

The Divider Rule



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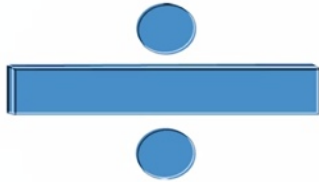
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The Divider Rule

The Divider Rule is just as much fun as The Multiplier Rule. The Divider Rule helps your child learn how to take the whole group into account and is a fantastic step toward building excellent manners.

Young children are, and should be for a time, very ego-centric. But by age three, a child should begin to become increasingly aware and considerate of those around them.



This is the age at which you can begin to say to your young child, "Look at her face, how do you think she's feeling?" or "The puppy likes gentle pets. Be so gentle with the puppy."

By age 5 or 6, this empathy should be well-developed because by age 13, not a lot is going to change, as the basic elements of a person's personality, or, if you prefer, their habits, are more than set.

The Multiplier and Divider Rules go a long way to creating this awareness. The Divider Rule teaches the child to ask,

"How many people are around me? How much should I talk, eat, or participate?"

The onset of screens has created an exposure to media and a lack of connection with other people that are not serving our children well.

There are many children in this generation who sometimes lack the ability to observe and consider social feedback from others.

Although the family television has been around for a long time, screens are much more pervasive today than they once were.



One way this shows up is with young children who seem to talk incessantly. They aren't really listening to others, and they just continue with their constant ramble of thoughts, not considering those around them.



The Divider Rule

Perhaps their parents don't want to squash them out and have not set boundaries, or perhaps it is an in-born personality trait, or a combination of both. In any case, these children are very hard to be around.

The flip side of that is the child who cannot seem to engage verbally, beyond simple responses. This is caused by:

**RELATIONSHIP
IS EVERYTHING**

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- The passive nature of screen use which does not require physical or social interaction
- The lack of verbal and social engagement of parents due to parents being entrenched with their own screens
- Exposure to low-level and questionable material through the media itself

Due to these, and various other possible reasons, many young people now lack the skills and/or interest to engage socially.

I have experienced this malaise, and perhaps you have, too, with children of all ages, from elementary age, all the way through high school-aged, and, of course, with adults, too.

It's a sad thing considering all of the wonderful, miraculous things there are in the world to learn about and explore.

Talking too much and a lack of social engagement are just two examples of poor behaviors that are becoming more prevalent today because of decreased quality social interactions due to the accessibility of screens, which often now begins in infancy!



Children, families, and media is a topic I will discuss in depth in a future video series called Unplugged, which is about how to balance technology in modern times. So, that will have to be the extent of this discussion for this e-book, so that we can get back to the Divider Rule.

**REPEAT
INVITATION**



Children who show a significant lack of social awareness might not receive as many invitations much past the age of 10 once a child's social invitations become a result of their own behavior and social graces rather than something their mom or dad has set up for them, as it is in early childhood. This is a very hard thing for a child to experience. And, a helpless situation for parents, since they cannot force other people to invite their child.

The Divider Rule

The Divider Rule can be applied anytime people are:

- Talking
- Eating
- Participating in an activity
- Using some material or object
- Engaged with anything that has some sort of limit, whether of a material item, or time

First, let's use talking and listening to illustrate a time when the Divider Rule can be very helpful. Pre-teens and teens, and yes, even much younger children, can learn how to be great listeners and conversationalists.

This means learning to make eye-contact, actively listening, and then asking questions that invite the person who is talking to share more, rather than switching the conversation back to themselves.

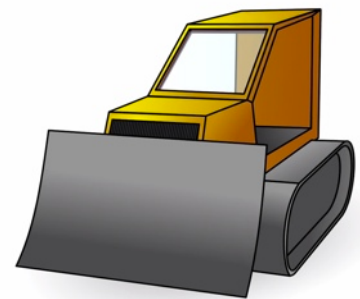
10 PEOPLE, EACH PERSON = 10% OF THE TIME

4 PEOPLE, EACH PERSON = 25% OF THE TIME

2 PEOPLE, EACH PERSON = 50% OF THE TIME

I once hosted an informal dinner at my home for a couple and their two children and my own children. We sat at an intimate square table, so we were all within close speaking range of each other. The couple's 18-year-old son dominated the dinner

conversation for the full hour and a half. He talked about himself and what he was up to, and his thoughts and opinions on Neither one of his parents was able to share, despite my attempts to draw them into the fold. He never asked my children or me to share, and his parents did not once make a move to help him to stop talking. The few times other things came up, he would quickly take over once again. His behavior had been reinforced for a long time.



There were 9 people at the table for about 90 minutes. So, if the Divider Rule would have been applied, each person would have had about 10 minutes to talk and share.

A more outgoing person might perhaps use a few minutes more, and a less-talkative person perhaps a bit less, but this would be the general guideline.



As the hostess, I would help bring out a more quiet person with some kind of an easy-to-answer open-ended question. And, I would do my best to make everyone feel included in the evening. If it's a dinner to someone's birthday or there is another guest of honor, they may get a little more talking time, since people are more likely to be focusing on them.

But, in general, the time can be divided up evenly between the number of people attending.

