



# No-Drama Discipline: The Whole-Brain Way to Calm the Chaos and Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind

*Daniel J. Siegel*

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**NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER** - The pioneering experts behind *The Whole-Brain Child* and *The Yes Brain* tackle the ultimate parenting challenge: discipline.

Highlighting the fascinating link between a child's neurological development and the way a parent reacts to misbehavior, *No-Drama Discipline* provides an effective, compassionate road map for dealing with tantrums, tensions, and tears--without causing a scene.

Defining the true meaning of the "d" word (to instruct, *not* to shout or reprimand), the authors explain how to reach your child, redirect emotions, and turn a meltdown into an opportunity for growth. By doing so, the cycle of negative behavior (and punishment) is essentially brought to a halt, as problem solving becomes a win/win situation. Inside this sanity-saving guide you'll discover

- strategies that help parents identify their own discipline philosophy--and master the best methods to communicate the lessons they are trying to impart
- facts on child brain development--and what kind of discipline is most appropriate and constructive at all ages and stages
- the way to calmly and lovingly connect with a child--no matter how extreme the behavior--while still setting clear and consistent limits
- tips for navigating your child through a tantrum to achieve insight, empathy, and repair
- twenty discipline mistakes even the best parents make--and how to stay focused on the principles of whole-brain parenting and discipline techniques

Complete with candid stories and playful illustrations that bring the authors' suggestions to life, *No-Drama Discipline* shows you how to work with your child's developing mind, peacefully resolve conflicts, and inspire happiness and strengthen resilience in everyone in the family.

## **No-Drama Discipline: The Whole-Brain Way to Calm the Chaos and Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind Details**

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# **From Reader Review No-Drama Discipline: The Whole-Brain Way to Calm the Chaos and Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind for online ebook**

## **Todd says**

All parents should read this. Great reminder of what is important.

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## **Jonathan says**

This book has a lot of excellent advice about the importance of your relationship with your children, and how you can "discipline" them in a way that preserves that relationship.

I use quotes around "discipline" because the authors begin the book by launching into a sort of questioning of what we even mean by "discipline". They wind up redefining the word to mean something a little different from what you might expect (i.e. "to teach" rather than "to guide by consequences" as many parents have come to understand it), and then proceeding to offer advice based on this new definition rather than the one with which you're familiar.

All of the advice seems really great--it's loving, centered, and respectful of both parents and kids.

But it feels like there's a huge missing piece: while the authors repeatedly speak about "boundaries" and "limits", they also preach firmly against "consequences" or "punishment". It's easy to see where they're coming from: handing out these painful forms of discipline is rough on the relationship and can engage anger rather than creating an actual teachable moment. On the other hand, the form of discipline they advocate is almost completely toothless. Every time your child misbehaves you're supposed to set aside time to "connect" with them and "redirect" later to discuss the behavior. One wonders if children will really feel there's a limit or boundary if nothing other than an acknowledgement that they've crossed it is forthcoming from Mom and Dad.

In the book, almost every one of the example "interactions" end up with the child tearfully confessing their crimes, explaining their inner motivations, and working collaboratively with their parents on a solution. I don't know about your kids, but mine look me right in the eyes and tell me that they're just going to misbehave again!

Despite the many references to brain physiology, there is little to recommend this book scientifically. The advice is based on anecdotes, not research, and on a vastly simplified and dichotomous view of the brain.

I also felt like this book was of tremendously inflated size. Many paragraphs end with a variation on the following sentence: "And, by doing this, you'll not only help your kids cooperate in the short-term, but help their growing brains, giving them skills to last a lifetime!" After reading that sentence for the twentieth time, you may wish the authors had followed their \*own advice\* and used fewer words to greater effect.

All that aside, there's a lot to like about this book. The authors freely confess their own parenting shortfalls, acknowledge there's no silver bullet, and much of the advice really is helpful. If you've never read a book

about how to calm tantrums or deal with misbehavior in the most loving way possible, this is a great place to start. Just don't expect solutions to all of your misbehavior problems--as the authors themselves acknowledge, their own methods are no panacea.

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### **Meg says**

When I saw the title of this book, I rolled my eyes and thought "No drama? You haven't met my child." As I started reading, I appreciated that the authors had a generally realistic approach to children and were thoughtful about how they connected their philosophy and suggested strategies to brain development. It had some helpful, catchy things to remember (like "shark music"). The examples seemed like real-life ones and every situation did not end perfectly. I liked all of these things. However, in the end I felt the book didn't offer me much, even though on the whole I agreed with most of their approach.

