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**Parenting Rage - Leashing the BEAST Within**  
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Ever gotten to the point, as a parent, where you just don't know what to do? The kids are constantly squabbling and arguing. They won't do ANYTHING they're told. They won't get up, go to bed, pick up after themselves, or eat what you put in front of them. You're at your wits end. Time outs don't work. Separating them doesn't help. Grounding them is useless. What do we do when we snap? We unleash the beast within.

When the beast within takes over, how far have you gone? Have you slapped your child? Grabbed him? Shaken her? Pushed him? Have you spanked her? Our parents did. When their beast within took over, they spanked us. But that's no longer allowed. That's Child Abuse. Even our children know it. How many of our children have said to us I'm going to report you for child abuse because we yelled at them or smacked them? They learn it in school and use it against us. Today, when we parents are pushed past our breaking point, what happens?

Each day in North America, 3 children die from child abuse. Every day in North America, 13,700 children are abused and neglected, according to the Children's Defense Fund. Our parents used spanking as their safety valve. We have NO safety valve, and the results are devastating.

Jeanette Kasper, Canadian author of *Anger Is NOT an Emotion*, says, "It's not that spanking is right. But, now that spanking has been made socially (and almost legally) unacceptable, it hasn't been replaced by anything." Think of this like a big area of rotten floorboards in the kitchen (or inside you). You pull up the rotten floorboards and push them off to the side, but you don't buy new ones. At dinnertime, you can't get to the stove to make dinner because the hole is too big (and NO! we aren't ordering out tonight!). The only way get across the hole is to stack the old floorboards back in place. But the danger of getting hurt on the rotten floorboards is much greater than before, because they don't quite fit, and they're unstable.

The danger in not planning a replacement behavior is much like trying to reuse the rotten floorboards. If we try to just stop a behavior without replacing it, we leave a gaping hole inside us. When the old situation and emotions reoccur, we will always

resort to the old behavior with much bigger, and far more destructive, results. Everyone has done it. Many parents have decided to stop yelling at the kids, and for the next two weeks yelled more than ever! We didn't replace yelling with a new behavior, so the old behavior got worse.

Spanking isn't allowed. But parents still snap. The replacement for spanking, with children over two years old, is to make a list of the top five things your child enjoys. The lists will be different for each of your children, and they change as the kids grow. These become their punishments. Friends, freedom, TV, computer, telephone, allowance, reading (if they love it), gameboy/Nintendo/Playstation, crafts, and toys are a few. You can take away one, two, or all depending upon the severity of their misbehavior. And you can take these privileges away for a maximum of one week at a time. Post the lists on the fridge. When they misbehave, or you feel the anger bubbling, go look at the lists and pick your punishment. You'll remain calmer because the punishments are set. The kids will be more cooperative because they'll know what to expect, and they hate losing their favorites. You won't snap, and if you do, you'll have your pick of punishments to use instead of physical violence.

With children under two years, punishment doesn't work, not even time-outs. They can't understand. The issue becomes our mental health. Our ability to cope is leached out of us through sleep deprivation and being on duty 24/7. The answer is to take sanity time. Ensure that you get three hours per week, at the very least, away from the house and the kids. More is better. Trade time with a friend or your partner, if necessary.

Create your own replacement safety valve. Leash the beast within. Help your parenting friends do the same. It's better to build children, than to repair adults. Let's do it together, starting now.

*Calgary author Jeanette Kasper is an acclaimed professional speaker who's Canadian BEST SELLER, Anger is NOT an Emotion, is revolutionizing how we deal with others. This unique perspective on human behavior gives us an understanding of how people relate to each other that leads naturally to using the over 300 solutions Mrs. Kasper gives in her book.*

*As a best-selling author, international professional speaker, and syndicated columnist, Jeanette is always willing to answer your questions, give interviews, and do a training session with your company, association, or parenting group. Jeanette concentrates on helping others create harmonious relationships at work, home, and play.*