



Freedom and Discipline

Introduction

The concepts of freedom and discipline are very important concepts for families, caregivers, and teachers to understand. They are at the very heart of our work with children. It is our understanding of these two ideas, perhaps more than any other, which ultimately determines the degree to which we are able to support children's development.

Our experience and understanding of freedom and discipline form the subtext that underwrites our relationship with the children. It impacts our observations, our interpretations, and our active responses. It determines how we prepare our environment, influences our daily interactions with children, and even frames our happiness in our own work.

Our attitude towards freedom and discipline cuts right to the core of our deepest motivations. What are our expectations? Why do we respond the way we do? Will we be able to support children's development, or unintentionally thwart it? Are we able to replace pride and anger with patience and humility? Understanding freedom and discipline demands that we examine the social, emotional, and cognitive reasons for why we make the choices we do, and for many of us, make the difficult, conscious effort to change lifelong interactive patterns.

The Conventional Understanding of "Discipline"

When we hear the word "discipline," it is usually connected to behavior. Whether in schools or at home, the idea of discipline generally focuses on the question, **"How do we get children to behave?"** Some of these may sound familiar:

- "Time out"
- "Name on the board"
- Going to "The Office"
- Losing recess time - or the "positive" version - "Success Recess" if everyone behaves.
- Putting your head down on your desk.
- Being "in the red" - children begin each day "in the green" and with each infraction move to "yellow" and finally to "red" if they've been very bad.
- Physical punishment
- Stickers, money, or trips to Disneyland for "good" behavior

Society's notion of "behave" generally means, "Do what the adult says." Listen. Follow directions. Sit still. Mind. Be quiet. Be nice. When children do not behave, then discipline is necessary. This discipline often happens when the adult is angry or frustrated because the child won't do what he says. Pride enters in as well; "I'm the adult, and you have to listen to me." Adults need to "keep the upper hand." Montessori observed this as well, when she wrote, **"What is generally known as discipline in traditional schools is not activity, but immobility and silence. It is not discipline, but something which festers inside a child, arousing his rebellious feelings."** (Montessori, *Creative Development in the Child Vol. 2*, p.41.)



As an alternative to discipline, some well-meaning adults try to motivate children with rewards, for example, the idea of “success recess,” extra recess if everyone gets their homework done. Rewarding children is a popular method of controlling behavior. A brief little scan of internet blogs immediately found this comment, “*What’s wrong with gold stars? After all, we spend our adult lives working to please the powerful people above us; why not train kids to do the same?*” Another random blog criticized teaching philosophies that “*strip teachers of their authority to reward good behavior and punish bad.*” Society’s understanding of discipline is often limited to how adults motivate children’s behavior, either by punishments or rewards.¹

This sounds very familiar, does it not? This is the way most of our society views the roles of adults and children, and this is probably the attitude towards discipline that most of us were brought up in. It is still as common today as it was when Montessori wrote:

“As far as child psychology is concerned, we are more prejudiced than wise. Up till now we have wanted to dominate children externally with the rod instead of ... guiding them inwardly like human beings. This is why they have passed close by us without our being able to get to know them. But if we set aside the tricks with which we have tried to ensnare them and the violence which we took for discipline, they reveal themselves to us” (Montessori, “Quotations on Freedom,” AMI Communications, 1985, No.1, p. 16).

The Conventional Understanding of “Freedom”

What does our society understand about the idea of “freedom?” **Freedom means you get to do whatever you want!** Freedom is the opposite of discipline. Children must follow our rules until they are 18 years-old, then they are free to do whatever they want. What do we often see when these 18 year-olds are finally free to do what they want? Binge drinking, drug use, date rape, skipping class. Of course, that also happens in high school and even middle school. Even in elementary school, at 3:00, the children rush out of the school building, finally “free” from the confines of “discipline”.

