



Parenting Strong-Willed Children

Peter Janetzki - Counsellor / Educator
Dip.T., Grad. Dip.Soc.Sc., M.Soc.Sc.(Counselling).
CCAA (Clin), PACFA Reg

 **PETER
ANETZKI
& ASSOCIATES**
www.peterj.com.au



The Goal of Parenting To Grow & Let Go

As parents keep in mind that our goal is to have our children grow up into healthy functioning adults who will leave us to pursue their own life and family.



 **PETER
ANETZKI
& ASSOCIATES**
www.peterj.com.au

How Strong-Willed Are You?

Checking Your Strong-Willed Child (SWC) Quotient

Source: *You Can't Make Me (But I Can Be Persuaded): Strategies for Bringing Out the Best In Your Strong-Willed Child* - Cynthia Ulrich Tobias(2003), Waterbrook Press, Pages 9 & 10

Mark only those statements that are true almost 100% of the time:

- almost never accepts words like "impossible" or phrases like "it can't be done."
- can move with lightning speed from a warm, loving presence to a cold, immovable force.
- may argue the point into the ground, sometimes just to see how far into the ground the point will go.
- when bored, would rather create a crisis than have a day go by without incident.
- considers rules to be more like guidelines (i.e. As long as I'm abiding by the "spirit of the law", why are you being so picky?)

 PETER
ANETZKI
& ASSOCIATES
www.peterj.com.au

- shows great creativity and resourcefulness—seems to always find a way to accomplish a goal.
- can turn what seems to be the smallest issue into a grand crusade or a raging controversy.
- doesn't do things just because "you're supposed to" -- it needs to matter personally.
- refuses to obey unconditionally—seems to always have a few terms of negotiation before complying.
- is not afraid to try the unknown; to conquer the unfamiliar (although each SWC chooses his or her own risks).
- can take what was meant to be the simplest request and interpret it as an offensive ultimatum.
- may not actually apologize, but almost always makes things right.

 PETER
ANETZKI
& ASSOCIATES
www.peterj.com.au



Checking Your Strong-Willed Child (SWC) Quotient

Your Score: How Much Strong Will Do You Have?

- 0-3 You've got it, but you don't use it much.
- 4-7 You use it when you need to, but not on a daily basis.
- 8-10 You've got a very healthy dose of it, but you can back off when you want to.
- 11-12 You don't leave home without it—and it's almost impossible to not use it.

She was such an adorable little girl.

Angela!" Her mother sounded exasperated.
"Angela, I said get over here *right this minute!*"

Standing in the aisle of the department store, I watched the face of this beautiful five-year old suddenly darken into an angry scowl. "No!" she cried. "I want to go see the toys NOW!"

Her mother looked exhausted as she grabbed Angela's hand and began to drag her screaming daughter through the store. As they passed me, I saw the mother's eyes roll upward as she muttered, "Just another ordinary day."



Richard loved football, but he didn't care much for studying.

By high school, his grades were so poor that his future was in jeopardy. His parents, it seemed, had tried everything—threats, bribes, promises—to no avail.

In desperation, Richard's father issued an ultimatum: "Richard, if you don't get those grades up immediately, you can't play football." And this boy who loved football as much as life itself, squared his shoulders, faced his dad, and quietly said, "Then forget football." And everyone lost. Richard lost what he cared about most, and his parents lost what they believed was their only leverage



Cynthia Ulrich Tobias(2003)

What is your story?

Your biggest battle
with your SWC?



Characteristics of a Strong Willed Child

- They have firm convictions, a high spirit, and a sense of adventure
- They seem compelled from within to fuss, fight, test, question, resist, & challenge
- They have a high need to win - to have their own way almost all the time with brothers, sisters, peers & parents
- They turn discipline issues into a struggle, a debate or a battle

Characteristics of a Strong Willed Child

- They have great potential for construction or destruction
- They require more effort in parenting than the average child
- They regularly become a stubborn & immovable force
- Dr. Dobson writes in his book *The Strong Willed Child*: "It is my firm conviction that the strong-willed child usually possesses more creative potential and strength of character than his compliant siblings, provided his parents can help him channel his impulses and gain control of his rampaging will."

