

State Dictates Perception

Perception Dictates Intent / Intent Dictates Action

Executive State

Conflict is a call for help and a teaching opportunity.
It must be **solved** with new skills.

Emotional State

Conflict is irritating and upsetting.
It must be **stopped**.

Survival State

Conflict is threatening and bad.
It must be **punished**.

The Power of Love

The Power of Love fosters the development of compassion. Compassion is a way of viewing the world through the eyes of interdependence and interconnection. "What you offer to others you strengthen within yourself," is the overriding principle Conscious Discipline is founded on. One of the myths we have grown to embrace is that we can attack others (verbally or physically) without harm to ourselves. Recently, a friend of mine said, "I will never forgive my nephew." She decided to hold on to her anger with the misguided illusion that it would somehow change her nephew or hold him accountable for his actions. We cannot harbor negative thoughts toward others without also negatively impacting ourselves. Choosing to see the best in others defines both them and us in the highest possible way. It encourages ownership of thoughts, feelings and actions, and fosters the willingness to change and learn new skills as needed. We can only live the positive, empowered life of our dreams when we choose to use the Power of Love to see the best in others.

The Power of Love requires us to harness all of the tools we have learned up to this moment. Managing our triggers and remaining calm enough to see the best in others is an extremely difficult task, especially for those of us working with challenging children! On the most basic level, we must become masters of composure, able to override our triggers. Then we must suspend our judgments about others' intentions and be willing to see those who act in hurtful ways as people calling for help.

Think back to a time in your life when you lashed out at loved ones. Was your deepest desire at that moment to make things worse, have them feel less than whole or simply to get personal relief from your own intense emotional distress? Now reflect on the aftermath of your actions. Immediately, you may have felt a sense of righteous relief, but guilt or shame tends to erase all sense of satisfaction over time. Children who act out experience the same volley of emotions. Our job is to remain calm enough to see the best and help them learn new skills. Our skills are only as effective as our ability to manage our triggers.