In Montessori schools, we hear other revealing attitudes about freedom- “I know this is *Montessori*, and the children are supposed to *work*, but can’t you just let them *play*? Can’t we just let kids be free?” This attitude reflects the fear of rules in modern parenting that rebounds from the strict discipline that *their* parents used. These new parents want to raise their children differently, so they give their children freedom, and don’t burden them with responsibilities or rules. Likewise, many preschool and kindergarten teachers are taught to just “follow the child’s lead” and let the children guide the learning process with their own interests. Hmm. Doesn’t this sound a bit familiar? Aren’t they doing what Montessori advised, aren’t they “setting aside the tricks and violence mistook for discipline?” Shouldn’t we see the children “revealing their true natures?”

But in reality, what do we see in the children whose parents just “let them be free,” and in the classrooms where teachers simply “follow the children’s lead”? We see children who are out of control, abandoned to their own devices, and classrooms that are chaotic free-for-alls. Is this the true nature of children? Parents and teachers have “followed the child” right over the edge of the cliff! What remains are frustrated parents and teachers who end up resorting to the same kinds of discipline they vowed to avoid.

¹ Alfie Kohn’s book *Punished by Rewards* provides a detailed examination of the effects of rewards and punishments. Read also, “Five Reasons to Stop Saying ‘Good Job’” by Alfie Kohn.



Where does that leave us? **Society's confused and conflicted ideas of freedom and discipline are at odds with everything we've been learning about Montessori's discovery of the true nature of childhood.**

Conventional thinking about freedom and discipline defines them *as external forces that are administered to children*. Adults *discipline* children. Adults *give* them freedom. The children are passive, and the power rests with the adult. This is the paradigm we have to address.

Conventional thinking about freedom and discipline doesn't work. In order to change the paradigm, we have to change our definitions of freedom and discipline. When we redefine our thinking, we can change conflict and frustration to understanding and support. Understanding freedom and discipline brings us closer to being the kind of adults who can support children's development with patience, knowledge, and compassion.

Montessori's Perspective on Discipline

Now let's look at how Montessori thought of discipline. Montessori's concept of discipline is very different from conventional thinking. Our concept is one of **self-discipline**. We view **discipline as a force within the child**. It comes from within the child; it is not imposed externally. When adults force the child to be silent or obedient, the child is passive and the adult's will dominates the child; this is not our concept of discipline. We believe **discipline comes when the child is active**. We believe a person is disciplined when he is master of himself, and is able to control himself when he needs to. This is the discipline we strive to support. (Montessori, *Basic Ideas of Montessori's Educational Theory, "Keys to the World,"* p. 74.)

Looking at discipline as an active force coming from within the child presents a very different relationship between discipline and education from the traditional one of dominance and coercion. Education should not teach the child how to be passive and submissive, **education must help the child to become active**.

Etymology

Interestingly enough, the words "education" and "discipline" are linked in their roots. If we trace the English word "discipline" back to its Latin origins, we find that "discipline" comes from the Latin word "disciplina" meaning "teaching, instruction, education." Similar words are "disciple," meaning "student, pupil, trainee," and "discern"- "to learn, to hear, to get to know." It is really fascinating that "discipline," and "discern" are related words. It implies that **discipline, as we understand it, is a process of coming to know, a process of learning, of development.**

Discipline as development

Let's think about discipline as a process of development. To help us do this, compare discipline with another process of development- that of movement. We know that movement is a process of learning and development. The child is not born with movement, but has the potential to develop movement. When the potential for movement is supported, every child follows a predictable pattern of development, shaped by her culture, and dependent upon opportunities for individual practice. The goal of developing movement is to prepare the child for life and independent action.



Now consider discipline as a process of development. The child is not born with discipline already developed, but has the potential to develop discipline. When the potential for discipline is supported, every child follows a predictable pattern of development, shaped by their culture, and dependent upon opportunities for individual practice. The goal of developing discipline is to prepare the child for life and independent action. (Montessori, *Basic Ideas of Montessori's Educational Theory*, "Keys to the World," p. 74.)

