

Alternatives to CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Comic 2

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I am going to beat my son. His teacher told me that he has been missing school. You have a teenage boy don't you? How do you make him behave?

My son's name is Isak. He is 15, almost as big as me now. We have some difficult moments, but our relationship is mostly very good – I think it is because I have never beaten him.

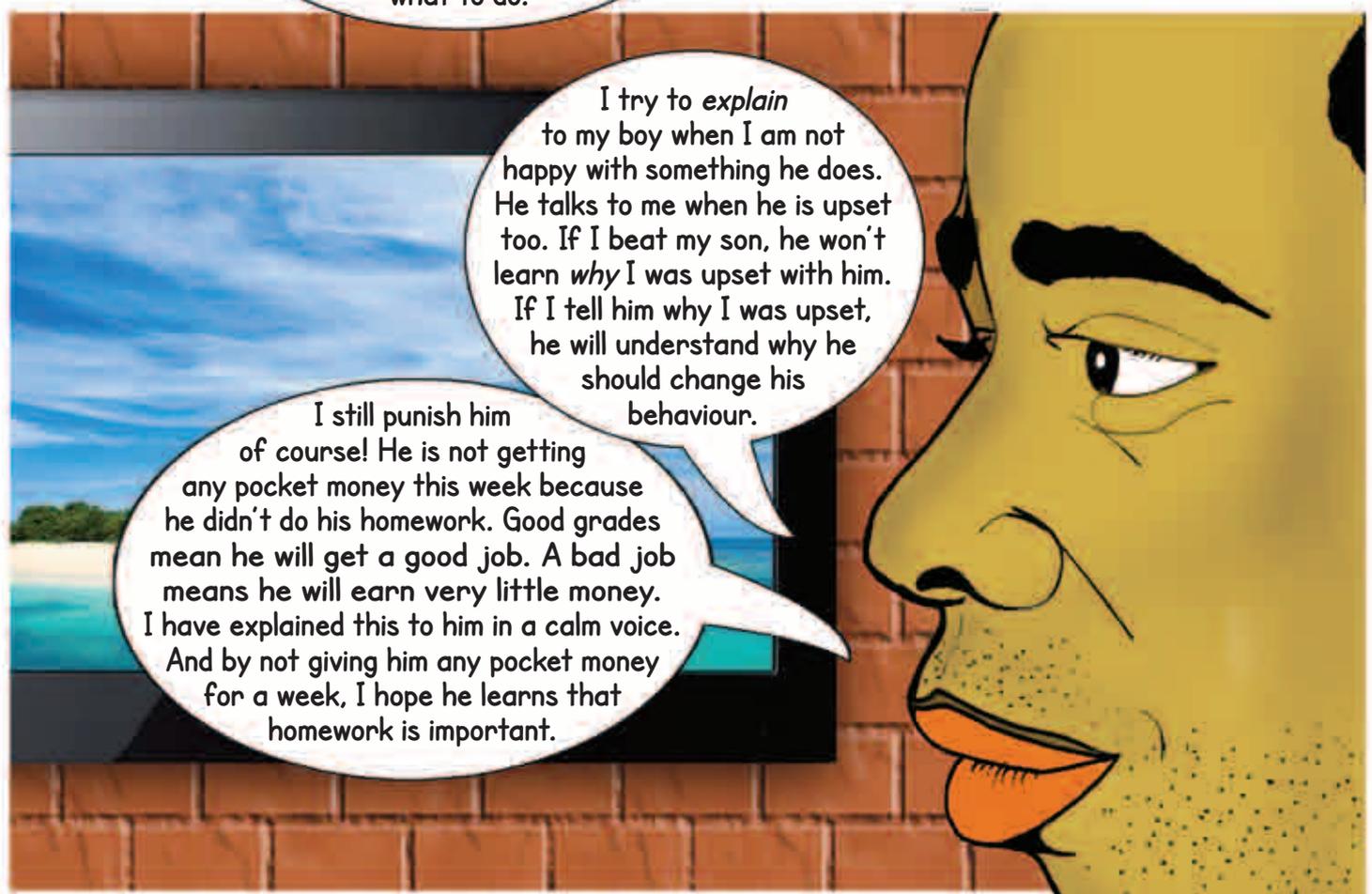
What??!!!





