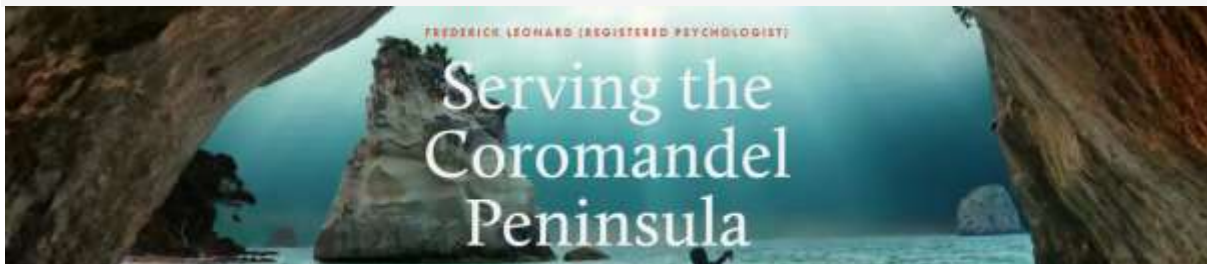


# WHITIANGA PSYCHOLOGY



## Parenting Support

Parenting is a unique privilege and perhaps the single most important role in our community. Our children present us, yes, I am a representative of my family, you are a representative of your family – Einstein said: *Everything comes from somewhere*. Children take to kindly, school and the streets what they ‘live’ at home. It is important to remember that our children do not do what we tell them, they do exactly as we ‘do’ or ‘don’t do’ – our actions speak louder than our words.

When parents think about ‘discipline’ they usually think ‘punishment’, because they believe it is the same thing. It is not! Parents sometimes yell, lecture, take away toys and privileges, put children in time-out (there is a timely place for some of these), but unfortunately this does not create long term learning, as well as the social and life skills that you want for your child. Punishment almost always create power-struggles! Discipline is rather about teaching your child understanding, it is about encouragement and communication – not about punishment.

There is a difference between what your child *wants* and what your child *needs*. All genuine needs should be met, but you cannot give in to all your child’s wants – you are creating future issues for the both of you. Your young-one *needs* food, shelter and care. Your child does not need an i-pad or PlayStation in the bedroom. Your child may *want* to sleep in your bed, but with support and encouragement he/she will feel a sense of self-reliance and capability by learning to fall asleep in their own bedroom. Your child may love (*want*) sugary colas and oily fries, it does not mean that your child *needs* it.

William Glasser and Jane Nelsen describes the basic needs of children as:

1. A sense of love, belonging and significance
2. Perceptions of capability
3. Personal power and autonomy
4. Social skills and life skills

If there are attachment issues between you and your child, parenting courses can only support your understanding, or your acceptance of parenting issues, to do something about it asks for a paradigm shift - a radically different way of thinking about discipline and your role as parent. Parents who are thinking of discipline as punishment, usually ‘need’ someone from

the outside to come and 'fix' issues in their family. These parents commonly ask wrong questions, because they usually want to know:

- How do I make my child care/mind?
- How do I make my child understand when I say 'no'?
- How do I get my child to listen to me?
- How do I solve the relationship issues in our family?

These questions are based on short-term thinking. Ask the right questions and see the results this change in approach creates for you and your child.

- How do I make my child feel capable?
- How do I help my child feel a sense of love, belonging and significance?
- How do I help my child learn respect, cooperation, and problem solving skills?
- How do I get into my child's world and understand his/her thinking?
- How can I use undesired situations as opportunities for learning – for both of us?