

Parenting for Independence



Welcome to this course

The course has come about as a result of the overwhelmingly positive response to my book *Spoonfed Generation: How to raise independence children*. It's seems natural to create a learning activity that helps you put some of the big ideas presented in *Spoonfed Generation* into action.

I wanted to keep this course easy for you to manage time-wise; easy to do and very practical. With these aims in mind, I've focused on these four major areas:

- 1 Putting big family values in your family frame
- 2 Developing the language of resilience
- 3 Encouraging kids to be problem-solvers
- 4 Bringing some cat and dog to your parenting

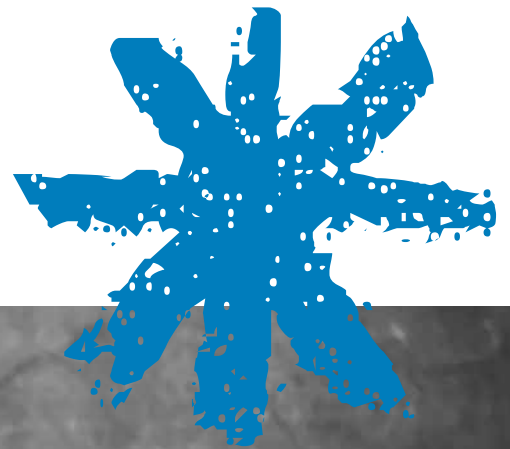
Each session contains essential information about the topic; includes activities designed to embed the learning and shows you how to explore this topic more fully in my book *Spoonfed Generation*.

Okay, it's time to start learning.

Enjoy!



Michael Grose
Founder, Parenting Ideas



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Parenting for Independence Session One



Putting big
family values
in your family frame

Session One



PUTTING BIG FAMILY VALUES IN YOUR FAMILY FRAME

What common traits and characteristics do your children share? It can be difficult to determine when children are in early childhood because the differences between children are often more apparent than the similarities. As children move into primary school and beyond through the secondary-school years the similarities are easier to spot, and they are important because they indicate the values and characteristics you value as a parent. Family constellation (birth-order position) will account for many of the differences between children. For instance, if your eldest child is a responsible, well behaved and cooperative, there is reasonable chance that your second child will be quite the opposite – a carefree, competitive character. Like niche marketers, children will play to their strengths within a family to attract attention from parents.

On the surface, this may make well-intentioned parenting seem pointless because you may focus on a particular value or characteristic but it won't necessarily be adopted by each child. This is only partly valid. Children invariably adopt the dominant values they are exposed to within their family in childhood. Each child in a family may display those values to different degrees, but they are drivers of their behaviour and attitudes. So, if each child in a family has a high work ethic, even if to varying degrees, then high work ethic is most likely part of your family frame. Take a moment to reflect on the commonalities between your children, or if applicable, the values and attitudes you share with your own siblings. These will be indicative of the impact of the parenting that they, or you, received. The predominant values that kids learn in their family usually stay for life. Those values will be stronger in some children than others, but all children will relate to them.



BIG-FAMILY VALUES

From my research into what makes healthy families tick I've noticed that the following five values constantly occur.

1. Self-sufficiency

Your kids won't magically become independent unless you place self-sufficiency firmly in your family frame. If each child works hard at whatever they do, they've probably picked up a high work ethic from their parents. Hard work is more than likely modelled by one or more parents and your family's proprietary language is littered with phrases such as, *'Hard work never hurt anyone,' 'The harder you work the more successful you'll be,'* and *'Work your way through obstacles.'* Similarly, when all children in a family are self-sufficient, it's indicative of a parenting style that promotes independence and autonomy. Independence becomes a core strategy so that self-sufficiency is modelled and the family's language is peppered with words and phrases that promote self-sufficiency and autonomy. Phrases such as, *'It's your choice,' 'That's something you can do yourself,'* and *'No excuses. You need to take responsibility for your own behaviour.'*

THREE WAYS DEVELOP SELF-SUFFICIENCY:

- 1 Develop self-help skills in children from an early age.
- 2 Expand their horizons by giving kids greater freedom to make choices.
- 3 Ensure children are accountable for their own behaviours.



2. Resilience

Resilience refers to children's ability to cope and bounce back from hardships, frustration and difficulties that they face on a regular basis. Most resilience experts agree that children have a natural instinct toward resilience but this can be adversely affected by experiences in early to middle childhood. These include a traumatic event, mental illness, lack of parental support and an overprotective or smothering parenting style. The easiest way to promote resilience is to offer your child unconditional love and support; do all in your power to provide a safe, predictable family environment; look for opportunity to build your child's coping capacities and strengths; and build your family's proprietary language around resilience. This includes phrases such as: *'Hang in there!'* *'This too shall pass!'* *'Don't let this disappointment spoil everything.'*

THREE WAYS DEVELOP RESILIENCE:

- 1 Allow kids to own and solve their own problems.
- 2 Encourage your kids to persist with difficult tasks and see through activities to the end.
- 3 Build children's coping skills particularly when faced with every day frustrations, hardships and difficulties.