The Divider Rule

This doesn't mean you use a timer, it's just a general way of thinking that can be helpful for monitoring one's self, as well as one's children. Also, once you get good at it, you can use this rule to help draw quieter people into social situations, even when you're not the host. Your host will most likely thank you! Overall, a meal is more enjoyable when it is a shared experience, and not just in terms of the food!

This young man likely left our home with no more awareness than he came with. He probably had a great time, and had fun sharing all of his stories and information about himself, to which we had listened intently and about which we asked him thoughtful questions. But there's a saying that when you speak, you share what you know, and when you listen, you have the chance to learn something new.

This young man is likely missing this chance to connect with and learn from others, and will likely continue to miss this chance in many situations, and for who knows how long. While he might show up fine at a larger party, it is unlikely he'll get repeat invitations to smaller get-togethers.

By teaching someone who likes to talk the Divider Rule, you give them a real tool they can use to help moderate themselves. In this way, they can both learn from, and share the gift of conversation with others, their whole life through.

Another time the Divider rule is especially useful is when there is food, or some material that is being used, among a certain amount of people.

In this situation the Divider Rule would be:

How much food or material or food is available for how many people?



We are a lot of people to have over!

Every host and every family has a different budget, and also a different ideas about portion sizes. When food is served, It's important for children to be aware of how many others are present and to estimate how much they should eat based on what is available.

For example, if they are at a birthday party with 20 children, and there is a bowl of grapes, they should take an amount of grapes that would allow the other guests to have a try at the grapes.

The Divider Rule

The same would be true for bacon at a brunch. Or, pizza slices at an end-of-the-year soccer party. Children around age 6 and up can begin to gain this awareness.

In our family, in addition to the Divider Rule, it's part of our family fraternity is to say, "Family Holds Back," or even just, "FHB." This was started by my children's paternal grandparents, for their own 9 children, because they hosted many events and dinners and never wanted their children to serve themselves first.

This is because if they all started first, there might be little left after they were done serving themselves! FHB and The Divider Rule help my kids remember that we let other people go first, and when we do go, we take an appropriate amount. Especially when we are likely hungry and everything looks and smells so good.

Even at other people's homes when we are the guests and are invited to go first, I remind my children to still hold back a bit, and to use the Divider Rule, again, simply, because, as a family, we are a lot of people to invite over. And, we definitely want the repeat invitation!

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Sometimes, even at a simple family dinner at home, if there's a dish that isn't overly plentiful for some reason, it's a good idea to say to your own family, "Let's use The Divider Rule and make sure we all take the right amount of berries."

So, this rule can apply in any situation where there is food and other people, your own home included. In the same

way, the Divider Rule can be applied to situations where there is a supply of something that is limited.



For example, perhaps there is a tree swing and there are 8 people lined up use it. The Divider Rule would help your child think to take just a couple minute turn before handing it off to someone else, whereas if it was just him and one other child, a longer ride might be just fine.

Or, perhaps someone has materials to make something at a party, or an event. The Divider Rule would say to use an amount of the materials that would leave enough for others, rather than using all of it, or the best of it, for oneself.



The Divider Rule

To recap, use the Multiplier and Divider Rules to self-regulate. Teach your children to press their pause button and ask themselves these important questions. Model it for them whenever you get the chance and it will become just “part of what they do.”



Think and talk it through out loud with them before social gatherings, both at your home, when out and about, and when your children will be out and about without you. By continuously reminding your children of this, they will know it is important to you.

And, when children are growing, the things that are important to you, ultimately will become permanently important to them, even if it's not until later on in their lives.

When children are aware of the concept of manners because of your direct instruction, and they in turn learn good manners, they gain self-respect. When children have self-respect, they naturally treat others with that same level of respect.

This, in turn, gives them greater access to all of the wonderful experiences available to us in this world. This e-book includes a blank Divider Rule worksheet that you can use with your child or classroom to help teach this strategy.

Thank you for being a member at Daychild. Your membership helps us make more resources for you, and we appreciate it!



MULTIPLIER RULE

WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE IF
EVERYONE WAS DOING WHAT I'M
DOING RIGHT NOW?

WHAT I'M DOING	IF EVERYONE WAS DOING IT...

IT'S UP TO ME

DIVIDER RULE

I LOOK AROUND AND ASK MYSELF,
"HOW MUCH SHOULD I _____?"

WHAT I SEE	WHAT I WILL DO

DIVIDER RULE

I LOOK AROUND AND ASK MYSELF,
“HOW MUCH SHOULD I _____?”
Talk, eat, or use.

WHAT I SEE	WHAT I WILL DO
WHAT I SEE	WHAT I WILL DO
WHAT I SEE	WHAT I WILL DO

Some other videos, e-books, and articles available at Daychild:

Videos and e-books:

The Choice Chart Behavior Management System: Parts 1 - 6

The Multiplier and Divider Rules: Tools for Self-Regulation and Basic Manners

Rapid-Behavior Shapers: Parts 1 - 4

E-books:

The Chit-Chat: A communication tool

Winning Ways to Speak

I Am a Happy Kid

Integrity Lessons, 1- 10: Character Development for All Ages

Resources:

Ten Ways to Trick Yourself into Exercising Everyday

How to Anchor Two People

Ten Reasons Your Stepchild Doesn't Like You, And 10 Winning Ways to Respond

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