

Turn Power Struggles into Connection



OVERVIEW

- What is power?
- 3 things to gain from conflict
- What to do in a power struggle
- 4 ways to prevent power struggles
- Power play

WHAT IS POWER?

Personal power is the feeling of being in charge of one's self and circumstances. All people want and need to feel powerful. How can we handle conflict so that each person retains their power?

Control vs. Power

There are many things we **cannot control**, but we always have a choice about how to respond. The feeling of power comes from realizing there is a choice.

Loss of control in parenting

Model the language of choice

<p>Disempowering phrases give power away</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "She made me"• "I have to"• "I can't"• "Whose fault is this?"	<p>Empowering phrases allow you to retain your power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "I choose to... because...."• "I feel..."• "How can I help?"
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Conflicts vs. Power Struggles

A conflict is a power struggle when it becomes about who is more powerful or who will give in. The issue becomes lost in a power struggle. **Guiding Question:** How can I put the focus back on the issue at hand?

Discussion Question: Choose a conflict situation that you feel comfortable sharing and discuss any power dynamics involved.

3 THINGS TO GAIN FROM CONFLICT

1. Build your child's self-awareness and/or emotional intelligence.

Ask questions to understand what your child is feeling so you can help them understand what they are feeling.

2. Build a deeper connection with your child using empathy.

3. Teaching moment.

There may be something to teach or learn to prevent a similar conflict in the future.

Balance Relationships and Rules/Tasks

Guiding Question: Do I want to focus on the relationship or the rule/task right now?

Reflection: What are your personal parenting values around conflict and power?

WHAT TO DO IN A POWER STRUGGLE

1. Hear the no without reacting to it. *"I see you're saying no to that."*
2. Stay open and assertive. Calm assertive energy.
3. Stay engaged and connected in creative problem solving. Talk about options and be creative. What is important to each person? *"It's important to you that you talk to your friends and it's important to me that I get help with the dishes. How can we accomplish both?"*
4. Come up with a solution and make an agreement.
5. Make sure the agreement is upheld and check in with the relationship.

Role play/discussion: Choose a conflict situation to discuss or role play and share with the whole group. You can choose how you want to share it.

4 WAYS TO PREVENT POWER STRUGGLES

1. Be a game show host (always on their side)
2. Give lots of choices and freedom. Share power and give meaningful choices whenever possible. Let them do things their way.
3. Leave off the consequence (or else). Say *"It's time to clean your room."* Rather than *"Clean your room or no TV!"*
4. Make it a game, joke or play.

POWER PLAY DISCUSSION

What does power play look like for boys?

What does power play look like for girls?

How do you know when to intervene?

REFLECTION

What's your biggest take-away from tonight?

SOME OF MY FAVORITE PARENTING BOOKS

Unconditional Parenting by Alfie Kohn

Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child, by John Gottman

How to Talk so Kids will Listen and Listen so Kids will Talk, by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

Connection Parenting, by Pam Leo

Real Boys, by William Pollack

The Highly Sensitive Child, by Elaine N. Aron