

## Chatterbox #324 – Childhood discipline and punishment (Ad free)

### Episode description

How were you disciplined as a child? Have you ever wondered about how different cultures and generations handle child discipline at home? In this episode, Andrew and Alina discuss the various punishments they experienced as children and explore how these methods have changed over time. They share personal stories and reflect on what worked, what didn't, and the impact these punishments had on their mindsets growing up.

### Fun fact

Did you know that Sweden was the first country in the world to ban corporal punishment of children in 1979? This progressive move influenced many other nations to adopt similar laws, leading to over 60 countries following suit since then.

### Expressions included in the study guide

- To stick one's nose somewhere
- The silent treatment
- To go into something blind
- To be a guinea pig
- To set the bar high
- To set something straight



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## Transcript

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Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

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**Andrew:** Chatterbox episode 324, “Childhood discipline and punishment.” Featuring Andrew and Alina.

So, our main topic of conversation for this episode is going to be about punishment at home. And keen listeners of Culips will know that not too long ago, Kassy and I recorded a Simplified Speech episode about punishment and discipline at school, and we'll link that episode in the show notes here, so that if you want to go back and listen to that episode, you can. But today we're going to shift our focus, and we are going to talk about punishment that we received as children at home. And joining me today for this conversation is Alina. Hello, Alina. How's it going?

**Alina:** Hi, Andrew. It's going good. How are you?

**Andrew:** I am good. And I can't really say that I'm excited to talk about this topic. It's not really like a pleasant or happy topic. But Alina, you and I were chatting before we started recording here, and we said we thought it's a really interesting topic because everybody from around the world will be able to connect with some level, we think, on this topic. And it's something that varies from culture to culture to culture, and also from generation to generation to generation. So, I'm really interested in hearing what our listeners have to say about this, and also hearing what you have to say about this. And I think it will make for an interesting discussion. Maybe not a happy discussion, but at least an interesting discussion.

**Alina:** Absolutely. It's relatable. You know, we all have a lot to say about this, I feel like.

**Andrew:** I think so. Yeah. So why don't we jump into it and get started? And as I mentioned, we're talking about punishments that we received at home as children. And maybe before we get into our personal stories, Alina, we could just mention some of the different kinds of punishments that children receive. What are some of the ones that pop into your mind when you think of this topic?

**Alina:** Yeah, definitely corporal punishment, you know physical punishment pops into my head straight away. What else do we have? We have like yelling. I don't know. Is it considered punishment? Probably, because, you know, it's not pleasant.

**Andrew:** We use this all the time when talking about abuse, which is, you know, it's different than punishment. Punishment and abuse sometimes could be just a small distinction, depending on your perspective. But when we talk about abuse, there's physical abuse and verbal abuse. So, I can't see why we couldn't say that there's both physical punishment and also verbal punishment as well. One that pops into my mind is being grounded. Or if you're a younger kid, then usually it's a timeout.

**Alina:** Timeout or like you put in the corner, you know, just to reflect on your behavior.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I think that's like one of the kinds of punishments that happened to me at school sometimes, especially like young elementary school grades. You know, "Oh, Andrew, you were bad. Go stand in the corner for a minute and reflect on what you did. And when you're ready to apologize, you can come back." That happened to me at school, but I don't think I ever got sent into the corner at home. Are there any other kinds of punishment that come to your mind?

**Alina:** I'm not sure exactly how to phrase it, like to generalize. But, you know, like when parents like take away your like gadgets and like TV time, whatever computer, you know, obviously when we were kids, you, and I, I mean, OK, you were a kid a little bit earlier. It

was before we all had an iPhone, you know, whatever gadget. But like I do remember something like that as well. Like, you know, no TV tonight. Stuff like that.

**Andrew:** Right. So maybe we could say taking away a privilege.

**Alina:** Privilege. Yeah.

**Andrew:** Yeah, that's how we would phrase it. So, yeah, when I was younger, it was like my Nintendo controller would be taken away. So, the Nintendo is there. I could turn it on. I could see it on the TV, but I couldn't play it. That kind of privilege to play, Nintendo would be taken away if I did something wrong. Yeah, those were the ones, the main ones that popped into my head as well. And maybe as we go through this conversation in more detail, some other ones will come to mind, and we could share those as we go along. But why don't we get into more of our personal stories now? So, Alina, I imagine that you were a pretty good kid growing up. I couldn't see you getting into too much trouble. Or were you a troublemaker when you were younger?

**Alina:** Like you couldn't be more wrong, to be honest with you.

**Andrew:** Oh, really?

**Alina:** But it's amazing that like as an adult, you know, I make this impression totally different from what I actually was as a child.

**Andrew:** Yeah. If you ask my mom, I'm sure she would be like, "Yeah, I mean, she was."

**Alina:** Of course, I wasn't the worst child, like I'm sure, you know, there could be worse. But I was definitely a troublemaker. I was definitely always getting myself into trouble. You know, I was like a very curious child, **sticking my nose everywhere**, you know,

adventures, kind of trying things, exploring the world, playing with fire, that kind of stuff. I wasn't, you know, easy, I guess.

**Andrew:** Wow. Yeah, that's totally, totally different than what I was expecting. Yeah, I'd say I was also a curious child, as most children are, right? I think most kids are naturally quite curious.

