

Parenting Manual – Introduction & Rationale

About the Author

Simon Beal is a Clinical Psychologist and specialises in child and adolescent psychology and has a strong interest in children's behavioural issues and helping parents to manage their children's challenging behaviours. Simon started his career in the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), but has now worked in the private sector for close to fifteen years. Simon now has three private practices across Adelaide, South Australia, where he receives referrals from General Practitioners, Paediatricians, Psychiatrists, School Counsellors, Teachers, Families SA, and the Federal Magistrates Court and Family Court of Australia. Simon is registered with Families SA to provide support to children and families in foster care, and Simon is also registered with the Independent Schools Board of South Australia as a behavioural consultant. Simon has the title of expert witness in both the Federal Magistrates Court and Family Court of Australia, where he has been regularly called to give evidence in relation to children's issues. Simon is also a parent of two teenagers, so understands all too well the everyday challenges that parents face. As a result of this experience, Simon believes strongly that parents need practical and sensible advice and strategies to manage their child's challenging behaviour. Simon strongly believes that the modern-day parenting approach is letting parents down in this very challenging and stressful area of parenting.

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INTRODUCTION

If you have downloaded this manual, there is every chance that as a parent you are at your wits end trying to deal with your child's behaviour. The information and strategies in these manuals are not intended for minor behavioural issues and children that are sometimes a bit naughty. These manuals are intended for parents that have tried all of the 'standard' parenting strategies, and nothing has worked.

These strategies are not found in the standard 'parenting self-help books', nor are they the typical strategies that so-called parenting experts persist with when trying to help parents with very challenging children. These strategies have been developed over years of trialling many different strategies and approaches, while also adhering to sound and logical psychological principles of behaviour management in children.

Due to the extremely challenging nature of some children, there are no magic fixes, and some of the strategies in these manuals may be confronting for some, and sometimes hard work for the parent. For these reasons, it is essential that the parent has a very good understanding of what they need to do and why it needs to be done this way. Having this background understanding also helps to explain why the standard parenting strategies haven't worked for so many parents with challenging children

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It is therefore strongly recommended that this Introduction and Rationale be read first, then move on to the strategies contained in the following manuals, depending on the child's age.

The Dilemma for Today's Parent

Parents have never had it tougher. On the one hand, parents are expected to control their children's behaviour, just as their parents did, and their parents before them. And we see this in action - in the supermarket or the playground – if a child is being naughty or throwing a tantrum, or playing too roughly, it's the parent that gets the scornful looks from the other adults. After all, it's the parent's job to keep their children under control.

And yet, on the other hand, not only are parents expected to control their children's behaviour, modern-day parents are also expected to do so much more. Today's parent is also expected to let their children make their own choices and let their children express their 'big feelings'. Parents are supposed to reason and negotiate with their children, giving the children more choice and control over their environment. Parents are also supposed to 'ignore the bad behaviour and reward the good', and everything is supposed to be completely calm and positive, and so the list goes on. Never before has it been so complicated to be a parent - today's

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parent is expected to do all of the above, yet are still expected to control their child's behaviour.

So if 'little Johnny' wants to have a chocolate bar in the supermarket, and then starts to scream and yell when his parent says 'no', the parent is expected to control the child and stop the bad behaviour, but at the same time, the parent is also supposed to let the child make his own decisions, have choices, express his feelings, and negotiate a reasonable outcome. And what of the parent at home who has to repeatedly ask their child to do something, like pack up their toys, or get ready for bed. Often the parent will get ignored, abused, or they have to end up yelling at the child to get anything done. According to 'modern-day' parenting, the parent is supposed to reason and negotiate with the child, let the child make sensible choices, ignore any abuse - because ignoring the bad behaviour is supposed to make it go away - and the parent has to speak calmly to the child and at the child's level, all while trying to run a household.

Parents are often told by well-meaning 'parenting experts' that children have to be allowed to express their feelings, that this is healthy for the child. So when 'little Johnny' screams in a fit of rage in the middle of the supermarket, this is apparently ok, because the child simply has '*big feelings*'. Parents are told that they need to avoid saying the word 'no' to their children. In fact, it has now got to the stage where childcare workers aren't allowed to say no or anything negative to a child. If 'little-Johnny' hits another child at daycare, the childcare worker is instructed to say something

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like “We only have gentle hands here, look, you have hurt this child’s feelings, now how about giving them a ‘high five’, and we’ll go and do another activity together.”

Basically, ‘parenting has gone mad’! We are getting it horribly wrong - and in my opinion, the ‘proof is very much in the pudding’. Generally speaking, most would agree that the generations of young people today are much more disrespectful, oppositional, anti-authority, and there is more violence than ever before. Some of this increased violence has been blamed on violent video games etc., yet research clearly indicates that children playing these games do not automatically become more aggressive. Interestingly, what the research does clearly indicate is that children who are allowed to play these games and are not adequately supervised may become more aggressive – in other words, the issue is not with the games, it’s with the lack of parental authority and boundaries with their children’s behaviour. Children are also now growing up with the clear message that “they are their own boss”, and “they can make their own decisions”, and “others can’t tell them what to do”. Children are told this as soon as they start school – and it’s these ideas that the children bring home, and this translates into the behaviour that we are now seeing much more of today - opposition, disrespect, and much more aggression and violence. It’s because children are now being ‘taught’ not to respect their parents.

Other factors have come into play as well, such as the belief now that it’s negative and wrong for a parent to be in control

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and to have the authority over their children, as this is seen as oppressive and ‘crushing a child’s spirit’. I would strongly argue that it is simply impossible to run a household without the parent being in control and having that authority, so that children just do as they’re told. This simple idea that children simply need to do as they’re told has been lost in all the modern-day parenting ideas that are now seen as the standard benchmark for parenting. Hence, the by far the biggest problem seen in families today is not drugs or alcohol or abuse, it’s the lack of respect children have for their parent’s authority.

It’s time to have some common sense brought back into ‘parenting’. Children need to do as they are told, and parents need to be in control of their children.

As mentioned above, the strategies found in these manuals are usually not necessary for children that are sometimes a little bit naughty. This manual is intended for parents that have tried it all and nothing has worked. It is intended for those parents who are at their wits end, and are sick of being told “you’re just not doing it right”, or that “you just have to keep trying”.

