



Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community

Alfie, Etc Kohn

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What is most remarkable about the assortment of discipline programs on the market today is the number of fundamental assumptions they seem to share. Some may advocate the use of carrots rather than sticks; some may refer to punishments as "logical consequences." But virtually all take for granted that the teacher must be in control of the classroom, and that what we need are strategies to get students to comply with the adult's expectations.

Alfie Kohn challenged these widely accepted premises, and with them the very idea of classroom "management," when the original edition of *Beyond Discipline* was published in 1996. Since then, his path-breaking book has invited hundreds of thousands of educators to question the assumption that problems in the classroom are always the fault of students who don't do what they're told; instead, it may be necessary to reconsider what it is that they've been told to do--or to learn. Kohn shows how a fundamentally cynical view of children underlies the belief that we must tell them exactly how we expect them to behave and then offer "positive reinforcement" when they obey.

Just as memorizing someone else's right answers fails to promote students' intellectual development, so does complying with someone else's expectations for how to act fail to help students develop socially or morally. Kohn contrasts the idea of discipline, in which things are done *to* students to control their behavior, with an approach in which we work *with* students to create caring communities where decisions are made together.

Beyond Discipline has earned the status of an education classic, a vital alternative to all the traditional manuals that consist of techniques for imposing control. For this 10th anniversary edition, Kohn adds a new afterword that expands on the book's central themes and responds to questions from readers. Packed with stories from real classrooms around the country, seasoned with humor and grounded in a vision as practical as it is optimistic, *Beyond Discipline* shows how students are most likely to flourish in schools that have moved toward collaborative problem solving--and beyond discipline.

Alfie Kohn is the author of many other books about education and human behavior, including *Punished by Rewards*, *The Schools Our Children Deserve*, and *Unconditional Parenting*.



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