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In Search of Balance

*Domains of Discipline
and Long-Term Outcomes*

Few things are more frustrating to adults than being unable to get children to mind them. A feeling of incompetence in developing and maintaining harmonious and satisfactory relationships with children is a major source of parental unhappiness and the main reason why half of all new teachers quit the profession within the first five years. When I became the coordinator of a graduate program in Special Education, I was dismayed to learn that teachers coming out of our combined B.A./M.A. program were receiving almost no training in behavior-management techniques or concepts. This realization was unsettling, because most of these young professionals would be thrust into postgraduation classroom situations where they would be dealing with very challenging behaviors (even in classrooms filled with students assigned the benign-sounding label "learning disabled"). Many of these children or youth likely would find it more enjoyable (and self-esteem-enhancing) to try to drive a teacher to despair rather than try to master academic material they considered difficult or boring. New teachers in general education, many of whom start their careers in urban settings where a large percentage of the students are oppositional and defiant, experience the same challenge. However, even in affluent school districts where the average child or youth is motivated and compliant, a teacher is likely to encounter one or more students in any class who have the potential, whether individually or jointly, to drive her to tears and, eventually, to a different career path.

The need for effective discipline strategies—in both home and school settings—has long been clear. Guidebooks abound, espousing philosophies of child-rearing and discipline regimes that run the gamut from the most rigid to the most permissive. In this book, I offer a more balanced framework—the

ABC Model of Discipline—based on scientific analysis of the characteristics of effective caregivers. The ABC model integrates a variety of psychological perspectives into three major approaches to discipline, which I term "Affective," "Behavioral," and "Cognitive." Each approach employs three core principles to work toward desired outcomes within three domains of discipline. The approaches are described in detail in Chapters 2, 3, and 4.

Unbalanced Discipline:
Failure to Emphasize Multiple Domains

The term "caregiver burnout" can be used to describe the demoralization that comes to any parent or teacher who lacks the skills to manage children's behavior. One would like to think that all books on discipline or behavior management try to provide caregivers with such skills, but in reality many books on discipline approach the topic on a global level and never get around to advising caregivers what to do when. The 2006 book *Guiding Children's Behavior: Developmental Discipline in the Classroom*, by Eileen S. Flicker and Janet Andron Hoffman, is a good example of this phenomenon. The book presents a model termed "Developmental Discipline," which, according to the authors, was inspired by the learning theories of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Piaget and Vygotsky were certainly great authorities on child development (I consider myself a neo-Piagetian), but they had nothing to say about discipline, as Flicker and Hoffman acknowledge. The idea underlying Developmental Discipline is that "children are active participants in their cognitive and social/emotional development" (8). That is all well and good, but if you are looking for any idea about how to translate that noble statement into concrete advice regarding how to actually guide the behavior of children, you will not find it in Flicker and Hoffman's book; in fact, they make a point of downplaying the importance or utility of specific discipline techniques.

The core of Developmental Discipline is that classroom misbehavior (a term the authors avoid) presents learning opportunities for the children involved and also for their caregivers. Several problem vignettes are presented, but after discussing various possible caregiver responses—for example, reprimand, encouragement, and ignoring—Flicker and Hoffman assert that the decision regarding what (if any) intervention to make should reflect an understanding of the particular child's temperament, possible lack of readiness, usual pattern of behaviors, and other factors, such as family and cultural issues, caregiver expectations, and poverty. The authors devote a lot of attention to the fact that children's behavior reflects transactions between children and their caregivers, and they urge caregivers to consider how their own attitudes, cultural expectations, or behaviors might contribute to the problems they

encounter. Flicker and Hoffman promise to make caregivers more aware and thoughtful about children and their own attitudes, but they do not provide a guide to the core techniques of discipline or how to use those techniques to become more adept at discipline. To me, the mystery is not why such a vague approach would fail to build discipline competence but why anyone would think that it could.

Alfie Kohn also writes about caregiver relationships with children and, like Flicker and Hoffman, is "constructivistic" (i.e., he emphasizes the importance of children's learning from their misbehavior), blames adults (i.e., he asks caregivers to consider their own contribution to child misbehavior), and eschews providing concrete, technique-based advice. However, although Flicker and Hoffman mention some techniques (but then assert essentially that "technique is unimportant, so you choose"), Kohn refuses to do even that much. In his 1996 book *Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community*, Kohn—well known for his books aimed at both parents and teachers—basically engages in an extended polemic against the evils of adults trying to tell children what to do. Although his main beef is with punishment, Kohn does not have much use for praise either. In his 1993 book *Punished by Rewards*, Kohn takes umbrage at the concept of positive reinforcement (including praise), because it implies that adults have the right to decide how children should behave. Kohn's basic point is that if caregivers want children to develop into autonomous and happy people, then they should stop trying to control or direct them and shift toward helping them become better decision makers. The way to do that, according to Kohn, is by turning classrooms as well as families into communities where adults are facilitators rather than authority figures.

