



5 steps to taking back your power by Kristen Wynns, Ph.D. NoWimpyParenting.com

Step 1: Ask Yourself, "Have I given away my power?"

Here are some signs you've given (or are giving away) away your power:

- When you ask your kids to do something, they frequently say, "No because..." or "First I'm going to..." or "I can't because..."
- Your kids throw tantrums or get furious if you won't take them where they want to go, buy them what they want, or help them with something.
- You often find yourself threatening and warning over and over again until you're so frustrated you lose your temper.
- Your kids make decisions about what they'll attend and not attend, when they'll go to bed, or when they'll turn off the t.v. or computer at night.
- Your kids ignore or laugh at your rules – even if you say there's a curfew or a bedtime, it's not really enforced and the kids know it.
- You often feel frustrated at the lack of respect you get from your kids and feel like, "My kids do what they want to do and don't ever listen to me."

Step 2: Reflect on "How did this Happen?"

- Cultural trends of modern parenting (wanting our kids to be empowered)
- Wanting our kids to be "happy"

Step 3: Redistribute the power appropriately (KEEP YOUR WATER GUN FILLED!)

- Many parents argue too much. They go on explaining the same thing dozens of times. If you have said something two times, then that's enough. After the second time, you should ACT and not TALK. Command, warning, consequence!
- Follow through: If you say, "If I find your shoes in the living room again, I'm going to donate them to Goodwill", donate them to Goodwill if you find them again! Once your children know that you will do as you say, then you won't have to do it. They will respect your word!
- Too many choices! Yes it's good to give kids choices. But you shouldn't be asking them, "Do you want to go to bed now?" "Do you want to go to church today?" If it's something you want your kids to do, make it a statement, "Time for bed." "We leave for church in 10 minutes."

Step 4: Maintain the new power structure and BE CONSISTENT!

- Follow through with consequences: If you ground your child for a week from his phone, don't let him have it back in two days because he's harassing you for it. If you put your child in time out for 4 minutes, and she giggles and runs away in 2 minutes, bring her back again. See punishments through!
- Keep it simple. Don't try to focus on too many behaviors and issues because it will overwhelm you and you won't end up following through on anything. Choose the top 3-5 behaviors you struggle with, and try your best to correct and discipline those behaviors every single time. If you give negative remarks and reprimands for everything, your discipline will lose power.
- Beware the dreaded **POWER SUCKERS!**
 - Kids ignoring you or refusing to cooperate when you make small requests
 - Pushing your buttons (explosions give KIDS THE POWER)
 - Negotiations (well I'll get the carrots if I can get ice cream later) and asking questions (Why do I have to brush my teeth?)
 - Partial compliance (doing some of what you ask)
 - Decision making
 - Kids telling you what they are willing to do...small things eventually add up to filling up their water guns and depleting yours.

Step 5: Watch out for regression to the "old ways"

Many parents enthusiastically embrace new parenting strategies and do a great job...for about 1-2 days. Then reality hits...long days at work, tired parents, smart kids...and parents lose their resolve and get sucked into the bad habits again.

- Find an accountability partner – whether it's your spouse, your parent, your best friend...You need someone who will ask you DAILY – "How are you doing with Billy? Are you still following through? Are you still being consistent? Are you correcting his behavior every time he misbehaves?"
- Another idea is to keep a parenting log and at the end of the day, take 5 minutes to write a summary of the day.
- Finally, remember these things aren't to give your ego a boost or to wear your kids down. Kids NEED and WANT boundaries and limits. It makes them feel safe, secure, and loved. So know that what you're doing isn't just going to make you feel good, it will ultimately make them feel good too!

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