**Alina:** It's natural. Yeah.

**Andrew:** Yeah. But I wasn't much of a troublemaker. We'll get into it a bit more. But of course, I did get into trouble at home. And I think most of that was growing up with siblings because I have a younger brother and a younger sister. And so, you know, when you're like, I don't know, maybe before the age of 10, probably from five to 10, you're really learning how to navigate sharing and getting along with your siblings. And I think a lot of the trouble that I got into is maybe because, yeah, I wasn't good at sharing my things, or maybe I wasn't good at including my siblings in things. I remember wanting to be really independent as a child, but my parents wanted me to include my siblings more. And so, yeah, when you're like a young child trying to navigate that and learn that, I think that got me into some trouble. And when I got a little bit older, but my siblings were still a little bit younger than me, I got into trouble for making them do some things that were like a little bit dangerous. Because I loved doing dangerous things like skateboarding and mountain biking and playing hockey. And I would get like my little sister to play hockey goalie, you know, and then take a slap shot or something while she was the goalie.

**Alina:** Oh, wow. OK. And she was how old?

**Andrew:** She is five years younger than I am. So maybe I was, you know, 12 and she was seven or something.

**Alina:** OK.

**Andrew:** So yeah, that kind of thing got me into some trouble, I think.

**Alina:** Oh, I see. It's all because of your sibling.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I'm trying to think maybe that's not fair. I also, I'm sure I got into some other kinds of trouble, maybe breaking things, maybe being rowdy, being really active in the house, you know, but that's just like normal kid stuff, I think.

**Alina:** Exactly. These things sound like just you being a child, really.

**Andrew:** Yeah, yeah, I think so. Like I said, I don't think I was, you know, evil or doing anything that's not normal. They were all pretty like normal kid things.

**Alina:** All right.

**Andrew:** Alina, if you were the bad girl, how would you get punished for that bad behavior?

**Alina:** What was the norm in your household? So, the norm in my household definitely was yelling, like a lot of, you know, lecturing and maybe not like in the most like easily perceivable way. It's like, you know, you can imagine it's very hard to hear what somebody is saying, you know, when they're yelling. But unfortunately, that's kind of like the impulse. And, you know, it was acted on a lot, mostly by my mom. I wouldn't say my father was a screamer, you know. So, yeah, there was that. I mean, I can't say, you know, it was kind of, I feel like, you know, common in Russia in general. So, it happened in my family as well. You know, a bit of physical punishment. Nothing too crazy, because, you know, I've been like hearing stories, and I felt like I was just, you know, blessed. There's nothing too

bad. I've heard much worse. So, I can't complain, really. But that happened, you know, especially when I was like a young child. Yeah, I mean, just kind of classic stuff. I feel like the worst thing, though, was **silent treatment**.

**Andrew:** The silent treatment.

**Alina:** I still like don't get it. And I don't know how to handle it, like how to deal with it. And unfortunately, you know, that's what happened a lot with my mom would kind of just not talk to me. And I was just like, you know, what's happening? Talk to me, you know, communication.

**Andrew:** Right, right.

**Alina:** But, you know, I feel like a lot of the reason could be that, like, that's the same thing she maybe experienced as a child. Never really learned any better. So, I've learned to justify some of these things as I grew up.

**Andrew:** OK, so you said a lot of interesting things there. And I want to go back and pick up on some of those. First of all, as I mentioned at the top, the way that society deals with punishing children, I think really differs from generation to generation to generation, maybe starting like a few generations ago. Probably from like the dawn of human history until the 1940s or 1950s, it was pretty much all the same. Like physical punishment, I feel like, at least in Western cultures, I can't speak for every culture around the world, but at least in my culture was probably a lot of physical punishment for children. However, you know, my parents' generation is different from my generation. My generation is different than the current generation. So, things have changed a lot in recent years. And because of that, I want to ask you about when you were a child. I was a child mostly in the late 80s and early 90s, but I think you're about a decade younger than I am, right?

**Alina:** Yes, exactly. I think 10 years. Yeah, I was born in 1993.

**Andrew:** Yeah. So, there's about a decade between us there.

**Alina:** I would say, though, speaking of the culture that, you know, unfortunately, it's sad to say for me, but Russia is always behind, like good 50 years behind the entire, especially Western world. So, it's kind of, yeah, it's taking people a while to kind of, you know, keep up with the trends in the world.

**Andrew:** I can't say that I'm an expert on this topic. I really don't know what the correct way to punish a child is or discipline a child. And I'm sure this is what I really want to hear from our listeners, because I don't have a child. And Alina, you don't have children either. So, it's maybe difficult for us to talk about this, you know, these days, but I think a lot of our listeners do have children and they'll be able to chime in as they go through the experience of disciplining their children.

**Alina:** Firsthand.

**Andrew:** Yeah, firsthand experience. The people who do have that. And guys, if you're listening and you want to share your experience, our Discord is a great place to do that. So, we'll be looking forward to your comments. But you mentioned, first of all, that the main discipline style in your home was yelling and maybe verbal punishment.

**Alina:** Yeah.

**Andrew:** So, did you think that was effective? Like, if you were disciplined that way, did it change your behavior in the future?