This approach is fine from a philosophical standpoint, and, in fact, Kohn's position on the importance of avoiding power struggles aligns with much of what I term the Cognitive approach to discipline (summarized in Chapter 4 of this book). Furthermore, many discipline authors caution caregivers to be careful about how they give reinforcement (e.g., it is better to say in a neutral tone of voice, "I'm pleased you cleaned up your room" than to say in a sarcastic tone of voice, "It's about time you decided not to be a slob"). However, few authors other than Kohn are opposed to positive reinforcement *per se*. The real problem is that Kohn's turn-the-other-cheek approach does not tell a teacher what to do (other than "nothing") when a ten-year-old student drops an F-bomb on her in class. Nor does it tell a father what to do when his six-year-old throws a dangerous object at his four-year-old brother. Unlike other Cognitively oriented experts (whom he thinks are cruel for even suggesting how caregivers can and should take charge in such situations), Kohn prefers not to answer such questions and instead blames caregivers for creating the problems in the first place.

Kohn's ideas seem to draw inspiration directly from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's ([1762] 1908) *Émile*, an eighteenth-century novel that is considered to be the first educational philosophy treatise and continues to be the bible for hippie caregivers around the world. Rousseau, who abandoned his own children and had no practical experience as an educator, expresses the view that children come into the world as perfect beings but become messed up by adults and by society in general. His advice, which at one time had great influence, is that the best thing parents or teachers can do for children is to leave them alone, a sentiment that Kohn seemingly shares. In terms of the discipline and competence domains described later in this chapter, Kohn clearly values above all else the discipline domain of "Tolerance" and the child social competence outcome of "Boldness." The problem for me is not that these are bad things to value, but rather that it is impossible to be effective with children, in either the short term (achieving harmony) or the long term (facilitating competence), when adopting such a one-sided emphasis. Even A. S. Neill, the educator whose Tolerance- and Boldness-grounded educational philosophy described in *Summerhill* (1977) also owes much to the philosophy of Rousseau, understands that children need limits; this belief is reflected in the title of Neill's subsequent book, *Freedom, Not License* (1978), in which he criticizes followers who took his previous ideas about child freedom to absurd lengths.

In case the reader has now decided that I am on the "tough" side of the discipline divide, I should point out that many people (including my own kids) would probably consider me a softie. My problem with Kohn is not that he is a gentle soul but rather that (1) his advice is unbalanced, in that he stresses the importance of Tolerance without giving equal emphasis to the discipline domain I term "Influence" and (2) he fails to go beyond rhetoric and does not provide caregivers with a varied tool kit of skills and tactics for dealing successfully with challenging situations. However, this criticism can be applied just as much to discipline authors on the other end of the spectrum, whose sole advice to teachers and parents is to get tough and who fail to give caregivers a tool kit of situation-based techniques for building their skills for dealing with challenging child behaviors. Unlike the overly soft Kohn, who emphasizes Tolerance but fails to emphasize Influence, overly tough authors tend to emphasize only Influence, without attending to Tolerance or another discipline domain I term "Warmth." Like Kohn, however, they also do not provide caregivers what they need in terms of specific techniques and tools for dealing in a differentiated way with various child-behavior challenges.

John Rosemond is an example of an author who espouses get-tough discipline yet eschews a discussion of discipline techniques other than those that emphasize Influence to the exclusion of everything else. He is one of America's best-known discipline experts, having written many books on the topic (almost

all involving family discipline), and is the author of a column (some of which addresses classroom discipline) that is syndicated in approximately two hundred daily newspapers. Until a few years ago, Rosemond—who, according to his website, does not possess an earned doctorate—wrote in a secular vein, but more recently he has been couching his discipline advice and lecture topics in more explicitly religious terms. However, I can detect no real change in the basic nature of his message other than, if possible, greater stridency and a single-minded determination to rid America of those he frequently refers to as "spoiled brats."

