



Breaking The Spiral Of Coercion

Submitted by TCS on 24 June, 2005 - 12:36

Posted on Attachment Parenting list, parent-l, on Wed, 20 May, 1998, at 10:51:28 -0400

by **Sarah Fitz-Claridge** (<http://www.fitz-claridge.com/>)



In an earlier post, I had explained that TCS children tend to listen to their parents rather than ignoring their advice,

because unlike some children, they are not in a defensive state in which they are expecting to be thwarted. When you expect someone to be trying to thwart you, you are much less likely to listen when that person does have some genuinely good advice.

A poster replied:

Sarah, want to come and live at my house? Unfortunately, both of my children seem to have inherited this trait that I have that makes us think and strongly believe that our way is the only way.

This could be good or bad depending upon how you mean it. It is part of TCS thinking that the right thing to do is what you yourself think the right thing to do, not what someone else thinks you should do. We TCS folks ensure that that happens by seeking **common preferences** – creating solutions to problems or disagreements that we all *prefer* to our initial ideas and any other candidate solutions anyone has thought of. A TCS outcome = doing what one wants (and everyone else doing what *they* want too). That could be what you mean. Or it could be that you mean “What I say goes and that’s final.”

Parents who have been **coerced** as children (we all have, of course) sometimes develop a “my way is the only way” attitude to life. This is a useful life strategy in terms of preventing other people treating them badly, etc., but it is an absolute disaster for their children.

Why? Because in applying their “my way is the only way” strategy to their interactions with their *children*, they thereby do to their children precisely what their own parents did to them – the very thing that caused them to develop that life strategy in the first place. So in dealing with the coercion they themselves were subjected to as children, they inadvertently pass on the very same handicap to their children. This is a very powerful **meme** which we TCS people are trying not to pass on to our own children.

A necessary step to breaking this destructive cycle is to understand the meme and to realise that life does not have to be a zero-sum game – that life does not have to be “my gain means your loss” and vice versa. Unlocking the power of the

creativity of the TCS problem-solving institution really does help in this. “Not coercing” is *not enough*. The most important aspect of TCS parenting is the decision-making institution and its potential to create a virtuous circle of common preferences.

Hope this helps.

to post comments

Comments

coercion

Submitted by derek (not verified) on 9 April, 2006 - 19:28

We all know deep in our hearts that coercion does not help relationships grow. sometimes i think we use coercion because of our own nature or we do not know what else to do. when under stress, it is at these times we have to take a break in order to get back to rational thinking. i think we all are better off when we try to realate to each other our viewpoints and work from there. we have to model for children the right thing to do not make them pay for what they did wrong.

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