**Alina:** I mean, I don't think it was effective. And I think it's just in general, like yelling, you know, not necessarily even at children, but adults as well. It can never really be effective because, like I said before, you don't really listen to the person while they're yelling. You're just kind of trying to, you're just hoping inside that it's over soon. You just want them to stop. You're not really getting what they're trying to tell you. And I mean, obviously, one of the worst things is, and for me, it's a big thing I'm working with, is that I kind of, you know, naturally children copy their parents. And I sometimes kind of, you know, find myself raising my voice when I, you know, wouldn't really like to, but it just happens. And like, you know, of course, I'm kind of trying to be aware. But I do understand, you know, I do have this like awareness that it's not really effective. And if I really want to get through to the person, it's ideal, you know, that I can speak calmly and maybe, you know, not quietly, but like just normal.

**Andrew:** Just normally.

**Alina:** Because that's how, you know, the person can actually hear you.

**Andrew:** Right.

**Alina:** As simple as that. I don't think it was effective. No, not really.

**Andrew:** The opposite of that, you also had **the silent treatment** where your mom, especially, would just kind of ignore you, maybe pretend like you're not around. And so, what kind of effect did that have on you? Did you think that was more effective?

**Alina:** Um, I mean, I don't really know exactly like what was supposed to happen. If you think about punishment, right, or any kind of like discipline, I guess the goal is ultimately to teach your child something. So, it has to be educational, right? You're like, you want to show them, like teach them a lesson. But I was just confused. I'll be honest. I think I would

learn a bit more, like I would have learned more from communication rather than like lack of it. It's just, it makes sense. Right? So, I wouldn't say it was more effective. I don't really want, I feel so bad, like criticizing my parents. You know, of course, it's a hard job, you know, being a parent.

**Andrew:** But like, I was going to say, your mom's probably just tired. She probably wasn't ignoring you. She was just like, "I just need a break."

**Alina:** They were all tired. You know, I have some friends who are parents, you know, I see them. They're like exhausted most of the time. And of course, it's difficult.

**Andrew:** It's a big job. Yeah. And I mean, I'm not here to criticize my parents either. I think that's a good point that you made Alina is that we usually learn from our parents. Right? So, I'm sure that the way that my parents punished me was, at least to an extent, based on the way that they were punished by their parents. I'm sure they did some self-reflection. And if they thought like, "Oh, that was really terrible. What my parents did to me, I'm never going to do that to my child." Then they probably changed some things. And I'm also sure, like, I'd have to go back and ask my parents, but I'm sure that when they were planning on having children, they did some reading and did some discussion. Maybe took some classes about, you know, how to raise a child. I'm sure they **didn't go into it blind**. Maybe they did, but I don't think so.

**Alina:** So, what about you, Andrew, and your parents? How did they try to teach you valuable lessons as a kid?

**Andrew:** I'd have to divide it into two parts, my childhood and being a teenager, because I think once I became a teenager, then they were a little bit more rational almost. And I think the kind of punishment that you were talking about that would be effective punishment, like teaching a lesson by talking things out and explaining why you feel a certain way or why

this is a good way to behave or not to behave. And that kind of focus was how they disciplined me as a teenager. But when I was a kid, it was mostly at least what I remember, mostly physical punishment. So, I was spanked whenever I did something wrong, especially some kind of big thing. My parents would hit me with a wooden spoon. That was like the punishment that I received.

**Alina:** Oh, wow.

**Andrew:** So, you know, like if you're baking or cooking and you have a wooden spoon, that was the instrument of the physical punishment. And I can say that it was not super painful. Like, don't think like I'm going to the hospital or something, but it would be painful enough where it would cause me to cry as a child. I remember getting spanked and being like, "I don't want to do that again." And being a little bit fearful of my parents.

**Alina:** So, it actually worked, I guess, on you?

**Andrew:** It's effective in a way. It's not like you learn the correct lesson about like, I shouldn't do this because it has this negative reaction. Like maybe if I do this thing, then I hurt one of my siblings. Or if I do this thing, I cause some other person to feel uncomfortable or something. Right? It's not like I learned that lesson. Instead, what it would teach me is if I do this thing, then I'm going to suffer. I'm going to get spanked and that's going to hurt. So, I learned to be fearful of the punishment. So, it did teach me a lesson, but it taught me like a totally different thing than intended. In Canada, in my generation, this was super common. This was not like something that was weird to me or like my friends were punished in a similar way.

**Alina:** It wasn't outrageous back in the day.

**Andrew:** It wasn't outrageous. However, if my parents did this these days in Canada, if they hit me with a wooden spoon on my butt, because that's usually where I would get spanked is on my butt. Then I think they would, you know, probably get a call from the government and maybe social services would be like, are you fit to raise your children? They'd probably be investigated and maybe even lose parenting privileges. Right? Like it's seen by the government these days as child abuse. So, it's really changed. And I think, I mean, I'm not sure. Maybe there are some communities, like some religious communities in Canada who claim like this is our religion and our way of raising children. Maybe they can still do it. But I have a feeling like it's pretty much illegal to discipline your child in this way.