The essence of Rosemond's message, as reflected in his book *Because I Said So* (1996), is that the modern family has become too child-centered. In Rosemond's view, parents should put their marriage and their own needs first and should demand absolute and unquestioning obedience from children. According to Rosemond, the child has a right to express resentment at this state of affairs, as long as he does so in certain closed-off parts of the house where the caregiver does not have to listen to him. Rosemond views children who are given too much freedom as selfish and self-centered, and he sees the main job of the caregiver as breaking the child's will and making him subservient. He attributes most social ills, such as drug use, to the rise of permissive child-rearing practices that are too concerned with a child's feelings or wishes. He sees himself as having a mission to reverse this trend, which he attributes to liberal authors with their excessive concern about such things as the child's self-esteem and happiness.

Rosemond has a tendency to make statements in a sweeping, authoritative, and non-nuanced manner, with little acknowledgment of individual variation among children or among caregivers. This is reflected in statements such as this one, from a 1994 newspaper column: "Given sufficient nurturing during infancy and early toddlerhood, every child believes the world should treat him as a special case. He believes he should be given what he wants, when he wants it, and please, don't forget the silver platter." Rosemond also justifies his views based on scripture, such as Proverbs 22:15: "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it from him" (this is often quoted as "spare the rod and spoil the child," but that more famous version is actually from a poem by Samuel Butler). A Biblical analogy Rosemond relies upon to support his views is that Adam and Eve chose to deceive and disobey their "father," but one would hardly be justified in labeling God a bad parent.

Rosemond's message is a variant of the "Tough Love" approach that was developed in the 1970s mainly to encourage parents of drug-using youths to become less enabling. *Toughlove* (York, York, and Wachtel 1982) is based on the justifiable position that caregivers should not continue indefinitely to

forgive intolerable and illegal behavior. However, when used as a general discipline framework, it has been taken to absurd lengths and seems to be encouraging parents to think that extreme toughness, including the threat of ultimate "parent-child divorce," is the best stance to take when dealing with all challenging child behaviors.

The ideological underpinnings of Rosemond's "Traditional Parenting" framework, with its exaltation of caregiver authority and its denial of the importance of child feelings or autonomy, can be found scattered throughout "Rosemond's Bill of Rights for Children" and his daily "John Rosemond's Thought for the Day" (both posted on his website, www.rosemond.com). Here is a sampling from his Bill of Rights for Children: "Children have the right to hear their parents say 'no' at least three times a day," "Children have the right to hear their parents say 'because I said so' on a regular and frequent basis," and "Children have the right to learn early in their lives that obedience to legitimate authority is not optional." Here is a representative, and (to me) scary, quote from his Thought for the Day: "If your child accuses you of 'being mean' you must have done something right" (December 1, 2006). Such statements are scary because they turn logic on its head, framing adult rights as children's rights and legitimizing, even glorifying, a mean-spirited and insensitive approach to children, all of whom are portrayed in the same highly negative terms.

It is difficult to find an elaborated statement of Rosemond's discipline framework, as his answer to virtually every discipline situation is the same: an insistence on instant and uncomplaining obedience. In one of his books, Rosemond even goes so far as to say that the task for a caregiver is to make a child her "disciple." Combining advice from various books by Rosemond, I have put together the following list of principles that seem to form the core of his advice to caregivers:

- Parents should be the focus of the family.
- Parents should be firm and authoritative.
- Parents should use the threat of punishment to teach responsibility.
- Frustration and unhappiness are good for children.
- Being right is more important than what works.
- Consequences be damned, expect a child to obey.
- Self-esteem and feelings don't count; praise is bad.
- Having character is more important than being smart.
- Don't try to establish a dialogue with a child.

Although these principles use different words, they all are elaborations on the same core message: The parent is the senior officer, and the child is the lowly

private; the parent's job is to give orders, and the child's job is to obey those orders without complaint or discussion. Rosemond makes some effort to justify this state of affairs in terms of eventual benefit to the child in becoming a person with good character, by which he means being a well-behaved conformist. No emphasis is placed on the higher-level form of character as the ability to make thoughtful and autonomous moral decisions, even when others around you are doing the wrong thing.

However, Rosemond's ultimate justification for an authoritarian and highly punitive approach to caregiving is based not on outcome but rather on moral (or what I would consider immoral) considerations. That is, Rosemond has contempt for the idea that it is all right for parents to treat their children as equals or to show concern for their feelings and wishes. Rosemond does not use Biblical justification for such a perspective, but his recent move in that direction does not appear to be much of a leap. Unlike other power-oriented discipline authorities who emphasize Influence but have little or nothing to say about Warmth or Tolerance, Rosemond goes out of his way to denigrate the importance of Warmth and Tolerance. Thus, in his 2005 book *Family Building: The Five Fundamentals of Effective Parenting*, Rosemond writes that "too much praise, as well as praise that is effusive, can create a powerful dependency" (105) and that "a child who receives no praise doesn't go looking for it" (106), which I read as "no praise is better than too much praise." In typical fashion, Rosemond distorts the position of Rudolf Dreikurs (profiled in Chapter 4 of this book) to support his view that too much caregiver warmth directed at children is a bad thing.