These manuals are not filled with ‘warm and fuzzy’ strategies that sound lovely and positive. Nor are the manuals filled with excuses for a child’s behaviour, and nor are the strategies ‘politically correct’ - it is political correctness that is partly to blame for the mess that we are now in when it comes to parenting. For parents that are reading this, there

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is every chance you have tried the normal strategies and found that they don't work for your child. These strategies and this approach to parenting is aimed at controlling and improving a child's behaviour, and importantly, this is done with the sole aim of preparing a child for the real world – because in the real world, we all have to do as we're told, and we can't throw a tantrum when we don't get our own way.

Background – Why it's Become So Hard

It's important for parents to understand how this has all come about, and why it's so much harder and more complicated for parents today. Several decades ago, there was a gradual shift against the old-fashioned parenting style, where children were 'seen and not heard', where households were ruled with an 'iron fist', where children were smacked or 'got the belt', where parenting was viewed as overly harsh, oppressive, and abusive. At the same time this shift was occurring, the issue of children being at risk of child abuse was receiving far greater publicity and acknowledgement. These two trends combined saw the rise of 'children having more rights'. As a result, parenting experts began advising parents that a different approach was needed, which essentially meant that children should be allowed to have freer reign, to have more choices, and to have more of a say. However, while this all sounded very positive and lovely for children and families, what started out

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as a gradual shift away from parents having all the power and children having none, has resulted in a landslide in the other direction, to the unfortunate position today where parents now have no power and children have all the power.

Over this journey, many distortions and myths have been created, and these have only served to increase the shift away from sensible parenting. One example of a distortion and myth being formed is the issue of smacking a child. In the early days of this 'shift', smacking quickly became seen as abusive, with the main argument being that smacking a child only teaches a child to solve their problems using force and aggression – so smacking was essentially banned. Interestingly, a recent major study in the USA involving thousands of children showed clearly that children raised with smacking were in no way worse off than children who weren't smacked – in fact, the children that were raised with smacking as a form of discipline were better behaved and better adjusted when the research did a follow-up several years later. And further to this research, we should also consider the logic of the argument that smacking leads to more aggression, as surely it's the case then that everyone over the age of 30 would be solving their issues aggressively and violently. You don't tend to see this happen very often at all. But interestingly, it can also be argued it's the younger generations who have been raised with no smacking that are now more prone to violence. This is a classic example of an idea that has grown in popular belief, and because it supported the popular trend at the time, and it sounds lovely

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and positive, which means it must be right, then it's accepted as the truth, even despite evidence to the contrary.

Another myth that has grown over this period is that it's healthy for children to be able to fully express their feelings. This notion has come from counselling and therapy ideas, where a person supposedly benefits from being able to freely express their emotions, and that it's a bad thing to 'bottle-up' your emotions. However, when this same logic is applied to everyday situations, the result is a child having a tantrum when they don't get their own way - and this is seen as 'healthy'. Unfortunately there is nothing healthy about it – it only leaves the child open to ridicule and much bigger problems later on, because society doesn't tolerate people throwing tantrums when they don't get their own way. Due to this myth however, parents are now led to believe that a child throwing a tantrum is just a sign that the child has 'big-feelings' and it's healthier for the child to let these feelings out. Hence, tantrums are now almost viewed as a healthy thing, and parents are told to just ignore it. Of course, if the tantrum occurs in the shopping centre, and a parent tries to ignore it, they are then seen as bad parents for not dealing with their child's inappropriate behaviour. Again, society does not tolerate someone expressing all of their emotions when things don't go their way. Children therefore need to learn to contain their emotions, so they don't behave inappropriately.

Another misconception that has arisen out of the early concerns about child-abuse and protecting children from

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maltreatment is the idea that children should be “their own boss”, that children need to say no when they don’t like something, and that children need to tell another person “you’re not allowed to touch me”. All of these ideas are now taught from Reception Year onwards at school. Unfortunately, while this may be good advice for protecting children from abuse, children take this advice home and tell their parent’s “you’re not the boss of me”. This is just another example of how ideas and beliefs have become distorted and applied to situations for which it was never intended.

Ironically however, the move away from what was seen as overly harsh parenting, as a way of preventing child abuse, has actually helped to create a greater potential for this abuse to occur. This is because parents are at much greater risk of losing their temper with their children, because we are now preventing parents from being able to control their child’s behaviour, but in the same breath we expect that parents should be able to control their child’s behaviour. This contradiction causes huge levels of stress for parents, and this can result in the parent being extremely frustrated and at their ‘wits end’, where it’s then possible that they will ‘snap’ when their child keeps misbehaving. It’s essential that parents get back the ability to control their children, so that they no longer feel frustrated and helpless as a parent.

Another misconception in parenting is the idea that punishments or consequences are bad for children – hence the advice now that a parent is to ignore the bad behaviour,

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as this is supposed to make the bad behaviour disappear, and then the parent can just sit back and reward the good behaviour. While this sounds great, parents with challenging children realise that this approach doesn't work. And nor does it work in real life either. Take for example the road rules – there are adults who will stay under the speed limit, because they know it's the law and that it's safer etc. – but there are just as many drivers that will speed despite knowing they're breaking the law and it's unsafe. The driver's that don't speed don't get rewarded for not speeding, and the only thing that stops drivers that do speed is the consequence – in other words a speeding fine. And the only reason drivers will continue to speed, even when there is a consequence, is they hope they won't get caught. The test is this is in the following scenario – if a driver was guaranteed of receiving a \$300 fine every single time they went over the speed limit – would they still speed?

Another example of consequences being a part of everyday life is on the football field. When two players are about to 'thump each other senseless', what makes them stop – is it both of them thinking that they each need to make sensible choices, or is it because the umpire ignores the behaviour and rewards them when they're good? No - what makes them stop is the consequence the umpire has if they don't stop – basically, it's the umpire that has a big enough consequence, and this forces the players to control their temper, and allows the umpire to control the game.

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Everywhere in life we have to follow the rules and we usually don't have a choice. You just have to do as you're told – you don't get rewarded for doing as you're told, and there are consequences if you don't. Most adults soon learn that it's just easier and a lot simpler to follow the rules and do as they're told, and those that don't have a hard time and often end up in jail.

Unfortunately, it has got to the stage where many children now need to 'learn' how to cope with doing as they're told and not always being able to choose. The reason they need to learn this is that this is what they need to do in the real world, for the rest of their lives.

