

Ep #14 Compound effect of behavior skills

In this episode, we talk about the compound effect. This is episode 14. Let's get started.

Smarter Parenting welcomes you to our podcast series, The Parenting Coach for ADHD. Here to heal and elevate lives is your parenting coach, Siope Kinikini.

Hey everybody. I hope everybody's doing great. I am super happy to be here today, not talk to you about something that is important for parents to understand. It's called a compound effect. And the compound effect is something that will help parents to understand that even the little changes that you make day to day have long term consequences or rewards. Okay?

So let me give you an example other this idea of compound effect in a different sense. So in the financial world, we have what is called compound interest. We all know what that is. So we put in a little bit at the beginning, and over time it starts to double, and it grows really fast. So for example, I've been working at my job, and I've been investing in my future in a 401K plan. Now in doing that, I was initially giving a small portion of that, and as I continually add on to that, and my employer contributes to that, the amount of return is increasing, incrementally increasing over time. To where now I am making quite a bit in retirement money. Right?

It's this idea that just little bit here, and over time it makes more. An increase of more is what we're looking at. And the same principle exists when you're talking about compound effect for behavioral issues and the way that you interact with your child. So if you are noticing some behavioral issues with your child, and you're investing something to address the behavior, and you continually do that over time, there's this compound effect that happens with your child and that type of behavior, and that specific behavior. Because you are consistent over time, the ability for them to adjust and to change increases. And eventually gets to a point where it's so big that they are able to make the adjustment without any difficult at all, right?

Now what would it be like if your child didn't have any behavioral issues? Well, first off that's impossible. We all know that. We're not seeking to make them into robots, and they obey everything we do because we want them to be individuals and make decisions. And we want them to grow, be happy. So we don't want them to, you know, exactly do everything that we say, but we do want them to make good choices, and we want them to be able to tell the different between right and wrong. And they're going to make mistakes, and that's okay, but they can understand that because there are consequences to behaviors, and they can move forward. So investing some time and just doing little bits here and there over the long term, if you are consistent, will reap some major rewards for you as a parent.

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Now, what does that look like when we are talking about Smarter Parenting and the [skills that you find on the Smarter Parenting website](#)? What that looks like is making even just the small investment of time now in a skill, and then practicing that. Every day for the next couple of weeks, you're going to notice that there's going to be an incremental change. The difficulty a lot of times that parents have is that implement something, and because the change is so gradual over time, they don't realize that changes are happening. Right? They don't.

Unless they've kept a record at the beginning. They're like, okay, this is the behavior, this is what it will look like, and then they go along this path with their child, and then they're able to look back. That's why journals are so great. Because we often forget where we were unless we've journaled it, and we've written it down, and then we go back, and we're like, wow, okay. That's where I was? Holy cow! I've changed a lot. Right? You have this marker, and you can tell.

Compound interest works that way in that it's kind of a surprising, subtle thing that happens. And unless you are, like, super aware and have been documenting it, you are not going to notice the positive changes that are happening, because they're just so gradual and so... Become so ingrained in what's happening with you and your child that it's in a lot of ways unnoticeable, right? And yet at the same time, you will reach a point where you're like, holy cow! Things are working great! Things are going really, really well.

I was coaching a parent online. We were doing a coaching session. And we notice the difference in, because I had recorded the initial coaching session with her, with all her issues and all the problems she was having with her children. And then compared it with where we were at the end, and she implemented everything that we had talked about over the course. But she didn't keep track. So in going back and looking at the previous footage, she was shocked at where she was. I mean, she was like, "Holy cow! That's what I was going through? I didn't realize that, because that is not even a problem anymore." Right?

And when we compared it to where she is now, it was like, huh. She's doing great. You know, we're dealing with other problems, but everything we were working on initially just kind of disappeared because she was doing these small changes along the way. That's the whole concept behind being consistent over time, which is why we make the recommendations we do. The skills are super easy to learn and to implement, and it's that consistency over time that's going to make the biggest difference, and actually help ingrain that into their behavior and into your parenting style with them that will really make a huge reward and payoff in the end.

