

**FELIX  
ADLER**



**THE PUNISHMENT  
OF CHILDREN**

**Felix Adler**

# **The Punishment of Children**

EAN 8596547206217

DigiCat, 2022

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It is man's moral duty to act as the physician of his enemies and seek to cure them of their wrongdoing. How much more, then, should this attitude be taken toward those whom we love—toward our children, if we find their characters marred by serious faults?

In discussing the subject of punishment I do not for a moment think of covering the innumerable problems which it suggests. Many books have been written on this subject; prolonged study and the experience of a lifetime are barely sufficient for a mastery of its details. I shall content myself with suggesting a few simple rules and principles, and shall consider my object gained if I induce my hearers to enter upon a closer investigation of the delicate and manifold questions involved.

## **1. NEVER ADMINISTER PUNISHMENT IN ANGER**

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The first general rule to which I would refer is, *never administer punishment in anger*. A saying of Socrates deserves to be carefully borne in mind. Turning one day upon his insolent servant, Speucippus, who had subjected him to great annoyance, he exclaimed, "I should beat you now, sirrah, were I not so angry with you." The practice of most men is the very opposite; they beat and punish because they are angry.