The "inner form" of discipline

Thinking of discipline as a process of development, like movement, casts a very different light on the idea of discipline. We all know that the development of movement is a universal, internal development with an outer manifestation – we see children grasp, roll over, crawl, walk, etc. Before these milestones appear, we know that internal changes must happen in the child's muscular and neurological systems in order for him to begin to reach and grasp, to crawl, and to walk. We know this is the same for babies all over the world.

We can also understand discipline as having an internal form, an internal set of laws to follow.² There exists a universal, inborn, discipline within every human being, not given or taught by society. We don't usually think of this, or recognize this with human beings, but we clearly acknowledge it in nature. We know that every part of creation has a particular discipline, or set of laws to follow.

In Montessori elementary, we tell many stories about the laws of nature, and how every particle is given a set of laws to follow to keep harmony on the earth. In telling about the laws of the three states of matter, (solids, liquids, and gasses) we say that the particles in solids must press only downward, the particles in liquids may press downward or outward, but the particles in gasses may move freely in all directions. Every living thing has within it a set of developmental laws to follow - a sunflower seed cannot become a violet; a cow cannot live the life of a bird. Basically, all of science is discovering the laws, or *discipline*, of the universe. The laws of physics, the laws of gravity, the laws of development- these are all positive forces that maintain balance and harmony in nature.

Although human beings have discovered many of these laws and can even manipulate them, human beings are not outside of the law. Every infant is governed by an internal discipline or set of laws to follow- their universal, developmental plan. We have talked about this; children develop according to an inner guide, an inner plan. They are assisted by the absorbent mind, and the sensitive periods for order, movement, sensory perception and language. These laws form the inner discipline of the child.

Internal discipline is the foundation for outer discipline. Just as in movement, the internal muscular and neurological processes are the foundation for outer movement, the movement we see. So too, the child's internal discipline determines the outer discipline, what we see.

The "outer form" of discipline

In our understanding of discipline as a process of development, we see that there are two forms - an **inner discipline** that guides development, and an **outer discipline**, which is a window to the internal process of

² Mr. Joosten elaborates on the concept of an inner and outer form of discipline in *Education as a Help to Life*, in the section called, "Discipline."



development. Outer discipline shows us the development of inner discipline, but it is also influenced by culture and society. What is considered “good behavior” changes from culture to culture, and throughout history over time. Although the outer and inner forms of discipline are very different, they are **“organically related and cannot contradict each other without serious consequences for man’s mental and physical balance”** (Joosten, 1994, p.58)

Consider the child having a tantrum when his sense of order is upset - “I don’t want to wear that coat! That’s a raincoat and it’s not raining!” We see a visible upset in outer discipline, a tantrum; “bad” behavior, caused by an invisible upset to inner discipline, the child’s internal sense of order.

How do we respond to this? Do we let anger and pride control our response by forcing or cajoling the child to wear the coat? Do we punish the child for the tantrum? Or do we respond with understanding of the child’s inner developmental laws; and with patience and humility, respond, “You’re right, it’s not raining right now. But the weatherman said it will probably rain later, when you are outside playing at pick-up time, so let’s just put the raincoat over your arm and you can wear it later if it is raining.”

Albert Joosten,³ a trainer who worked with Maria and Mario Montessori, writes, **“The task of the adult then, is not to inject or teach discipline, but to offer the child suitable forms by means of which he can individually and socially follow and express the dictates of his inner discipline. This help must take very concrete forms. It requires not only ever increased efforts at self-discipline and respect for the inner discipline of the child, but also the preparation and organization of an environment where the child can, and is helped to, obey his inner discipline. It should be help offered, not violation inflicted”** (Joosten, p. 58).

I can’t help but think back to the etymology- what if instead of *disciplining* children, we helped them to *discern*?

