



WEEK 3 | YOUR TRANSFORMATIVE PARENTAL JOURNEY

The Ten Core Pillars of **Empowered Parenting**

The following ten core pillars are what hold us in a secure foundation as we traverse the terrain of conscious, empowered parenting. There is no expectation, or requirement, for perfection here. These are ideals, paving the way toward a greater future. Please be gentle and kind to yourself as you begin, or deepen, your relationship with these fundamentals.

The “HEAD” of Empowered Parenting

This represents the willingness to utilize our access to scientific, and evidence-based research to support and affirm our longing to parent peacefully.

1. Informed and Aware

When practicing empowered parenting, we understand parenting is a job unlike any other, a job that takes skill building, constant learning, and a willingness to be informed of the latest research, science, and understanding of how children best develop and blossom. We are willing to challenge conditioned and outdated modes of thinking that place expectations and responsibility on children that are

developmentally inappropriate, and sometimes harmful. We embrace brain science, attachment science, nervous system science, emotional intelligence, and conscious communication. We take responsibility for ourselves, as the parent or caregiver, to understand what is happening beneath the behavior of the child. We take responsibility for assuring our family rules, boundaries, and expectations fit with where our child's brain, body, and being is at developmentally. Alfie Kohn's term for this is "reconsider your requests." Are your expectations, requests, and demands appropriate for your child's age, development, temperament, and quality of attachment? A child's 'ability' to handle requests can change, often within the same day (or even the same hour!); development isn't linear, and the adult understands that.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE:

https://www.amazon.com/Unconditional-Parenting-Moving-Rewards-Punishments/dp/0743487486/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=Unconditional+Parenting+by+AlfieKohn&qid=1611363299&s=books&sr=1-1

Unconditional Parenting
by Alfie Kohn

2. *Intentional and Reflective*

When practicing empowered parenting, we understand and accept what is required of us. We dedicate ourselves to softening our resistance to the amount of emotional, physical, psychological, spiritual, and mental energy and labor conscious parenting requires! We view this work as an utmost priority and carve out the necessary time to make daily intentions and reflections. We stand in full self-responsibility, as the parent in the family, and reject blaming our children for our struggles and challenges in parenthood. We take this seriously! We set daily intentions. We reflect daily on what is working, what is not working, what needs to be tweaked, how our children can best be served and cared for, and what we need as parents to thrive as leaders.

3. *Present, Committed, and Devoted to Imperfect Authenticity*

When practicing empowered parenting, we are dedicated to continual self-growth. We live from a space of curiosity; when we react, we respond to our reaction with curiosity and a willingness to understand. This supports our ability to be as present as

possible for our child. We are aware that unprocessed feelings, experiences, and stressors from childhood can feel overwhelming and cloud our ability to be present in our bodies, and present in the moment with our child or children. We are willing to take full responsibility for how we feel, think, believe, and respond or react to our child's feelings, needs, requests, and behaviors.

We actively seek and practice receiving the support we need. We release the urgency to become a perfect parent, and instead commit ourselves to continuous growth, awareness, and accountability. We understand that the greatest gift we can give our children is to be here, now, in the present moment (not perfectly). We are dedicated to quality connection, not quantity or perfection. Alfie Kohn calls this "keeping our eyes on the long-term goal." We parent for the future well being of our child, not for immediate gratification or ease. Though, BOTH can co-exist together!

The "HEART" of Empowered Parenting

This represents the emotional intelligence of peaceful parenting strategies and values.

4. All Feelings are Valid and Welcome

When practicing empowered parenting, we are actively engaged in our own emotional intelligence. We practice learning how to name our emotional reactivity, our feelings, and our needs. We understand that there are no "good" or "bad" feelings, for ourselves or our children, and make space for all feelings to be felt. We model emotional containment by not reacting, to the best of our capacity, when overcome with strong emotion. We practice mindfulness of our feelings, acceptance, and non-judgement, so we can feel our feelings, and allow them to pass.

5. Attuned and Empathetic

When practicing empowered parenting, we are dedicated to attuning to our children's experience. We are willing to practice, regularly and consistently, wondering and exploring how our children may be feeling... what their experience may be. We are soft, warm, and willing to offer gentle, considerate responses to our child's big feelings, disoriented actions, and mistakes. We are willing to practice self-empathy

and are dedicated to differentiation and clear boundaries. We understand that we are responsible for our feelings and can separate how we feel from how our child feels. We are willing to look beneath any behavior as our child's best attempt to meet their needs, communicate their experience, and cope with their big feelings. We are mindful, and willing to respond to the moment with an in-depth awareness of what is going on inside of us--our feelings, needs, judgements, beliefs, as well as our child's.

6. Loving Kindness and Forgiveness

When practicing empowered parenting, we are dedicated to noticing where we can soften our harshness into kindness, unconditional acceptance, and a willingness to forgive (ourselves and others). We practice generous assumptions, and reject assuming our child makes choices intentionally, willingly, out of spite or manipulation, malice, or ill will.

We are generously assuming our children are always doing the best they can. They are having a hard time, not giving us a hard time. We forgive our children and ourselves to make inevitable mistakes. We see conflict and mistakes as an opportunity to connect, learn, and grow. We do not hold grudges against our children or pigeonhole them. We see the long term, and understand our children are growing, learning, and remember that mistakes are human, normal, and an important element of becoming an empowered person.

The “HAND” of Empowered Parenting

This represents our understanding of the practical, evidence and strategy based tools of peaceful parenting.

7. Communicate to Connect and Understand

When practicing empowered parenting, we are dedicated to unlearning communication programming rooted in judgement, criticism, blame, shame, and projection. We are willing to learn and practice non-violent, compassionate communication within our own heads, and with our children. We practice, daily, taking ownership for our feelings and needs, and communicating directly. When we slip into passive aggressive language, “you!” blame language, or criticism, we are

dedicated to catching ourselves, taking accountability and apologizing to our child or children. We understand that our children are learning how to communicate, and many times, especially under stress, will struggle to do so. We will hold space for our children as they find their voice and will make space for their voice to be heard (even when it's loud, messy, and not the most kind!). We will teach our children a different, more compassionate way of expressing themselves, without punishment, making them wrong, or shame.

8. *Nonviolence and Safety*

When practicing empowered parenting, we make a commitment to non-violence in thought, word, and deed. We aim to keep our household a space of warmth, comfort, and peace. We commit to soften our dependency on any strategy or tool that diminishes the humanity of our child.

This includes utilizing communication, clear limits, empathetic support, and creative problem solving when we are in need of help in our parenting. We continuously commit to be safe harbors for our young, where no body, mind, or heart is intentionally harmed while in our presence. We practice non-violence with ourselves, as well. We commit to self-empathy, compassion, and forgiveness when we make a mistake and cross a boundary of safety and respect with our child. We are dedicated to reaching out for support when we realize we are depending on forceful and disrespectful parenting tactics.

9. *Boundaries from Family Values*

When practicing empowered parenting we understand a core need of every human is to understand. We are dedicated to clarity and confidence when setting limits and boundaries. Every limit, rule, and boundary in our family's home stems from intention and clarity about our core values. We reject conditioned values, and practice courage. We hold space for our child's discomfort or disagreement. We are clear in ourselves and are dedicated to knowing when to stand firm in our clarity of limits, and when it is safe and appropriate to soften and exercise flexibility. We understand that our boundaries, and our expectations are our responsibility, as the parent, to secure. We support our children's needs, whatever they may be, at any age, to meet those expectations and boundaries. If we are not willing to be an active and engaged participant of our boundary being honored, we are willing to get curious as to how important that boundary truly is to us.