THE KEY PRINCIPALS

Understanding Why A Child Behaves Like This

When parents have children with very challenging behaviour, they often want to know why the child is so difficult. The trouble with the question of 'why' is that it's a very difficult question to answer, as the answer parents are given depends on who they ask. For example, if you ask a paediatrician, they may say that it's due to an underlying condition such as ADHD or Aspergers. If you ask a school teacher, all too often the finger is pointed at the home environment, saying that there must be something wrong at home. If you ask a

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counsellor or therapist, ‘attachment issues’ may be the cause, and a naturopath will say that it’s all to do with diet and supplements. The point is that it’s nearly impossible to ‘know’ what the exact reason is, and in any case, all too often the answer and what the parent is told to do about it falls well short of fixing the problem and dealing with the behaviour.

Another issue that arises when asking why a child’s behaviour is so difficult is that the explanation often can then become ‘an excuse’ for the behaviour. This is often a major problem when the child is diagnosed with an underlying condition such as ADHD or Aspergers. All too often, a child gets diagnosed with a condition such as ADHD or Aspergers, and then their behaviour is ‘excused’ and tolerated because they have this condition. This then means that everyone around the child is expected to tolerate and accept the behaviour, being led to believe there is nothing that can be done about it because the ‘underlying condition’ is causing the behaviour. Unfortunately this only results in the child being ‘allowed’ to behave inappropriately, which then allows the child to suffer as a result of the natural consequences that result from behaving in such a way. This obviously does no-one any good. A common example of this is where a child has been diagnosed with the condition Aspergers Syndrome, and teachers/parents take the view that the child’s ‘meltdowns’, which may result in them becoming violent toward others, are unavoidable and everyone just needs to tolerate and accept it. Unfortunately, everyone suffers

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when this approach is taken, and the child is then often ostracized due to their behaviour. Taking this approach, whilst seen as being supportive of the child, in no way helps to prepare the child for the 'real world', where such behaviour is simply not tolerated at all.

The approach in these manuals takes a very different view, which is to put aside the diagnosis or condition and focus on the behaviour, realising that we all need to learn how to function in the real world, regardless of what condition we have.

Hence, in these manuals, the approach has been to put aside the question of why, simply because it usually doesn't address the problem, and simply focus on the strategies to deal with the problem behaviour. However, having said this, parents usually still like to have some understanding as to what is most likely causing the behaviour. In my opinion, in a very high percentage of cases, it is the child's personality traits that cause most of the behaviour problems – coupled of course with the inadequate parenting strategies that are now recommended to parents. Importantly, attributing most of the difficulties to the personality of the child helps to explain why parents can have no problems with other siblings, yet have major difficulties with one.

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Personality Traits

There are several key personality traits that tend to stand out as ‘causes’ for the challenging behaviour.

Self-Centredness – this is one of the key personality traits that cause children to have very challenging behaviour. It must be remembered that all children are born being very self-centred, however some children never seem to move away from this and remain very self-centred as they get older. Other children however will tend to develop more consideration of others, and as a result their behaviour becomes less selfish. It’s this ‘self-centred’ personality trait that causes so many problems for parents – this is because all the child thinks about is themselves and nothing else seems to matter. This personality trait dictates their outlook in everything they do – and it translates into the common situation where if it’s going the child’s way, then everything is fine – but as soon as it stops going their way – look out! This causes major problems in both the family and the school environment. A common example of ‘self-centeredness’ causing problems at school is when a child always needs to control or dictate what game will be played, or what the rules will be. Other children may tolerate this for a while but they quickly tire of it, leaving the self-centred child with very few friends, and often in lots of fights.

Self-centredness is also at the heart of another major issue for parents (and sometimes for other adults that care for the child), which is the child’s lack of respect shown for the

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parent. Some children naturally respect their parent's authority; others however show very little respect at all. These children won't do as their told, they will argue, ignore, verbally abuse, and even physically attack their parents – and it usually happens when the child isn't getting their own way. Many parents wonder why a child shows so little respect, and then often wonder if it's their fault, for something they did, or didn't do in the past. Rarely is this the case - in most instances, it's the child's self-centredness that leads to this lack of respect. It's also important to note that this 'lack of respect' will typically begin at home. This is purely because the child can get away with it at home – because at home is where the child feels safest to display their self-centredness – they don't need to curtail it at all at home, therefore the parents see the full force of it. This explains the common situation where the child can be an absolute angel at school but a 'devil' at home. If permitted to get away with it, it's also common for this self-centred behaviour to 'spread out', often spreading at first to grandparents and others close to the family, and it can eventually spread to the child's school. If you have a child that is fine at school but very challenging at home, this should be seen as a good sign, for it says that their level of self-centredness is not so strong that they can't control it sometimes. The thing that makes a child control it at school is usually either social pressure, or the 'fear of a consequence'. In other words, the child will respect a teacher because of the 'fear of the consequence' if they don't do as they are told, and therefore the child forsakes their self-interest.

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Parents then tend to ask the logical question “how do we get that respect”. Many parents have been led to believe that to get this respect they need to be spending more time with their child, doing more things for them, not focusing on the negative behaviour and rewarding the good, etc. Unfortunately taking this approach nearly always results in the opposite – less respect. Most parents who try this approach will say that it worked well until they stopped giving the child what they wanted, and then it all turned bad again. The answer is for the parent to demand the respect from the child, and the only way a parent can demand respect is by having and giving consequences to children that don’t show that respect. Another way of looking at this is that children with this personality trait will continue to take advantage of a parent’s tolerant approach – in other words, and put simply, if parents ‘allow’ the disrespect to occur, that’s what they’ll continue to get, because by being disrespectful allows the child the opportunity to get their own way if the parent gives in.

It should also be remembered that a child needs to learn that this ‘self-centred’ approach won’t be tolerated well by others, so it’s very important not to give in to the self-centred behaviour. It’s better for the child to learn early that they need to be respectful and considerate of others, rather than let them suffer the natural consequences of behaving selfishly all the time, which never ends up going well for the child.

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Determination and Strong Will – Another very prominent personality trait of children with very challenging behaviour is their very strong will. And this makes sense – a child with a very determined attitude will fight hard for something they want, and if anyone tries to stand in their way of getting what they want, look out! On a positive note, this characteristic isn't a bad thing – having a strong will and determined attitude can lead to many great achievements – but only if managed in an appropriate way. Unfortunately, children are usually too young to know how to manage and control their strong will – and let's remember that many adults struggle with controlling their own strong will at times, with many adults being guilty of having 'lost it' at times when they haven't got their own way, so children shouldn't be expected to control this themselves either.

