time-outs, I have taken things away. Nothing works.”

What do these all have in common? Disconnection. What the parent hasn’t tried is, connection. Connecting to their child. Because here is another big thing everyone is missing:

***It isn’t about the behavior. It never is. It is about the underlying emotion that is driving the behavior.***

If you can get more curious about the emotions driving the behavior rather than focusing on the behavior itself, this parenting thing will be a whole lot more enlightening.

One more thing: Lower your expectations and take action where you can. If you have told your two-year-old ten times to get out of the trash can and he still doesn’t, it is because the part of his brain that controls his impulses is not fully developed. Two-year-olds are hard wired to touch and explore and figure out everything for themselves. THEY CANNOT HELP THIS. I would be more worried if he never tried to dig in the trash can. This is where you, the adult comes in. Move the trash to a place they cannot reach it. Create “yes” spaces.

### **Argument #3: “Kids need to learn respect. My parents spanked me and I respected them.”**

No, you didn’t. You feared them. You do not respect someone who hurts you. Do you respect anyone who would hit you now? I hope not. I surely don’t. Kids do not respect

people who hit them. They fear those people and then comply out of fear, but please, let's not conflate that with respect. Do you know who I respect? I respect someone who is rational and emotionally mature enough to connect with me when I am having a hard time and who can communicate to me when they are having a hard time. I REALLY respect someone who can stay calm and present when my emotions are going crazy.

Not to mention, the fact that you think respect is earned by physical force and pain is very disturbing. I don't even know where to begin with that notion. Therapy, maybe? I don't say that in a condescending way. I think therapy is good. I have been myself. If you believe that the only way children can learn the concept of respect is by being spanked then I would say you need to really look at your ideas of self-love and worth. It's a very low-lying world view.

**Argument #4: "Kids need discipline. That's the problem these days. No one is spanking their kids anymore and the youth are little assholes with no discipline."**

First of all, most people admit that they spank their kids. It's not like gentle parenting is taking the world by storm (yet). There is only a very small percentage of us who do not use hitting, punishing or shaming as a way to teach people things. Secondly, no one said ANYTHING about not disciplining children. Why is spanking and discipline synonymous to you? Is spanking the only form of discipline you know of? Discipline comes from the word, "disciple" which means, "to teach." Children learn what they live. If you spank them when you don't like what they are doing then they learn that hitting and being aggressive is how you handle situations in which you are having trouble getting your point across. Think of your child in a situation with someone who was giving them a really hard time. How would you want them to handle it? Would you want them to hit the person? Or remain calm with an advanced ability to communicate? However you would want your child to handle stress, then do that, because how you are is how they learn. It is really not rocket science.

**Argument #5: "They are too young to understand when I tell them to stop and hitting is the only way to get my point across."**

If your child is too young to understand something, then they are too young to understand why someone they love and trust is inflicting pain upon them. All the more reason to lower your adult expectations of a toddler and use gentle techniques. We want our children to learn through experience, not to simply comply out of fear. My goal is not to raise an obedient human. My goal is to raise an independent, driven, outspoken, child who isn't afraid to speak and question people, including myself.

**Argument #6: "Children need to learn real world consequences. If you touch a hot stove it is going to burn you."**

Well, you are not an inanimate object so give yourself a little more credit. You are a feeling,

thinking, free human who has a choice. Yes, there are what I like to call, “natural consequences,” in life. Hitting a child is not one of them. It is a choice that you are choosing to make. Touching a hot stove and then getting burned would be a natural consequence. Another one would be that if my child doesn’t want to put a jacket on, then he will discover what it’s like to get cold and then learn on his own the benefits of wearing a warm coat. Hitting him to get him to put a jacket on does not teach him this valuable lesson. Now, if what you mean by using the hot stove analogy is that you are like the hot stove waiting to burn someone, then as a human as opposed to an object, it is your job to cool yourself off to ensure you don’t take it out on and burn those around you. It is not your child’s job to make sure she doesn’t come near the stove.