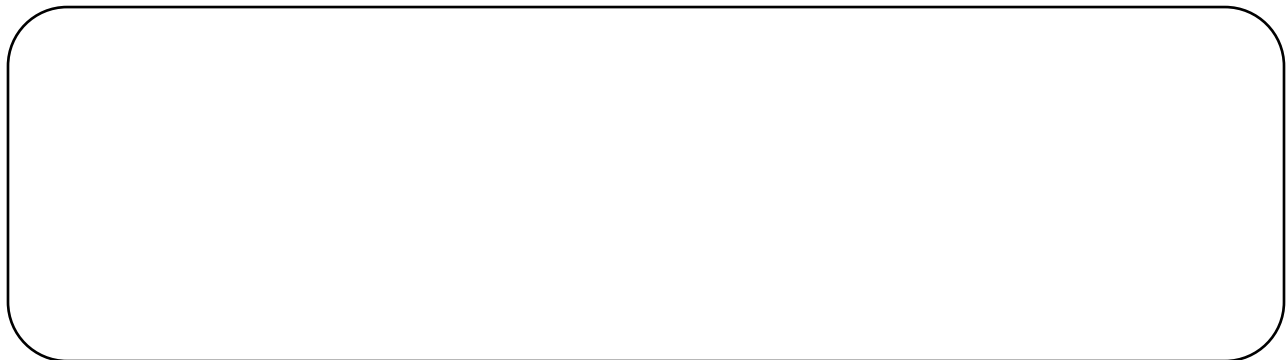
10. Joy, Play, and Fun!

When practicing empowered parenting, we are dedicated to unearthing and celebrating the essence of parenting: raising children can be fun! Magical! And an opportunity to remember what play, lightheartedness, and fun feels like! We are dedicated to learning how to soften conflict through connective play. We are curious about how everyday squabbles can be soothed and transmuted into an opportunity for connection and teaching through playfulness and creativity. We embrace play as our children's process for understanding, healing, and transforming stressed behavior into self-connected and cooperative behavior. We prioritize joy and laughter when stress, fatigue and feeling overwhelmed are oppressing the family culture.

Get Curious!

*Write a few words about your relationship with each pillar.
Are you currently practicing? Are you resistant to practicing?
Are you curious and longing to deepen your practice with a particular pillar? No
judgment, at all.*

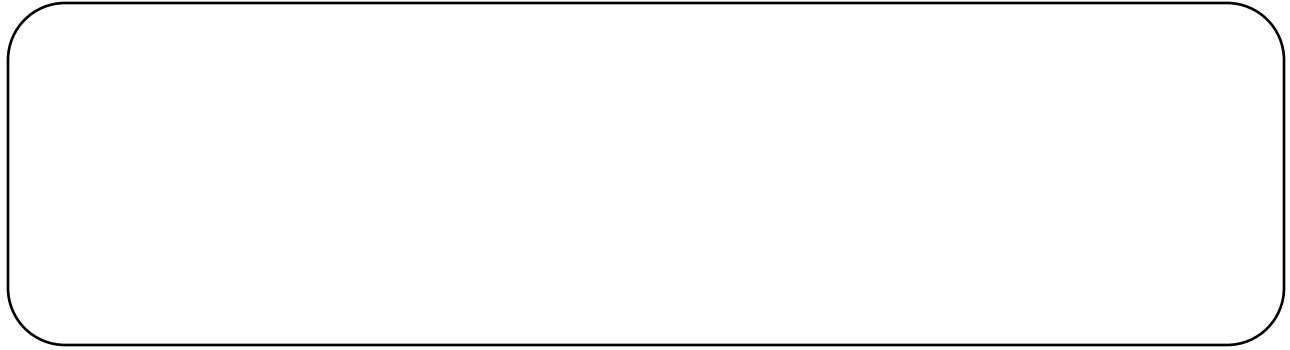
Pillar 1: Informed and Aware



Pillar 2: Intentional and Reflective



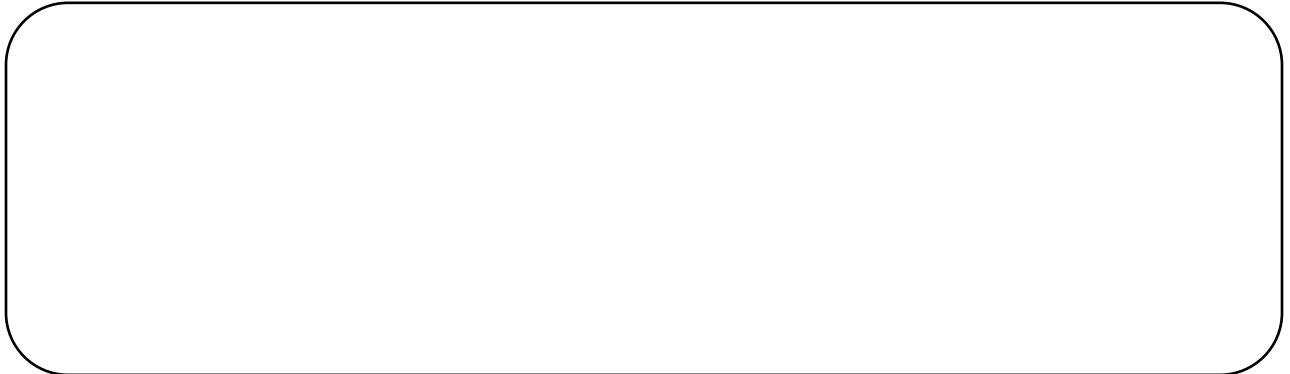
Pillar 3: Present, Committed and Authentic



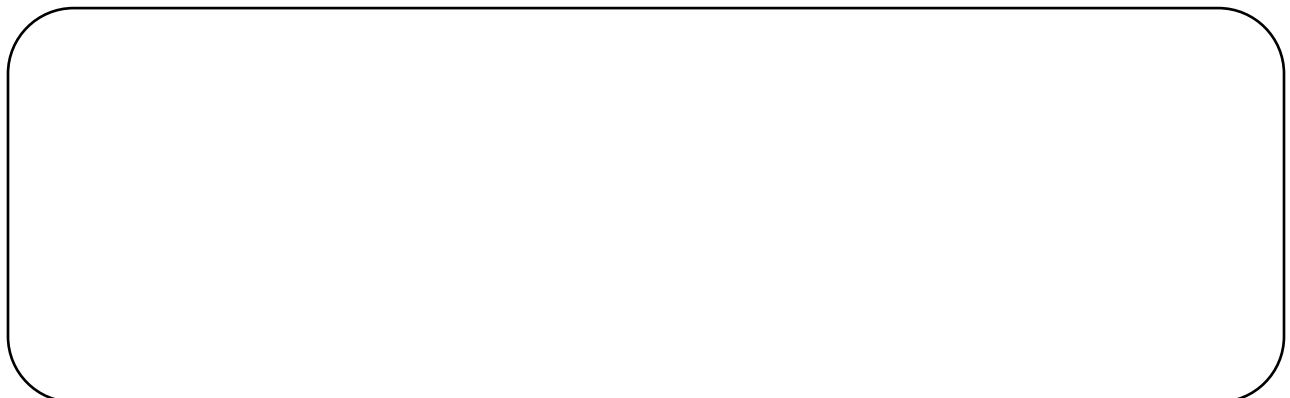
Pillar 4: All Feelings are Valid and Welcome



