**POWER STRUGGLES**

**Power struggles create distance and hostility instead of closeness and trust.**

**Distance and hostility create resentment, resistance, rebellion (or compliance**

**with lowered self-esteem).**

**Closeness and trust create a safe learning environment. You have a positive influence only in an atmosphere of closeness and trust where there is no fear of blame, shame or pain.**

**IT TAKES TWO TO CREATE A POWER STRUGGLE.**

**I have never seen a power drunk child without a power drunk adult close by.**

**Adults need to remove themselves from the power struggle without winning or**

**giving in. They need to create a win/win environment. HOW?**

The following suggestions teach children important life skills including self-discipline, responsibility, cooperation and problem-solving skills -- instead of "approval junkie" compliance or rebellion.

1. Decide what you will do.I will read a story after teeth are brushed. I will

cook only in a clean kitchen. I will drive only when seat belts are buckled.

(I will pull over to the side of the road when children are fighting.)

2. Follow through. The key to this one and all of the following is KINDNESS

AND FIRMNESS AT THE SAME TIME. (Pull over to the side of the road

without saying a word. Children learn more from kind and firm actions than

from words.)

3. Create a Positive Time Out routine. Create a "nurturing" (not punitive) time out area with your child.

4. Use distraction and lots of supervision for young children. Punishment

decreases brain development. Children are often punished for doing what

they are developmentally programmed to do -- explore. (Please read

Positive Discipline for Preschoolers.)

5. Get children involved in the creation of routines. (morning, chores,

bedtime). Then the routine chart becomes the boss.

6. Ask what and how questions: How will we eat if you don't set the table?

What is next on our routine chart? What was our agreement about what

happens to toys that aren't picked up? What happened? How do you feel

about what happened? What ideas do you have to solve the problem?

(This does not work at the time of conflict, nor does it work unless you are

truly curious about what you child has to say.)

7. Put the problem on the family meeting agenda. Let the kids brainstorm

for a solution.

8. Use ten words or less. One is best: Toys. Towels (that may have been left

on the bathroom floor). Homework. (Sometimes these words need to be

repeated several times.)

9. Get children involved in cooperation. Say, "I can't make you, but I really

need your help." (10 words)

10.No words: Use pantomime, charades, or notes. Try a hug to create

closeness and trust -- then do something else.

11.Non-verbal signals. These should be planned in advance with the child.

An empty plate turned over at the dinner table as a reminder of chores.