I'm trying to teach Izak right from wrong without hitting him. If hitting worked, a lot of kids should be perfect by now!

But my son Sam keeps making the same mistakes. I really don't know what to do.



I try to *explain* to my boy when I am not happy with something he does. He talks to me when he is upset too. If I beat my son, he won't learn *why* I was upset with him. If I tell him why I was upset, he will understand why he should change his behaviour.

I still punish him of course! He is not getting any pocket money this week because he didn't do his homework. Good grades mean he will get a good job. A bad job means he will earn very little money. I have explained this to him in a calm voice. And by not giving him any pocket money for a week, I hope he learns that homework is important.



But when I am angry I can't be calm.

With practise, you can learn to control your anger. If you feel angry, don't punish your son until your temper has cooled. Punishing someone in anger is not a good idea.



We had a teacher once who never hit *anyone*, yet he had the best-behaved class in the school. They all got good grades too. I went back to the school when my son was young to find out how I could be the best Dad I could be.

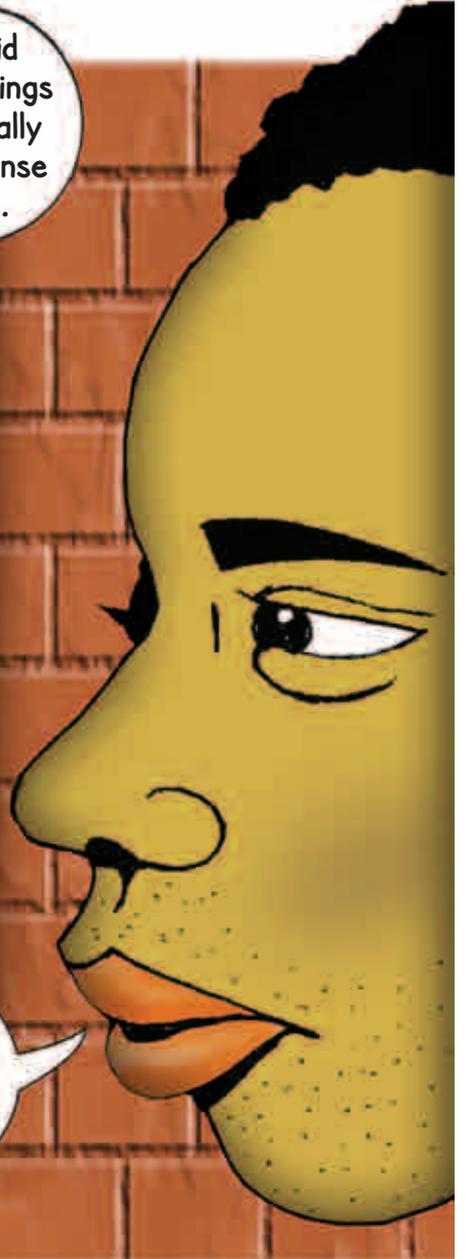
What did he say?
Did he tell you his secrets?

He said a few things that really made sense to me.

1. Corporal punishment can turn into abuse, as adults start to hit harder and harder. At a certain point the beating becomes violence.
2. Kids who are beaten learn that violence is acceptable so they start to hit younger kids, or they may hit their own children or partner when they grow up.
3. Kids who are beaten often do less well at school, and are less able to have good relationships with their families and friends.



I learnt that I have to communicate with my son right from the start. And that if I respect him, he will respect me.





But my son *must* respect me — I'm his father!

I am trying to build a good relationship with Isak. That way, when problems do happen we can talk about them. If I do have to punish him, he knows that I am punishing him for a good reason.