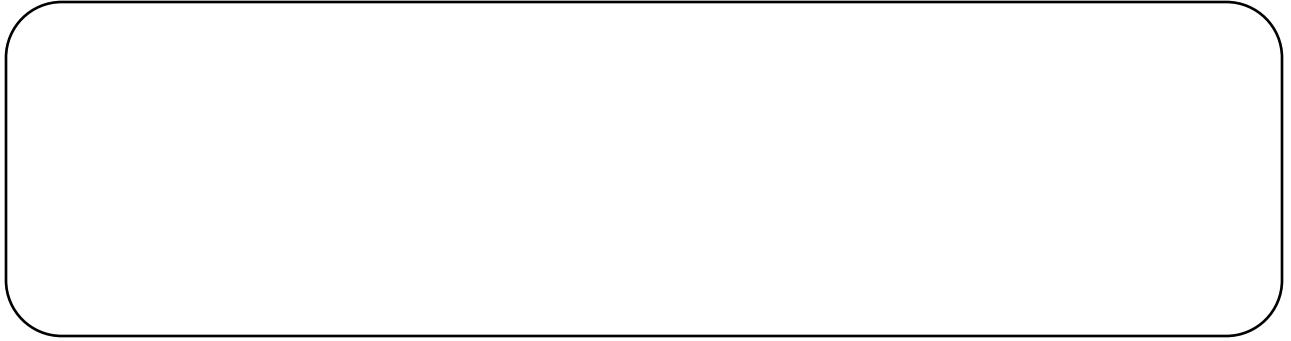
Pillar 5: Attuned and Empathetic



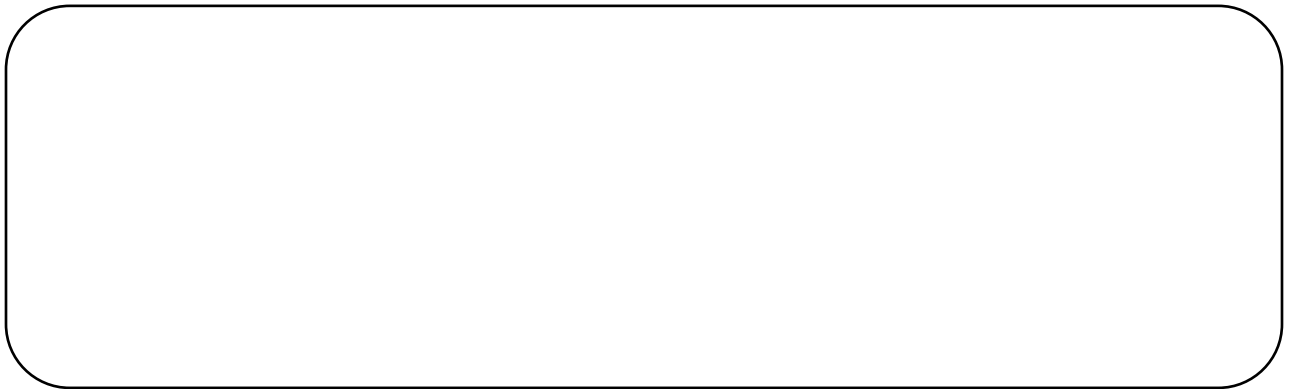
Pillar 6: Loving Kindness and Forgiveness



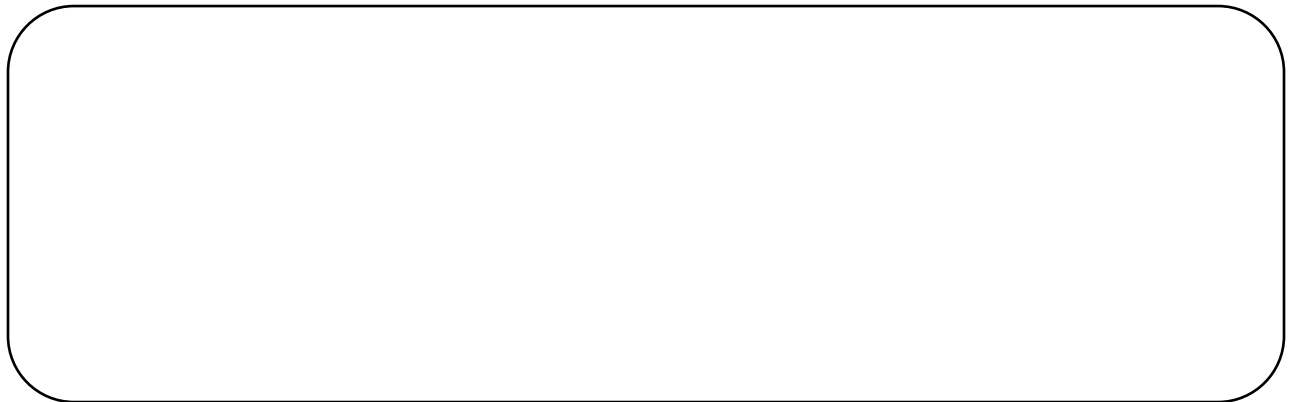
Pillar 7: Communicate to Connect and Understand



Pillar 8: Non-Violence and Safety



Pillar 9: Boundaries from Family Value/Limits with Love



Pillar 10: PLAY!



Understanding Power Over and Power Under Parenting

Power over or under dynamics occur in any intimate relationship. Often, these dynamics stem from a lack of self-awareness, tools, or support. If you find yourself parenting from any of the following examples, please be gentle with yourself. We are all learning, and moving toward empowered parenting means confronting the behaviors we display as parents that can benefit from introspection and transformation!

Power Over Parenting

Authoritarian

The most extreme version of power over. There is ZERO space for the child's feelings, thoughts, needs, desires, wants, and voice. The parent is at the top of the hierarchy and the child is at the bottom.

- The child is to be “seen and not heard.”
- Children are seen as “born bad” and must be taught how to “be good.”
- It’s “my way or the highway.”
- Parents must “rule with an iron fist” so their child does not turn out “spoiled and entitled.”
- Fear is used as a tool to control our children’s behavior, or our external environment.
- This includes yelling, shaming, threatening, punitive time outs, name calling, any kind of physical harm, no matter how 'small' or 'light' the adult perceives it to be, sending to bed without food, enforcing isolation from community or other family members, and comparison.
- Demands immediate obedience without informing the child of the “why” behind the rule or boundary.
- Punishes children for their mistakes. May lecture, shame, or criticize a child publicly or privately.
- Reacts harshly toward the child because of the parents own lack of emotional regulation, yet will blame the child for “making them act that way.”
- Adds to the chaos and retaliates to the child's deregulated and disoriented behavior.

- Parents from fear without awareness or reflection.
- Wants to control who their child is, how they feel, and how they act to be a “good parent.”
- “I am the parent and I know best!”
- Conditional love and acceptance. The child best act or perform to an expected standard to receive love, acceptance, and approval.
- Respect is demanded without reciprocation.
- Hypocrisy. “Do as I say, not as I do.”
- Hypervigilance and expecting perfection; the adult who says, 'We don't make mistakes like that.'

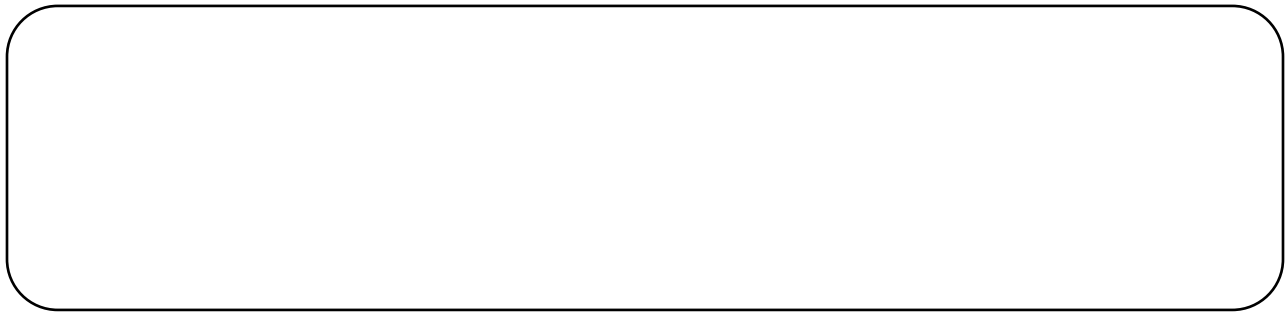
Authoritative

When used optimally, this is scientifically supported as the. best parenting model. There is typically “high warmth” (emotional connection, emphasis on relationship over obedience), yet the parent is still at the top of the hierarchy, and the child at the bottom. If authoritative parenting is not used optimally, there may be space for the child to express and feel, yet there **may not** ultimately not be space to reconsider plans, limits, or lifestyle to MEET the child’s needs, or respect their opinion.