**Alina:** It's interesting you're saying that because I actually Googled something prior to this episode, our conversation, in terms of like countries that made it illegal, like officially banned corporal punishment. And I just kind of went over them. There are 60 countries and Canada is not one of them. South Korea is. I think they banned it in 2021, like relatively recently. But like, yeah, neither Canada, you know, nor like Russia or America, you know, these big countries, they haven't quite like banned it at home. In schools, I think they did. Yes, but not at home. So, it's frowned upon for sure. You know, like, yeah, definitely these things kind of have changed, evolved, thankfully. But like in terms of how legal it is, I'm not sure. Like, probably could be grey area.

**Andrew:** Here's the thing. These days, I think if parents were to discipline their children in that way, they wouldn't be talking about it. It would be very much a secret because.

**Alina:** That's a good point. Yeah.

**Andrew:** Just society has this view of that kind of punishment these days as being immoral and a bad style of parenting. So, like I said, I don't want to really throw my parents under the bus and say that they were bad. I think to an extent it did work.

**Alina:** Like you said, you know, we don't have children and like it's easy for us to be like, "Oh, yeah, don't do that. It's so wrong." You know, absolutely. But then, you know, when you talk to actual parents and sometimes, they're just like so frustrated and, you know, it's just so difficult for them to just like, you know, actually think, and pause and, you know, be like rational, especially with younger kids, because it's actually like more difficult to explain to a younger child, you know, why something is wrong. But I would argue, though, that, you know, I have been, you know, OK, I just have to say something. I have been reading about, you know, parenting. I have been reading parenting books since I was a child.

**Andrew:** OK. Why? Getting ready for one day?

**Alina:** That's a good question, I guess. I was always trying to find like better ways, you know, it's not like, I don't know. It's just I remember very vividly, you know, going to the library and like really, you know, consuming a lot of content as to like how to parent, you know, for some reason. I don't know. It's kind of ridiculous as a child. Why would you be interested in something like that? But like these days, I am, you know, kind of still reading about it and watching stuff on YouTube and stuff. And I feel like it has been established pretty much, you know, by a lot of scientists and like psychologists that physical punishment is definitely not effective. Like it's not educational. And, you know, as common as it used to be. Yes. Because maybe people never really, you know, thought about any alternatives. But it is good to see that these days, you know, people actually are more kind of mindful about the ways they treat their children. And, you know, there is definitely more information about it, just like out there. So, it's just, yeah, it's better these days.

**Andrew:** Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I think it's nice that most societies around the world are thinking about these things, right? And questioning like, this is the way we've always done things. But does that make it right? And so, to take that step back and analyze it and yeah, hopefully grow, right? Hopefully we can find some better methods.

**Alina:** Exactly.

**Andrew:** I think these days and yeah, we'll have to throw it out to parents and see what they say. But I have a feeling that taking away a privilege is a big one, probably losing your phone privilege. But I think that would only work for older kids, though. Right?

**Alina:** Exactly. Like, how do you, you know, go about it with younger children? That's the question.

**Andrew:** Yeah. Have you ever seen like a kid without an iPad, like they have an iPad at a restaurant when they're eating dinner or something and then the parent takes it away when the food comes?

**Alina:** Tantrum. Yeah.

**Andrew:** Throw a tantrum, have a meltdown.

**Alina:** Oh, gosh. Yeah.

**Andrew:** So, it's very hard to communicate these things to children, right? So, Alina, knowing what you know from doing this kind of research and also your own experience, if you were a parent right now, how do you think you would discipline your child? What kind of methods would you use?

**Alina:** I mean, hypothetically, of course, I would definitely try to avoid, you know, anything physical at all costs. Because again, you know, just like kind of knowing all this. And I feel like that's the biggest problem maybe with our parents, that they didn't really know exactly what they're doing, like the consequences of this, because, you know, it does result in a lot of like mental health issues in the future, you know, to different extents. But of course, you

know, like it requires so much work. I feel like parents don't think enough about how they feel. And it actually does play a huge role in how they treat their children. Basically, you know, all these kind of reactions, like spanking and stuff. It is mostly to do with how parents feel, right? They just react on this impulse, like they are maybe upset, frustrated, and they end up punishing kids for something maybe that like they feel themselves, you know, and obviously that makes them feel even worse. But that kind of spirals it. And I feel like, you know, it's really hard to stop once you start. It's like you cross this line. So, I guess for me, you know, in the future, if I have children, it would be important just not to cross this line, as it is hard to go back, you know. But how? I mean, there are definitely healthier ways. Like, I'm not even sure, you know, a lot of people would, kind of, insist that punishment as a thing like should not really be introduced at all. Like, instead, maybe it's more about like teaching and guiding. And like, you know, even with smaller children, more of like, like very calm, you know, peaceful ways. And the most important thing is to actually maybe even emphasize the good behavior, like to maybe reward and encourage, you know, and notice more of the positive behavior, rather than just focusing on, you know, like punishing for bad behavior.

**Andrew:** I mean, I think those are great points. To be honest with you, Alina, I have never thought about this topic, how I would discipline a future child of mine. But what you've brought up is very interesting. To me, it seems like we almost need to have parents do a little time out before they discipline.

**Alina:** Exactly. Yeah.

**Andrew:** I never really thought about that before. But yeah, it makes it seem plausible that when I was being punished, maybe it was my parents who are demonstrating poor impulse control. Like maybe they were so angry in that moment because of me just driving them crazy, that the punishment that they enacted on me was more like them just being

stressed out and angry in that moment, and not really thinking about what was best for me. That was just like their outlet with that frustration.