**Argument #7: “Spanking and hitting are not the same thing. I do it on the fat of the butt where they can’t even feel it.”**

In this culture it is not uncommon to use certain words to make the reality of something seem less severe. For example, the reason we call hitting a child, ‘spanking’ is the same reason we call eating a pig, eating ‘pork’. It is the same reason we call genital mutilation, ‘circumcision.’ These terms lessen the impact of reality. It has to be that we are less likely to question our conditioning. But the truth is that if you treated ANYONE else in your life the way you treat your child, it would be looked down upon. That is the difference. Spanking children is socially acceptable by most people in this culture, therefore there is no one to hold you accountable for your actions like there would be if you hit your wife or your husband. In 52 counties spanking has been banned because they understand that spanking is, in fact, hitting.

Also, if the point isn’t to hurt them then why are you doing it? Why do people defend spanking by saying it doesn’t hurt their child? If the point is not to get them to submit by way of pain or force, then what is it? Why else would you spank? In my opinion, to defend spanking by insisting it doesn’t hurt implies a level of guilt about your actions. You know it is wrong so you insist it doesn’t hurt, but of course it hurts. They don’t listen to you because it feels good. And even if it isn’t physically hurting, it hurts emotionally, which is probably worse.

**Argument #8: “Not all kids are the same. Don’t act like you know my kid. Some kids need a spanking.”**

Saying “not all kids are the same,” is for things like which shows they like and what their favorite color is. It isn’t for physical pain. No human, of any kind, deserves to be or thrive from being hit. Just insert the word, “wife” into this argument. “Not all wives are the same. Some just need to be hit.” How humans respond to stress and pain is actually very similar. We are hard-wired for connection and have limbic systems that has us be able to feel each other like all other mammals. We are more alike than you might want to admit. What

makes children so much different is their environments and how they are raised. So if your child is continuously “acting out”, look at yourself and how you played a part in that.

This same logic can be applied to spanking.

**Argument #9: “Don’t judge me! Let people parent how they want to parent and mind your own business.”**

I won’t go too deep here because I wrote a whole article on the “don’t judge me,” fallacy. Basically, when people inside a group of a larger whole see that other people who are a part of that group are doing things that inadvertently affect the rest of the group, then those people are going to have something to say. My son will grow up to be an adult in a world of adults who were hit as kids. I don’t want that for him. I want better. Do you judge people who hit their spouses? Or people who commit rape crimes? I hope so.

“Did you just compare spanking to raping someone?!”

No, I didn’t. I used it as an example for why it is totally necessary to make judgments on people’s actions sometimes. BUT since we are on the subject, let’s compare the two:

Both are:

- Requiring of a victim and a perpetrator.
- Inflicting pain, harm, unwanted actions onto another person’s body.
- Doing so without consent.
- Using dominance, strength, and force to do so.
- Leave the victim feeling hurt, shame, isolated, fearful, etc...

**Argument #10: “I agree you should never spank as a reactionary response out of anger, but rather I think you should do it calmly and rationally.”**

Ok, this just creeps me out. No one who is calm, collected and thinking maturely and rationally wants to hit their child. To use aggression towards someone (and hitting is aggressive) you have to be feeling some level of tension, anger, frustration, etc.

If you insist that you hit your kid when you are calm, you are either not actually calm and not aware of it, or you are a psychopath of sorts. If you are calm and collected, then you know there are a number of ways to handle tough situations with your children that do not require striking them. Not to mention how confusing it must be for a child to see a calm adult using a hurtful act against them. The tone doesn’t match the response and I imagine

that can be pretty disorienting for a child.

Listen, I don't think there are bad parents. As one blogger just recently wrote, "there's no cool mom or mean mom...there's just parents who understand how the brain works, and those that don't, yet."

What is required here is a better of understanding of children and their development, which is to say a better understanding of ourselves as humans. I am not perfect. I have never hit my son, but I have definitely wanted to. Well, I don't actually ever want to hit my child, but there have been moments where it felt like it would feel so good to do so. The difference is awareness. I am aware that the feeling and thought has nothing to do with what my son is doing. It is a result of the way I was conditioned and raised. It is how I was taught to handle anger, frustration, etc. Parents, let this be your new mantra:

My child is not *giving* me a hard time. My child is *having* a hard time.

If you were not raised in a peaceful environment then it is going to be hard to rewire your system for parenting your own children (I speak from experience). Again, it is not about perfection, it is about awareness. Just keep redirecting it towards you. How can you adjust, shift, change, act? Don't make it about your child. That is where the healing is. If you are lost as to what to do in certain situations or you are overall having a hard time not using corporal punishment, I offer coaching for parents just like you. [\[Click here to learn more\]](#)