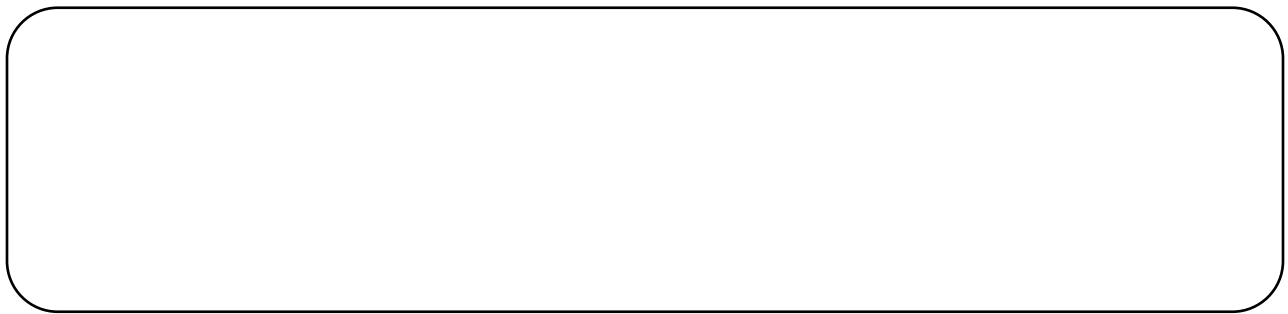
- According to “Untigering,” by Iris Chen, the authoritative parenting style showcases all of the outward parenting tools that we advocate for : empathy, patience, understanding, yet it may not be married with the level of self awareness and consciousness advocated by Empowered Parenting.
- In many ways, Authoritative Parenting is in alignment with Empowered Parenting, or Power-With Parenting, with room for growth in terms of orienting the family system more toward consensus, versus the parent’s creating space for the child’s opinions to be heard, seen, and valued, yet the parent has the ultimate say surrounding limits, goals, and expectations.
- Note: this is quite a nuance. Get curious if you have strong feelings coming up for you! This journey is about thinking critically and finding what is true for YOU!

Ask yourself the following questions to become more clear:

Do I believe that parents can BOTH hold the ultimate “power” and honor their child’s agency? If yes, how? If not, why not?



Do I believe that the parent should have the ultimate say surrounding the limits and social and academic expectations of the child? If yes, why? If not, why not?



Power Under Parenting

Permissive

- Parents struggle being present, physically or emotionally, and children are expected to “raise themselves.”
- Parents may struggle to set boundaries. The stress of needing to parent from a place of confidence and leadership can be too much to bear, so they prefer to keep quiet, stay passive, and allow their children to make their own decisions.
- May feel their child’s rejection or emotional abandonment, so they do not do or say anything that will upset their child.
- Fear of conflict may keep them quiet.
- Fear that they are incapable may cause them to hold back and not work together with their child to set limits.

Uninvolved

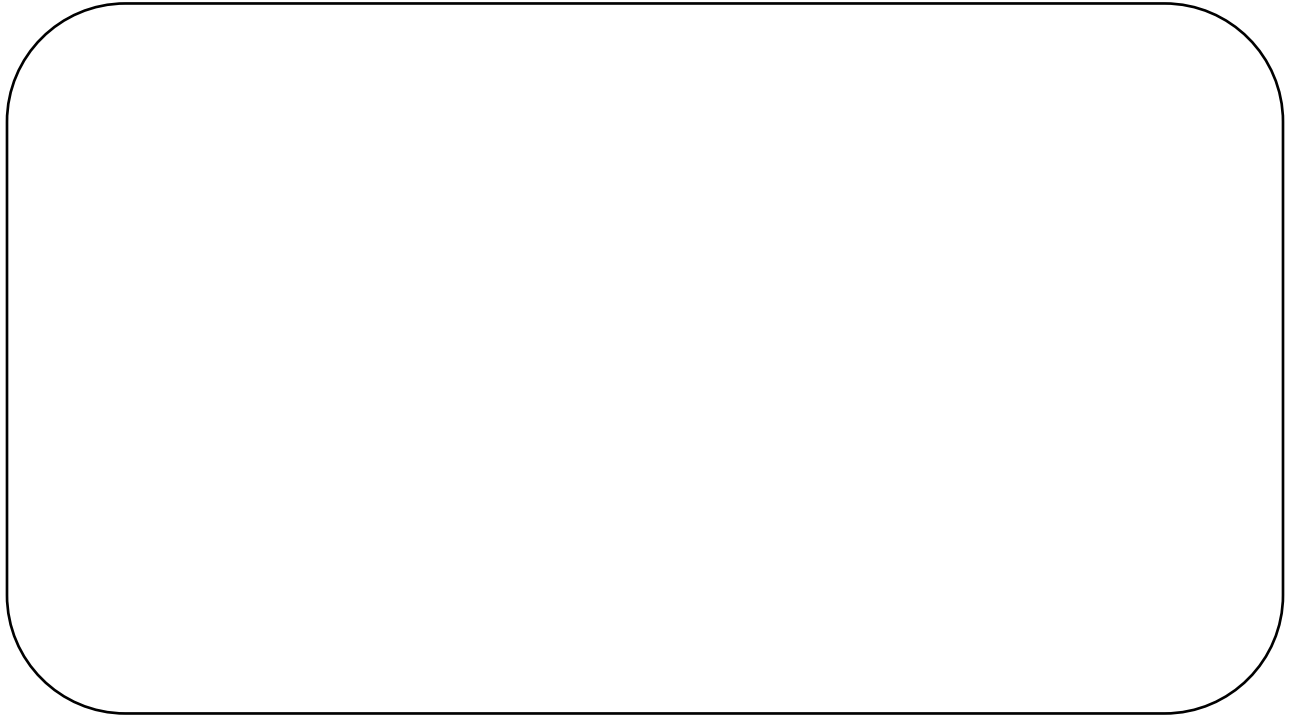
- This parent may be completely, or partially “checked out.”
- This parent is devoid of warmth and nurturance and may appear “there but not really there.”
- Sees parenting as a burden to escape.
- Believes the child should be capable of independence and leaves the child “to their own devices.”

Gaining Compassion for Our Fears

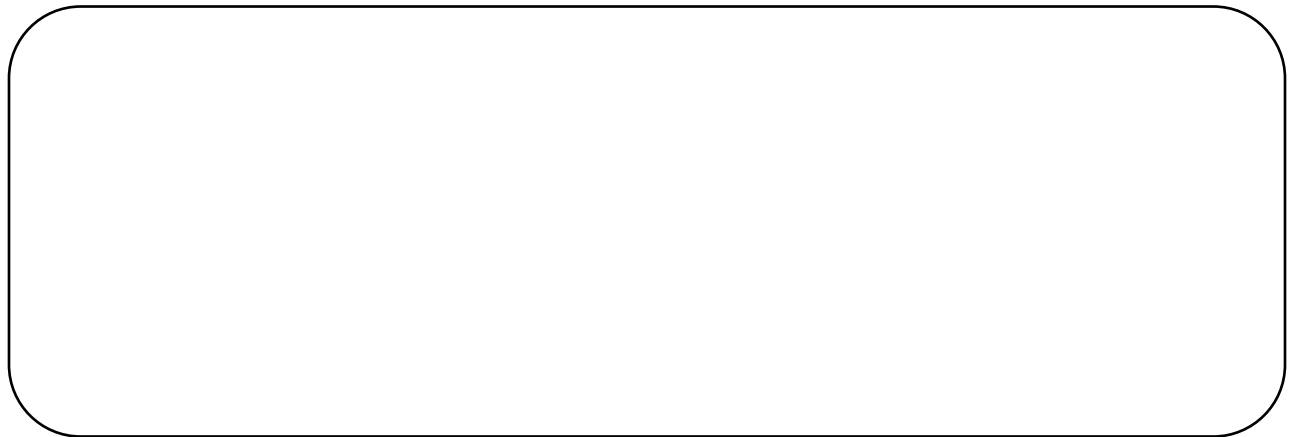
What keeps parents from practicing Empowered Parenting is often the result of living and parenting from fear. Fear is very real and very valid. And, we are here to understand our fears so we can show them curiosity and compassion. When we can understand what holds us back, we can work to soften those barriers and gain greater agency from a space of truth and trust.