OK, Alina, we are going to keep our conversation going just for a little while longer to say thank you to all of our wonderful Culips members who support us. So, some boco, we got three rapid-fire questions here. And Alina, I think you hinted on this one in the main episode but **set it straight** for us.

**Alina:** I actually did.

**Andrew:** Were you more often punished by your mother or your father?

**Alina:** As I mentioned before, it was definitely my mother pretty much all the time. I don't really know. Like, I know it is maybe more common for like mothers to be like these, you know, figures in the children's life, you know, that are kind of doing most of the disciplining and punishing. I know it varies though from family to family. But like, for me personally, yeah, it was mostly my mom, and my dad was just kind of there, you know? And I was... I mean, I did still respect both parents like, not just my mom, because she was so scary and punishing me all the time. But like there was something about my dad that his silent presence could sometimes be even stronger, you know, in terms of me actually learning something about what I did, rather than, you know, it tells you a lot, really, you think about it. I don't know if he was just like, if he was so insightful, or if he was just like quiet there, not really knowing what to do, but it actually worked somehow.

**Andrew:** You just have one sister, right?

**Alina:** I do. Yes. Little sister.



**Andrew:** Yeah. I wonder if that's like, because you were a girl, maybe it was like, the mom punishes the girls. And if you had a brother, I wonder if it would have been your father's duty, because I think I was disciplined equally by both parents, both would get mad at me from time to time. But I remember like, sometimes, if I did something that was worthy of being punished with like a spanking or something, it would be like, my mom would be like, "When your dad comes home, I'm going to tell him and he's going to spank you." So, it would be like, the dread of being like, "Ugh, when my dad gets off work and comes home, then I'm going to have to get spanked by my dad." And then I imagine for him, he's probably like home after a long day of work and be like, "Ugh, I gotta..." You know, he doesn't know what's going on. He probably doesn't want to do it. But my mom would make him do it. So yeah, I think equally, but most of the... the strong punishments always came from my father.

**Alina:** OK, maybe because you were a boy, maybe that's a good point. But again, yeah, it could vary.

**Andrew:** Yeah, yeah, who knows. So, Alina, you do have a sister, was she punished the same way as you?

**Alina:** It's a very good question, because I am absolutely sure. And like, we have actually talked about this with my parents, you know, multiple times, and they admit, you know, that my sister was not punished, like, nowhere, like nearly. They were not that hard on her like as they were on me. I don't know why, like, I've been trying to analyze this for my entire life, maybe. But I guess it's as simple as maybe they've learned something along the way. Like maybe, you know, they like trial and error. I **was** a bit of a like, **guinea pig**, first child, you know, they tried some things with me, and then my sister came along. But at the same time, I feel like we are very different, my sister and I, so she is a little bit more kind of like, agreeable, you know, she would say sorry, I would be like, "No!" I had this like, very strong sense of justice, you know, I wouldn't just apologize if I didn't believe that I, you know, and

she's different. She's just like, yeah, I'm gonna do everything just to get it over with. So that was a big kind of difference between us, I guess. But then I talked to a lot of people. And like, I feel like it's a, again, some kind of tendency that parents tend to just like, be harder on their like, older children for some reason.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I think that was true for my family as well. I feel like my sister got really let off the hook. In a lot of ways, my brother and I, we both paved the way for her.

**Alina:** That's a good way to put it.

**Andrew:** When you are a parent, if you have multiple children, the first time that one of your children does something, it could be scary, right? Like, especially like, when I was a teenager, I remember, I'd want to take the car out, I'd want to go meet my friends at night, I want to stay out late, do all these teenager things, right? But my parents would be like, "No, you got to come home by this time. You can't take the car out." Blah, blah, blah, these like strict rules, right? Well, when my sister had to do that, and she was at that age where she wanted to do those things, it was like, "Yeah, go nuts. Yeah, you got your freedom." You know? And I was like, "What? That's so not fair. Like, I wasn't allowed to do those things and now she is?" But they're probably scared, like, oh, Andrew's gonna get in a car accident, or he's going to hang out with like, bad people or get mixed up in the wrong crowd or something, right? But then when they learn, like, oh, that didn't happen to Andrew, didn't happen to Andrew's brother, then, you know, it's like, the rules were loosened for my sister. So, they're like, "Oh, it's not as bad, you know, nothing's gonna happen to them." But the first time it happens, they're probably, you know, pretty nervous that something bad could happen. So maybe that's, that's what it is. But I feel like my sister got a much easier go of things.

**Alina:** My sister definitely got away with so many things, you know, I didn't, like, in terms of, you know, even like my school kind of stuff, you know, grades and all of that. I do know,

I, for sure, I've been there, I've seen, she was like, my mom was like, you know, well, you know, you know, they're not so important, these grades. And I was like, wait a minute. I remember that, you know, you said something differently, different to me, like, you know, what happened? Like, what's the story now? What changed?

**Andrew:** I wonder if your parents had different expectations for both of you.

**Alina:** I feel like **I set the bar really high**, and she didn't, my sister, so maybe it was very smart on her end.

**Andrew:** OK, last question here, Alina, do you ever remember being punished for something that you didn't do? Do you have any memories about that?