Something I noticed early on was the total lack of reference to existing discipline approaches. The strategies and philosophies described in this book borrow quite a lot from discipline approaches such as Jane Nelson's "Positive Discipline," Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish's "How to Talk So Kids Will Listen," Elizabeth Pantley's "The No-Cry Discipline Solution," and Alfie Kohn's "Unconditional Parenting" (and probably others that I'm not aware of). It felt very disrespectful that the authors did not acknowledge others' work in this area. For example, relating to the "redirect" strategies given here, the chapter in "How to Talk..." includes many of the same strategies (but is much more detailed and specific).

But most importantly, I felt there was an over-emphasis on staying calm. On the one hand, yes, you are likely to use better discipline strategies if you are calm when you do it, and "connection before correction" (a Positive Discipline term) can definitely make a difference. On the other hand, isn't it kind of weird to act like a zen robot with your child? I can't stand hearing myself and other parents speak in that coaxing, fake-happy voice. You know what I mean: the one where we pretend we're all understanding and patient when actually we are feeling annoyed and frustrated. If you're angry, it's okay to show your child that you're angry – or hurt or disappointed – and that's a more natural, human way to interact. And a stern voice communicates that you're serious and gets your child's attention, where a friendly, soft voice may not. I didn't feel the book gave very constructive advice for how to manage emotional states while staying in connection with your child – basically it was just "help yourself to calm down before talking to your child." (Again, I contrast it with parts of "How to Talk So Kids Will Listen" which show you how to be serious and stern, just more effectively and in a way that's not damaging to your child/ the relationship.)

As a side note, I felt like there were a few major discipline/ parenting issues that would have been relevant but were not addressed here, even briefly – like understanding children's different temperaments, or thinking about different cultural styles, or using proactive strategies for family togetherness and communication.

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### **Nancy says**

This book reminds me of an updated version of books like "How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk." In fact, this also has talking illustrations/cartoons outlining what to do ("Everyone gets to share the slide")/what not to do ((Let those kids slide or we're going home!")). What I like even better about this is it doesn't imply kids will always react in a reliable and connected way even if parents act and talk "perfectly" in any given situation. Lots of science behind children's brains, and helping kids to be

emotionally self-aware. Summary of discipline outlined: connect & redirect. Good read.

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### **Courtney Judd says**

This book is excellent! I've been getting angry and unkind all too frequently with my two-year-old. "Time out" stopped working, reasoning is challenging, and although spanking was a last resort for me, it's ineffective. I needed other "resorts" so I turned to this book. I find "HALT" and "1,2,3" the most effective strategies. "HALT" stands for "hungry," "angry," "lonely," and "tired." Those are the most common reasons why children act out. The idea behind "HALT" is that you pause before responding to misbehavior and try to identify the source of the misbehavior in order to teach more effectively. "1,2,3" is a step-by-step approach to disciplining children calmly. 1. Why did my child act out this way? 2. What do I want to teach? and 3. How am I going to teach that principle. The idea that impacted me most in this book was that you can't teach a child to stop a behavior while the child is upset and out of control. The book instructs that before you address misbehavior you need to calm the child down, so the child will listen to what you are trying to teach. It also mentions how parents "over-talk" when they are disciplining, so children tune out what they are saying. I could go on....but I've already gone on too long. After a week of trying strategies learned, I will report that I am way less angry and more calm. It's exhausting making the effort to no-drama discipline, but the tantrums have seemed to end sooner. The book also promises that the more you no-drama discipline, the less you'll have to discipline because you are teaching your children skills to make better decisions, so fingers-crossed that's the case. I highly recommend it.

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### **Tracy says**

This is worth a read from the library but please don't buy this book! What is said on 250 pages could be summarized in 15 and by making it longer the authors complicate a simple strategy.

In short: connect with your kids and focus discipline on learning rather than consequences.

I will have to try it before I judge the merits of the strategy. Much of the advice runs counter to almost every parental instinct I have. Eg, if your child throws your glasses against the wall, make a joke to lighten the mood and then talk about what to do next time. I think there are definitely great take aways but I'm skeptical of how centered the strategy is on avoiding any bad feelings between parent and child. Bad feelings exist in all relationships. Part of being human is learning from them and doing better next time not avoiding them altogether.

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### **Linda Vituma says**

Viena no gr?mat?m, kas j?dz?gi un praktiski maina vec?ku un b?rnu attiec?bas. Ar dažiem v?rdiem, daž?m idej?m.

\*) Discipl?na - kas sav? s?kotn?j? v?rda noz?m? (no lat??u valodas) - ir "zin?šanas".