- ✓ Fear of not belonging and judgment
- ✓ Fear for our children’s safety
- ✓ Fear for our children’s “success” in the world
- ✓ Fear of “being out of control,” powerlessness
- ✓ Fear of “coddling”
- ✓ Fear of inadequacy
- ✓ Fear of “failure”
- ✓ Other? _____

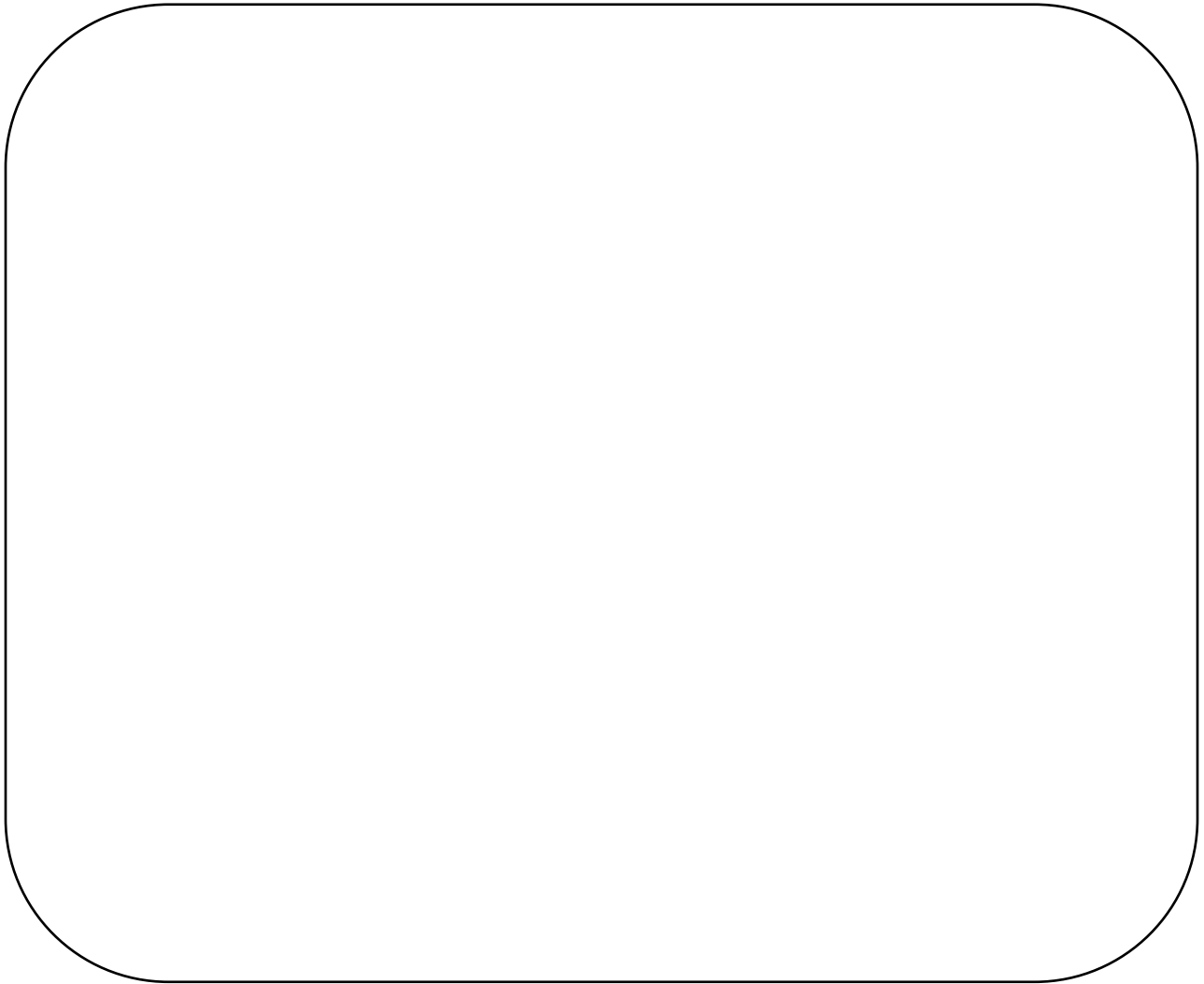
Which of these fears are most alive in your parenting?



What fear keeps you from practicing Empowered Parenting?



If you could offer your fear compassion, what would you say to your fear? (Ex: Dear fear, it makes sense why you feel that way! You want what's best for your child, and there is so much that is unknown. How can I support you to trust?)



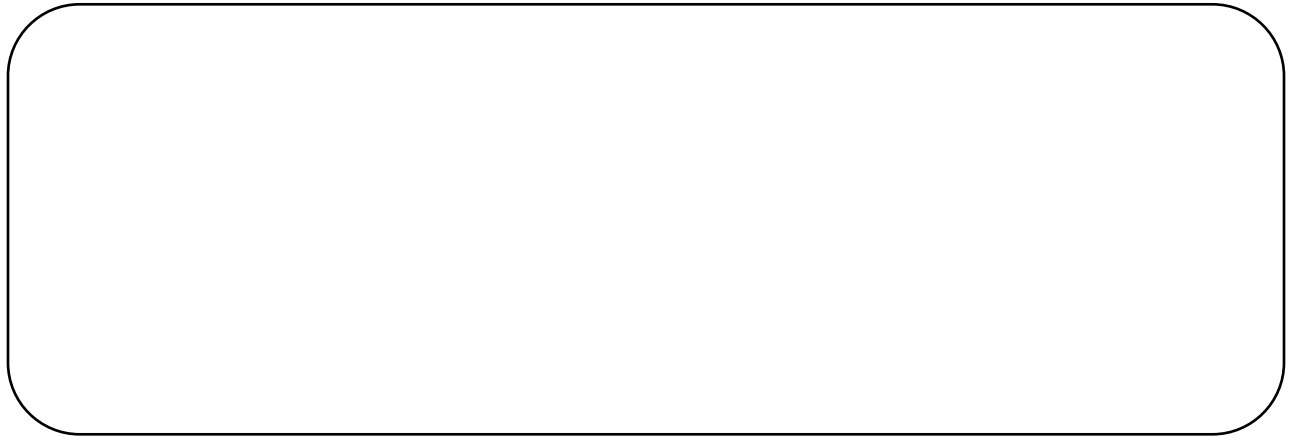
Becoming Aware of Generational Parenting Patterns

Without judgment, we will explore where in your parenting you are standing firm in Empowerment, and where you slip into Power Over/Power Under parenting.


To support you to have greater coherency and context, we will begin by exploring the power dynamics of your family of origin.

