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## DO KIDS REALLY WANT LIMITS?

This idea that children really want limits isn't completely true. It is true, of course, that in the long run youngsters are more comfortable in a house where parents have clear, reasonable rules and enforce them consistently and fairly. Under these circumstances the kids are better off whether or not they realize the connection between their parents' behavior and their own well being. In such a home, in addition to feeling cozy, warm and comfortable, children are also developing the critical skill of frustration tolerance.



Frustration tolerance is the ability to put up with discomfort or pain now in order to achieve some more important future objective. It's a beautiful evening and I would like to trash this math homework, but I'd also like to get at least a B in the course. I'd like to slug my brother, but I don't want to upset my mother and be grounded. I'd like another piece of lemon meringue pie, but I don't want to get fat. Successful adults learned high frustration tolerance (HFT) when they were kids.

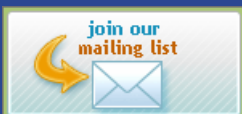
Many unsuccessful adults, however, still show significant amounts of low frustration tolerance (LFT). They can't wait, so they run the yellow light. They purchase three new, unnecessary DVDs when their credit card is already overloaded. They watch the new show on TV instead of going to the gym to workout. LFT may be one of the fastest routes to failure as an adult.

## CHILDREN WANT WHAT THEY WANT WHEN THEY WANT IT

Kids are just kids, so naturally they start out at the LFT point. At any one moment, children want what they want, and they can be angry and disappointed if they don't get it. Kids do not welcome or enjoy adult-imposed limits. As a result, youngsters' frustration frequently leads to trouble with parents in the form of testing and manipulation.

But learning to tolerate—with a little parental assistance—both limits and frustration is a normal and necessary part of growing up. Over the years, most children learn and internalize three important lessons about frustration. First of all, not getting what you want is a regular occurrence in life; you will drive yourself crazy if you overreact to everything that goes wrong. Second, being frustrated is not the end of the world; the feeling always passes. And third, getting better and better at enduring as well as managing life's disappointments PAYS BIG DIVIDENDS.

Keep that in mind next time you have to say "No" to your kids.



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## QUICK TIP: THE GOAL OF GOOD DISCIPLINE

The *first goal of good discipline is self-control*, or what you might think of as frustration tolerance. Good discipline fosters success in all of the self-esteem domains, but it is perhaps most helpful in regards to character.

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