Montessori’s Perspective on Freedom

Relationship to discipline

We have identified discipline as being a process of development. The child must be free to act in accordance with his inner laws of development in order to develop discipline. Remember Montessori observed that spontaneous self-discipline was an outcome of normalization- following the healthy, normal path of development. Yes, the child must be free, but our understanding of freedom also differs from the conventional notion of freedom.

³ Mr. Joosten trained with Dr. Montessori in 1934. He worked with Maria and Mario Montessori on International Montessori Training Courses and Conferences all over Europe. In 1949 he was director of the Indian Montessori Training Courses in India. He co-founded the Good Shepherd Maria Montessori Center in Sri Lanka in 1957. In 1973 he was appointed the director of the Montessori Training Center of Minnesota. He gave workshops and lectures in India, USA, Canada, and Europe. He died in 1980.



The conventional understanding of freedom is the release from oppression, or the end of all responsibilities and restrictions. The conventional understanding of freedom is the direct opposite of the conventional understanding of discipline. If we think of freedom as the opposite of discipline, the result is chaos, impulsiveness, permissiveness, and abandonment as we described earlier. With this kind of freedom, we “follow the child right over the cliff.”

Definition of freedom

Our understanding of freedom must also be different. We can define freedom as **“the capacity to pause, and make a specific choice, to the exclusion of all other possible choices.”** (Sackett, 2009) Another way to think of freedom **is the ability to choose a reasoned path.** Both of these definitions consider freedom as *ability*, an ability or capacity that is independent of external coercion.

Freedom is an internal state. Like discipline, freedom cannot be given or forced; it comes from within. Montessori tells us that ***“Real freedom is a consequence of development; it is the development of latent [dormant] guides, aided by education. Development is active. It is the construction of the personality, reached by effort and one’s own experiences.”*** (Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, “The Child’s Contribution to Society,” p.205, Kalakshetra)

Seen in this light, **freedom and discipline are both active processes that are developed through the child’s own activity and effort.** This is very different from the idea of freedom as letting children do whatever they want. Montessori writes in the *Absorbent Mind*, ***“If freedom is understood as letting the children do as they like, using, or more likely, misusing the things available, it is clear that only their “deviations” are free to develop”*** (Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, “The Child’s Contribution to Society,” p.205, Kalakshetra). This is why in many traditional preschools when teachers give the child freedom, as they think they are supposed to, and “follow the child;” they see only chaos. ***“When we demand that the child be given freedom, we are not understood, because only the ‘deviated’ child is known and the very nature of freedom misunderstood.”*** (Joosten, *Education As A Help To Life*, p. 18-19).

Rather than being opposites, freedom and discipline are very much alike. They are both internal states, they are both processes developing within the human being. They are both considered a capacity. They are both related to choice; self-discipline is choosing to be in control of myself, and freedom is making a choice to act in a certain way. They are both connected to the concept of liberty.

Freedom and Discipline Develop Through Liberty

Let’s examine what we mean by the word “liberty.” We have said that in our work as “new educators,” our task is to aid the child in constructing himself. Self-discipline and freedom are two active processes that the child will construct, through his own efforts. But how do discipline and freedom develop? Freedom and discipline develop through liberty. Montessori writes, ***“In order that the phenomenon should come to pass it is necessary that the spontaneous development of the child should be accorded perfect liberty”*** (Montessori, *The Advanced Montessori Method, - I, p. 56, Clio*) Montessori tells us that we must give the child “perfect liberty,” but what does that really mean?

First, let's look at what "perfect" means. Again, not the conventional understanding of perfect meaning something ideal or unattainable, but rather, perfect meaning, "**complete, and lacking nothing essential.**" Perfect liberty is the *liberty* that is *essential* for human development.