Eh?



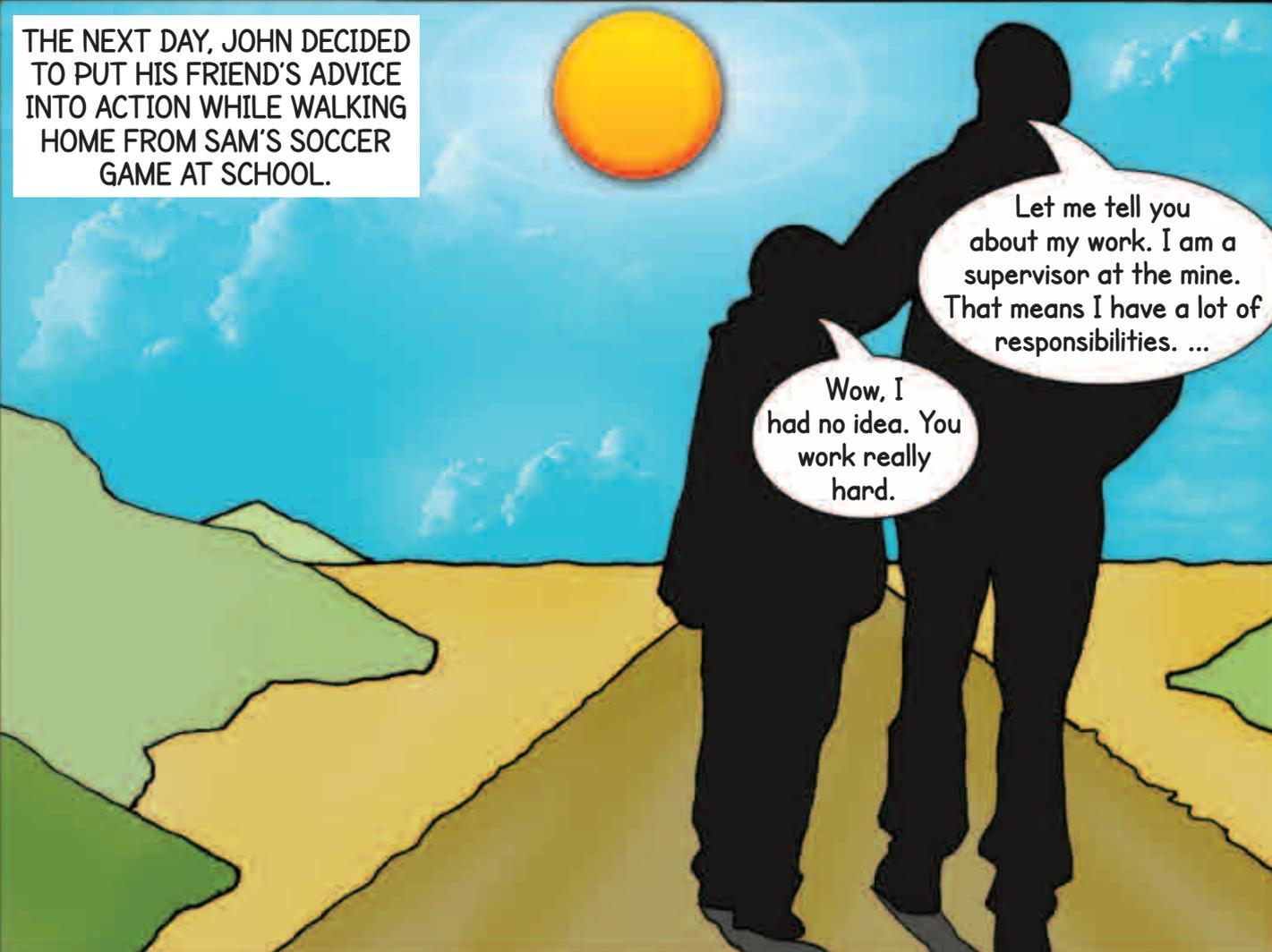
I let Isak help me around the house and I teach him things when we fix up our old car. I learn about what Isak likes to do and what he is interested in, like soccer. I let him know that we both have good days and bad days and that we can talk about our problems, rather than just turning to violence.



