

**CHAPTER 11  
THE CHILD WHO IS RESISTANT**

---

**RECLAIMING OUR STUDENTS**

**ON-LINE BOOK STUDY**

FACILITATED BY

**EVA DE GOSZTONYI**

**CATHERINE KORAH**

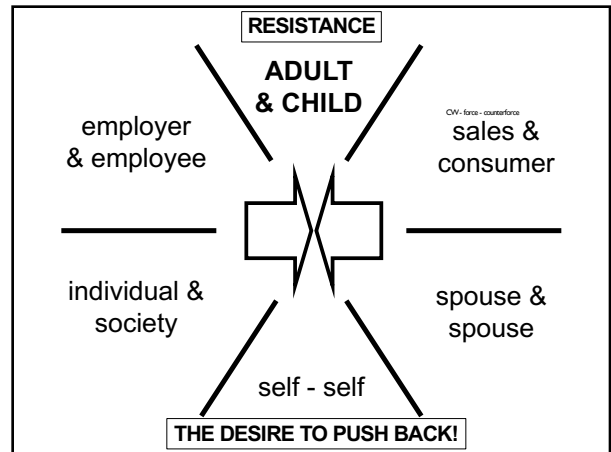
**MARTINE DEMERS**

**HANNAH BEACH**

**TAMARA STRIJACK**

**CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

1



2

***the CounterWill* instinct**

... is a pushing back against the will of others

or a defensive reaction to perceived control and coercion

**INSTINCT**

3

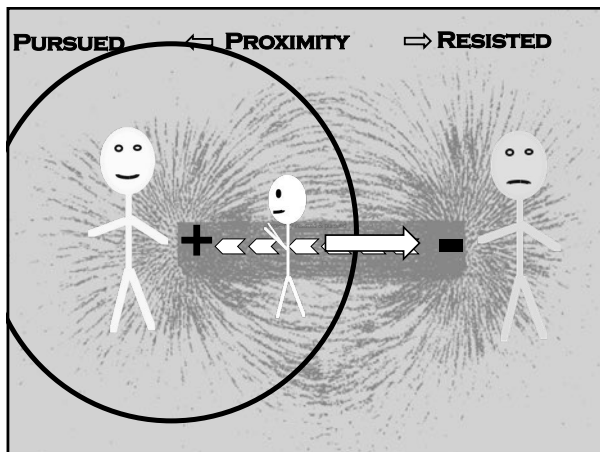
**RESISTING DUE TO A LACK OF CONNECTION**

COUNTERWILL serves attachment by PROTECTING AGAINST OUTSIDE INFLUENCE & DIRECTION from those NOT within the parent-sanctioned village of Attachment. It is the default dynamic in a child that serves to PROTECT them from being told what to do by **those who don't know what they need.**

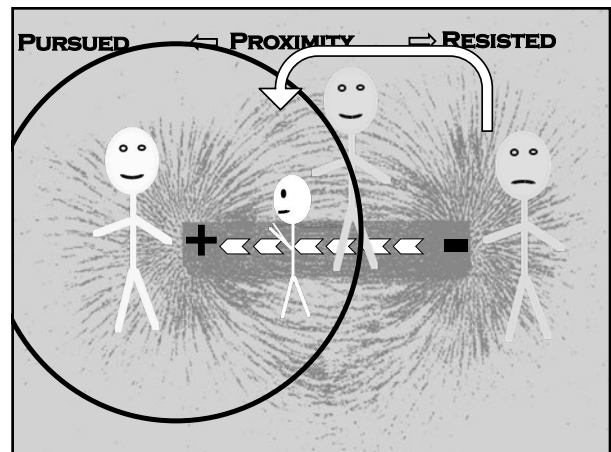
*“Children were designed to be impossible to manage unless sufficiently attached to those in charge”*

- Hence the importance of good parent-teacher-school relationships. If the parents don't trust us the child will have difficulty following us.
- And the problem with Substitute teachers unless properly introduced.