**Alina:** So, I did. Yeah, I did think about it. I'm pretty sure that it might have happened. Because as I said, you know, like, very strong sense of justice, I would always be like, no, you know, that's unfair. I don't remember anything specific, anything in particular. Like, I do know this about, you know, myself, that I don't really dwell on these, like, negative things in life. It's very difficult for me to remember, like, negative things. And I'll be honest, in preparation for this episode, I sat down and like, try to, like, dig, you know, deep and try to kind of jog my memory and, you know, see how many things I can remember, but not really. I mean, I'm pretty sure, you know, OK, I'll tell you that I might have thought it wasn't fair, but my mom probably, you know, had her own opinion on this matter. So, at the time, yeah, I wasn't maybe always, I didn't always agree that I deserved that punishment. But I feel like maybe, yeah, my parents, they thought they did. So, what about you?

**Andrew:** We're similar in that way that I don't like to dwell on, you know, something negative that happened in the past. And so it would be, yeah, unlikely that I would hold on to that and remember something. But yeah, I don't ever remember, although I'm sure it happened, because like, my brother and me were only two years apart. So, we are always

probably blaming each other for things trying to get out of trouble, right? Like "I didn't do it, it was him!" blaming each other and trying to get out of trouble. And I'm sure that sometimes my brother was successful at that. And I got in trouble for something that he did. But also, probably I got out of some trouble sometimes and managed to place the blame on him. So, I'm sure probably equaled out in the end. But yeah, nothing major comes to mind. Alina, before we wrap up here, you mentioned earlier that your mom had like a really unique kind of weird way of disciplining you sometimes. Do you want to share with our audience what that was?

**Alina:** Yeah, so she would get creative, because, you know, I guess most of the traditional punishment methods didn't work on me. She would do that thing when she would like have me learn Pushkin, you know, very famous Russian poet.

**Andrew:** The poet, yep.

**Alina:** And she would like, yeah, make me learn his poems by heart and then come back to her and like recite all these poems. Like, I don't even know exactly like where she like how she came up with that idea. My sister did the same thing, actually, we just talked about it recently. But the best part here is that I actually like benefited massively from this because as a part like our, you know, school curriculum, we actually had to learn a lot of Pushkin's poems, and I did not have to do anything. I already, I was ready. So, I was just like, yeah, I can just recite 10 poems to you right away, you know, just like without any preparation. So, it's kind of paid off in the end.

**Andrew:** You know, that seems like a good way to punish a child, right?

**Alina:** Kind of, you know, like it's still hard, but it's educational.

**Andrew:** Educational, it benefited you in life in the future. Yeah, it seems like maybe that's a nice approach to take with discipline.

**Alina:** Just an idea.

**Andrew:** So, do you still remember some to this day? It's probably like burned in your mind.

**Alina:** I mean, that's a good question. I would probably be able to like remember parts of those poems, not maybe, you know, the entire things. But yeah, for sure. Like, if you give me the beginning, I'd probably give you the next line, something like that, engraved on my memory.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I kind of like that. I think that's a nice punishment.

**Alina:** Yeah, interesting one.

**Andrew:** Yeah. All right. Well, Alina, thank you for joining us today. It was an interesting conversation.

**Alina:** Thank you.

**Andrew:** That brings us to the end of this lesson. Talk to you next time. Bye.

## Detailed Explanations

### To stick one's nose somewhere

Idiomatic verb

Alina explains that as a child, she was very curious and was always getting herself into trouble. She says, "I was definitely a troublemaker. I was definitely always getting myself into trouble. You know, I was like a very curious child, **sticking my nose everywhere**, you know..."

The verb **to stick one's nose somewhere** means to get involved in situations or matters that are not your business or concern. For example, if someone is always asking about personal matters that don't involve them, you might say **they are sticking their nose where it doesn't belong**.

Another example could be if a colleague keeps asking about your private emails or work that is not part of their job. You could say they are **sticking their nose into your business**, implying they are being too curious or nosy.

The origin of the phrase comes from the idea of literally putting your nose where it doesn't belong, like an animal sniffing around. It suggests being overly curious or meddlesome. Just like a dog sticking its nose into everything, being overly curious about things that don't concern you is described as **sticking your nose somewhere**.

Some similar expressions include "to meddle," "to snoop around," or "to poke around."

Here are a few more examples with **to stick one's nose somewhere**:

**Dave:** Why is Mark acting so secretive lately? I want to know what he's up to.

**Alice:** Dave, you **shouldn't stick your nose where it doesn't belong**. If Mark wants to tell us, he will.

**Dave:** OK, you're right.

**Emily:** I've been seeing a lot of strange people coming in and out of Mr. Thompson's house lately. Do you think he's hiding something? Who do you think it could be?

**Richard:** **Stop sticking your nose into his business**. It's probably nothing important.

**Emily:** I don't know... I think he's got a secret and I want to find out what it is.

## The silent treatment

Noun

Alina tells Andrew that one of the ways her mother disciplined her as a child was by giving her **the silent treatment**.