A child with a 'strong will' will fight very hard for something they want, and this spells trouble for the parent. A very good analogy (although somewhat politically incorrect), is that of a caged wild animal. If a wild animal is placed in an enclosure with four boundary walls, it will work very hard at finding a way out – after all, it wants its freedom. If the animal detects even the slightest weakness in one of the boundaries, the animal will relentlessly attack the area of weakness, often to its own detriment, for as long as it still thinks there's a possible way out. This is the animals strong will at work – and children with are strong will are no different. If a child with a strong-will spots a weakness in one of the boundaries, look out! This is very important to understand, as it

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highlights the very important issue of consistency in parenting. This will be discussed in greater detail later, but for now it's important to understand that if the weakness is repaired in the boundary wall of that caged animal, that animal will quickly work out that there is no longer any point in trying, and it will give up on the battle. Children are the same – if they sense that a parent has it covered, that the parent won't be giving in or not following through, they will learn very quickly not to bother battling anywhere near as hard. However, for this to occur, the child needs to see that there is absolutely no give in the boundaries, what-so-ever! Therefore, when dealing with strong-willed children, parents need to be very consistent and use very effective strategies to maintain very firm boundaries.

This example above raises several key issues in parenting that need to be addressed. The first is the concern that being very firm with boundaries will 'crush a child's spirit'. Parents have been told for decades that being firm with a child and having consequences etc. will crush a child's spirit and that this is therefore damaging to the child. This is rubbish, and it's just another example of ideas being blown out of all perspective. If the boundaries were ridiculously harsh and 'abusive', then the child's spirit may be crushed, but when we are talking about perfectly reasonable boundaries and expectations of behaviour, nothing will be crushed, except for the challenging behaviour. To highlight this point, take the example of the caged animal – having very firm boundary walls in place simply stops the animal from continually trying

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to escape – if one boundary is then later damaged or weakened, is the animal just going to sit there with its spirit crushed. Furthermore, if having firm boundaries in place lead to crushing the animal's spirit, then it would surely be fine to enter a lion's cage, as the firm boundaries would have crushed the animal's spirit and therefore it would no longer pose a threat to humans. Similarly with children, having firm boundaries in place does not crush the child's spirit, it only stops the child's continually challenging behaviour. And the proof of this is very evident in households where a child is being very strong-willed – as soon as the boundaries are relaxed in some way, the battles begin again. This would not occur if the child's spirit was truly 'crushed'. Further to this, it can also be argued that for some children with very strong wills, their 'spirit' does need to be crushed – at least back to a reasonable level – down to a level that society accepts and tolerates.

The other concern raised by this issue of having firm boundaries is the common strategy for parents to 'pick their battles'. When faced with continual battles at home, parents are often told the solution is to 'pick their battles', in other words, let some things go and only battle the important issues. This seems to make sense, simply because if some battles are let go, there will be less battles to deal with. However, to the strong-willed child, a parent 'picking their battles' is simply sending the message that sometimes, if the child challenges the parent, the child will get their own way. And to a strong-willed child, this means 'game on'. This

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strategy of ‘picking the battles’ simply leads to more battles. So, for a strong willed child, what is actually required is firmer boundaries, not more flexibility in *boundaries*.

Intellectual ability

Although not a personality trait, a child with an above-average level of intelligence can also cause their behaviour to be much more challenging, but this characteristic is very dependent on one or both of the above two personality traits also being present. In other words, you can have a bright child who is very well behaved, because they aren’t self-centred or as strong-willed. However, the presence of intellectual ability in a child that’s also very self-centred and strong-willed creates by far the biggest challenge for parents. Intellectual ability allows the child to better spot a weakness in the boundaries. It also allows the child to argue their way around a boundary, or to talk their way out. It also allows them to have an excuse for everything, and they will use it any way they can to get what they want. Again, intellectual ability is a very positive thing to have; it just needs to be used for good and not evil.

The Three Traits Combined

As mentioned above, the combination of the three characteristics of self-centredness, strong will, and intellectual ability creates a nightmare for parents. The parent of a child with these three traits will almost certainly be faced with very challenging behaviour, ranging from

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standard defiance and lack of respect to major tantrums and rage when the child doesn't get their own way. But not only this, it's also the case that a child with these traits seems to 'thrive off of the battle'. Often it actually seems that the thing that originally started the battle has been forgotten and for the child, it simply becomes all about winning the battle – at any cost! Often, it will seem that the child will be just picking anything to argue over, just for the sake of having an argument. Unfortunately there is not a lot of logic to explain this phenomenon in children's behaviour – parents often wonder, why would a child argue with a parent so much so that the parent ends up getting furious with the child, so that the child then only ends up in more trouble? The answer is simply in the hope of winning the battle – children with these characteristics seem to thrive off of it. Nevertheless, and regardless of the lack of logic to explain it, the behaviour is very draining and unacceptable – society does not tolerate a person whom argues every point for the sake of it – it's therefore the parent's job to not only stop this behaviour for their own sanity, and for their family's sake, but also to help the child learn that the behaviour is unacceptable, recognising that it's the child that will suffer in the long run if this argumentative behaviour is allowed to continue.

The Strategies That Don't Work

As already mentioned, modern-day parenting has taken a direction that is very much focused on positive

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reinforcement and allowing children to have more rights and more freedom to express themselves and grow as individuals. As already mentioned, this approach is completely fine for some children, especially those that are very 'meek and mild' and placid by nature. Out of this very positive approach has come many strategies that obviously support this view, with the strategies sounding very positive and nurturing. Basically, this approach, and its strategies, all sound very lovely and healthy, and it's very easy to sell this approach to parents – after all, who doesn't want a household that's filled with warmth and positivity. Unfortunately, in the 'real world', this modern-day parenting approach and the strategies that go with it prove to be very ineffective in dealing with very challenging behaviour.

However, not only is this 'modern-day' parenting approach often ineffective, it can actually make a child's challenging behaviour much worse. It is therefore important to discuss these strategies that don't work, and discover why they don't work, and what can be done instead.

Rewarding the Good and Ignoring the Bad - At the heart of parenting today is the concept of 'rewarding the good behaviour'. This stands to reason, for it is the complete opposite of what modern-day parenting is trying to escape from, which is the use of consequences and punishment that was used in the 'old days' of parenting. This focus on 'rewarding the good behaviour' has also extended to 'ignoring the bad behaviour', which is solely based on the psychological principle of not reinforcing unwanted

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behaviour. Basically this principle is based on the idea that any attention given to unwanted behaviour is likely to encourage more of the same behaviour – therefore parents are told to ignore the bad behaviour. This sounds great in practice, but it doesn't usually work. And unfortunately, some behaviour that children display simply can't be ignored – for example, it's very hard to ignore a child that's throwing things around a room, or hitting, biting or kicking their sibling during an argument. It is simply wrong, and impossible, to ignore some types of behaviour. Many parents will also argue that they have tried to ignore the bad behaviour but it hasn't resulted in the behaviour stopping, in fact, some say it only makes the behaviour worse, with child continuing to escalate their behaviour until they get a response. But besides this, ignoring the bad behaviour doesn't teach the child that the behaviour is unacceptable.