Rosemond notes correctly that Dreikurs objected to the use of "evaluative praise" and uses that to support his own position that caregivers should not concern themselves with establishing warm and approving relationships with children. However, Rosemond neglects to point out that Dreikurs advocated a different way of delivering praise, which is termed "encouragement," and that Dreikurs's whole orientation, as is the case with other advocates of a Cognitive perspective—such as the approach espoused in the *Love and Logic* series (Cline and Fay 1990; Fay, Fay, and Cline 2000)—is one in which the tone of the relationship with children is very positive.

In addition to denigrating the importance of caregiver Warmth, Rosemond also denigrates the importance of Tolerance. Rosemond strongly disputes the importance of listening to a child, establishing a dialogue with him, or attending to his feelings. In fact, Rosemond tells parents that they should make it their job to cause frustration and disappointment in their children. He belittles authors who place any emphasis on establishing an affectively sensitive dialogue with children, as Phil McGraw, TV's "Doctor Phil," does in his 2004 book *Family First*. Rosemond also takes issue with McGraw's statement,

in referring to family relationships, that "it's not about what's right or wrong. It's about what works." Rosemond responds by writing, "No, it most definitely is *not* a matter of what works; it's a matter of what's right and what's wrong. I, for one, would rather do what is right, even if it doesn't 'work'" (2005, 10).

The problem is that caregivers who turn to authors such as Rosemond definitely *are* looking for solutions that work and are not likely to find them in advice that disparages two of the three pieces of the discipline puzzle. Furthermore, Rosemond's universal advice to "get tougher" fails to recognize that most caregivers who are ineffective at discipline are already being tough, and it is not working for them. There is a paradox operating here, in that caregivers who are struggling to get children to mind them turn to authors like Rosemond for advice, and the only advice they get is to "keep doing what you are already [ineffectively] doing." One of my hopes for this book is that readers will come to understand why such advice—as well as equally unbalanced and ideologically driven advice from authors on the "left," such as Kohn—is badly flawed. In the following pages, I hope to show why, and how, a balanced approach to discipline is the best framework for developing satisfying and effective relationships with children and youth.

Three Domains of Discipline: Basis for a Balanced Approach

My ABC Model of Discipline is grounded to a large extent in scientific research concerning the characteristics of effective caregivers. The three domains of discipline that form the basis of the model emerged from factor analytic studies in which large numbers of caregivers were rated on a number of items and statistical methods were used to group the items into a small number of factors. A limitation of factor analysis is that a factor emerges only if items relevant to that factor are used in the initial measurements. If a domain of discipline has not caught the attention of researchers, they will not include items relevant to that domain in their initial study, and thus a factor reflecting that domain will not emerge in the statistical analysis. This is exactly what happened in the research literature on caregiver discipline, as researchers initially found only two discipline factors. Later work, however, involving reanalysis and the addition of new items revealed that a three-factor model more fully explains the phenomenon of discipline.

The initial two factors were labeled "Warmth" and "Control," the latter of which I prefer to call "Influence." Warmth refers to the extent to which a caregiver overtly expresses love and approval toward a child, while Influence refers to the extent to which a caregiver insists on child compliance and demands behavioral changes from a child. The factors are bipolar, in that a caregiver's

scores on these two dimensions can range from one end of a continuum to the other. Thus, on Warmth, a caregiver can range from the midpoint (neither very warm nor very cold) to one end of the continuum (very warm/accepting) or to the other end of the continuum (very cold/rejecting). The same goes for the Influence factor, on which a caregiver can be scored anywhere from very high to very low. As these are independent factors, a caregiver's score on one of the factors does not give any indication of where she will fall on the other factor. Thus, a caregiver could be high on both Warmth and Influence, low on both, or somewhere in between on one or both.

