



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 6, 2010

New Study Finds Spanking Is Good for Kids

Spanking is like milk: It does a body good — or at least a mind. No, this isn't the conclusion of traditionalist parenting expert Dr. James Dobson but the finding of a study conducted by psychology professor Marjorie Gunnoe at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. FoxNews.com reports on the story, writing, "According to the research, children spanked up to the age of 6 were likely as teenagers to perform better at school and were more likely to carry out volunteer work and to want to go to college than their peers who had never been physically disciplined."



This may come as a relief to parents who don't wish to spare the rod, but have been accosted with numerous studies stating just the opposite. But how do we reconcile these contradictory findings? Well, perhaps the answer is that the previous scientific studies weren't very scientific. Fox points out that, in the past, such research was lacking because it was difficult in more traditional times to find subjects who had never been spanked. In contrast, Professor Gunnoe included 2600 such individuals in her study.

I had always identified this as the fatal — but furtive — flaw in contemporary analyses of corporal punishment's effects. To provide just a little anecdote in this regard, I remember once seeing the very libertine Dr. Drew Pinsky on television addressing a certain woman's psychological problems. She had said that she derived sexual excitement from being humiliated and provided some quite salacious details. Well, Pinsky's response was to ask if she had ever been struck as a child, to which she answered in the affirmative. He then in effect said, "Aha! You see, I knew it." The problem was that this show aired at least 10 years ago and the woman was approximately 25 years old, so the days of her "trauma" were about 30 years back. Now, how many people growing up then never, ever — not even once — endured corporal punishment? You might as well have asked her if she had ever eaten carrots and then blamed her problems on beta carotene exposure.

We should bear this in mind when hearing claims used to justify anti-spanking laws, such as the prohibitions they have in Sweden and certain localities in the United States. Professor Gunnoe says that such claims are untenable and just don't accord with the data.

Yet there is a larger truth about these contradictory studies: in reality, you can find research to justify any position you might take. This is why we must never, in the name of "science," dispense with what G.K. Chesterton called "that forgotten branch of psychology": common sense.

Thus, while I believe in corporal punishment (I like a soldier who knows how to maintain discipline) and am sympathetic to Gunnoe's study, I'll be consistent and say that the most obvious interpretation of it is insufficient to reveal the truth. For instance, the failure to spank your children is not just a difference, but a symptom. People who won't lay hand or switch on bare bottom embrace a completely different parenting philosophy than those who will.



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The difference is not just that they won't apply the rod — it's that they lack what I call a "rod mentality."

That is to say, to such parents, discipline is often a dirty word. They tend to be overly permissive, set poor examples, be inconsistent in moral guidance and not teach responsibility. They are unlikely to view themselves as absolute authority figures but, rather, will treat the family as a democracy (without a constitution). They are more apt to want to be buddies than parents to their children.

Common sense tells us some other things as well. For one thing, we often hear that corporal punishment is damaging because it "teaches violence," a nonsensical assertion if ever there were one (I completely refute this notion [here](#)). It is ironic, too, given that those who promote this idea are generally evolutionists who believe man to simply be a highly evolved animal. After all, can you think of an animal that doesn't at times use violence? Animals use it in defense of self and territory, to kill prey, to win females, and sometimes simply because they're angry. Hey, even Bambi is guilty. I read a while back about a deer that attacked a man, impaling the fellow with his antlers. Yet, evolutionists would have us believe that somehow, magically, man is the only "animal" who ended up with the Gandhi gene while "evolving" in this violent world.

Of course, in reality, as even cursory observation of babies and toddlers informs, it's more like the Attila the Hun gene. When they have tantrums, they will often lash out, hitting, biting, and pulling hair. Hey, they will cry and scream without that behavior being modeled for them, either.

Despite this, some would have us believe that parents can control these often violent, disagreeable little creatures without occasional recourse to physical action themselves. These experts tell us that if you have to resort to such a tactic, there is something wrong with your parenting ability. This is an interesting theory. If it is valid, we can save ourselves a heck of a lot of money.

Why not just eliminate our military, for instance? If man can ever and always be reasoned with, there is no need for an entity whose purpose is, in part, to violently impose our will (rightly or wrongly) on others.

Then, if a man breaks the law and resists arrest, won't the police use violent action to take him into custody? Why should this be allowed? Can't they just talk to him, reason, and cajole him into compliance? Maybe he just needs to know he's being listened to.

Oh, this doesn't make sense? OK, then what do you do when a child "resists arrest"? What happens when the answer to "Go to your room" is "NO!" and the answer to "You're grounded" is also "NO!"? If force is sometimes necessary with the mature beings known as adults, why would it not be with the raw pieces of humanity known as children?

And if we can't answer that question without a study, it only proves that, lamentably, reason does not always prevail.



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