Statistics of Strong-Willed Child

(Source: Dobson, 2004, p.41-43)



- ⇒ Nearly 3 times SWC to Compliant
- ⇒ Nearly every families with multiply children have at least one SWC
- ⇒ SW boys out number girls by 5%
- ⇒ Compliant girls out number boys by 6%
- ⇒ Birth order has nothing to do with SWC
- ⇒ Most parents of SWC know very early
- ⇒ 1/3 know at birth
- ⇒ 2/3 know by the 1st birthday
- ⇒ 92% know by the 3rd birthday
- ⇒ Two SW parents are likely to produce a SWC

 PETER
ANETZKI
& ASSOCIATES
www.peterj.com.au

Statistics of Strong-Willed Child

(Source: Dobson, 2004, p.41-43)



- ⇒ 74% of SWC rebel significantly in adolescence
- ⇒ The weaker the authority the greater the conflict in later years
- ⇒ Only 3% of compliant children experience severe rebellion & 14 % go into mild rebellion
- ⇒ The majority of SWC rapidly decrease their rebellion in their 20's
- ⇒ 3x SWC than compliant children made VLA's & LA's during the first two years of high school
- ⇒ 80% of compliant children were VHA & HA students
- ⇒ The compliant child experiences higher levels of self-esteem than SWC
- ⇒ 19% of compliant children dislike themselves of which 2% had extreme self-hatred of very SWC 35% disliked themselves & 8% had extreme self-hatred

 PETER
ANETZKI
& ASSOCIATES
www.peterj.com.au

Strong-willed does not have to be a negative trait!

Strong Willed Children Who Became Great Leaders

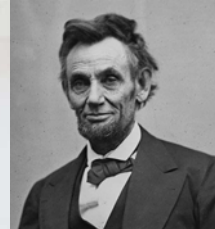
Thomas Jefferson, Marie Curie, Albert Einstein,
Joan of Arc, Thomas Edison, Abraham Lincoln,
Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr., and Mother
Theresa.

They held up under adversity, stood for their convictions, and
persisted against all odds, they refused to believe their
dreams were impossible.



Abraham Lincoln

- 👉 In 1831 his business failed and went into bankruptcy
- 👉 In 1834 he failed in business again and went into bankruptcy
- 👉 In 1835 his fiancée died
- 👉 in 1836 he had a nervous breakdown
- 👉 Two years later in 1838 he was defeated in the elections
- 👉 In 1846 he was defeated for the US Congress
- 👉 In 1848 he was defeated again for the US Congress
- 👉 In 1855 he was defeated for the US Senate
- 👉 In 1856 he was defeated for the US Vice-President
- 👉 Two years later in 1858 he was defeated again for the US Senate
- 👉 In 1860 he was elected President of the USA



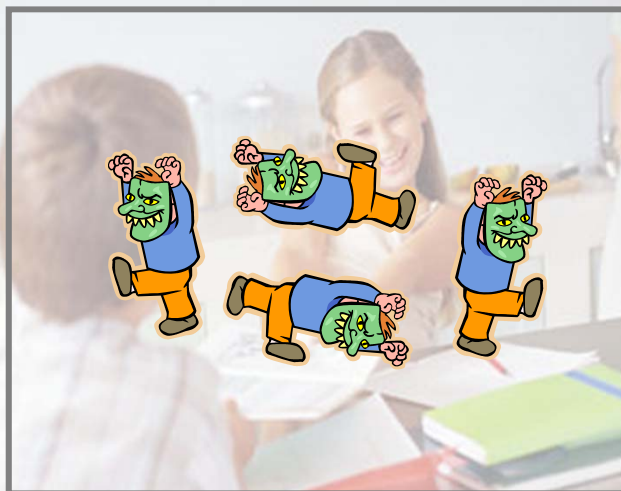
February 12, 1809 -
April 15, 1865

Being a Parent of a SWC

Gives us the opportunity to love, nurture and guide our child who has great potential into being all that they can be. Directing that wonderful and mysterious energy into the right channels, combined with their marvellous determination can achieve the impossible?



Behaviour of a Strong Willed Child



Strong Willed Children - Hard Wiring



- More Intense
- More Perceptive
- More Persistent
- Internally insecure
- Highly anxious
- More sensitive even if they don't appear to be to others



Strategies for Survival - What Won't Work,

- × Backing them into a corner & leaving them no choice
- × Telling them what they will and will not do!
- × Insist that something can't be done
- × Demand that they obey without question
- × Manipulation or coercion
- × Pleading to reason, humanity or compassion
- × Asking "please will you do..."
- × Making everything a battle
- × Getting upset with 'snot talk'





Strategies for Survival - Some Suggestions

- ✓ Understand your child - get into their shoes
- ✓ Have clear age appropriate boundaries that the child understands
- ✓ Use choices and consequences
- ✓ Ascertain if it is Defiance or Irresponsibility



Strategies for Survival - Some Suggestions

- ✓ Focus on Strategic Battles - the one that you must win
- ✓ Avoid power struggles by using routines and rules
- ✓ Don't get hooked into the debate. Use cool down times & pick your times to talk/discuss
- ✓ Separate your love & acceptance of them from your behaviour



Strategies for Survival - Some Suggestions

- ✓ Don't believe the brave front that they may put up
- ✓ Be consistent - follow through every time
- ✓ Teach them to think and assist them to generate alternatives
- ✓ Don't ask why
- ✓ Reinforce positives in ways that "stroke" your child.