Diana Baumrind, a University of California psychology professor, developed a model of optimum discipline based on the two-factor solution (1967). She postulated four pure, or ideal (i.e., clear-cut), types of caregiver discipline, based on combinations of extreme scores on the two independent factors. She labeled these four ideal types "Authoritarian" (high on Influence, low on Warmth), "Permissive" (high on Warmth, low on Influence), "Authoritative" (high on Warmth, high on Influence), and "Chaotic" (low on Warmth, low on Influence). Baumrind then looked at children whose parents fell in the ideal type categories. She found that four-year-olds whose parents used Authoritative discipline had the best social competence and four-year-olds whose parents used Chaotic discipline had the worst. Both the Permissive and the Authoritarian parents had children who were less socially competent than those of the Authoritative parents, with somewhat different patterns of incompetence emerging. Specifically, preschoolers exposed to highly Permissive parenting were lower on the social competence dimension of "Responsibility" (which I call "Niceness"), while preschoolers exposed to highly Authoritarian parenting were lower on "Assertiveness" (which I term "Boldness"). Preschoolers exposed to Authoritative discipline, on the other hand, were high on both these dimensions of social competence.

In a follow-up study of these children and their parents, Baumrind (1971) found that a subset of the formerly Authoritative parents were not doing very much controlling, while their children were among the most well-adjusted and socially competent in her sample. She termed this discipline pattern "Harmonious" and postulated that these children had become so well-behaved and so attuned to cues from their parents that the parents no longer had much need to set limits; furthermore, when limits were set, they were communicated in a very subtle way (such as the lifting of an eyebrow), and the children picked up on and responded to those subtle cues instantly.

Although there is undoubtedly some truth to this developmental explanation, there is a strong alternative possibility that Baumrind's two-factor model of discipline is inadequate. Specifically, it lacks a situational component, in that no discussion is made of the undeniable fact that competent caregivers do
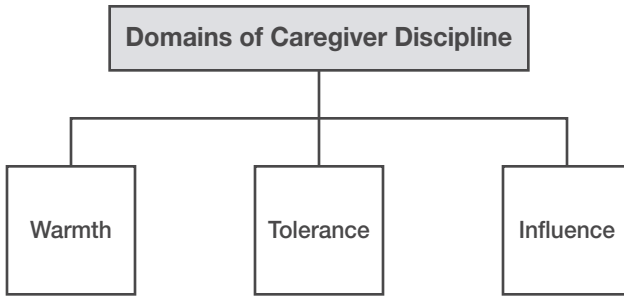
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FIGURE 1.1   Research-Derived Domains of Discipline

not set limits all the time; in fact, it is illogical to assume that one could set limits all the time and still be Warm. So, it is very possible that the Harmonious caregiver, whom Baumrind sees as a special exception to her theory, might actually be its most ideal exemplar. Catherine Lewis (1981) made this argument, based on a reanalysis of Baumrind's data. Lewis found that an item Baumrind termed "firm enforcement of rules and standards" actually reflects low parent-child conflict (because of good child behavior) and that the bulk of parents categorized by Baumrind as Authoritative were actually moderate rather than high on Control.

Such a caregiver is one who sets limits when she has to (and thus is more likely to be rated as medium rather than high on Influence), but much of the time she does not set limits, because she understands the importance of giving a child space and not defining everything he does as objectionable. The absence of this discrimination process in Baumrind's model reflects the absence of a third dimension of discipline, which I term "Tolerance." Wesley Becker (1964) identified this third domain of discipline and labeled it "calm detachment versus anxious over-involvement" (I prefer the shorter term Tolerance). It refers to the extent to which a caregiver maintains a boundary between her own needs and values and those of a child, and gives a child room to be himself, without excessive monitoring and intrusion. Figure 1.1 depicts the three-factor model of caregiver discipline.

The domain of Tolerance adds a dynamic, or situational, element to Baumrind's somewhat static and authoritative notion, in that a competent caregiver is not just a limit-setting machine but someone who can discriminate between a situation where a limit is needed (such as breaking a chair) and a situation where a limit is not needed (such as expressing annoyance but not breaking anything). This more laid-back caregiver comes close to what Baumrind termed Harmonious, but the harmony comes not just from having a very well-behaved child but also from making a conscious decision not to treat every-

thing a child does as a problem (a fuller elaboration of this discussion is found in S. Greenspan 2006).

In my own contribution to this research area (S. Greenspan 1978), I identified preschoolers who were unusually high or low on social competence and then used a structured interview to explore the discipline tendencies of their mothers. The interview included various scenarios in which a child was portrayed as engaging in some annoying behavior (such as bouncing a ball in the house) and then responding to a maternal request to stop by complying (one more bounce and then stopping) or not complying (continuing to bounce). The child was also portrayed as either uttering affect (saying, for example, "I don't want to stop") or not uttering affect. The adult subjects were then asked to imagine they were the mom and to verbalize what their response would be after each scenario. What I found was that the mothers of the highly socially competent children were better able to know when they did not have a problem than were the mothers of the children with low social competence. The latter group tended to treat the expression of affect as if it were an act of defiance, even when there was compliance (the one final bounce was also problematic for these moms, who seemed to have little tolerance for anything other than absolute and immediate cessation of the offending activity). These individuals also seemed more likely to hold a grudge, as they made more negative side comments, such as "What a nasty little kid," as the scenarios proceeded from one act of defiance to another. The mothers of the highly socially competent children, on the other hand, were better able to focus on what was actually happening, and when a child was portrayed as complying but only expressing affect, they were more likely to ignore the one more bounce and make a reflective comment, such as "I understand you like to bounce the ball in the house, but thank you for stopping."

