

# Build a Child's Character With The Five Golden Rules for Staying Connected to Children

## Unit 4

A. \* **First thoughts first-** Dr. Birchak emphasizes that we need to "Stand side by side others as a guide, instead of over others as a dictator." Most adults have had experiences with the micromanaging boss or administrator. What toll did it take on you and what impact did it have on your motivation? Think of the worst boss you ever had and the best boss you ever had. Describe how you will take these lessons to make yourself a more effective leader "with people" instead of "over people." List one behaviors you will try to avoid and one you will try to employ.

### B. Video - 10 minutes

**Golden rule #2 - Become a Guide Not a Dictator**

**Section Concepts:**

- **The Quickest Way to Create Insanity is to Mix Rewards With Punishment**
- **Never Take Away or Threaten a Child With a Reward They've Earned**
- **Avoid Covert Rules or Rules That Are Dictated by Today's Mood**
- **Never Punish Children With The Things We Want Them to Love**

Discussion questions:

1. Dr. Birchak shares the story about the woman who was mistreated by a boss. The boss later asked, "Why don't you ever do anything nice for me?" The popular author Erich Fromm, in his book *The Art of Loving* said that one of the major myths associated with love is that we believe the problem with love is that *others don't love me enough!* He said we need to spend more of our energy **not** focused on why others don't love us, but rather, *how can I make myself more lovable?* He said that if we did this, all other problems would take care of themselves. List one behavior you could employ to make yourself a more lovable person.
2. Most adults can reflect on moments in their lives when someone tried to motivate them with fear instead of collaboration. What impact did it have on your connection to this person? What lessons have you learned from a boss, teacher, parent, or administrator who tried to motivate with fear? Name two things you will do in your life to avoid falling into that trap.
3. It's important to be held accountable for our actions and it's important to be good life educators in all we do, but it's another to expect all children nationwide to be at the same place at the same time. With all the demands on scores- name one thing you can do to help nurture and maintain a "passion for the possible." Describe a personal "yardstick" you use to measure a child's ability to become a fully functioning citizen in our society.
4. We don't have to scream at children or use physical punishment to teach them that their "fits" don't work, but we've all been punished for certain behaviors- what was the result of this treatment?
5. **\* Adults will often use punishment and justify it by saying, "It's the only thing these kids will understand!" Or, they may say, "Hey I was punished and spanked but I turned out okay." In reality, it's not the "only thing they understand" but the "only thing you understand. Decades of research recognizes that punishment may stop a behavior but it doesn't teach an appropriate behavior. Research has also established the**

**effectiveness of positive reinforcement in shaping behavior. Indicate one reason you believe people cling ineffective practices such as punishment and negative reinforcement. Describe one thing you can do to help others understand how they can motivate with collaboration instead of punishment.**

6. Children desperately need a stable world to live in. In the video and in his book, Dr. Birchak shares the story of Jay, a little boy who was afraid to share his wonderful accomplishments. Try to imagine a world where you had no one to share all the things that make you proud. What would your life be like? What lesson can you learn from this example that will make you a more compassionate motivator?
7. **\*What kinds of adult behaviors are responsible for children becoming "burned out" on school? What can we do in little league, sports, school, organized activities, and in life to help them develop a passion instead of disdain for the educational system?**
8. The world is in too much pain and far too many people inflict pain on each other. Brainstorm one way you can be a guide in small everyday interactions at stores, on the job, or out in public.

**C. Reading discussion questions for Chapter 2 - Conscience.**

**D. Reading for the next unit-** For the upcoming unit read **Chapter 3** in the book *How to Build a Child's Character- By Tapping Into Your Own* (Birchak, 2004, Royal Fireworks Press, Uniondale, NY)