Liberty and freedom are often used synonymously, and in English,⁴ they are related words. If we look at the etymology of both words, we find the word "freedom" comes from the Proto-Indo European word "prijos" which means "beloved, dear." "Prijos" is also the root of the word "friend." "Liberty" comes from the Latin word "liberi," meaning both "free" and "children." It is interesting that the roots of freedom and liberty contain such emotional, positive words: beloved, dear, friend, free, children.

One of the many dictionary definitions of freedom is "the **ability** to exercise free will and make choices." A definition of liberty is "the freedom **to act** without being constrained." Freedom is a noun, a state of being, and liberty is a verb, an action. Liberty is the means to attain freedom.

Liberty is closely connected with choice and action. Freedom is the *capacity* to choose, but liberty is *to be able to act* upon a choice. Freedom is an internal state, you either have the capacity or you do not, but liberty is an external condition. From its origins, the word "liberty" has an *implication of permission*. Liberty is *given* to someone. "Liberty is given to the child; freedom is acquired by the child." It is possible to have freedom without liberty, and to have liberty without truly being free (Cuevas, 2006).

Just as the development of discipline requires external support for the child to follow an inner guide, freedom requires the *external possibility to act* in order to follow the *inner ability to choose*. **We support development of freedom by giving the children liberty to act upon their choices.**

Liberty requires independence

Liberty is essential, but it is not enough to give the *liberty* to act, without also giving the *means* to act. I can *choose* to play the cello, "I want to play the cello!" Society can grant me the *liberty to act* on that choice, "Sure, go ahead and play the cello!" but my individual limitations make it impossible for me to act on my choice. I simply don't know *how* to play the cello. In order to act on my choice, I must develop the independent skill of playing the cello.

Liberty alone is not enough. In order to make it clear what we mean by liberty, we have to consider the role of independence. Independence is necessary for freedom. The children must have the independent skills necessary for them to be able to act on their choices. Montessori writes, "**At the base of all these activities there must be going on a gradual conquest, a gradual gaining of independence. This does not mean that one is to do just what one pleases at the moment, or that one is allowed to play about with anything, using it as an accompaniment to one's fancy. It implies to acquire a sense of the power to act alone; the possibility of carrying out some useful and important action without the help of others; being about to solve one's problems for oneself, to reach a difficult goal by one's own efforts**" (Montessori, "Principles and Practices," pp.12-13, AMI Communications, 1979).

⁴ In Italian, there is only one word for the concept of liberty, but in English, we use the words freedom and liberty to represent two distinct yet related aspects of the concept (Cuevas, p.67).



Independence, the ability to act for oneself without relying on others, is at the root of freedom. The child cannot act upon the choice he has made without the independent skills to do so. The gradual conquest of independence frees the child from his personal limitations to freedom. In order to help the child develop the ability to make a choice and act on it, we must also help the child develop independence- to act on his own. ***“The only true freedom for an individual is to have the opportunity to act independently.”*** (Montessori, *Education and Peace*, p. 55, Clio)

There are very practical applications of these lofty principles. For example, if a child has *made the free choice* to work outside, in order *to act* upon that choice, he must have *the independence* to put on his jacket and tie his shoes. If he does not yet have the practical skills himself, then he must have the independence to know how to ask an older child for help. Knowing when and how to ask for help is a form of independent action. The adult who takes away the possibility of asking for help, by acting for the child, denies the child another expression of independence, and therefore, liberty.

Liberty and Limits

In this gradual building up of independence, and of freedom- the ability to pause and make a choice, Montessori is clear that there are limits. Remember these words from a previous quote, ***“This does not mean that one is to do just what one pleases at the moment, or that one is allowed to play about with anything, using it as an accompaniment to one’s fancy.”*** (Montessori, “Principles and Practices,” pp.12-13, AMI Communications, 1979).

Three guiding principles of limits

It is difficult for some people to understand the difference between liberty and abandonment. This is the difference between supporting children’s development through liberty, and thwarting development by abandoning the children to do whatever they please. In order to understand the difference between liberty and abandonment, we must look at limits. There are three guiding principles that aid us in understanding the limits to liberty⁵:

1) Limits are for the protection of the individual, environment, and other people in the environment.