The three-factor solution of discipline has support from the research literature, from both "construct validity" (factor-analytic) studies and "predictive validity" (child-adult congruence) studies. Furthermore, I believe this solution makes more intuitive sense than does one that includes only two factors. The three-factor solution also has consensual validation support, as seen in the fact that each of the three major approaches to discipline has a principle that "loads" on one of the three factors (or what I term "domains"). I explore this last point at length in Chapters 2 through 4.

Three Desired Long-Term Outcomes of Discipline

Most of the discipline books that are aimed at parents or teachers emphasize the short-term goal of managing behavior. This involves such things as getting

a child to cease an undesirable behavior (e.g., hitting another child) or to initiate some desired behavior (e.g., sharing his toys), as well as restoring the balance in a caregiver-child system (family, classroom, etc.) from one of conflict to one of harmony. The short-term purposes of securing compliance and restoring harmony are very important, because any system—whether a classroom, a family, or a group home—cannot function very effectively if people are causing pain to each other.

One obvious way to maintain peace and harmony is, of course, to always give in to a child and to never set any limits. This is definitely *not* a recommended solution, however. It may make the child happy, but it is also likely to make the adult caregiver very unhappy. The trick to being an effective disciplinarian is to find a method that satisfies the needs of both the child and the adult caregiver. Furthermore, I believe (as do most discipline experts) that adults and children are not equals and that adults have a right to impose their will in certain circumstances. The trick is to do this in a way that does not cause conflict to escalate and that does not damage the child's well-being. Another reason why it is not a good idea to purchase harmony by always giving in is that children need structure and limits, and it is a mistake to think that always giving in will make a child happy. In fact, the opposite is likely to happen. Children who never experience adult limits seem to be always unhappy about something and are more likely to behave in ways that cause peers to reject them (which *really* makes them unhappy).

Most of the nine principles contained within the ABC Model of Discipline are intended to achieve the short-term goal of ending undesirable child behaviors and restoring harmony to a system (family, classroom, etc.). Typically, this involves using two or more of the nine principles in concert. I explore this theme more fully in Chapters 5 and 6.

Important as it is to the restoration of system harmony and the encouragement of short-term behavior change, discipline may be even more important as a means of positively influencing a child's socioemotional development. Obviously, even when exposed to the best caregiver discipline, children can become socially incompetent. We all know families, for example, in which all of the children turn out very well except for one outlier who falls in with the wrong crowd or develops problems for other reasons, such as having a brain-based attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. It is undeniable, however, that caregiving does contribute to healthy child development, in that children exposed to skilled discipline are generally better prepared to deal with life's challenges than are children exposed to inept or chaotic discipline. Thus, effective discipline can be considered a "necessary but not sufficient" condition for the development of socially competent children. What this means is that although it is possible for children exposed to effective discipline to become

socially incompetent, it is almost assured that children exposed to inept discipline will become socially incompetent. (But I do not mean to deny that very occasionally, a highly competent "invulnerable" child emerges unscathed from the most chaotic and risk-filled environment.)

In asserting that discipline influences social competence, it is necessary for me to say something about the term itself. Social competence, like many psychological constructs, has proven somewhat difficult to define. One reason is that it can be approached either in terms of outcomes or in terms of inputs, and some scholars get the two mixed up. A socially competent outcome occurs when a child succeeds in a socially valued and age-relevant role. A commonly used outcome index of social competence is popularity and friendships, as measured by peer-nomination methods (such as having everyone in a class rank everyone else, and then summing the rankings). Children who are popular generally have better social skills (such as understanding reciprocity norms) than children who are less popular, and extreme unpopularity can be an indicator that a child needs some form of early mental-health or special-education intervention.

