



Never Violence

A story told by Astrid Lindgren

Author of *Pippi Longstocking*

Said Astrid Lindgren: "Above all, I believe that there should never be any violence." Lindgren received the German Book Trade Peace Prize for her literary contributions, and in acceptance told the following story.

"When I was about 20 years old, I met an old pastor's wife who told me that when she was young and had her first child, she didn't believe in striking children, although spanking kids with a switch pulled from a tree was standard punishment at the time. But one day when her son was four or five, he did something that she felt warranted a spanking - the first of his life. And she told him that he would have to go outside and find a switch for her to hit him with. The boy was gone a long time. And when he came back in, he was crying. He said to her, 'Mama, I couldn't find a switch, but here's a rock that you can throw at me.'

"All of a sudden the mother understood how the situation felt from the child's point of view: that if my mother wants to hurt me, then it makes no difference what she does it with; she might as well do it with a stone. And the mother took the boy onto her lap and they both cried. Then she laid the rock on a shelf in the kitchen to remind herself forever: never violence. And that is something I think everyone should keep in mind. Because violence begins in the nursery - one can raise children into violence.

"Too often we fail to feel situations 'from the child's point of view,' and that failure leads us to teach our children other than what we think we're teaching them."

Ways to Say "No"

A recent survey of grade school children reports that most of them expect to "ask" NINE times before their parents "give in." Here are some responses to assure your child that you have no intention of changing your "No" to a "Yes."

"Did you hear me say 'No'?" ♦ "We need the money for something else." ♦ "I'm starting to get really angry with you." ♦ "No, and that's final." ♦ "I have thought about it, and the answer is still no." ♦ "That is too old for you." ♦ "I remember saying 'No.'" ♦ "You already have enough of those." ♦ "Please find something else to do." ♦ "Perhaps you didn't hear me say that we are not going to do that." ♦ "Your whining makes me think that you may already have too many toys." ♦ "I'm not going to be changing my mind about this." ♦ "You know the rule and it hasn't changed." ♦ "This is not fun. Please think of something else to do." ♦ "You are marching around the edge of my patience." ♦ "Absolutely not." ♦ **"I am the parent. Parents make these decisions."**

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