

Avoiding and Transforming Power Struggles

- *Remember that you are an adult and can take the first steps out of this situation*
- *Realize that this is about power, not about the topic you are arguing about*
- *Realize that the power struggle may be you or the other person's only way of knowing and showing that you or she are important - find another, more effective way to express that need to be important*
- *Use the conflict as a way of knowing each other's feelings and thoughts and fears*
- *Check to see if you and the other person really have time for this*
- *Realize that the power struggle may be about previous bad experiences, not about the topic*
- *Take "no" as a negotiating point, not a red flag*
- *Help the other person to save face during the power struggle*
- *Sidestep - offer an alternative at the beginning of the power struggle*
- *Keep your voice neutral and your tone low*

- *Avoid known trigger topics during the power struggle*
- *You don't always have to win - accept that and move on*
- *Let others have the last word*
- *Use conflict and negotiation skills - get training in these*
- *Move away from the audience - don't let your kids see you engaged in a power struggle*
- *Sit down - make your body lower than the other person's - it will diffuse the tension*
- *Don't get drawn into one if either of you is tired*
- *Listen to the other person*
- *Don't moralize, sermonize, or use put downs*
- *Listen to yourself, monitor your own behaviour*
- *Ask the other person for ideas on how to resolve the problem*
- *As soon as the other person moves the slightest bit toward compromise, you do the same*

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