**Discipline: Take a Look Back**

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You already know how to discipline your child. But do you know where you learned how?

I know a man named Don who, in disciplining his 10-year-old son, pushed him forcefully down to the floor. It surprised this father, and shocked everyone in the room. No one knew what to do next.

For Don, it was clear that something deeper was going on. He hadn't figured it all out yet, but he knew that what he'd done was not right. He knelt down, told his son he was sorry, and apologized to the other family members present.

Later, Don put the pieces together. He remembered how his own father had pushed him down several times. Now he was following in his footsteps.

When you discipline your children, you can't help but be influenced by the way you were disciplined. In most cases, the memories will play back in your mind. Your first course of action-your first instinct-is to do what was done to you. That's true whether you were spanked, yelled at, grounded, given time out, abused or ignored.

We have to come to terms with the past. How did your father discipline you? How did it make you feel? abused? or neglected? or did it make you feel like he really cared for you?

Discipline involves a struggle of wills-yours against your child's-and it's easy to see how these events become dramatic and memorable for a child. It's easy to see how abuse leaves children with lasting scars, and how proper, loving discipline leaves them with a sense of confidence and security.

So when discipline is needed, don't ignore the past. Learn from it. Maybe your father did all the right things. Maybe you'll need to make some adjustments. Maybe your past is so overwhelming that you need help in learning new ways to discipline.

When you're faced with the need to discipline in love, remember to look back and learn from the past. Healthy discipline can take a bad situation and make it a positive, loving and learning experience. And those lessons will last a lifetime-or even longer.