



# What to Do When an Appropriate Consequence is Hard to Find

by *Dr. Charles Fay*

**T**he “Energy Drain” approach was created to give adults a practical way of creating logical consequences that teach responsibility. Simply stated, the child (or teen) is required to replace energy “drained” from the adult by their misbehavior.

**Step 1:** Deliver a strong dose of sincere empathy.

*This is so sad.*

**Step 2:** Notify the youngster that their misbehavior drained your energy.

*Oh sweetie. When you lie to me (or almost any other misbehavior) , it drains energy right out of me.*

**Step 3:** Ask how he or she plans to replace the energy.

*How are you planning to put that energy back?*

**Step 4:** If you hear, “I don’t know,” offer some payback options.

*Some kids decide to do some of their mom’s chores? How would that work? Some kids decide to hire and pay for a babysitter—so their parents can go out and relax. How would that work?*

**Step 5:** If the child completes the chores, thank them and don’t lecture

*Thanks so much! I really appreciate it.*

**Step 6:** If the child refuses or forgets, don’t warn or remind.

Remember: ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS!

**Step 7:** As a last resort, go on strike OR sell a toy to pay for the drain.

*What a bummer. I just don’t think I have the energy to take you to Silly Willie’s Fun Park this weekend.*

OR...

*What a bummer. You forgot to do those chores. No problem. I sold your Mutant Death Squad action figure to pay for a babysitter tonight.*

People who are really successful implementing this skill  
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