**The silent treatment** means intentionally ignoring someone or refusing to speak to them as a way of showing displeasure or punishing them. For example, if someone is upset with a friend and decides not to talk to them for a while, they are giving that friend **the silent treatment**. Another example could be if a partner is angry after an argument and chooses not to communicate for a few days. This is also called “**giving the silent treatment**,” meaning that they are using silence as a form of punishment or protest.

Be careful not to use the expression **the silent treatment** to describe someone who is just quiet or shy. **The silent treatment** specifically means to intentionally use silence as a form of punishment or protest.

For example:

- Incorrect: "He's very shy and gives everyone **the silent treatment**."
- Correct: "After our argument, he started giving me **the silent treatment**."

Some similar expressions include “giving someone the cold shoulder” and “icing someone out.” However, **the silent treatment** refers to almost no communication at all. “Giving someone the cold shoulder” or “icing someone out” can refer to being cold and unkind to someone when communicating, or purposefully not inviting them to social plans.

Here are a few more examples with **the silent treatment**:

**Mark:** Amelia hasn't responded to my texts all week.

**Olivia:** Maybe she's giving you **the silent treatment** after your argument.

**Mark:** I think you're right. I wish she would just talk to me.

**Ryan:** Honey, just talk to me.

**Beth:** ...

**Ryan:** This is getting ridiculous. Why are you acting like a child? Stop giving **me the silent treatment** and tell me why you're mad at me.

## To go into something blind

Idiomatic verb

Andrew explains to Alina that his parents probably did a lot of reading and took classes to prepare for raising children. He says, "I'm sure **they didn't go into it blind**. Maybe they did, but I don't think so."

The idiomatic verb **to go into something blind** means to start doing something without any preparation, knowledge, or information about it. For example, if you start a new job without any training, **you are going into the job blind**. Another example is if you try cooking a new recipe without reading the instructions first. This means you are starting without knowing what to expect, so **you're going in blind**.

The origin of the expression comes from the idea of being physically blind, meaning you cannot see. When you **go into something blind**, it's like walking into a situation without being able to see what's ahead. You have no information or guidance, just like a blind person cannot see their surroundings.

Fun fact – when you go on a date with someone you've never met before, that's called a **blind date**. It's a date that **you're going into blind**!

Here are a few more examples with **to go into something blind**:

**Jeffrey:** Did you see the trailer for that new vampire movie?

**Rosa:** No, I didn't, and please don't tell me about it. I love that director and **I want to go into** the viewing experience **blind**. I don't want a single spoiler.

**Jeffrey:** OK, I won't tell you anything. We definitely have to see it when it comes out, though!

**Victor:** Are you going anywhere interesting during your summer holidays?

**Barbara:** Yes, actually. My parents are bringing me along on their trip to Japan.

**Victor:** Wow, how exciting! Have you been reading about any Japanese customs and cultural practices?

**Barbara:** No, I don't really have time to do that. I'll just see what it's like when I get there.

**Victor:** Hmm. I think it might be smarter to do a little preparation first. If **you go into** the trip **blind**, you might accidentally end up behaving rudely during your travels.



## To be a guinea pig

### Expression

Alina explains to Andrew that her parents were not as strict with her younger sister because they learned from their experiences with her. She says, "I **was a bit of a guinea pig**, first child, you know, they tried some things with me, and then my sister came along."

The expression **to be a guinea pig** means to be used in an experiment or test to see if something works or how it affects someone. For example, if a new medicine is being tested, the people who try it first **are guinea pigs**. Another example is if a teacher is trying out a new teaching strategy on her students, those students **are the guinea pigs** for the experimental teaching method.

The origin of the expression comes from the idea of using guinea pigs (small, furry animals often kept as pets) in scientific experiments. These animals were often used to test new medicines and treatments because they were thought to have many biological similarities to humans.

A common mistake to avoid is using **to be a guinea pig** to describe someone who is just learning something new. It specifically means being part of an experiment or test. For example:

- Incorrect: "He's trying to learn a new language, so **he's a guinea pig**."
- Correct: "He's testing a new language learning app, so **he's the company's guinea pig**."

Some similar expressions include "test subject" or "lab rat."

Here are a few more examples with **to be a guinea pig**:

**Christopher:** My company is testing a new app, and they asked me to use it first.

**Josie:** Oh, so **you're the guinea pig**? How is it so far?

**Christopher:** It's pretty good. I'm finding a few bugs, but that's the point of testing it.

**Kyle:** How was your first physical therapy appointment?

**Ilana:** A little bit uncomfortable. I **felt like a guinea pig** when the physical therapist was investigating the source of my pain. She kept gasping and frantically taking notes whenever she asked me to do basic tests like walking in a straight line or lifting my leg.

## To set the bar high

Idiomatic verb

Alina says that her parents were stricter with her than with her sister. She tells Andrew, "I feel like **I set the bar really high**, and she didn't, my sister, so maybe it was very smart on her end." Here, Alina means she always tried to get high grades at school, so her parents had high expectations for her. However, her sister didn't study as hard at school, so the expectation was lower for her sister.

The expression **to set the bar high** means to establish a high standard or level of expectation. For example, if someone performs very well in a task or job, they set the bar high for others who will follow.