Another problem stemming from this 'positive' approach in parenting is the idea that you get rewarded for doing the right thing. Again, this sounds very positive, but it doesn't happen in real life, at least not in the way children perceive it. Yes, we can argue that if you do the right thing, you eventually get rewarded, but the rewards are often in the sense of feeling pleased with yourself, being a nice person etc. – not something that immediately appeals to children. Out of this approach however have come the strategies of reward charts, sticker charts, reward programs and token systems, all aimed at rewarding the good behaviour. Unfortunately this approach and these strategies tend to

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create many problems. Firstly, it teaches children that you should expect to get rewarded every time you do something good, and this has extended to children expecting to be rewarded for just doing what's expected. And this also creates the dilemma of what to do when a naughty child gets rewarded for being good, yet a child who is normally good anyway gets nothing! A classic and very true example of this will highlight this point – a family with a seven year old boy and a five year old daughter were having major problems getting the boy ready for school every morning. In line with the standard parenting strategies, the parents devised a reward program to encourage the child to behave better in the mornings. They had tried rewards before and this didn't work, so they tried it again, thinking that maybe the reward just needs to be bigger. This time it worked brilliantly - at the end of the week the boy received a brand new Nintendo DS for getting ready every morning without a battle – his sister, who always got ready every morning without any fuss, got nothing. And as soon as the reward was won, the bad behaviour returned.

Reasoning and Negotiating - Again, for several decades parents have been told that it's healthy to give their child choices and options. And again, it's easy to see why – again this approach has stemmed directly from the shift away from the so-called overly harsh parenting in the old days. It's even argued that by giving children choices and options this helps a child to develop decision making and negotiating skills. Again, this sounds very logical and healthy, but when put into

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practice and applied to everyday life, it creates a nightmare for parents. Part of the problem is that we've got carried away with the whole idea, and parents now feel that they have to give their child a choice with everything they do. When this is coupled with a strong willed and self-centred child, giving the child a choice is opening the door to a battle, and what a parent will get is battle after battle after battle, and often just for the sake of a battle. This can make everyday life a misery for everyone, and in no way does it help to develop a child's decision making and negotiating skills. Further to this, it actually leads to the child believing they get to have a choice with everything they do, and this is simply not the case. The simple fact is that all of us often have no choice in the daily things that we do, and children need to get use to this. It's now got to the stage that many children actually have to learn that often they don't get a choice, and that they can't negotiate everything – often we all have to do as we're told!

Coupled with parents being told to give their child choices is the issue of children at school now being told that they need to make their own choices – again, it is argued that this leads to children developing their decision making, and this is supposed to provide them with the ability to make sensible choices. Again it all sounds lovely, but we are forgetting that often children don't know what's good for them, so allowing them to make the decisions is asking for trouble.

The reality is that children get plenty of choices now days. It must also be remembered that having choices is not always a

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good thing. Having choices also means that decisions need to be made, and making decisions can be hard work – sometimes life is a lot simpler when there isn't a choice.

Spending More Time with Your Child - A very common suggestion to parents struggling with their child's difficult behaviour is that the child's behaviour is simply attention seeking, and therefore the remedy is to spend more time with the child. This idea originally stemmed from early research into children that were extremely neglected and deprived of adult care and attention – essentially the research focussed on children in orphanages. It was observed that extremely neglected children displayed very challenging and inappropriate behaviour, but when given appropriate care and attention, the behaviour improved. Hence, parents today are often told that when a child is behaving badly, it is purely attention seeking, and they therefore have to spend more time with the child. Again, this is simply not true, and it's another example of taking some unrelated research findings and applying it to everyday family life. And the proof of this is often found in a parent's experience of this approach. Most parents immediately feel guilty when they are told that the child is simply craving their attention, and as a result they go out of their way to give the child all the attention possible – some even reduce their working hours to make sure the child is getting more attention. Sadly however, this is rarely the answer, because it's not the problem to start with – in 99.99% of cases, the child is not being neglected in the first place. Of course the

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child will ‘lap up’ all of the attention, and typically, no matter how much extra attention is given, it will never be enough, and then what happens is that as soon as the attention stops going the child’s way, the problem behaviour returns.

Related to this suggestion of spending more quality time with the child is the issue of having little or no quality time with a challenging child. Parents are often told that in order for the behaviour to improve they need to spend more quality time with the child. This then creates the unpleasant problem of a parent not wanting to spend time with a child because the child’s behaviour is so bad. While parents often feel very guilty for feeling this way, it’s also very common – children can behave atrociously one minute and the next minute expect the parent to ‘get over it’ and be nice to them and do something nice with them. In reality, it’s the last thing a parent feels like doing, but more importantly, it’s not the answer to fixing the behaviour either. The solution is in fact the opposite – the behaviour must first be fixed, then the parent and child can, and will, naturally spend more quality time together.

Picking Your Battles - It does seem logical that if you are getting into lots of battles with your child, that one way to reduce this is to ‘pick which battles you have’. However, this is not the answer, and worse, it actually causes more battles. This strategy is directly related to the above-mentioned issue of having a strong-willed child and firm boundaries, and the ‘caged animal’ example. All too often parents with strong-willed children are told to ‘pick their battles’, but to a strong

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willed child, this is the same as waving a red flag to a bull – it signal's 'game on'! 'Picking your battles' is essentially the same as saying to the child that sometimes they will get away with it, and other times they won't. Again, using the same analogy of the caged animal, it is the same as weakening the boundary fence – the animal knows there is a weakness and simply cannot help itself from trying to exploit that weakness. Hence, when a parent picks their battles with a strong-willed child, the result is more battles. It then stands to reason that the last thing a parent should do is to pick their battles, and this means having very firm boundaries at all times. Once a parent has established these firm boundaries, the parent may then decide that there are times when the child can have a choice or a say, but the parent always has the final say – end of story!