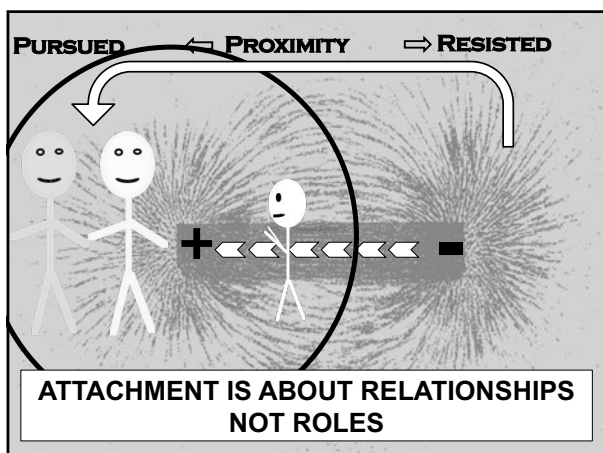
4



5



6



7

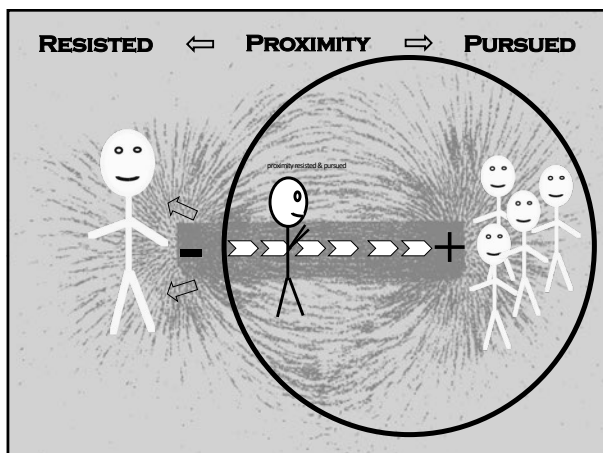
**ATTACHMENT & COUNTERWILL**

**WHY DOES A CHILD OPPOSE AN ADULT TO WHOM HE/SHE IS ATTACHED?**

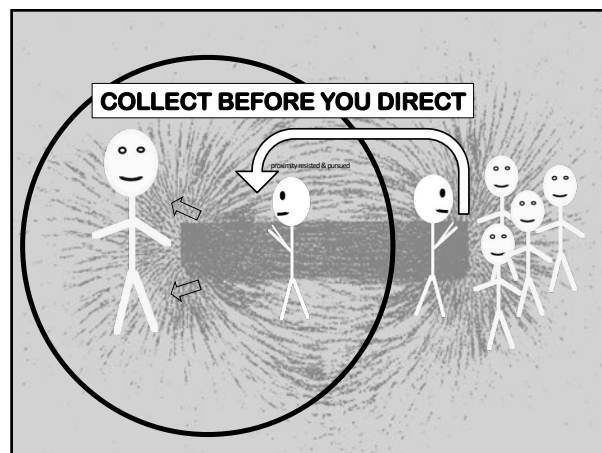
1. When the directive is given the child is attached to someone or something else

- other students
- a video game etc.

