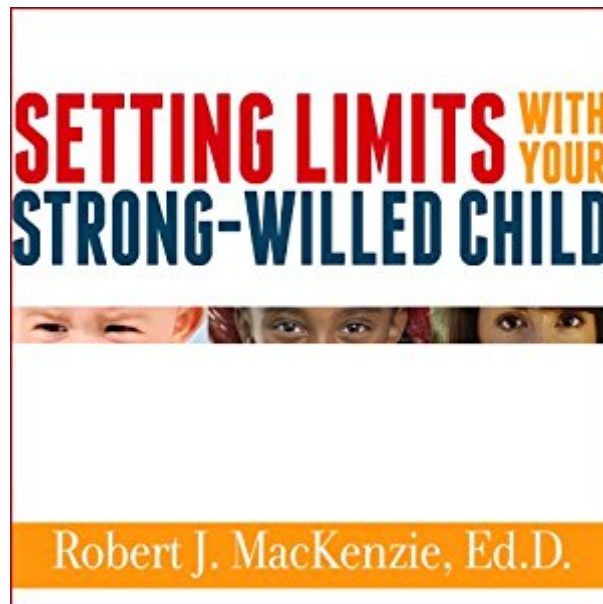


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# Setting Limits With Your Strong-Willed Child: Eliminating Conflict By Establishing Clear, Firm, And Respectful Boundaries



## Synopsis

Here is an essential manual for creating a positive, respectful, and rewarding relationship with a strong-willed child. Based on proven techniques and procedures, parents and teachers alike will welcome this book.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a step parent of a very "Spirited" and "Strong-Willed" child, I can acknowledge first hand that the methods and philosophy of this book WILL promote harmony and cooperation. Maybe not initially but certainly in the long term. "Setting Limits" deals with discipline issues associated with the nine temperamental traits: 1.Persistance, 2.Intensity, 3.Regularity, 4. Distractability, 5.Energy and Activity Level, 6.Sensitivity, 7.Adaptability, 8.Reactivity, and 9.Mood.The author is also the parent of two children, one compliant, easy going, and the other one strong-willed/demanding so he can relate with the parents who scream, "nothing works with this kid!".This book is NOT about harsh punishment but rather teaches respectful limit setting, which is an essential teaching tool. It teaches parents to give children clear, respectful messages to convey the necessary information for the child to make acceptable choices. To focus on the behaviour in a way that does not belittle, criticize or shame the child. Although parents may genuinely feel that they are giving a clear "Stop" message to their child, they are sometimes unwittingly giving a yellow or even green light to unwanted behaviours. The strong-willed child interprets these vague massages as "Optional requests" or learns only that the behaviour upsets or angers the parent. This may lead to increased limit testing to see where the boundaries really are, especially if they enjoy making us jump and yell.

It sometimes seems that Strong-willed children need to learn everything the hard way by aggressively testing all limits or restrictions (much more than compliant children) to see where the bottom line really is. They are aggressive researchers who leave parents little room for ineffective discipline.

As a kindergarten teacher as well as a parent of strong-willed 5-year-old twin boys, I too often found myself yelling louder, reminding more often and searching for stricter punishments to get the children to cooperate...Nothing was working! I needed a new approach...and Dr. MacKenzie has given me the understanding and the tools to set limits effectively without losing my sanity. I learned how I was part of "the dance" of non-compliance and I realized that I would have to change my behavior first before I got a positive change in the behavior from the children. I learned the difference between "soft limits" and "firm limits" and the importance of my actions supporting my words; then, the kids began respecting the rules because they knew I would follow through with consequences. It was an eye-opener to realize that by me constantly reminding...I was actually teaching the children to ignore (at least the first few times because they knew more reminding was coming)...by giving unclear open-ended directions...I was actually setting the situation up for clarification, testing and conflict...and by bargaining and making deals out of desperation...I was actually giving the kids the opportunity to control the situation as they decided to up the ante the next time! The best part of this book is the real life examples of exactly what to say and not say to the kids. It is as if the author has been looking in my windows as my twins defy me in so many of the exact same situations. I was immediately comforted by the fact that I am not alone in trying to get compliance instead of defiance from my boys.

It is amazing how well this very great, very practical book documents typical family interactions. All of the examples are very realistic, and reading them makes you say, "Yes, exactly, that's exactly what happens with me and my child." By simply drawing these interactions out on a timeline, MacKenzie shows how much effort can go into verbal sparring with your child, and how this sparring is an insidious, counter-productive, and self-perpetuating process. I learned some simple lessons from this book that fundamentally changed for the better the way I interact with my 9 year old daughter. First, some kids, for a variety of reasons, are strong-willed, and in most cases it's nobody's fault they are that way. So get over worrying about why your kid is strong willed. Parents who were compliant children themselves can be especially puzzled by their strong-willed children, and want to look for an answer to "what went wrong?" But in most cases nothing went wrong. Second, when strong-willed kids challenge your rules with defiant/testing behavior, it is very easy to see the whole

thing as a power struggle that they are constantly drawing you into as part of a sinister plot to make your life as unpleasant as possible. In contrast, MacKenzie very helpfully suggests that, when you child tests and challenges, you simply remind yourself that your child is strong-willed, and the way strong-willed children learn about the world is to test limits. The purpose of testing these limits is not to make your life hell. It is their way of genuinely \*asking\* the question, is this thing I'm doing okay? That's their job, to ask questions about behavior in this way -- it's how they learn how the world works.

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