Anger Management - Much has already been discussed about the problem of children being argumentative and battling against a parent's authority. What hasn't been discussed yet is another major problem that is created by all of the battles that occur between a parent and a strong willed child – anger! Almost always, the battles lead to an escalation in anger – the child gets angry because they're being told to do something they don't want to do, and the parent gets angry because the child isn't doing as their told – and with each exchange, the anger escalates. And the real problem with this is that when anger reaches a certain point, the child, and often the adult, loses the ability to control their emotions, and that's when things get out of control. This is

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when children will say and do things that can be very extreme, and often the child will be very remorseful later, feeling terrible about what they've said or done - and it can be the same for parents. Parents too can lose control and say and do things they regret later. This very situation can actually be the cause of adults losing their temper and treating children with inappropriate force, which is exactly what modern-day parenting was trying to stop. Ironically, it is the modern-day parenting strategies that leave parents ill-equipped to deal with challenging behaviour, resulting in the parent feeling so frustrated that they end up 'losing it' with their child.

When anger is present, it is usually suggested that the child, and sometimes the parent, needs anger management. Again, this sounds logical, but again, rarely is it the answer. Firstly, children are not good at controlling their anger, no matter how many strategies we give them. This is purely because children do not have the mental capacity to monitor their emotions and then employ strategies to manage these emotions, especially when they are caught up in the situation. It must also be remembered that adults have a hard time doing this as well, so we can't expect children to do it either.

Where there is a lot of anger in a household between children and parents, a lot of the anger actually stems from the arguments and battles. The simple answer is to take away all the arguing and battles. And the proof of this working often lies with this question – if for the next two weeks, every child

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in the household simply did as they were told, the first time, without any arguing or battles or reminding, how would things be? Trying to treat the anger is a ‘bandaid’ measure - it’s far better to treat the cause.

Accepting that the above strategies don’t work isn’t hard for parents struggling with very challenging behaviour – they already know that these strategies don’t work. What is unacceptable is telling parents that they must keep trying and that it will work eventually. This only lays the blame at the feet of parents, making them feel that they haven’t done it properly, or that there must be something wrong with them, their family, or their child. Parents have copped a raw deal for too long, with the modern parenting principles and strategies having left them feeling powerless and often feeling useless as parents. Coupled with this is the fact that it’s not helping their children either. Children with these challenging behaviours are growing up thinking that they can’t be told what to do, that they don’t have to do something they don’t want to, and that they get rewarded for just doing what’s expected. And if that’s not bad enough, everyday life becomes extremely frustrating and miserable for the entire family, and parents often end up resenting their children, and then feeling bad because they resent their children. For parents with challenging children, the modern parenting approach is completely wrong – not only does it not deal with the behaviour, but it often makes it worse.

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The Strategies That Do Work

From a closer look at modern parenting principles and strategies, it's very obvious that it's become horribly complicated for parents. Parents have been flooded with things they should do, things they shouldn't do, and things they're not allowed to do, all of which sounds great on paper, but in reality it's practically impossible to put into practice. A very common situation will highlight this point – a child is arguing with their mother over what the child wants to wear to school that day – even when the school has a uniform, children have a tendency to decide that today they want to wear something different! Equally, it may be over the child needing to brush their teeth, put their toys away, pack up their mess, or any number of other daily tasks. In the situation of what to wear today, today's parent is firstly expected to allow the child to have a choice, even if there is no choice because it's a uniform. The parent then needs to negotiate calmly with the child, often needing to reward the child if the child happens to give into the parent's way of thinking. But if the child continues to argue and gets angry, the parent is to remain calm, even if the child is becoming hysterical and throws a shoe at the parent, or scratches and lashes out in a rage. The parent is also expected to get down on the child's level, remaining calm, and somehow tolerate the screaming and lashing out from the now out-of-control child. Following this stressful start to the day, the parent is then expected to put all that behind them and spend some quality time with the child, all the while walking on egg shells

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waiting for the next minor situation to not go the child's way, only to trigger off another round of all-out war!

One aim of this manual is to demonstrate that it doesn't have to be so complicated –in fact, it needs to be very simple. One problem with it being so complicated is that with all of the different strategies and techniques that parents are expected to follow, there are more opportunities for the self-centred, strong-willed, often intelligent child to find ways to manipulate the situation to get their own way. Keeping it very simple allows far less opportunity for the child to challenge anything, and it also makes it much easier for parents to be as consistent as they need to be.

With this in mind, there are two crucial factors in parenting challenging children – the first is the need for very clear and very simple rules – the second is the need for consequences, as it is the consequence that makes a rule effective.

Rules – When it comes to rules, simple is best. The more complicated the rules, the more opportunity there is for a strong-willed child to try and cheat the system. And the more complicated the rules, the more the door is left open to more arguments and battles. In a household, there is only one rule that's required – children need to do as they are told – the first time!

The Need for Consequences

In everyday life, we're all expected to follow many rules, and it's these rules that ensure that things run smoothly. It's not

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hard to imagine what life would be like in a society without rules. So we all know that rules are a good thing, but the reality is that there are many of us that won't necessarily follow all of the rules, particularly if it means that following the rule is stopping us from getting our own way, and especially if we think we can get away with it. The reality is that even though we know that following the rules is a good thing, many of us wouldn't if it weren't for the consequences for breaking the rules. This is a fundamental and crucial point to managing behaviour – it's the consequences that make the rules effective. Without consequences, for many of us, rules are nothing more than some guidelines to follow when it suits us. And it's exactly the same for children. Due to a child's personality, they will happily break the rules if it means getting what they want – the only thing that stops them is the consequence for breaking the rule.

Just to make the point about the importance of consequences, here is another example that most adults can identify with – AFL football. Without rules, the game would be a debacle – it's the rules that make the game run smoothly, and it's the umpire's job to enforce the rules. Without the umpire, many of the players would break the rules if it meant scoring a goal, especially if they knew they could get away with it. Now, the question needs to be asked "what makes the players listen to the umpire", or in other words, what gives the umpire the ability to control the game. It's certainly not that all the players respect the umpire because they think he's a nice person and he does such a

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good job – the only reason the players listen to the umpire is that he has the consequences to back up the rules. And importantly, the consequences are not just a slap on the wrist – they are of ‘real’ consequence to the players. It’s this that makes the players respect and listen to the umpire’s decision and follow the rules.