8



9



10

**ATTACHMENT & COUNTERWILL**

**WHY DOES A CHILD OPPOSE AN ADULT TO WHOM HE/SHE IS ATTACHED?**

1. When the directive is given the child is attached to someone or something else

2. Counterwill has been "held at bay" earlier and re-emerges when the child is in a safe place.

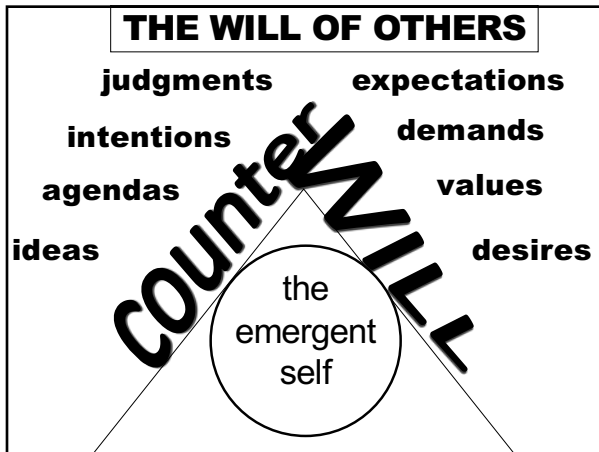
11

**COUNTERWILL & DEVELOPMENT**

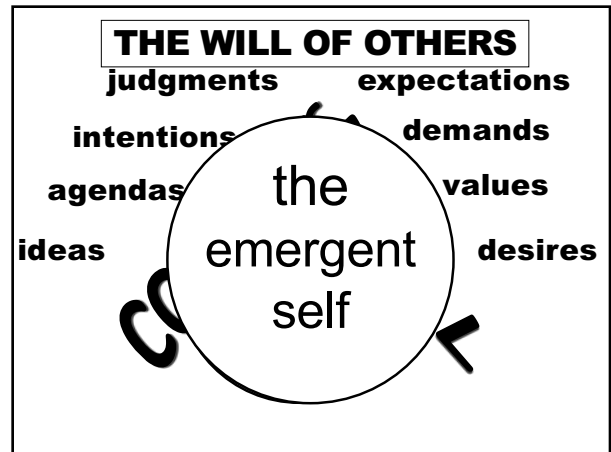
**COUNTERWILL** serves **DEVELOPMENT** by preparing the way for SEPARATE FUNCTIONING

The first step in finding one's own **WILL** is to resist and counter the **WILL** of others.

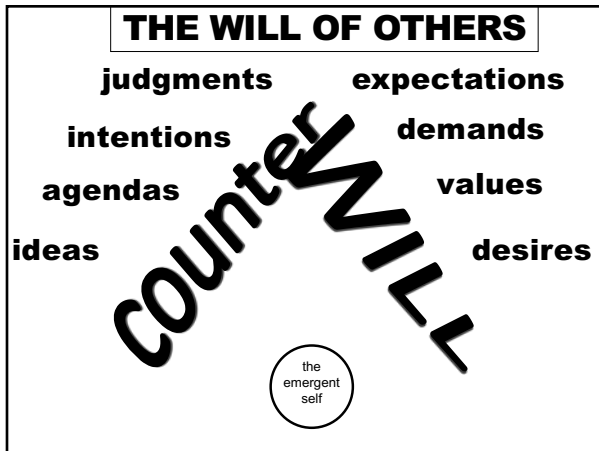
12



13



14



15

**The COUNTERWILL reaction is often mistaken for a show of WILL:**

- of having a strong will, being strong minded or stubborn
- as being on purpose
- as intentionally meant to push buttons, test limits, challenge authority, seek power

Children with lots of counterwill feel pushed around and counterwill is a protective or DEFENSIVE reaction. They are RESISTING the will of the other.

16

**ATTACHMENT & COUNTERWILL**

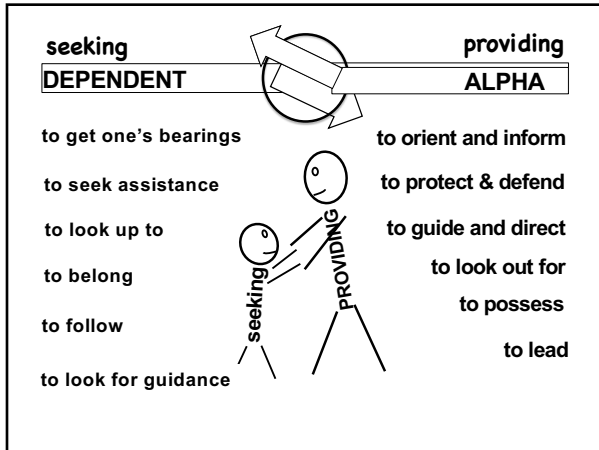
- when attachment is intense, counterwill will be weak or nonexistent.
- whenever attachment is weak, counterwill will be strong.
- counterwill problems will exist wherever there are attachment problems.