The children feel the protection of those limits. If they know that we do not harm others, then they know that they will not be harmed here. If we do not destroy other’s work, then our work will not be destroyed. If we conserve our resources, then resources will be available to all when we need them.

2) Limits are defined by the individual’s capacity to act independently. This means that limits are flexible and have individual parameters

When I told my son I was writing this lecture on freedom and limits, he responded, “What’s the big deal- you give ‘em as much freedom as they can handle, and that’s the limit.” Because each person’s level of

⁵ Lynne Lawrence, “Freedom and Discipline,” unpublished lecture, Columbia, Maryland, March 2009.



independence is different, some limits are flexible. We can only give as much liberty as each person is able to manage.

3) Limits are defined by the context in which the activity takes place

Some limits are needed in some situations, but not in others. It may be fine to climb up the slide in your own backyard, but on the playground, where there are other children waiting to slide down, climbing up may be unsafe.

Underpinning each of these three guidelines is **respect**- respect for myself, respect for others, and respect for the environment. Respect is based on knowledge: our knowledge of the child, and the child's knowledge of himself, which comes from use of the materials.

The three classroom rules:

1) We respect the work of others.

What does this mean to a 3 year-old who interrupts work? We say to that little one, "When we're together, and someone is working, we don't disturb each other. When you see someone is busy, we don't disturb him." This conveys a universal, concrete expression of respect. Now the child can carry inside of himself a question that can be applied anywhere. "Is that person busy?" With this understanding, all kinds of situations such as walking over rugs, interrupting, taking away someone's work, yelling across the room, are encompassed in one simple limit: We respect the work of others. When we see someone working, we do not disturb him.

2) We take care of what we use

It is important to take care of what we use, and return it the way we found it so that it is available to everyone. How a child takes care of what they use depends on age and capacity at that time. This is part of our rationale for limiting the resources in our environments; if there is an endless supply of toys, crayons, pink towers, there is no motivation for caring for what we use. This limit, "we take care of what we use", can be generalized to any situation. The child has a question he can ask himself: "Oh, is this a situation where we take care of what we use?" It can apply to the classroom materials, the toys at a friend's house, the trees and garden, the world's resources. We take care of what we use.

3) We make sure every living thing is safe

This limit can also be generalized to many different situations and encompasses many little rules. We don't need to have rules about not pulling the leaves off the plants, hitting-kicking-biting-pinching-name calling-pushing, or holding the guinea pig above your head. The rule is simple: We make sure every living thing is safe. We can use "true and brief" positive phrasing to reinforce the simple limit: "We make sure every living thing is safe. Too much food harms the fish; we feed the fish just a pinch of food."



Our goal is to provide the child with limits to liberty that can expand and contract according to their own independence and self-discipline. These limits can be applied in any setting, and are consistent for everyone. The purpose of limits is to give the child liberty to follow their inner guide. The child who cannot yet hear the call of their inner guide, who has deviated from the path of normal development, has not yet developed the ability to make a reasoned choice. To give this child unlimited liberty is a disservice. This is why permissive parenting doesn't work. This is why the teachers who simply "follow the child" fall right over the cliff.

Limits and choice

Limits are essential to our understanding of how to help the child develop the ability to make a choice. Limits are necessary for freedom. Limits narrow the choices. We offer a limited number of activities or choices that the child will succeed with. Do you want to wear the red shirt or the green shirt? Would you like peas or carrots? Do you want to walk next to me or hold my hand? The child begins to practice making choices.

As the child becomes older and develops the ability to make reasoned choices, the limits expand, but they are still there. If you take the bus home from school by yourself, call me when you get home. You may go to Layla's house, but do your homework first. After you make yourself a snack, clean up your mess. Discipline, freedom, and independence are processes that are developed through opportunities to practice. Limits are like the banks of the river, guiding the child's life force and energy in a constructive path.