\*) Connect & Redirect - pirms main?t uzved?bu, non?kt kontakt?.

\*) K? Šerlokam Holmsam vienm?r mekl?t atbildi uz jaut?jumu "K?p?c?", nevis dz?vot pie??mumos, kas s?pina gan pašu, gan b?rnu.

Labv?l?gi un iedrošinoši. Lai saprastu, k?p?c nedaudz ar? skumji, dom?ju izlas?t v?l vienu S?gela gr?matu

“Parenting from inside out”.

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### **Loren says**

I enjoyed the basic ideas in this book, and appreciated the gentle, logical solutions presented. They are helpful ideas. But like SO many other parenting books, the tone is repetitive and a little arrogant - and it doesn't acknowledge that what parents need perhaps more than anything is grace for themselves, grace their children, and a sense of humor.

I wish more parenting authors would just acknowledge that at one time or another, your child will be the hot mess melting down in a very public place. Your child(ren) will pick up bad habits and present discipline challenges that will exasperate you. And none of that makes you a bad parent.

So yes, tell me your oh-so-perfect solutions for molding your child into that well-behaved angel that will make all of your other parent friends gaze upon with wistful sighs. But ... don't pretend that your book is going to solve the gritty, exhausting, frustrating parts of parenthood. It won't.

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### **Maria says**

This is the sort of book I think I need to just always be reading. On a loop. Things I took away this time were to connect first, to remember that if there isn't a connection, any attempts to correct will be futile. Also remembering that just as I have hard days where my attitude is less than ideal, so do my kids. My job is to help them recognize those triggers, figure out how to minimize the negativity and refocus. And the final big takeaway- while it might feel ridiculous to be creative in efforts to redirect, not overexplain and to connect instead of just putting a kid in time out (or something similar), in the end, that's not how things get better. I'm sure I'll retain more on my next read through, but this was exactly what I needed right now. Now to find the energy to use what I've learned....

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### **Susan Bazzett-Griffith says**

I realized about 1/4 of the way into this book that I'd read another book by this author, and that not only was there a lot of the same information in this "new" book, but that what irked me about that book did the same in this one. Siegel and Bryson have interesting ideas, but no one needs to read more than one of their books to know/understand/get them. They believe in making sure discipline is about teaching versus punishment and that connection with your child is always the important first step in discipline. They back up their beliefs with research dealing with neurophysiology and the developing brain. They also use ENTIRELY too many hypothetical situations and analogies, some of which they clearly made up to help bring others around to their way of thinking rather than to illustrate a germane thought. It isn't a bad book, or a bad approach. I don't disagree with much of what they say in the book, but I take issue with reusing the same basic information in multiple books (I've only read one other, but they reference additional works, which they ALSO referenced in the other book I did read), and encouraging people to buy and read the other books when they've sufficiently summarized the information in each book on its own. Overall, I was disappointed in this book, but it was partly my own fault that I didn't check the author more closely.

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## Matt says

Before tackling this book, the reader must understand a secret that is essential to good parenting; there is no 'perfect parent' or 'ideal' approach to tackling the issues of disciplining a child. Drs. Daniel Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson dispel this myth from the beginning and offer an insightful and highly educational approach to discipline and parenting that is simple, yet effective. With strong parallels from their previous joint publication (*The Whole Brain Child*), which I have previously reviewed, the authors tackle discipline from a non-punitive perspective seeking the "teachable moment" approach for both parent and child. With a better understanding of the child's brain, the parent can fine-tune their end results to best align with what the child has going on and how the message reception plays an integral role in the final product, hopefully a cessation of the issue at hand. Siegel and Bryson make reference to their previous work and the different parts of the brain, as well as how disciplining from the lower, more reptilian, brain can lead to gross exaggeration and emotional messes that could take years to rectify. By talking and redirecting over punishing and lecturing, the authors propose that a child and their brain will become no only more receptive to addressing issues, but also more capable of digesting behaviours in need of change. While some sections may leave even the more tapped-in parent wondering where the parental power may have gone in this approach, Siegel and Bryson assure the reader that all is not lost, even if the magic wand is no longer in play. Well-written with honest examples and keys to success, Siegel and Bryson offer up a wonderful guide to address discipline issues from an emotionally calm and drama-free approach, leaving time for the parent and child to tune into an episode or two of *DAYS OF OUR LIVES* and see how well adjusted they are, compared to some families.