17

**Attachment Principles**

1. Attachment is the primary need of a developing being.
2. Growth takes place in the context of a safe Attachment.
3. A “safe” Attachment figure both cares about (loves) and cares for (takes charge of) the dependent being.
4. Being dependent requires the ability to tolerate vulnerability.

18



19

**Attachment Problems**

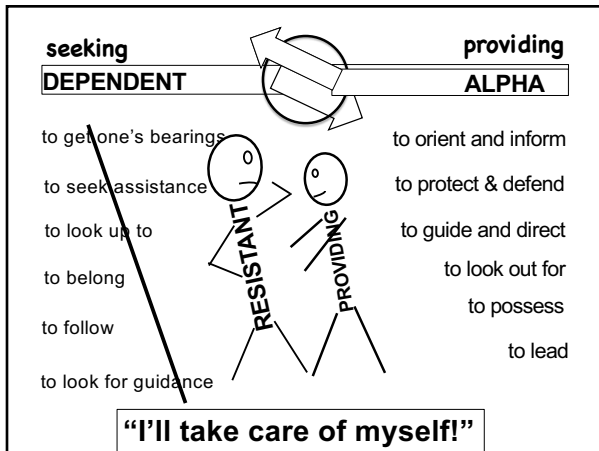
When it is NOT safe to depend :

- parents are unpredictable, hurtful or abusive OR
- the child is very sensitive, and it makes it very difficult to let others care for him/her

**This EVOKES THE COUNTERWILL INSTINCT as a PROTECTIVE mechanism "defense"**

**"I'll take care of myself!"**

20



21

**The DRAMA of the CHILD STUCK IN COUNTERWILL**

**a tragedy in three acts**

**ACT I**  
*When kids get stuck, adults start pushing.*

**ACT II**  
*When kids feel pushed, they put on the brakes.*

**ACT III**  
*When kids get stuck in their resistance, adults tend to get stuck in their persistence.*

22

**Handling CounterWill**

23

The belief that resistance and opposition must be unlearned

(a) doesn't recognize or value the developmental benefits of having one's own mind and

(b) fails to appreciate that we need to GROW a child out of resistance, not punish or teach a child to behave otherwise.

*from Rest Play Grow by Deborah MacNamara*

**COUNTERWILL is NOT a learned response, but an EMOTIONAL REACTION based in INSTINCT**

24

**Our ROLE as the adult**

**teacher**  
Educator  
**Principal**  
COACH  
**Technician**  
**Attendant**  
**counsellor**

**Adjusting our VIEW**

- Taking things LESS PERSONALLY
- Recognizing INSTINCT involved
  - Aiming to “do no harm”

**Adjusting our STANCE**

- Normalizing by conveying that some pushback is part of the process
- Placing child in charge when possible

**Making ROOM for**

- For child to display own “will”

*... being patient*

25

**KEEP REACTIONS TO COUNTERWILL IN CHECK**

seeking	providing
<b>DEPENDENT</b>	<b>ALPHA</b>
to get one's bearings	to orient and inform
to seek assistance	to protect & defend
to look up to	to guide and direct
to belong	to look out for
to follow	to possess
to look for guidance	to lead

26

In order to serve the role of ‘provider’, our **ATTENTIONAL MECHANISMS ARE SENSITIZED** to signs of vulnerability and challenges to our alpha position.

