

COPYRIGHT 1999, SUZANNE SHELL  
Reproduction without permission prohibited

I have been called a 'baby bruiser' because of my pro-spanking position. Oh yes, I have been targeted by several name-calling, anti-spanking fanatics who evidently have nothing better to do than find spanking parents to malign on various Internet sites and mailing lists.

A recent study reveals that 97% of American parents admit to spanking their children at one time or another. I will not dispute that there are probably parents out there who react in anger rather than according to a carefully thought out plan of discipline, however that doesn't mean that spanking should be outlawed.

Yes, I said outlawed. The anti-spankers are waging an emotionally charged campaign to outlaw spanking. They are also employing various back-door methods to prevent parents from spanking their children.

If a parent is charged with child abuse or neglect, the court will order them not to spank the children as part of the case plan. I recently attended a hearing for a 6 week old infant who was removed because he failed to gain weight - apparently due to an intolerance to his formula. The judge returned the child to the parent's home on the condition that he would be supervised by the maternal grandmother with the instructions that she 'never let that child out of her sight, even if she had to go to the bathroom,' and to *not spank the child*. I wonder, who actually spans a six week old infant? What an absurd ruling.

It is irrelevant to the courts that spanking is legal in Colorado, they are outlawing it one family at a time. But how do the children feel about being spanked?

I belong to a fascinating Internet mailing list called the *redbottomclub*. It is for children who are spanked. They share their experiences and discuss the associated issues. The children who are on this list are from around the world, including countries where spanking has been outlawed. It is interesting to note that many parents will break the law and spank their children in these countries.

What is more interesting is that many of these children recognize when they deserve a spanking. As one fourteen-year-old from the UK said, ". . . don't want the time? Don't do the crime!!"

When advised by a rabid anti-spanker to 'refuse to be spanked,' one astute youngster said, ". . . I think it would probably make the situation worse. . ."

More advice to the youngsters included, "Don't back down, don't let them scare you or bully you! They [spanking parents] are wrong! You have RIGHT on your side! FIGHT for what's right!" To which another young man from the UK replied, "Wrong about what? That [disobeying] wasn't such a good idea? Or that they think that, unfortunately, as this is the third time [I've] done it, and nothing else has worked, a spanking might work? I don't know about anyone else, but I get scared just thinking about a caning! They don't need to bully me!"

Hmm. Even when the anti-spanker said, "Don't be afraid to call the police or child welfare. . ." the overwhelming sentiment from the youngsters was, "Which will result in being taken away from your parents, maybe for good. No thanks!"

One youngster stated, ". . . criminals are usually adults who know the difference between right and wrong, but kids have to be taught the difference by their parents. . . And in some homes discipline means a spanking. . ." Sounds like a few adults could learn a thing or two from this youngster.

The child-savers who want all children to grow up in an idyllic, pain-free, conflict-free world would say these youngsters are brain-washed. I think they are well on the road to becoming responsible and self-disciplined adults. If, at their tender ages, they can see how their parents love them and want the best for them, they are not abused children.

The attitude that spanking parents must face can be summed up by one of the points that anti-spankers espouse, "Refuse to accept your parents as people who have authority over you. In good homes, all are equal."

What a crock! These people are obviously not parents. They're not even residing in the real world that the rest of us live in. I guess, then, that teachers shouldn't have any authority, or bosses, or police, or courts either. Sounds like anarchy to me.

I've seen a child who isn't spanked. At five years old, her father never even says 'no' to her lest he damage her delicate psyche. This child is a horrendous brat. In one day I observed her running completely out of control in an adult setting while daddy spent his time chasing her from one end of the arena to the other. At dinner, she colored on the walls and broke a glass for which she was never even chastised, much less punished. And daddy never even paid for her damages, either. Daddy was incredibly cruel to this child with his indulgence, everybody who saw her despised this terror. Is that fair to her? I don't think so.

Does spanking harm children? No. Emphatically no. My son Jacob, who had turned my husband, Dennis, in for child abuse in 1992 for a spanking, recently admitted that he knew he could count on Dennis to do whatever he said he would do. He also stated that he learned more from Dennis than he did from his own father. He loves us *and* respects us. He regrets what he did at thirteen. He has become a responsible man. That speaks for itself.

*See the Spanking Parents website at <http://www.parentnow.org>*