Childhood Parenting Pattern

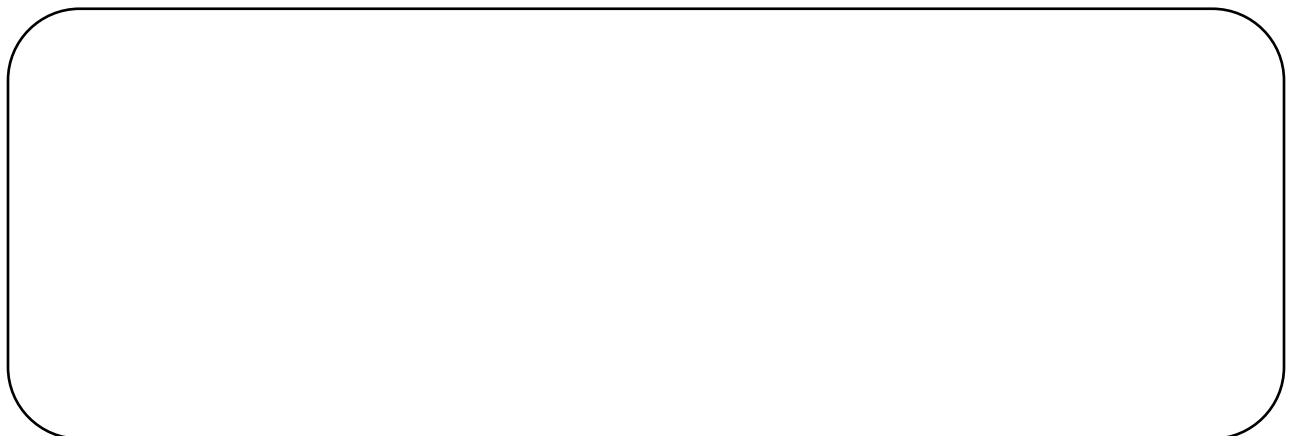
Drawing from the information above, what Power Pattern was most consistently alive in your childhood home?



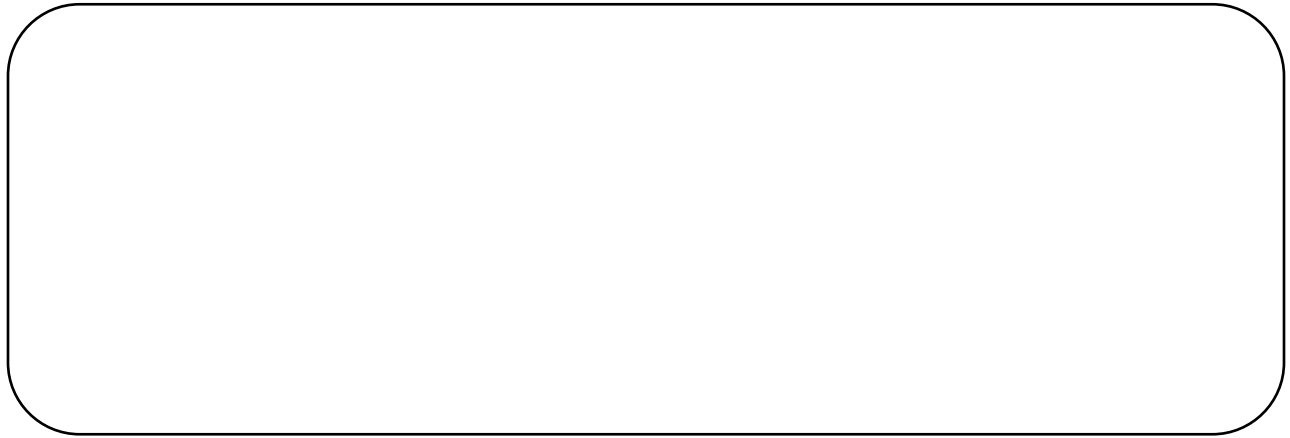
If you had two caregivers in your home growing up, did they exercise a similar, or inconsistent parenting pattern?




If you were raised with the power over or under pattern, can you recall a specific event that stands out in your childhood where this dynamic was at play?



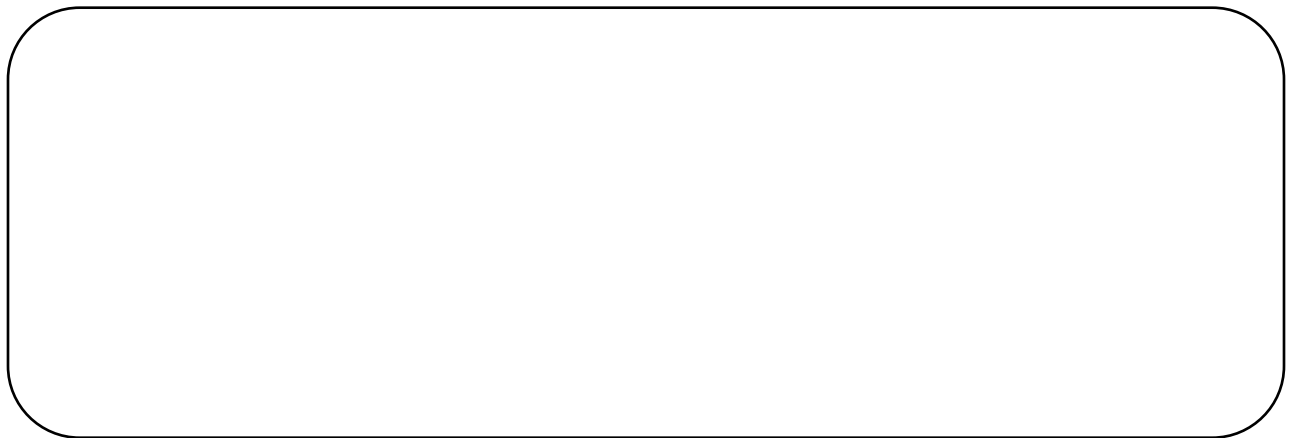
Recalling this power over or under scenario now, how do you feel?



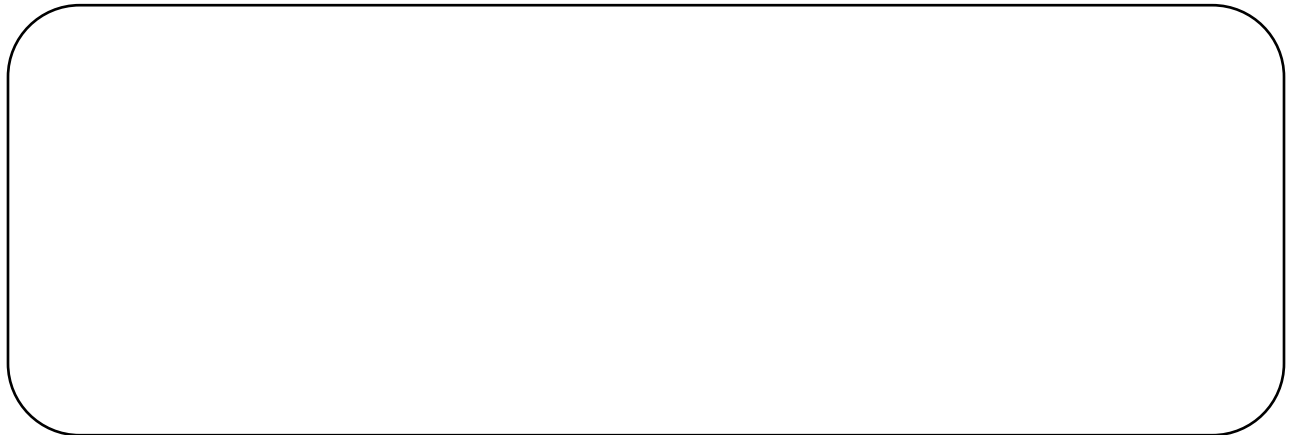
What did you think about yourself because of experiencing this kind of behavior from your parents or caregiver?