PERCEIVED VULNERABILITY	PERCEIVED ALPHA CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fear</li> <li>• upset</li> <li>• naïveté</li> <li>• wounds</li> <li>• confusion</li> <li>• weakness</li> <li>• defenseless</li> <li>• helplessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• talking back</li> <li>• lack of respect</li> <li>• lack of deference</li> <li>• lack of submission</li> <li>• lack of compliance</li> <li>• lack of conforming</li> <li>• show of superiority</li> </ul>

**Moved to Assert Dominance, Assume Responsibility, Care For and Take Care Of**

27

**MAINTAINING THE ALPHA POSITION IN THE FACE OF COUNTERWILL**

**STAY IN CHARGE EVEN IF YOU CAN'T BE IN CONTROL**

**“I have decided that you may...”**

**“Let’s all ....”**

28

**COUNTERWILL IN PANDEMIC TIMES**

- **COUNTERWILL** can be “kept at bay” by Alarm
  - Children will comply to keep safe
- **BUT COUNTERWILL** will manifest itself when safety is not an issue
 

When there are too many “have to’s” there will be push back somewhere!

  - Children may
    - ❖ not want to do work - outright refusal
    - ❖ not follow directions as expected
    - ❖ do the opposite
    - ❖ seem unmotivated

29

**HANDLING COUNTERWILL**

**UNDERSTAND WHAT MAKES A STUDENT FEEL VULNERABLE, EVOKING COUNTERWILL**

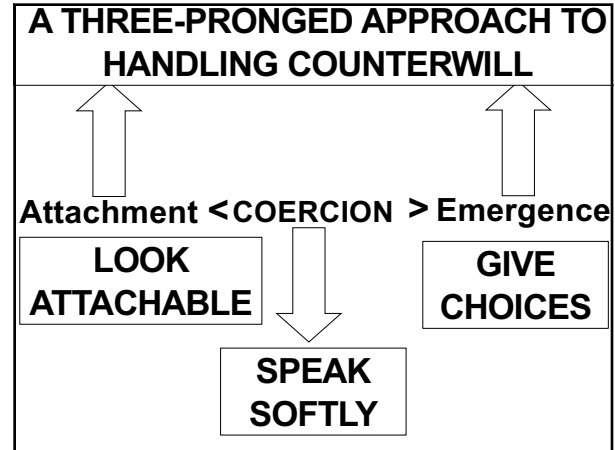
- **NEW LEARNING**
- **NOT KNOWING WHAT IS EXPECTED**
- **LOOKING INADEQUATE, ESPECIALLY IN FRONT OF PEERS**
- **CONFIRMING INADEQUACY (WRITING)**

30

**DON'T LET COUNTERWILL BREAK THE CONNECTION.**

- don't take counterwill personally
- anticipate and expect counterwill
- reflect the resistance as natural & normal
- repair damage done by counterwill fallout
- don't use separation as a consequence
- don't make behaviour the bottom line
- repair damage done by counterwill fallout

31



32

**REDUCE COERCION**

- back off until you get a better attachment hold
- draw attention AWAY from the coercive elements of the situation
  - give space (don't hover)
  - give time for the counterwill instinct to diminish
- if other students "tattle" tell them. "I'm dealing with this." (Maintaining the Alpha stance.)

33

**REDUCE COERCION**

- refrain from using a commanding or prescriptive manner
- refrain from focusing on the SHOULDs, the MUSTs & the HAVE TOs
- use as little force and leverage as possible
- LEAD the child out of the impasse of the power struggle
  - Come alongside the COUNTERWILL
    - "You really don't want to do this right now."
    - "It is better if you do something else."