School success or failure can be another good outcome indicator of social competence. This assertion may surprise those who think of school success mainly as a function of cognition, but many social behaviors—such as attendance, effort, work completion, respect for authority, and compliance with rules—contribute mightily to success in school and, later, in adult settings such as the workplace. In fact, given some minimal level of academic potential, it is typically social incompetence rather than low intelligence that causes students to drop out, to be suspended, to be expelled, or to be referred for special services. Ability and social functioning are not unrelated, of course, as in the case of the class clown, who often is diverting attention away from his own sense of academic inadequacy.

Social competence is, of course, just as important for adults as it is for children, and some people believe that the main function of discipline (and even of schooling) is to prepare children to become socially competent adults. Many possible outcome indicators can be used to determine whether an adult is socially competent. One that was used in a long-term evaluation of an early-intervention program that was a precursor to Head Start was whether girls later became pregnant as unwed teenagers. Preschool girls who were enrolled in the program were dramatically less likely to become teen moms (and, consequently, to go on welfare) and thus were much more likely to pursue their studies, to attain a career direction, and to escape from the cycle of poverty in which their own mothers had been trapped (Gray, Ramsey, and Klaus 1982). Although early-intervention programs have pursued the largely unattainable goal of raising intelligence, various commentators have pointed out that the

success or failure of these programs should be viewed mainly in terms of whether they prepare their graduates to succeed in adult social roles (such as holding a job and staying out of jail) that, for the most part, depend on social rather than academic skills (Zigler and Trickett 1978).

While social competence outcomes, such as school completion, are important, it is more useful for our purpose to discuss social competence in "input" terms. By inputs, I mean the kinds of behavioral dimensions (such as impulsivity and social judgment) that make one susceptible or invulnerable to a particular social competence outcome, such as becoming suspended or expelled. Many kinds of behaviors fall under the rubric of social competence. Three broad categories have been identified, which my colleagues and I (e.g., S. Greenspan and Driscoll 1997) have termed (1) "Temperament," (2) "Character," and (3) "Social Intelligence."

Temperament refers to one's degree of emotional, motivational, and attentional stability, as reflected in the ability to sustain effort, to take things in stride (without flying off the handle), and to maintain a fairly consistent positive mood. For purposes of the ABC model, I am reframing Temperament as "Happiness." Clearly, Happiness is a major goal of discipline; when asked what she wishes for a particular child, almost any caregiver first answers "to grow up to be a happy person."

Character includes two subtypes. The first refers to the ability to conform one's behavior to societal expectations and to generally behave in a way that others view positively. In this book, I am reframing Character as "Niceness." A nice child is one whom other children, and adults, want to be around, while a "nasty" child is one whom others view negatively and wish to avoid, or worse. Clearly, influencing children to be nice is a major goal of discipline. In fact, it is probably the most explicitly emphasized purpose, given that the dictionary definition of parent and teacher discipline commonly uses phrases such as "maintaining order" and "forming proper conduct."

The other subtype of Character (and the third competence trait depicted in the ABC model) is what I term "Boldness." This trait refers to the ability to assert one's will in situations where to do otherwise would make one vulnerable; it also refers to the development of a unique identity and set of lifestyle preferences. Although excessive Boldness (i.e., when it is not paired with Niceness) could make a person insufferable, there is no question that most of us want children to become adults who are able to assert their needs—but in a nice way. As I articulate in my book *Annals of Gullibility* (2009), it is important for children to develop the ability to say "no" in situations where others would mislead or coerce them down dangerous or undesirable paths, such as engaging in crime, using drugs, or joining a gang or cult.

Becoming non-gullible is an ideal outcome of discipline that has long been implicit in education; for example, the Massachusetts Bay Colony established public schools in North America not to prepare children for work but to keep them from being misled by Satan. Within the secular setting of public education today, discussion of non-gullibility as a goal is not stressed much, except within the context of curricular add-ons, such as saying no to drugs. Families, however, express much concern about the importance of children being able to resist peers who would lead them astray. This was a constant refrain of my late mother, who used to warn me unceasingly about my tendency (as a shy individual) to be swayed by "bad influences." However, this worry is not something emphasized much by discipline experts, whose discussion of "will" is less about the importance of strengthening the willpower of children and more about the importance of strengthening the ability of caregivers to impose their will on the children in their care. Undoubtedly, strengthening the resolve of caregivers is a worthwhile goal, but one should not lose sight of the fact that children who grow up to become weak-willed adults who cannot assert themselves are very likely to be exploited and very *un*likely to become happy or successful. Furthermore, to paraphrase Erik Erikson (1950), it is a sin to crush the spirit of a child.

