

# Alfie Kohn

## Quotes

*Children, School, Students, Punishment, People, Teacher, Thinking, Important, Rewards, Trying, Kids, Teaching, Perspective, Unconditional Love, Tasks, Country, Outcomes, Motivation, Desire, Educational*

Children learn how to make good decisions by making decisions, not by following directions.

~Alfie Kohn

If children feel safe, they can take risks, ask questions, make mistakes, learn to trust, share their feelings, and grow.

~Alfie Kohn

Educational success should be measured by how strong your desire is to keep learning.

~Alfie Kohn

Children, after all, are not just adults-in-the-making. They are people whose current needs and rights and experiences must be taken seriously.

~Alfie Kohn

In outstanding classrooms, teachers do more listening than talking, and students do more talking than listening. Terrific teachers often have teeth marks on their tongues.

~Alfie Kohn

Educators remind us that what counts in a classroom is not what the teacher teaches; it's what the learner learns.

~Alfie Kohn

Saying you taught it but the student didn't learn it is like saying you sold it but the customer didn't buy it.

~Alfie Kohn

Whoever said there's no such thing as a stupid question never looked carefully at a standardized test.

~Alfie Kohn

If a child is off-task...maybe the problem is not the child...maybe it's the task.

~Alfie Kohn

People will typically be more enthusiastic where they feel a sense of belonging and see themselves as part of a community than they will in a workplace in which each person is left to his own devices

~Alfie Kohn

The Legacy of Behaviorism: Do this and you'll get that.

~Alfie Kohn

To be well-educated is to have the desire as well as the means to make sure that learning never ends.

~Alfie Kohn

How we feel about our kids isn't as important as how they experience those feelings and how they regard the way we treat them.

~Alfie Kohn

We have so much to cover and so little time to cover it. Howard Gardner refers to curriculum coverage as the single greatest enemy of understanding. Think instead about ideas to be discovered.

~Alfie Kohn

You have to give them unconditional love. They need to know that even if they screw up, you love them. You don't want them to grow up and resent you or, even worse, parent the way you parented them.

~Alfie Kohn

When test scores go up, we should worry, because of how poor a measure they are of what matters, and what you typically sacrifice in a desperate effort to raise scores.

~Alfie Kohn

Social psychology has found the more you reward people for doing something, the more they tend to lose interest in whatever they had to do to get the reward.

~Alfie Kohn

The value of a book about dealing with children is inversely proportional to the number of times it contains the word behavior.

~Alfie Kohn

If unconditional love and genuine enthusiasm are present, praise isn't necessary. If they're absent, praise won't help.

~Alfie Kohn

Independence is useful, but caring attitudes and behaviors shrivel up in a culture where each person is responsible only for himself.

~Alfie Kohn

Do rewards motivate people? Absolutely. They motivate people to get rewards.

~Alfie Kohn

Punishments erode relationships and moral growth.

~Alfie Kohn

We can't value only what is easy to measure; measurable outcomes may be the least important results of learning.

~Alfie Kohn

Most of us would protest that of course we love our children without any strings attached. But what counts is how things look from the perspective of the children

~Alfie Kohn

Unconditional parenting: Moving from Rewards and Punishments to

Love and Reason.

~Alfie Kohn

Punishment and reward proceed from basically the same psychological model, one that conceives of motivation as nothing more than the manipulation of behavior.

~Alfie Kohn

Very few things are as dangerous as a bunch of incentive-driven individuals trying to play it safe.

~Alfie Kohn

Students should not only be trained to live in a democracy when they grow up; they should have the chance to live in one today.

~Alfie Kohn

The overwhelming number of teachers ...are unable to name or describe a theory of learning that underlies what they do.

~Alfie Kohn

Trying to be number one and trying to do a task well are two different things.

~Alfie Kohn

Standardized testing has swelled and mutated, like a creature in one of those old horror movies, to the point that it now threatens to swallow our schools whole.

~Alfie Kohn

Punishments and rewards are two sides of the same coin and that coin doesn't buy you much.

~Alfie Kohn

Grades are a subjective rating masquerading as an objective

evaluation.

~Alfie Kohn

Learning is something students do, NOT something done to students.

~Alfie Kohn

Assessments should compare the performance of students to a set of expectations, never to the performance of other students.

~Alfie Kohn

Trying to do well and trying to beat others are two different things. Excellence and victory are conceptually distinct . . . and are experienced differently.

~Alfie Kohn

Being a team player should not imply a demand for simple obedience and conformity.

~Alfie Kohn

When we do things that are controlling, whether intentional or not, we are not going to get those long-term outcomes.

~Alfie Kohn

When was the last time you spent the entire day with only 42 year olds?

~Alfie Kohn

John Dewey reminded us that the value of what students do 'resides in its connection with a stimulation of greater thoughtfulness, not in the greater strain it imposes.

~Alfie Kohn

We learn most readily, most naturally, most effectively, when we start with the big picture - precisely when the basics don't come first.

~Alfie Kohn

If faculty would relax their emphasis on grades, this might serve not to lower standards but to encourage an orientation toward learning.

~Alfie Kohn

To control students is to force them to accommodate to a preestablished curriculum.

~Alfie Kohn

Grades dilute the pleasure that a student experiences on successfully completing a task.

~Alfie Kohn

Maximum difficulty isn't the same as optimal difficulty.

~Alfie Kohn

Contrary to what you think, your company will be a lot more productive if you refuse to tolerate competition among your employees.

~Alfie Kohn

In education, parody is obsolete.

~Alfie Kohn

There are different kinds of motivation, and the kind matters more than the amount.

~Alfie Kohn

To feel controlled is to lose interest.

~Alfie Kohn

The race to win turns us all into losers.

~Alfie Kohn

How can we do our best when we are spending our energies trying to make others lose - and fearing that they will make us lose?

~Alfie Kohn



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