This is the second 'parental discipline' book that I have read in the past few months. With a child in his Torrential Threes, I sought out some helpful advice to tackle issues of defiance, acting out, and even outright ignoring. While the book has some sound approaches to it, it contradicts some of the previous literature that I have read by another well-known and respected parenting expert. Such is the peril that any parent (or reader) will encounter when reaching out for assistance. I was pleased to see Siegel and Bryson speak of not "running one's life based on the manual of one expert or another while ignoring parental instinct", for that is what I feared I would do. Children are as unique as ice cream flavours, and the parent knows their child better than any academic or psychologist. At times, it takes a nudge in the right direction to tune into those frequencies the child emits, but we cannot discount our own intuition in finding an effective way to parent and discipline the child. I especially enjoyed the 'discipline is not all about punishment' approach, for I never saw the difference. Boiling discipline down to being a set of teachable moments, the parent can reins in behaviours and teach from a 'how well is this working?' angle, rather than a 'punish the behaviour out of you' approach. If I took one thing away from this book, it is that. Our children are the future and if we can get in better touch with their feelings and development (mentally, physically, and emotionally), we are well on the way to raising happier, healthier, and more well-adjusted children. Then we can see those life lessons flourish when grandchildren come along. That said, don't spill your secrets too readily; you had to learn them the hard way too!

Kudos, Drs. Siegel and Bryson for this wonderfully organised book. I enjoyed its content as well as the strong ties to your previous work, which serves me well on a daily basis.

Like/hate the review? An ever-growing collection of others appears at:  
<http://pecheyponderings.wordpress.com/>

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## **Laura says**

This is a fantastic book; I would really like to adopt Siegel and Bryson's very well-informed and well-tested discipline philosophy. Their philosophy does seem to require more thought, creativity, and engagement with your child than the average parenting style. I think that my husband will be great at this, but I'm worried for myself about doing a good job with the creativity part.

The philosophy in a nutshell is that you first connect with your child--meaning that you have a discussion or a few words to help calm your child (and yourself) to bring them to a less reactive state so that you can teach them better when you get to the correction step. (these are the only two steps)

In correction, aka redirection, aka discipling (not a typo--they do talk about the relationship between discipleship and discipline even though it's not a religious book), you first think about what you want to teach your child, which may not be the same thing even for the same infraction from one time to another. One goal is to help your child develop empathy. Part of this will often involve discussing with your child what they can do to make things right.

Siegel and Bryson advocate being consistent but not rigid and helping your child develop emotional intelligence in the long run. They do talk about how to begin this process with toddlers who can't participate in the process in the same way an older child can.

We thought this book was really excellent. If any of you, my goodreads friends, read this book, I would love to hear your thoughts on the book, especially if you have older children than I do. We intend to read more of Siegel's parenting books in the future.

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## **Eat.Sleep.Lift.Read. says**

There is no silver bullet to parenting and the authours rightly confess this in the book.

There is a lot of useful advice here and much to like and enjoy in this book. But like any 'parenting' book, it seems to have been written in the land of parenting utopia where every 'explosive situation' is scalable and every child, given time, can see the errors of their ways. If your household is anything like mine, we don't have this luxury.

That being said the 'message' of this book is simple, and on the whole, a commendable one. Connect with your kids, keep calm and try and avoid any nuclear episodes.

I'm all for 'modern' parenting. Teaching through example, being tender and the rest of the mantra that goes into this book but I can also see the merit of taking the hard-line when needed. Parenting, like anything in life, is very situational. No one knows your kids better than you (hopefully), and knowing this should give one enough confidence to dealing with discipline situations appropriately.

Much can be taken from this book and put into practice, just don't expect that far off land of calm and

obedient little munchkins to be destination numero uno.

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### **Bruce Hicks says**

I can't speak highly enough about this book. It explores the link between a child's neurological development and the way a parent reacts to misbehavior. Written in a clear and compassionate style, the authors present a research-based approach to viewing discipline as "teaching" rather than "punishing". It explains how a child's brain is--quite literally--immature, and how parents can help our children through difficult emotional times by connecting with them, helping them to calm down and access their "upper brain" where true learning and growth can occur. It stresses the important of consistency and boundaries, but within a framework of connecting lovingly with a child and helping them to develop their minds and morals in a way that will benefit them their entire life.

Co-author Tina Payne Bryson has a wonderful 5-minute video on Youtube (search no-drama discipline) that beautifully summarizes the no-drama discipline approach. If you're even a little curious about how to handle the next time your toddler (or teenager) has a melt-down, I would highly recommend it!

A rare 5-star book for me, and it totally deserves it.

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### **Kara says**

You can kind of skip the book and read the "Connect and Redirect Refrigerator Sheet" in the Resources section without missing much content. I'd prefer the anecdotes be replaced with research and sources.

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