Has this thought held you back or affected you negatively in any way now in your life?



If you could talk with this thought, what would you say? Write a message to this thought with compassion and non-judgment.

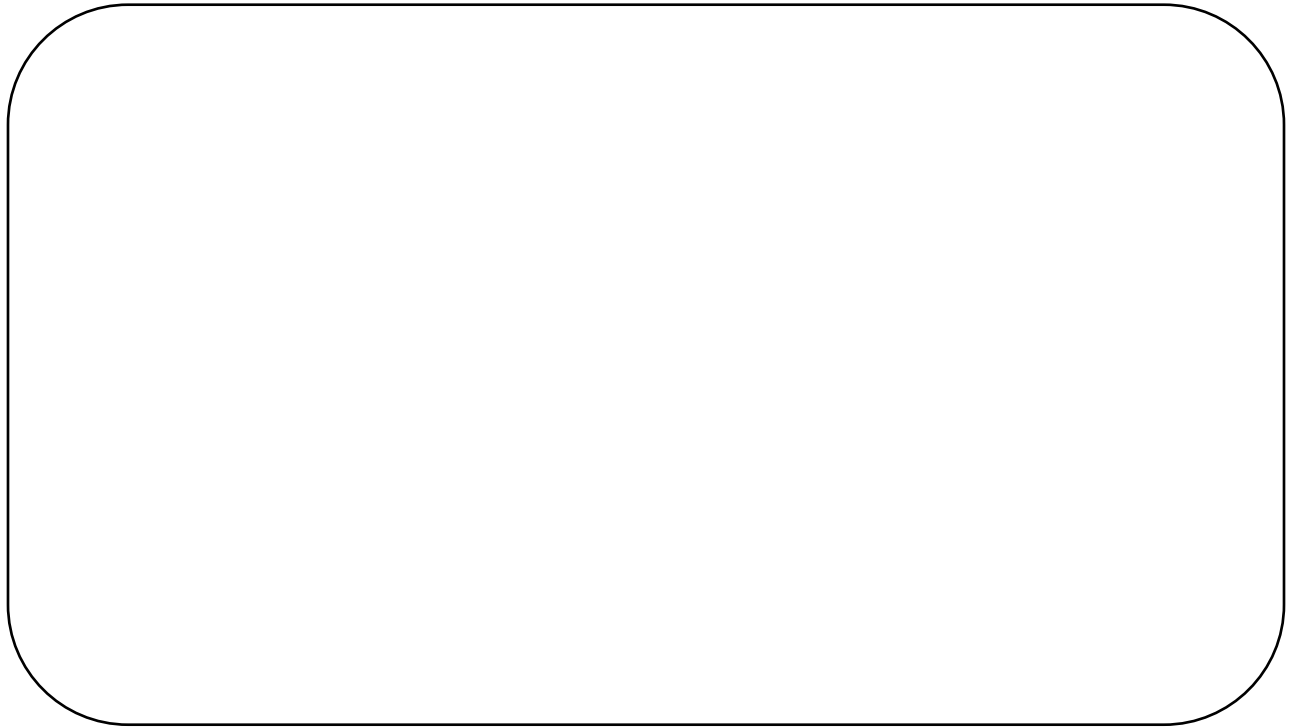


If you could travel back in time and put yourself in your parent or caregiver's shoes, what do you think that your parent or caregiver was feeling at that time that he/she displayed some behavior that led to disconnected communication? (Ex: yelling, punishing, hitting, shaming, blaming, manipulating, neglecting, ignoring, etc.)

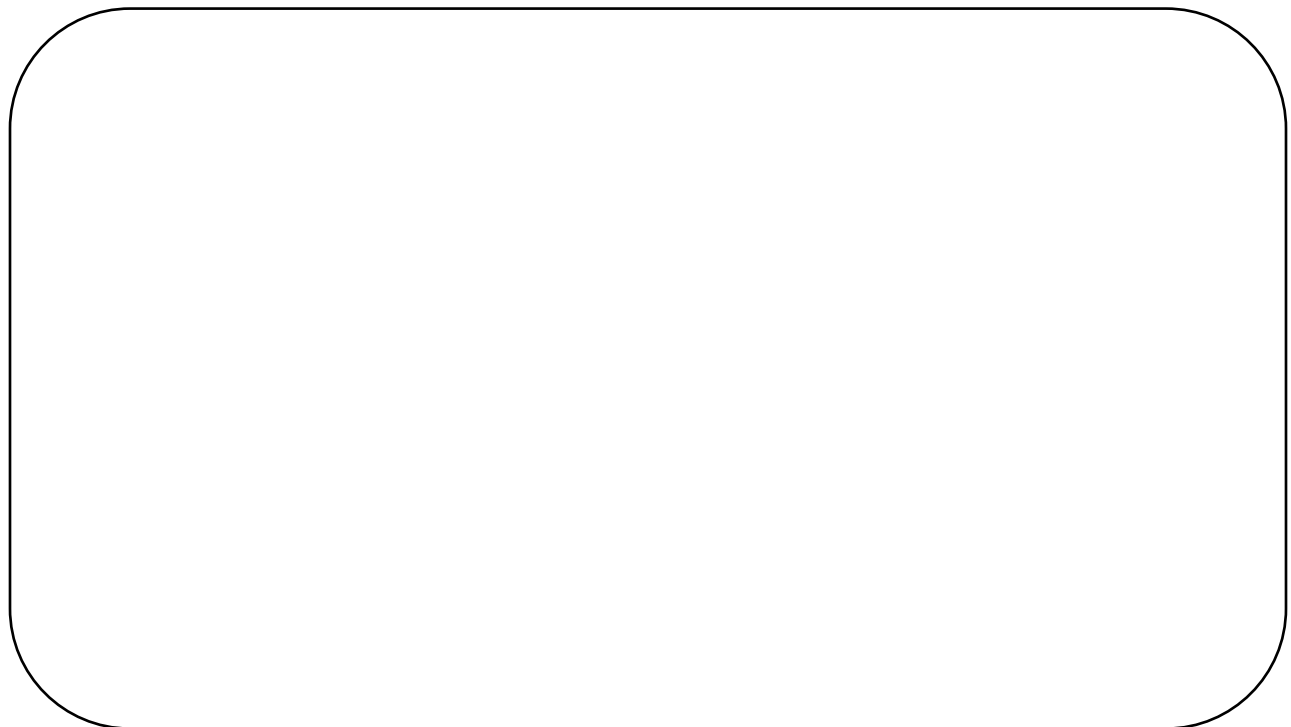


Your Current Parenting Pattern

Drawing from the information above, what parenting pattern is most consistently alive in your parenting and in your home?



If you are partnered, do you have a similar parenting style, or is there inconsistency?



Recall a time, or several, in your parenting, where you were able to access one or more empowered parenting pillars.

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Recalling these memories, how do you feel?

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When you were parenting from the empowered parenting pillars, how do you imagine your child felt? What kinds of thoughts about themselves and the world do you imagine they were having during this experience?

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Recall a time, or several, where you found yourself slipping into the power over or under pattern? (Remember, there is no judgment here. Often, these behaviors are left over from our own childhoods. You are in the right and perfect place!)

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Recalling this scenario, how were you feeling when you slipped into power over or under parenting?

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What were you needing/wishing for when you slipped into power over or under parenting?