Social Intelligence, a third input domain of social competence, has been very important in my own research, but I do not stress it in this book. It refers to the extent to which a child or adult possesses an awareness and understanding of people and their behavior. Social Intelligence is obviously a very important contributor to success or failure in various social roles and situations. In terms of the ABC model, however, I prefer to view it as a "mediating variable" and thus do not emphasize it. In calling Social Intelligence a mediating variable, I mean that it operates behind the scenes and is not directly observed.

To illustrate: When a child is in a situation where he could behave nicely or nastily, his level of Social Intelligence (such as judging likely adult responses and taking the perspective of someone who might be hurt by his action) contributes to his ability to behave appropriately. The same could be said for Boldness. For example, when a child is being bullied or otherwise pressured, if he has good Social Intelligence, he is more likely to understand that taking a stand is essential to getting the bullying to end, is more understanding of the true motives of the bully (namely, to test the child's resolve), and is more aware of other options available to him (such as appealing to adults for help). Thus, although I do not talk directly about Social Intelligence within the framework of the ABC model, I nevertheless believe that one of the ways in which discipline contributes to the other social competence outcomes (such as Niceness) is by impacting on a child's Social Intelligence. Of the three
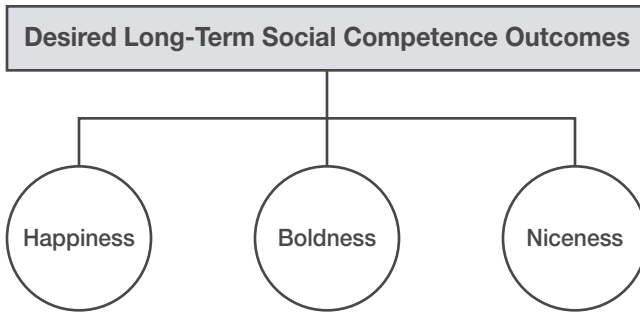
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Desired Long-Term Social Competence Outcomes   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

      ( Happiness )      ( Boldness )      ( Niceness )
```

FIGURE 1.2   Desired Long-Term Social Competence Outcomes for Children

discipline approaches in the model, the Cognitive approach most explicitly emphasizes Social Intelligence as a mediator of good behavior.

The outcome of social competence used in the model, as portrayed in various figures in this book, thus has three components: Happiness (emotional stability and positive mood), Boldness (autonomous functioning), and Niceness (kindness and appropriateness). Figure 1.2 depicts this aspect of the model. One obvious thing to keep in mind is that the most socially competent children (and adults) are relatively high on all three components. Thus, although Boldness is a desirable trait for any human being to possess, a child who is very bold but not very nice is ultimately not going to be very socially competent in outcome terms. Similarly, Happiness is a desirable state to which all human beings aspire, but true happiness can only exist in people who also care about the happiness of others (as long as one is not so concerned about others' happiness that he forgets about his own—that is, becomes too low on Boldness).

Logical Links between Discipline Domains and Child Outcomes

At the heart of the ABC Model of Discipline is the idea that the three domains of discipline and the three desired social competence outcomes are logically linked. Figure 1.3 illustrates this linkage. The three discipline domains appear at the bottom of the figure, and the three desired competence outcomes are at the top, connected by arrows pointing upward, suggesting that each discipline domain has a logical causative link with one of the desired outcomes.

By calling this a *logical* link, I am suggesting a commonsense connection rather than one that has necessarily been empirically validated. Human beings differ from machines in that they cannot be perfectly programmed to turn out
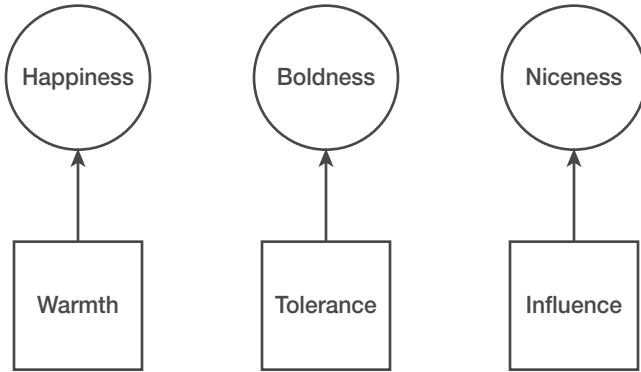
FIGURE 1.3   Logical Links between Domains of Discipline and Outcomes

a certain way. But I think a case can be made for arguing that a child who is exposed to caregiver Warmth is more likely to be a Happy kid, a child who is exposed to caregiver Tolerance is more likely to be a Bold kid, and a child who is exposed to caregiver Influence is more likely to be a Nice kid. I explore these logical connections more fully in the next several chapters, especially in Chapter 6.