Cool Down Time

De-escalating & Emotional Management
Self Soothing & Calming Down
'Clear Mind' verse 'Mud Mind'

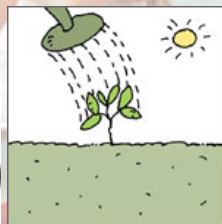


Time Out

1. On a Chair sitting quietly
2. 1 minute per year of age
3. Use a clock - Stop Start DON'T Restart
4. Address the Issue & Repair relationship
5. When finished it is FINISHED!

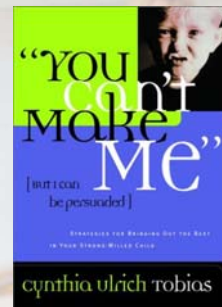
The Most Important Things

- 👍 Relationship
5 to 1 ratio
- 👍 Security
- 👍 Identity
- 👍 Self Care
- 👍 Our Own Growth

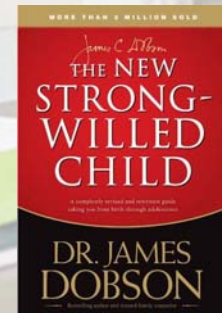


Some Books

You Can't Make Me (But I Can Be Persuaded): Strategies for Bringing Out the Best In Your Strong-Willed Child
by Cynthia Ulrich Tobias, Waterbrook Press,
a division of Random House 2003

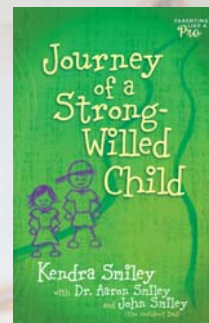


The New Strong-Willed Child: Birth Through Adolescence
by James Dobson. Tyndale House Publishers
2004

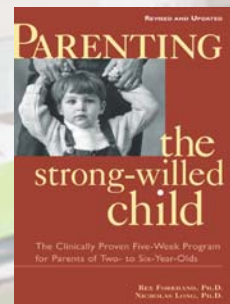


PETER ANETZKI & ASSOCIATES
www.peterj.com.au

Journey of a Strong-Willed Child
by Kendra Smiley, Moody Publishers,
January 2009

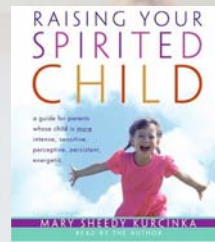


Parenting the Strong-Willed Child, Revised and Updated Edition: The Clinically Proven Five-Week Program for Parents of Two- to Six-Year-Olds
by Rex Forehand, Nicholas Long
McGraw-Hill 2002

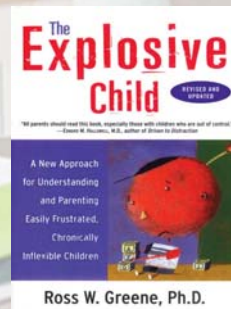


PETER ANETZKI & ASSOCIATES
www.peterj.com.au

Raising Your Spirited Child: A Guide for Parents Whose Child Is More Intense, Sensitive, Perceptive, Persistent, Energetic
by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka, Perennial 1998



The Explosive Child: A New Approach for Understanding and Parenting Easily Frustrated, Chronically Inflexible Children
by Dr. Ross Greene Harper Paperbacks, 2001



 PETER
ANETZKI
& ASSOCIATES
www.peterj.com.au

<http://www>

Some Webpages

- ☑ Cynthia Tobias
www.applest.com/strongwilled.asp
- ☑ Focus on the Family Australia
www.family.org.au
- ☑ The Australian Family Association
www.family.org.au
- ☑ The Australian Federation for the Family
<http://wingfold.tripod.com/ausfamily>
- ☑ Focus on the Family with Dr James Dobson
www.family.org

 PETER
ANETZKI
& ASSOCIATES
www.peterj.com.au

pETER
ANETZKI
& ASSOCIATES



www.peterj.com.au

Talking Life
with Peter Janetzki
8pm - 10pm
Sunday
discussing real issues, with real people, about real life.

Listen live www.96five.com