The difficulty for parents is that, as mentioned above, consequences and punishments are now seen as unhealthy and even sometimes damaging to children, and along with this, parents are now encouraged to only use rewards and avoid the consequences all together. Consequences are not unhealthy – as we’ve just discussed, we all live with them in our daily lives. But not only have consequences become so unpopular in parenting, they have also become weaker and weaker. It has now reached the stage where a major consequence for a child is considered to be ‘Time-out in the Naughty Corner’, with the child needing to sit there, one minute for every year of age, thinking about what they’ve done wrong. This is usually not much of a consequence to a strong-willed child at all. The fact is that consequences now have become so weak that they are often ineffective at controlling a child’s behaviour, especially children with very challenging behaviour. This is one of two crucial points in making consequences - for a consequence to be effective, it must be ‘*of consequence*’ to the child. Put another way, it must be really unpleasant, the child must really dislike it.

We have already mentioned the road rules, and this is a good example of the importance of consequences and the

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importance of the ‘consequence being of consequence’. We all know that there are speed limits that should be obeyed, yet there are some of us that still speed. Now, if the speeding fine was \$1, that wouldn’t be very effective at stopping people from speeding - those that chose to speed will simply pay the dollar and off they’d go again. However, when the speeding fine is \$300, it becomes much more of a deterrent. But let’s extend this argument for a moment, as this also raises another key principle of parenting challenging children – consistency. Back to the speeding fine example – if it was automatic that every time someone exceeded the speed limit they would receive a \$300 fine the next day in the post, and importantly, if it wasn’t paid they would go to jail – in other words, the police aren’t going to forget about it after a few days - then there would be no more speeding! In other words, when the consequence is big enough, and applied consistently enough, it’s this that make’s the rule effective, and it’s this approach that will make a child do as they’re told.

This example highlights the second crucial point in making consequences effective – they must be followed through with. As in the speeding fine example, if we knew that the speeding fine would disappear in a few days, then it wouldn’t be effective at all. And this is a very challenging issue for parents, and always has been. So many things can get in the way of following through with consequences. Sometimes it’s just too hard – often following through with a consequence is enough to set the child off again with more challenging

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behaviour, which therefore tempts the parent into just forgetting about the consequence to 'keep the peace'. Parents feeling sorry for a child is another common obstacle to following through with consequences. A regular example of this is if there's something stressful occurring within the family, such as parents separating, or a death in the family. These situations are often triggers for children's behaviour to go off the rails, and while we may tolerate some of it for a short period of time, often the boundaries need to be re-established, and this means consequences. Feeling sorry for a child makes it so much harder for the parent to follow through. Whatever the obstacle, not following through is guaranteed to make consequences ineffective, and instead, the child will quickly learn that they can get away with the bad behaviour.

This also raises another issue with consequences. As already discussed, consequences are necessarily negative, for them to be effective, they need to be unpleasant. Parents will sometimes wonder how the household will ever be a pleasant place to live if all there is are rules and consequences - and after all, the aim for parents is usually to make the household a more pleasant place to live. The answer is simple – the household will become a much more pleasant place to live when the challenging behaviour is under control, and when the challenging behaviour is no longer there, there's obviously no need for the consequences. As a parent, do not be fooled into thinking that the environment first needs to be made pleasant for the

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behaviour to occur. Many parents are led to believe that this is best way to deal with problem behaviour, and from this comes the strategies of ‘spending more time with your child’. This is definitely not the way to go - as already discussed, a strong-willed and self-centred will simply take advantage of this ‘positive’ approach, leaving the parent feeling even more frustrated.

Consistency

Consistency is vital, and the notion of consistency applies to many facets of parenting when trying to deal with a child’s challenging behaviour. As already discussed, it is crucial for a parent to *not* ‘pick their battles’, as picking the battles sends the message to the child that sometimes the parent will give in. This only encourages a child to keep trying, never knowing when they may get their own way, or win the battle. When it comes to consistency, there is a very important psychological principle at work called intermittent reinforcement, and when it comes to strong willed children, this very important to understand, as it is at the heart of being consistent. Decades of research has shown that there are several ways in which any behaviour will be reinforced, or encouraged – these are called ‘schedules of reinforcement’ – it simply means that there are ways to more of the same behaviour. Some examples are continuous reinforcement, consistent reinforcement, and of course intermittent reinforcement. The important thing to understand is that intermittent reinforcement is the most powerful way, out of all the different types of reinforcement, to reinforce

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behaviour, or get more of the same behaviour. Intermittent reinforcement is when the person will get rewarded for their behaviour at some stage, but they never know when it's going to happen, it may be the next time they do the behaviour, or may be after the next twenty times. A great example of the power of intermittent reinforcement is Poker Machines, which are based on intermittent reinforcement. It is the principle of intermittent reinforcement that helps to make poker machines so addictive. The person never knows when they'll get rewarded, it may be the next time, it may be in ten times, so they keep trying. Now, imagine this principle at work when it comes to parenting a strong-willed, very determined and self-centred child – the result is obvious – if a parent gives in just once, the child's challenging behaviour has been rewarded, and then it's 'game on'. The child's persistence will ensure that they will continue to challenge the parent until again they get rewarded by the parent giving in.

Consistency by not 'giving in' to a persistent child is therefore crucial, and it's also vital that a parent consistently follows through with consequences. The idea of consistency is also very important over the longer term – in other words, it's very important that a strong willed child realises that the rules and consequences are not going to change, and when children understand this, they are far more likely to give up on the battles.

Another very important aspect of being consistent is 'consistency between parents' – in other words, both parents

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ideally need to be consistent with applying these strategies. If not, a smart strong willed child will quickly work out ways to manipulate the situation to get their own way. However, this issue of being consistent between parents poses an additional problem for dealing with challenging behaviour. It's quite common for parents to have very different parenting styles, and also of course, it's not uncommon for separated parents to have very different rules and consequences. While this isn't ideal, if nothing much can be done to improve consistency between the parents, not all is lost – the important thing for a parent to remember is that they themselves must be very consistent. This is the best hope they have at managing the child's challenging behaviour. And it's important to know that children can cope with this reasonably well with inconsistent rules and boundaries. An example of a child's ability to adapt to inconsistencies occurs frequently at school – children work out very quickly which teacher is relaxed and will allow kids to 'muck' around, however the same students work out very quickly which teacher is strict and the students 'don't dare step out of line'.