The origin of the phrase comes from the world of sports, specifically the high jump or pole vault, where a bar is set at a certain height that athletes must jump over. **Setting the bar high** means placing it at a challenging height.

A common mistake to avoid is using **to set the bar high** to describe something that is just difficult. It specifically refers to establishing a high standard or expectation.

For example:

- Incorrect: "Climbing this mountain **sets the bar high**."
- Correct: "Her excellent performance **sets the bar high** for future employees."

You can also say **to set the bar low**, as in, "The person I replaced at work was really lazy, so **he set the bar pretty low** for me. My boss is just happy that I show up to work."

Here are a few more examples with **to set the bar high**:

**Becky:** Our team did an amazing job on this project. We really **set the bar high** for the next one.

**Nathan:** I agree. It will be hard to match this level of success.

**Jason:** The first speaker at the conference was incredible. I got really nervous because **she set the bar so high**. I ended up doing pretty poorly on my presentation.

**Tiffany:** I'm sure you actually did much better than you think you did.

## To set something straight

Idiomatic verb

Andrew asks Alina to clarify a point they discussed earlier in the episode. He says, "Alina, I think you hinted on this one in the main episode but **set it straight for us**. Were you more often punished by your mother or your father?"

The expression **to set something straight** means to correct a misunderstanding or to clarify the truth about a situation. For example, if people have the wrong idea about why you missed a meeting, you might want **to set it straight** by explaining the real reason. Another example would be a rumor going around that you are dating your coworker when you actually aren't. You can **set it straight** by explaining that you two are just friends.

The origin of the phrase comes from the idea of making something straight or clear, just like straightening a crooked line. It means to make sure that everyone understands the correct information and removes any confusion.

A common mistake to avoid is using **to set something straight** to describe simply giving information. It specifically means correcting a misunderstanding or clarifying something that is not clear. For example:

- Incorrect: "**I set it straight** by telling them my name."
- Correct: "**I set it straight** by explaining that I missed the meeting because of a family emergency."

Some similar expressions "to clear up," "to clarify," or "to straighten something out."

Here are a couple more examples with **to set something straight**:

**Monica:** I heard you didn't go to the party because you were upset with Lily.

**Eric:** What?! That's not true! I was just feeling sick.

**Monica:** Really? Well, everyone thinks it's because of your argument with Lily.

**Eric:** Oh no. I need to **set things straight** with everyone. I'm going to text the group chat and explain.

**Polly:** Lucas, I wanted to talk to you about something. Are you familiar with our policy on romantic relationships in the office?

**Lucas:** Woah, woah. Is this about Nancy? Let me **set this straight** – we are NOT dating.

## Quiz

**1. Your friend tells you, "I need to set something straight." What do you think she is going to say next?**

- a) Something confusing
- b) Something that will clarify a misunderstanding
- c) A joke to make you laugh
- d) An unrelated story

**2. When someone "sticks their nose somewhere," what are they doing?**

- a) Smelling something
- b) Ignoring a situation
- c) Getting involved in someone else's business
- d) Cleaning up a mess

**3. What does giving someone "the silent treatment" involve?**

- a) Speaking softly to someone
- b) Deliberately ignoring someone or refusing to speak to them
- c) Complimenting someone frequently
- d) Writing a letter to someone.

**4. In what context might someone be a "guinea pig"?**

- a) While cooking a meal for friends
- b) When taking a vacation
- c) While studying for an exam
- d) When trying out a new medical treatment

**5. Which of the following is a good example of "going in blind"?**

- a) Starting a new job without any training
- b) Planning every detail of a trip in advance
- c) Reading the instructions before assembling furniture
- d) Studying extensively before an exam.

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## Listening Comprehension Quiz

- 6) What does "to take away a privilege" mean, according to Andrew?
- 7) When he was a kid, what did Andrew do with his siblings that ended up getting him in trouble with his parents?
- 8) Do Andrew and Alina have children of their own?
- 9) Was Alina more often punished by her mother or her father?
- 10) What unique method of punishment related to poetry did Alina's mother use on her daughter?

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## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What are the most common forms of punishment that parents use? Which forms did your parents use on you? Looking back on this, do you agree or disagree with these forms of punishment?
2. How can parents discipline their children without using punishment? Are there alternative methods that you think are more effective?
3. Andrew and Alina talked about parents using **the silent treatment** as a form of punishment. Do you think **the silent treatment** is an effective way to discipline someone? Why or why not?
4. Alina mentioned that her parents were stricter with her than with her younger sister. Do you think it is common for parents to be stricter with their first child? Why or why not? How do you think this affects sibling relationships?
5. How do you think parental discipline styles have changed over the years? What factors have influenced these changes, and do you think the changes are for the better or worse?

## Quiz Answers

1.b    2.c    3.b    4.d    5.a

6. "To take away a privilege" means removing a special right or enjoyable activity as a form of punishment. For example, parents might take away a child's Nintendo controller, meaning the child can see the Nintendo but cannot play it. This is done to correct or discipline the child for their behavior.

7. He got into trouble for making his siblings do some things that were a little bit dangerous, such as getting his sister to play hockey goalie and taking slap shots at her.

8. No, they do not.

9. Alina was more often punished by her mother.

10. Alina's mother made her memorize and recite poems by the famous Russian poet, Pushkin.

### Episode credits

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