

All of us grew up under one of three types of parenting.

The first is Authoritarian or what we refer to as "the giving orders parent".

The second is the Chaotic parent - this is very common today - though it existed even when I was a lad. We call this second type of parenting "the giving up parent".

The third type is called the Democratic or "giving choices parent". This latter is the parenting style I prefer for many reasons that will become apparent as this article unfolds.

Lets take a look at the Authoritarian Parent first. This style gives orders and expects them to be obeyed. Tools used are reward and punishment (although sometime a lack of punishment is the reward). This style of parenting tends to produce children who may use the "might makes right" attitude of his/her parents with their peers, or they may become overly compliant and dependent children - just waiting for someone to tell them what to do.

Chaotic parenting is often the result when a parent tries to be authoritarian and their kid just looks them in the eye and says "No!" Corporate punishment has fallen out of favor with the powers that be so what does a parent do when junior says "No!"? This type of parenting is the most frustrating and tends to produce children who are very good at being in charge but not very good in knowing how to do things correctly. Maybe today's politicians are the children of chaotic parents.

Democratic parents set limits - and give choices that have consequences. They tend to raise children who are self controlled, good at making good choices, and cooperative with authority. Everything that I will teach in the STEP series will help you learn how to be a democratic parent.

First rule of effective parenting is to understand that your children do not want to be parented - they want to eat ice cream for dinner and watch the late show on tv. Parenting is an "imposition" on our children and if we want to impose on someone, we better have a good relationship with them. If your relationship with your child could stand some improving - get started this week. Friendship with your child is a good start to asking them to do what you want.