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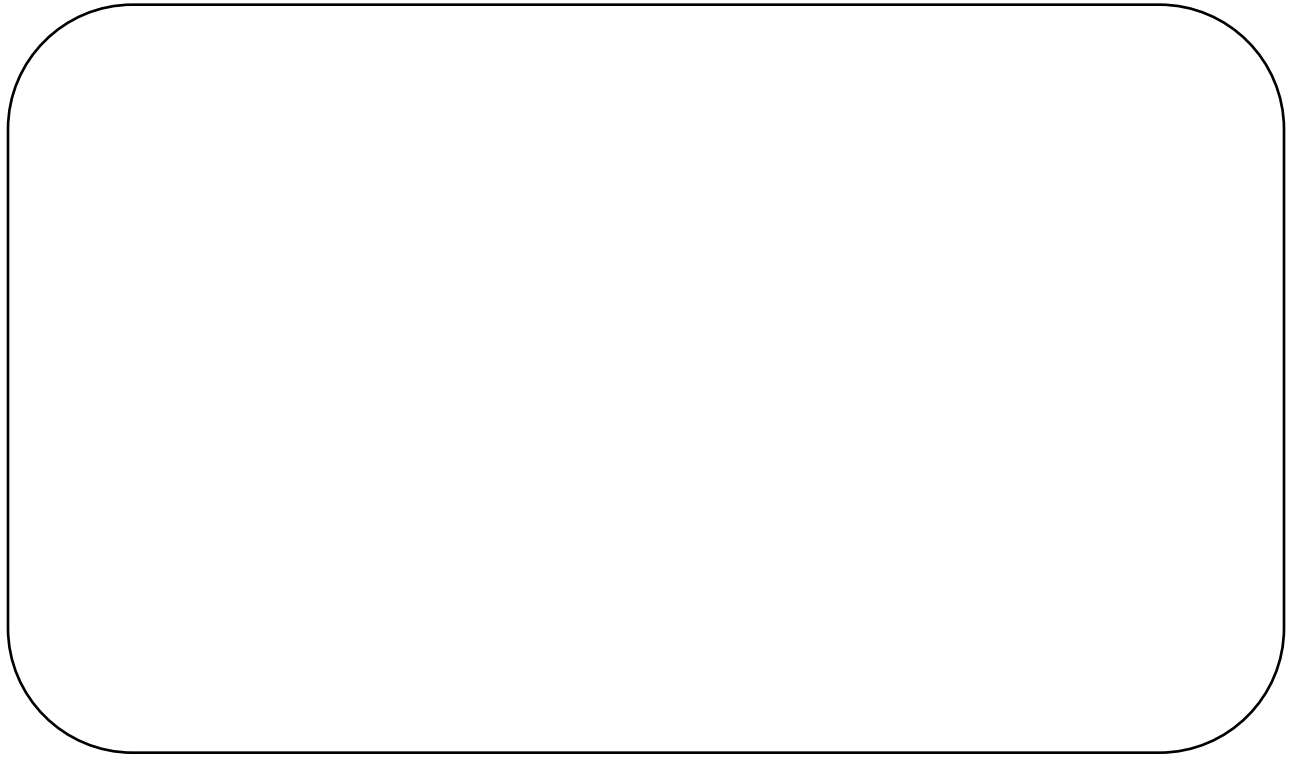
What kinds of thoughts were running through your mind when you slipped into power over or under parenting?

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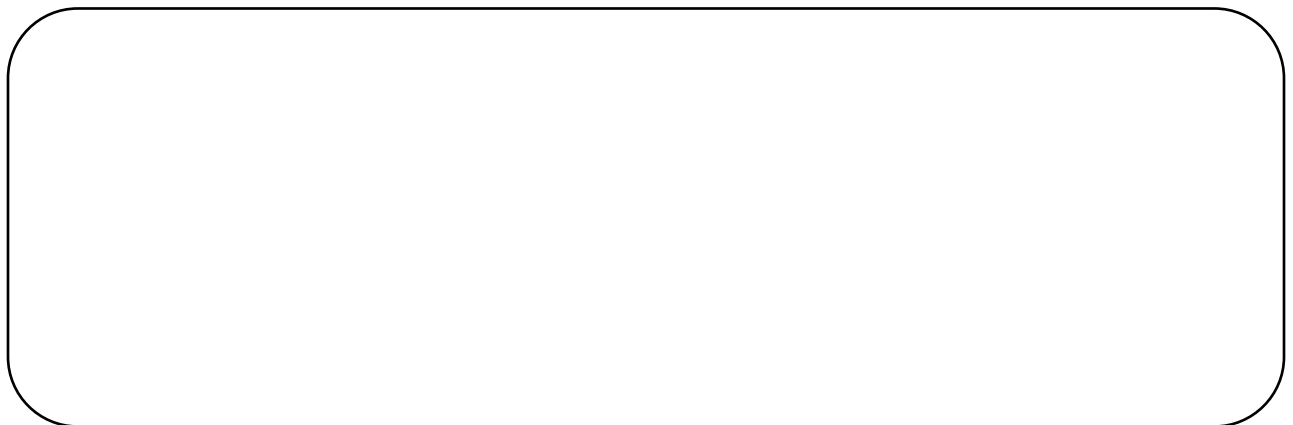
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We invite you to pause and offer yourself grace here, and kindness. What kind and loving words can you offer yourself at this moment?

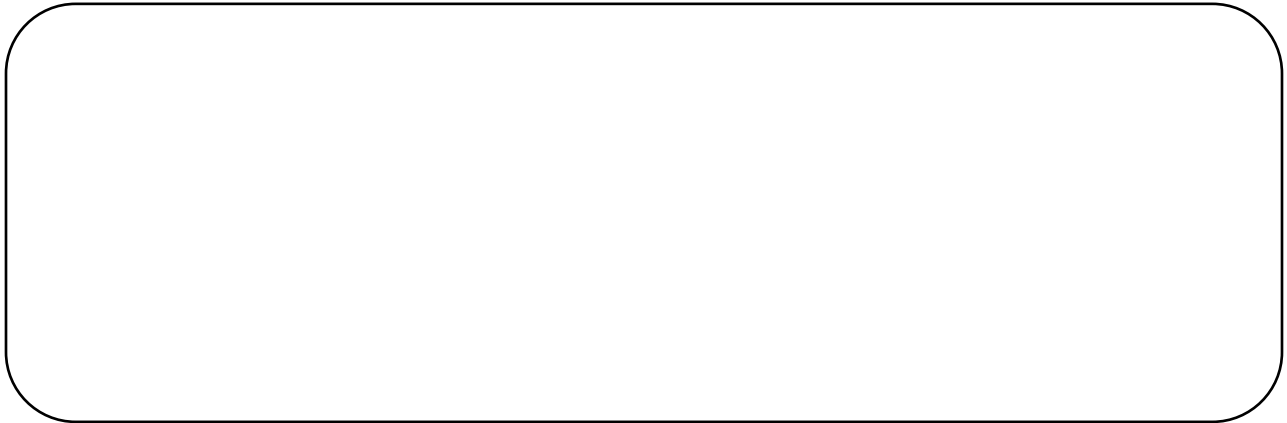
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Your Child or Children

What commitment can you make to yourself right now that will disrupt the repetition of power over or under parenting patterns?

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What commitment can you make right now to your children, and future generations, that will heal and soften the cycle of power over or under parenting patterns?



If you could write a letter to your future generations, your great-great-great-great grandchildren, what do you want them to know? What do you want them to feel? What do you want them to experience in their childhoods? Their lives?



Resources

Thank you so much for your willingness, your courage, and your vulnerability.

You are here to grow and expand. You are here for yourself, your child, children, and future. We are deeply appreciative of your work.

Resources

1. Clinical Psychologist Laura Markham, PhD, <https://www.kidsinthehouse.com/all-parents/parenting/parenting-styles/how-to-be-a-strict-and-permissive-parent>
2. <http://www.parentingforbrain.com/4-baumrind-parenting-styles/>
3. Baumrind, D. (1966). Effects of authoritative parental control on child behavior. *Child Development*, 37 (4), 891.
4. Chen, Iris. (2021). *Untigering: Peaceful Parenting for the Deconstructing Tiger Parent*. Introduction.