Okay, so for this idea of the compound effect, one of the things that I really want people to remember, and parents to remember, is that small things along the way make huge difference over the course of your child's life. Gradual change is more effective than abrupt change. Right? Let me say that again. Gradual change is better than abrupt change. And the reason why gradual change is better is because it becomes more of a habit to us, and it becomes more natural over time. Abrupt change can change things for a while, but a lot of times we revert back to what we have consistently done in the past.

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So the idea that compound behavioral changes are so powerful, that idea that it's so powerful comes from that idea that we as people tend to default to what we know, and what we are comfortable with. And so if we make changes, changes should be gradual and over time, because those are the most effective ways to make behaviors work and stick. We don't want to spend time changing behavior for a short period, and then having to go back and readdress them later. Right? We want to make changes that actually over time continually improve. Right, so there's gradual incline, rather than trying to do this huge thing.

The same thing can be said about exercise, right? So going to the gym, for example. You can go to the gym after not going to the gym, and you can work out at 100%. And if you do that, the next day you're going to be sore, tired, and unmotivated to go back and continue because your body just rejects that. Right? If you do it gradually, you go out, and you haven't exercised for a while. You go to the gym, and then you start off smaller, and with lower intensity, and then you continually build on that, and its consistency over time, you're going to see changes happen. You're going to see your body respond better to what's happening, and actually that change that's happening gradually will have long term benefits. And you will be able to reach your goals! Right?

So it's kind of a universal truth that the compound effect is the most powerful way to bring about change, both physically and also emotionally, and with behaviors with your child. Right? Remember, gradual change is better than abrupt change. So you want to make gradual changes over time, being consistent. And that way you can be more successful.

So with your [ADHD child](#), this is going to look really different than say, children that don't struggle with ADHD. Because the consistency over time is elongated. I mean, it will take a little more time for them to adapt and adjust. And then on top of that, you're dealing with addressing behaviors that may come up that interfere with what you're trying to teach them. Right?

So say, for example, that you want your child to follow your rules, right? For a child that does not have ADHD, you would establish a behavior plan, you'll have rewards and consequences, for example. You will set down what the expectation is, and you will work with them on that. With a child with ADHD, one day you can be addressing that, and then the next day they can be full on inattentive, and full on hyperactive. Another day, and so you're dealing with these varying moods and emotions that are popping up while you're trying to establish this compound effect, right? And teach them to follow the rules.

So the idea is is that you would have to adjust. Right? And that's where a lot of parents become exhausted, because they're like, oh, man, I have to adjust now to this behavior. And it does. It gets exhausting. What you want to do is you want to focus on the goal. The goal is to teach your child how to follow instructions, right? And if that's the goal, then you want to be able to actually teach at multiple levels of where they're at.

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In full tantrum mode, what does that look like? When they are inattentive, what does it look like? When they're hyperactive, what does it look like? That actually takes a little more time because you're adjusting to those things, but at the same time, you really should look at it as a blessing because now you're teaching this particular skill, following instructions, in different ways, right? Which is actually makes the compound effect even more powerful. Because you're adjusting to whatever's happening, but staying consistent to the goal of whatever it is you're teaching, which is in this case, [Following Instructions](#). Right?

And the variation of being able to do that actually helps your child absorb the way that they need to behave better than say only having a child that's consistently one way, and then you're teaching a skill that way, and then when they finally have a tantrum, they don't know what to do because they're unfamiliar with what needs to be done. So in a way you should be grateful if your child's moods are changing, and adjusting. And that you're teaching to those. Right? That's a good thing. That's a good thing. Because that is a compound buildup that actually adjusts for anything that may happen along the way.

So at the same time, like I said before, it can make it a little more difficult for you. Because now instead of just teaching this one straight level of how to do things, you're actually adjusting for wherever your child is, to make up the difference. Right? So remain focused. Set a goal for what it is you want your child to learn, and regardless of the mood, regardless of the behavior, you want to be teaching consistently and stay focused on that. And don't get swallowed up in the emotion of the moment or in the, you know, the chaos of the moment.

I've seen it so many times where a lot of parents, as seen as the child tantrums, the child actually gains more control over the situation, because the parent is drawn in to the tantrum. Right? And so it becomes less about what they wanted to address, and more about control. Right? We're going to control this child, and then we'll go back and we'll address what we're trying to do. My suggestion again for parents is to remain consistent what you're teaching your child, and if they do throw the tantrum, then you offer the consequence, you take the time to step away. Disengage. Because a lot of times the engagement escalates the tantrum behavior. And especially if there are other people around. You know, they know you're uncomfortable, and so they want to continually push so they can get a response out of you. So you want to be very cautious.