34

**REDUCE COERCION**

- use structures and routines to orchestrate behavior
  - the routine guides the behavior
  - teach routines in a fun way
  - make routines engaging:
    - "hop like a bunny", "quiet as a mouse", "big steps like a giant" "super-hero job"

35

**SET UP YOUR ENVIRONMENT IN ORDER TO HELP GUIDE ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

**LINING UP:**

1. Masking tape/ floor signs
2. At arm's length
3. Hula hoops

**WALKING IN LINE:**

1. At arm's length
2. Hula hoops
3. Using a rope

**SEATING:**

1. Desks spaced out
2. Masking tape on floor

**CIRCLE TIME:**

1. Masking tape
2. Chairs
3. Hula hoops

36

**ENGAGE THE ATTACHMENT INSTINCTS**

1. Get in the child's face (or space) in a friendly way, collecting the eyes, a smile and a nod
2. Provide a 'touch of proximity' for the child to hold on to
3. Invite the child to depend upon you
4. Act as the child's compass point



37

**COLLECT BEFORE YOU DIRECT**



*The ATTACHMENT INSTINCTS are engaged*



38

**ENGAGE THE ATTACHMENT INSTINCTS**

- Talk about how hard it is to always "have to do" things
- Normalize that there are times when we all want to refuse to do what we "must".
- Allow the child time and space to handle their Counterwill instinct

**COME ALONGSIDE**

39

**ENHANCE EMERGENCE**

- provide for some sense of choice
- put the focus on the child's *will*
- make room for the child's initiative and involvement
- solicit good intentions where possible
- place in charge where appropriate and possible

40

**USE PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS**

- Singing and actions – to take the mind off of the "have to"
- Playing usually evokes smiles – increasing attachment
- Play with "NO"
  - a "NO" dance
  - saying "NO" or "I DON'T WANT TO" as loud as you can – as silly as you can

41

**USE PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS**

BEING AIRPLANES – CAN YOU SHOW US?



COULD YOU LEAD US IN A DANCE?

TAKING MY DOG FOR A WALK

LET'S PRETEND TO FISH


42

### “SETTING THE STAGE” WITHOUT TRIGGERING COUNTERWILL

“Have to” agenda	Invitation to create
<p>“We’re all going to make these beautiful tulips in Art today”</p> 	<p>“I’ve gathered some supplies, let me know your ideas, of what you would like to make to create a sense of Spring for our classroom”</p> 



43

### “SETTING THE STAGE” WITHOUT TRIGGERING COUNTERWILL

“Have to” agenda	Invitation to create
<p>“If you have not already finished your math and your drawing for your book report you <u>need</u> to do it <b>now</b>.”</p> 	<p>“This morning’s mission ‘until recess’ is to finish unfinished business. Please see whether you have completed these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Math exercise (on paper or dry-erase board)</li> <li>✓ Book report (you can choose how you want to represent your favorite part )</li> </ul> <p>Note: I’m coming around to offer help, you can choose which items on this morning’s mission you want to proceed.</p>

44


### “SETTING THE STAGE” WITHOUT TRIGGERING COUNTERWILL

“Have to” agenda	Invitation to create
 <p>“Today we’re writing about cars in Language Arts.”</p>	<p>“If you could drive a car right now, what kind would you like to drive? Why this one? Where would you like to go? Why would you choose to go there? Who might you invite to join you?”</p> 

45


### MORE IDEAS FOR HANDLING RESISTANCE

- Provide journals (lots of pages!)
- Provide sketchbooks (100 pages)
- Provide magazines for collage creations
- Establish a permanent ‘**Creation Station**’ that holds supplies for making & creating that are easily accessible (if permitted)
- Encourage transition time by setting up Rest & Recoup times after recess and lunch time to help students transition back into the classroom  
Make sure to COLLECT the students, before proceeding ahead with instruction



46


## Managing RESISTANCE is a matter of RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS and SOFT HEARTS.



Gordon Neufeld, PhD

47

### A website that helps schools to use a Developmental Trauma-Informed Approach to helping children.



**Website:** <https://www.cebm.ca>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/Centre-of-Excellence-for-Behaviour-Management-258831034630381/>

**YouTube:** [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaV0\\_4xIoZ282eYxcFdp-ww?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaV0_4xIoZ282eYxcFdp-ww?view_as=subscriber)

48