Consequences provide feedback

Working hand in hand with limits are consequences. Consequences are helpful and necessary. Consequences give us feedback about the choices we've made. When I choose to carry many things at once I often drop them. When I choose to stay out late at night I am tired the next day. If I choose to type up my notes tonight, I'll have more time this weekend. To have real freedom, we have to be able to consider the consequences of our choices, and agree to accept those consequences. We accept the consequences that we foresee, but also the unintended consequences, which we did not foresee. This is responsibility.

In terms of the first plane child, who lives in the moment, the consequences are real and immediate. A bucket filled to the rim spills when I carry it; I know where the floor cloths are and I know how to clean up the water spill. Walking across someone's work rug messes up their work and makes them unhappy with me; I'll walk around the rug. If I hold the knob while I close the door, the door closes quietly. Consequences give children feedback about the choices they made.

In these simple examples, we can see the emergence of self-discipline, independence, and responsibility: the control of movement necessary to walk around a rug, to carry a bucket without spilling, to close the door quietly; the independence in knowing just what to do to clean up a spill, or how to enter and exit the room by myself; the responsibility to know that when we make a spill, we clean it up, and that banging doors might disturb people's work.

Conclusion

"Activity, freely chosen..."

We give the child liberty, and what do we see? Normalization. Why? Because remember, it is only activity "freely chosen" that induces the deep attention we call concentration. The limits of how the materials are



used help the child's control and coordination of movement. The design of the materials calls for exactness and precision, which pulls the child into repetition and deeper concentration.

Concentration **"frees the actions of the child"** and leads him to normalization; **"freedom of action consolidates and develops the personality."** (Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, "The Child's Contribution to Society," p. 206, Kalakshetra, 1984). Concentration unites the body and the mind in service of independence. The body and the mind work in harmony to develop mental and physical capacities that bring the child greater independence and greater freedom.

But it is not only freedom that develops with concentration. The body and mind also work together in developing self-discipline. The body becomes a servant to the mind. The body can execute the will of the mind. The child's will, the part of the mind that consciously decides to do something, is supported by the physical body's ability to do, or not do, what the mind wills.

Now we see a blurring between the distinction of what is freedom, and what is discipline. Freedom and discipline work hand in hand, both spurred on by concentration. Concentration, that building block of normalization, is essential for development. Remember, it is *normalized* children, aided by their environment who, **"show in their subsequent development those wonderful powers that we describe: spontaneous discipline, continuous and happy work, social sentiments of help and sympathy for others. Activity freely chosen becomes their regular way of living. (This) is the doorway to a new kind of life."** (Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, "The Child's Contribution to Society," p. 206, Kalakshetra, 1984).

We see that freedom and discipline are not opposites after all, they are allies; irrevocably linked together. They are both active, internal processes developed through the child's own activity and effort. Freedom is the capacity to choose, and discipline is the capacity to act on that choice. The child's will is the agent of freedom and discipline. Will is the means of connecting these two forces so that power can be passed between them. Freedom and discipline are united- brought together to form a whole- the whole child, for freedom cannot exist without discipline, and discipline leads to deeper freedom. **"The more the capacity to concentrate is developed, the more often the profound tranquility in work is achieved, then the clearer will be the manifestation of discipline in the child."** (Montessori, *The Child in the Family*, p. 38, Clio)

Our knowledge and understanding of child development endows us with the responsibility to prepare an environment for the child that will support the development of healthy, happy, normal life. The child cannot prepare the environment for himself, we must do this for the child. Then, in the words of Mr. Joosten, **"We will realize and rediscover freedom's true nature: freedom consists in the opportunity to live and develop in accordance with the inner laws and needs of development, of life. In fact, true freedom is not freedom from, but freedom for!"** (Joosten, *On Discipline*, p.18)

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