So you can disengage as much as you want, but you want to stay consistent to what it is that you're teaching. And then bring them back in. That way you're in control and you're actually bringing them back into what you're discussing, rather than feeding into what they're doing, and then they know that they can lead you wherever they want based on how big the tantrum is. Does that make sense?

I know. You know what? We could talk about this, like, forever because there are just so many aspects to it, and it's... I wish we could just sit down and have some tea and talk about it, and really kind of get into exactly how this works, and how this... Different things you should

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consider when you're working with a child who's misbehavior tries to throw you off task. Right? But again, stay on task. Stay consistent with what it is you're trying to teach your child. Disengage if you need to, engage when you need to. But stay consistent on that topic.

Parents maybe wonder, well, why wouldn't I address the behavior that they're exhibiting? Again, that actually gives them the power, and it's a distraction. You end up focusing more on the power struggle. The other part is that if you're able to do that, you actually are showing your child exactly how to behave in chaos. You're actually setting some really good boundaries about what you are going to do if they decide to tantrum. Right?

And once they understand, they will realize, oh, okay, so regardless of what I do, my parent's going to be pretty consistent, and we're going to stay focused on what we need to do. That with the compound effect will teach them how to better behave when they don't like something. Right? Or better behave when they're confronted with something. They're not as easily distracted because they know they have to go back and focus on what it is they need to do.

You're actually showing them, this is how you focus. Right? This is how we're going to focus. This is what we're going to do. We're going to focus on this; this is what we're going to do. Instead of, oh, you're throwing a tantrum, okay, now it's about your tantrum. Now it's about whatever's going on. Being consistent that way over time, and again as I said, over time, this compound effect will take place, and the gradual change is always the more effective change. Right? There's an abrupt change. And you may not even notice it unless you document it. But changes will happen in a short amount of time, even small ones.

And over time those small ones will incrementally increase until you have a child that you don't recognize like the mother I was coaching who didn't recognize who she was previously because she had addressed those slowly, and it just became a way of life [inaudible 00:16:55]. And when she went back and looked, she's like, "Wow, I didn't even realize that was me. Right?" It was a surprise for her.

Again, compound interest. I'm thinking money. Because we all want money, right? Compound effect. The idea of compound effect, and the importance of understanding that concept will be super helpful for you. So if you are feeling like I'm only doing this really small piece, and it's insignificant, it's not important. It is absolutely important. Absolutely important. It's the building blocks of smaller things that make a difference over time. Right?

Take a building, for example. A building takes small bricks. And it takes one brick, one brick, one brick. And you just keep stacking those until you end up with a huge building. Right? Each of those bricks have significance. They are important. And if you are willing to just insert just one brick at a time over time you'll have a wall, and pretty soon you'll have sides, and then you'll have a roof. And you'll have everything built and established where it needs to be. But stay focused on establishing those bricks. You know what I mean?

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So compound effect. You want to be... You just invest. Invest some time, as little as you need to. I mean, as much as you need to. Just invest, and put some time and effort into small things that over time gradually build to bigger things. It is a universal law, I honestly believe that when it comes to parenting that if you do those small investments over time, you will reach the goals that you want to reach. Right?

So that's it for me, you know, this week. What more is there to say, really? Kind of just built this whole thing, right? That's it for me. I'm so glad that I was able to share a little bit more... Scratch that. Cut that out. Okay. That's it for me. So next week. I'm excited to share more about ADHD parenting. If this podcast has been helpful for you, or this vlog has been helpful for you, please subscribe and give us a rating, and share it with a friend or someone you know who could benefit from learning more about ADHD and about parenting. Yeah, that's it. Thanks for joining me. I'll see you later. Bye!

For more information on the behavior skills of the Teaching-Family Model check out the following resources:

[Ep 2: What is best behavior interventions or medication?](#)

[What are good parenting skills? Why parents need behavior skills](#)

[What can Smarter Parenting do for me?](#)

[Confession: I should have used the skills](#)

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