

# Keys to Joyful Parenting



In most cases, we only have the opportunity to live with our children for 18 years or so. These times are precious, and here are some ideas for parents to maximise joyful times, and minimise conflict and frustration.

## Embrace Your Power as a Role Model

Children pay more attention to what we do than what we say. As parents, that means we have opportunities every day to have a powerful impact on our children simply by the way we live our own lives. Whatever lesson we want to teach can be best taught by role modelling. We have the power to BE the person we want our child to be.

## Celebrate Our Lack of Control

It's common place in our society to say "you can't control another person", but we sometimes feel our job as parents is to control our children. It's not possible, and it inevitably leads to frustration. It's actually wonderful that each of us are in control of our own actions, and no one can "make" us do anything. If your child refuses to do something, you have the choice to feel upset, or to embrace the reality that you cannot control them. It can be really powerful for a parent to say to a child who is refusing: "I am so proud of you that you realise that you have control over your own actions".

## Be Happy to Lose Power Struggles

When our children become adults, we are not likely to say "I really miss the conflicts and arguing". It's in everyone's interest to minimise conflict, but parents often engage in power struggles since we are conditioned to believe we have to "get our way" with children. If parents can let go of that idea, and be willing to let the child "win", many conflicts can be avoided. Of course we have to keep our children safe, but very few of our "rules", and power struggles, have to do with safety. When we focus on being peaceful and positive, our children try to do the same thing, leading to a more harmonious household.

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**OFFICE** | 46 Maple Street, Maleny  
**LOCATIONS** | 2 Fifth Avenue, Maroochydore  
865 Gympie Road, Lawnton

**Ph: 07 5435 2504**

Email: [info@theparentingcentre.com.au](mailto:info@theparentingcentre.com.au)



### About Dr Bob

*Dr Bob is a Clinical Psychologist, Mediator and Lawyer with over 30 years experience working with children and families.*