Do you know what drives me crazy? When I come home with a headache after a long day and Sam has his music blaring. I need some peace when I come home to my house!

Have you ever explained to Sam why it is a problem? Does Sam know how tiring your job can be? Do you give Sam an alternative? You could tell him that he can play his music as loud as he wants on the weekend, or when the rest of the family is out.

THE NEXT DAY, JOHN DECIDED TO PUT HIS FRIEND'S ADVICE INTO ACTION WHILE WALKING HOME FROM SAM'S SOCCER GAME AT SCHOOL.



Wow, I had no idea. You work really hard.

Let me tell you about my work. I am a supervisor at the mine. That means I have a lot of responsibilities. ...

LATER IN THE WEEK ...



Hi Sam!
I have had a terrible day! Five people were off sick and three of our machines broke. My head is killing me and your music is adding to the pounding in my head.



I had a bad day too! We lost our soccer finals. But I understand, I'll turn it down.



Is that good enough?

Last month Daddy beat Sam for playing his music too loud and he ran away for a few days.

This new method of discipline Daddy is trying is so much better. It really helps us to be a better family. Why don't you fetch Daddy a cool wet cloth for his head?



Does that feel better Daddy?

Thanks my dear! It does feel better.

It seems when I stop hitting Sam, I am better cared for myself!



Dad, can I ask you something?

Sure Sam, what?



You seem different these days. We seem to be getting along better, I think talking to each other instead of you getting angry and shouting helps.

Well, I'm trying to be a better parent. It's sometimes not easy but I'm trying — I don't think a real man needs to hit his son.



I'm going to try to do my part too! I'll try to be a real man and be cool like you!

Corporal punishment is when a person in authority (such as a parent or a teacher) uses physical force with the intention of causing pain as a form of discipline. Corporal punishment of children usually includes things like smacking, slapping, spanking or beating with the hand or with some implement (like a stick or a belt). It can also involve other things, like kicking, shaking, pinching or burning.

Corporal punishment is used in many homes. There have been cases in Namibia where excessive physical force has been used against children in the home. There are cases where children have been seriously injured or burned. Some children have even been beaten to death.

Corporal punishment can be a problem for the following reasons:

- Corporal punishment can turn into serious physical abuse.
- Corporal punishment teaches children that violence is an acceptable way of dealing with issues.
- Corporal punishment teaches children that it is okay to use violence against someone you love.
- Corporal punishment makes children more aggressive towards other children.
- Children who are exposed to violence may be more violent as adults.
- Corporal punishment does not teach children the reason *why* their behaviour was wrong.
- Corporal punishment can damage self-esteem by making the victim feel scared, sad, ashamed or worthless.
- Corporal punishment can destroy the relationship between a child and the child's parent or caregiver.

There are many other ways that children can be punished. Here are four examples:

- (1) **EXPLAIN THE PROBLEM.**
- (2) **MAKE CHILDREN TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR ACTIONS:** For example, if the child breaks something, he or she must fix it.
- (3) **'TIME OUT':** Sometimes children become overexcited and this can lead to bad behaviour. It can be effective to take the child out of the room – to calm down, sit quietly and think about what he or she has done wrong.
- (4) **TAKE AWAY PRIVILEGES:** The punishment could be not watching television, not being allowed to visit friends or not receiving pocket money.

Discipline is meant to teach a person the difference between right and wrong, not to cause injury. There is no need to inflict pain to discipline a child. There are many other forms of discipline which are much more effective.

DO YOU

... HAVE A QUESTION?

... HAVE A COMMENT?

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