

Brandon Payne

Strong Response Essay

EN 1010, 2A

November 4, 2015

Spanking in the 21st Century. A Response to Leonard Pitts Jr.

The right and wrong ways to punish your child for misbehaving has been a debated topic for decades. Is putting your screaming five year old child in timeout the answer? Is giving your child a spank on his/her rear going to work? Is spanking considered child abuse? None of these questions are falsifiable. None of them have a right answer, but we can explore these ideas and come to an agreement.

In Leonard Pitts Jr's *Spare the Rod, Spoil the Parenting*, he argues in favor for spanking as a legitimate child discipline tool. His essay is short and to the point. It's modern day look on spanking argues differently than I have ever read before. Leonard Pitts claims that this generation is completely spoiled. Our kids are brats he repeats several times throughout his essay. He argues his point by examining a new study by Dr. Diana Baumrind. She finds that most middle-class families use some sort of corporal punishment. She also pointed out that a mild spank does not scar the child for life. Pitts then argues that a tiny minority use a more harsh form of corporal punishment such as blows to the head or face. He then informs that this is not what this essay is about; that the parents that use this form of punishment are riding the line of child abuse and he does not agree with that at all. He goes on to say that kids nowadays do not have the respect they used to. Children have a huge sense of entitlement. "So the pertinent question isn't: To spank or not to spank? Rather it's: Who's in charge? Who is teaching whom? Who is guiding whom?"

Spanking is not child abuse, but it is not the best way of teaching your child. Spanking is a poor choice of parenting and it shows signs of weakness out of a parent. There are many other appropriate ways to discipline your child.

Pitts clearly tells that spanking is not abuse; that blows to the head or face is borderline abuse. He explains that only a tiny minority parent in this way. A child could be maladjusted by the time of adolescence or adulthood if the child is continually hurt in this way. He implies that he does not agree with this kind of punishment and I have to agree completely. There's no reason to physically harm your child in such a harsh way. The great psychologist Sigmund Freud goes into great detail of how the childhood of a person can greatly affect them. Many people suffer from it not only physically at the time of the punishment, but mentally years later as an adult. It leads to mental instability and can likely turn that child into a parent who abuses themselves.

With the study from Dr. Diana Baumrind, Pitts finds many ways to show that spanking is a fine way of parenting. He says "giving a child a mild spanking does not leave the child scarred for life." For the most part this statement is true, but spanking can significantly affect the child in his/her adolescence or adulthood. Dr. William Sears from the National Institute of Health says that a child who is spanked is more likely to spank their child themselves. Spanking promotes hitting as a normal everyday thing. It's shown that children in violent homes are more likely to be violent in society.

First thing is that Pitts may be suffering from juvenoia. Juvenoia is the thought that your particular generation is better off than the one before it, and wiser than the one after it. Pitts believes that the newest generation of children are spoiled brats. He thinks that kids nowadays have too much sense of entitlement and they need to learn they are not the center of the universe.

But his parents probably believed that about him. The generation above him probably went to work when they were twelve to help the family and that generation believes that his were spoiled brats. Juvenioia is within us all. We think that if you are older, you are the boss and you know better. But who's to say that the older is always wiser. I've met children who know better than some adults. To say that our generation of kids are spoiled brats would be completely opinionated by a single person.

Parents that spank do it as a form of punishment to stop the child from misbehaving, but it's not always the way they want to do it. Even though the parent may not completely agree with spanking, the parent will turn to it. Many times it's because the parent cannot control their temper and cannot control their child so spanking or hitting is the only way. Their anger and frustration comes out as a physical blow. Parents with a bad temper can completely blow up on their child for such a small reason because the parent cannot control themselves. Parents need to learn how to control themselves first before they can ever learn to be a good parent. Sometimes spanking comes from a bad parent out of pure frustration and anger.

Over the past fifty or so years, our way of life has significantly changed. Technology, democracy, and the belief in individualism has fundamentally changed our nation. Going along with that; parenting has certainly changed. Fifty years ago it was perfectly okay for a parent to hit their child. Even a teacher could spank their student's behind with a wooden paddle. This is the twenty-first century and things are different now. Parents find new ways of awarding and disciplining their child. The world is changing and we cannot hang on to our root beliefs forever. If we did we would still enslave African Americans, we would look down upon gays and lesbiens. So if you tell me that we need to go back to our old beliefs I would tell you that you are dead wrong.

All in all, Leonard Pitts' article is significant because not a lot of people would argue for spanking. His research and reasoning making good points, but his lack of passion for this particular topic gives away his credibility. His old set in ways taint his lack of judgement. The world has changed and along with that is parenting. Spanking is looked down upon by many young parents. Parents who do participate in it lack the skills needed to control their child without it. Spanking in general leads to more maladjusted children and adults.