

COUNTERWILL

The instinct to push back, resist, oppose, and defy when feeling controlled or coerced

ADULT OVERREACTIONS TO KID'S COUNTERWILL CAN LEAD TO ATTACHMENT INSECURITY

RESISTANCE CAN BE HEALTHY OR A SIGN OF STUCKNESS

SIGN OF DEVELOPMENT

Common in preschoolers & teens due to growth as separate self and wanting to "do it myself"

SIGN OF STUCKNESS

Common in kids who are not deeply attached or dependent on the adults who are responsible for them

COUNTERWILL INSTINCTS CAN BE EXPRESSED AS ...

- to do the opposite of what is expected
- resist, counter, balk and talk back
- be noncompliant and defiant
- be preoccupied and attracted to taboos
- act quarrelsome and argumentative



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MYTHS ABOUT COUNTERWILL

- the child has a strong will that needs to be broken
- the child is stubborn and it is hereditary
- the child is trying to test limits or seek power
- the child is doing it on purpose to make parent mad

DON'T LET IT BREAK THE CONNECTION

- * don't use separation as a consequence
- * don't take counterwill personally
- * reflect resistance as natural
- * keep your reactions to counterwill in check
- * repair damage done from counterwill fallout

STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING COUNTERWILL

- * collect before directing
- * be less explicit with directions
- * use play to orchestrate transitions
- * refrain from using a commanding tone
- * refrain from SHOULD's, HAVE TO statements