Fewer Choices, Not More Choices

Parents have been constantly told that they need to give their children more choices. As already mentioned, this idea has stemmed from the belief that decades ago children were 'seen and not heard' and therefore they never seemed to have much choice. Parents have also been led to believe that giving a child more choices somehow leads to better

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decision making and reasoning skills. As well as this, children are also now told in schools that they ‘have to make sensible choices’, and they need to ‘choose’ how to behave. While this all sounds very positive, in real life it’s often a very different picture. Since when do we leave it up to children to decide what’s best for them and let them decide how they ‘should’ behave. In adopting this view that children need to be responsible for making these decisions about what’s best for them, we are assuming that the child is wise and sensible enough to make a good decision. What we are essentially asking then is for a strong-willed self-centred child to make ‘sensible’ choices or decisions that will often not go in their favour – is this really going to happen? This approach has created the situation where a strong-willed, self-centred child thinks they get to have a choice with everything they do, and this simply leads to endless arguments and battles because what the child wants is often unreasonable or impossible, and they think they have the right choose. In most instances children these days have plenty of choice – in many instances, it’s far simpler and far easier to not give children the choice in the first place, and after all, sometimes they just have to do as their told.

Don’t Get Engaged in the Battle

Apart from the need for ‘consequences that are of real consequence’, this final point is possibly the most important of all. Under no circumstances should a parent get engaged in a battle. Getting engaged in the battle is like waving a red flag at a bull – for a strong-willed, self-centred child, it’s game

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on, and remember, strong-willed children thrive off of the battle. The difficulty for parents however is that many of the modern parenting strategies not only encourage but demand that parents engage in the battle. Take for example the recommendation that parents need to reason and negotiate with their child. Engaging in any discussion about something that just needs to be happen only sends the message to the child that there is room for negotiation, that they possibly have a choice, or what is being asked of them may not need to happen – in other words they sense the opportunity to argue! With strong-willed children, what parents actually need are strategies that allow them to not get engaged in any battle – in other words, children need to get the clear message that they simply need to do as they're told.

Importantly, any arguing or 'getting engaged in the battle', or very importantly, any signs of showing frustration and anger, are all actually signs of 'weakness' to a strong-willed self-centred child. Don't ever think that a strong willed self-centred child will see that the parent is getting upset or frustrated, and this will make them stop and do the right thing – rather, the opposite happens, they see it as a weakness and will try their hardest to exploit it.

The importance of not getting engaged in the battle is the idea that by not getting engaged, the parent is showing that they're in control – that they've got the situation covered. Getting this message across is essential when dealing with challenging children. Demonstrating that the parent has got it covered and that the parent is in complete control sends

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the very clear message to the child “don’t even try” – this is essential in taking away most of the battles. Just as children have an uncanny ability to spot a weakness, they also have an uncanny ability to see when the parent has it covered and under control. And it also needs to be remembered that a child knowing that the parent is in control is essential for the mental health of any child. This creates an environment of calmness, as opposed to the constant battles and chaos, and the child will appear much more settled generally. And this is what parents are trying to achieve, a pleasant and calm household, rather than the alternative, which is constant arguments, battles, anger and temper tantrums.

A Word of Caution

It can sometimes happen that when a parent is working hard to manage and improve their child’s behaviour, the parent’s expectations also change in the process, especially when the parent starts to see some real improvement. Sometimes this leads to parents expecting perfection, in other words, a child that is perfectly behaved all the time. This simply isn’t going to happen, and nor is it the aim. With a strong willed child, the aim is to simply contain this strong will to a manageable level, so that everyday life can be reasonably calm, settled and positive. There will still be the bad days, but for the parent, it just needs to be manageable.

Related to the above issue is where parents should set the boundaries, in other words, what acceptable behaviour is and what behaviour is disrespectful. Using a common

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example is the best way to understand this issue. If the parent is asking a child to do something, and the child responds with blatant defiance or even worse, swearing and abusing the parent, this is clearly disrespectful, and the parent will need to deal with this behaviour, in other words, consequences every time. However, if the parent asks a child to do something, and while the child is doing as they're told, they are 'muttering' under their breath "I hate you", or "you don't love me", or "why is it always me you pick on" etc., this is just 'attitude', and the parent will never entirely get rid of this. It needs to be remembered that the parent can't expect the child to be happy and willing to comply with the parent's instructions, as it's usually not something the child wants to be doing. The child simply needs to be doing as they're told. So if a child is doing as they're told, but 'muttering' under their breath about how terrible their life is, the parent needs to ignore it. However, when it shifts to being disrespectful, it can't be ignored.

Summary

These are the key principles involved in parenting challenging children, and while they have been developed to deal with very challenging behaviour, the same principles can in fact be used for any child, as these principals are what applies to all of us in everyday life, so children may as well get used to it. But when it comes to children with very challenging behaviour, these principals are essential. It is also important

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to understand that these principles can be applied to any child with challenging behaviour, regardless of what is supposedly causing the behaviour, such as an underlying condition, trauma in the family, or a difficult childhood.

It's important to also understand that these principals do not change according to the child's age. The only thing that changes is how these principals are applied – how a parent deals with a four year old's behaviour will obviously be very different to how a parent needs to treat a ten year old – but the principles remain the same.

These principles are all based on standard behaviour management practices that have been developed from decades of psychological research. Importantly, as mentioned above, they are also the exact same principles that apply to all of us in our everyday lives, and this is why it is essential that children come to understand and accept that this is how it is. After all, it's the parent's fundamental role to prepare their child for the real world. Despite what parents have been told in recent decades, modern-day parenting ideas and strategies help very little to prepare a child for the real world. In fact, in following the modern-day parenting ideas, children in fact become ill-prepared for the realities of everyday life. For anyone who disagrees with this fundamental principal, perhaps take some time to consider the lack of respect, the aggression and violence, and the extremely challenging behaviour displayed by children and teenagers today, compared to children and teenagers twenty years ago. The 'proof is in the pudding'.

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THE PARENTING MANUALS

Defiance & Daily Battles – Two to Five Years Old

Written specifically for children in the 2 to 5 year old age group. Despite their young age and small stature, strong-willed children at this age can be a real challenge for parents trying to cope with their child's very challenging behaviour. This manual provides practical and effective strategies for any parent, grandparent, or adult carer.

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THE PARENTING MANUALS

Defiance & Daily Battles – Five to Twelve Year Olds

Written specifically for children in the 5 to 12 year old age group. Based on the same principles as explained in the Introduction and Rationale, this manual provides practical and effective strategies for any parent, grandparent, or adult carer.

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Anger Meltdowns & Rage

While anger is normal, some children express it in unacceptable ways. Children cannot control their anger themselves, they need to be taught how to control their anger, and they need the parent to be in control. This manual provides practical and effective strategies that allow parents to stay in control and teach their child how to control their anger and emotions.

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Time-Out

One More Important Variation

Battles on the Way to Time Out

What to Do When You're Out

A Common Criticism of This Approach

Part 3 – SUMMARY

What if This Doesn't Work?