3. Shared responsibility

Generally, families that function well are guided democracies or benign dictatorships. They work best when parents take on the executive function, running the family like a joint enterprise, with all members regardless of age having a stake in the operation. That means that kids according to age and interest have some say in how their family operates, how the family cares for its members, and how individuals behave and contribute to their group.

It's not up to parents to resolve every problem, rather it's up to parents to facilitate the group to resolve issues and for kids to assist and care for each other. If a child has a behavioural or learning issue, the whole group can have some sort of stake in assisting that child. Families work well when everyone contributes and helps out when individuals have problems or difficulties.

THREE WAYS TO DEVELOP SHARED RESPONSIBILITY:

- 1 Use family meetings to give children a say in the management of family-life.
- 2 Encourage children to support each other when they have difficulties.
- 3 Share jobs among all family members.



4. Contribution

Kids will belong in their families in two ways – through contribution and active participation, or as passive receivers of care and attention. Children with special needs may not have the capacity to contribute as much as others, but their participation can still be positive and valued. The key is to give kids an opportunity to contribute to their own wellbeing, as well as that of their siblings and the family, through chores and other domestic responsibility, without being paid. Children in large families by default usually always have to help around the house, look after siblings and take responsibility for their possessions without an expectation of being paid.

THREE WAYS TO DEVELOP SHARED A SENSE OF CONTRIBUTION:

- 1 Expect kids to help at home without being paid.
- 2 Use a roster to allocate jobs.
- 3 Use the language of cooperation. E.G. *"Nana will be staying for the weekend. What can we do to make her stay pleasant?"*



5. Social interest

Social interest is wonderful concept that ideally every family adopts as a value. It means acting for the good of the group – whatever group you are in. All children have a need to develop social interest because they are egocentric. The world revolves around them – quite rightfully too. With maturity they develop greater empathy for others – as well as a realisation that the world doesn't revolve around them – and they begin to take into consideration the greater social good when they behave. The family is a great learning ground for the development of a child's social interest. They must learn that they need to fit in to what happens around them. The sense of belonging and wellbeing that kids get from heightened social interest is quite profound.

THREE WAYS TO DEVELOP SOCIAL INTEREST:

- 1 Encourage children to volunteer in the community.
- 2 Encourage children to donate part of their pocket money to charity.
- 3 Model social interest by your own volunteering (coach a sports team; join the school committee; be part of a local community group).

CONCLUSION

These values frequently occur quite naturally in big families. In fact, the greater space and freedom given to children by parents in large families encourages self-reliance and natural resilience. Large families almost invariably function around the predominant values of shared responsibility, contribution and social interest. In the absence of these values large families become quite dysfunctional. This notion gives raising a small family with a big-family mindset real legs.





Session One Activity

1 HOW DOES YOUR FAMILY RATE?

On a scale of 1 (not very strong) to 5 (very strong) rate the prominence of each value in your family's frame. In completing this task think of the commonalities in your kids rather than each individual child. If all your children are independent and self-sufficient particularly compared to children outside your family then you should rate this value highly.

1 Self-sufficiency	1	2	3	4	5
2 Resilience	1	2	3	4	5
3 Shared Responsibility	1	2	3	4	5
4 Contribution	1	2	3	4	5
5 Social interest	1	2	3	4	5

Take a quick look at how you scored your family on these important values and attributes. A score three or lower indicate areas to focus on to build children's independence.



2 PUTTING INDEPENDENCE-BUILDING INTO ACTION

Choose one of the five areas to focus on over the next three weeks.

What are some key action steps you will take over the next three weeks to place that area into your family frame?

3 FURTHER LEARNING

You'll find a more in-depth look at the Big Family Mindset in Chapter 7 of *Spoonfed Generation: How to raise independent children*.





Parenting for Independence Session Two

Building Resilience in kids

Session Two



BUILDING RESILIENCE IN KIDS

Resilience is a concept that has become a part of the parenting lexicon over the past decade or so in not only Australia and many other countries too. It's certainly a concept I've been talking and writing about for over two decades, and its importance can't be understated, particularly if you listen to futurists such as Mark McCrindle. He predicts that the children born in 2010 and beyond will have a minimum of five careers and twenty different employers in their lifetime. Gone is the job for life, replaced by a series of mini-careers, according to McCrindle. He claims we need to get used to being employed for the life of a particular project and then be prepared to look for other projects upon completion. If this scenario is accurate, and I suspect it is because it's happening already, then young people entering the workforce of the future will need personal resilience to handle the ups, downs and disappointments that will come from more flexible working arrangements.

My colleague, psychologist Andrew Fuller, refers to resilience as the ability to bungee jump your way through life. It's a fabulous metaphor that suggests the notion of bouncing back from difficulties and getting back on track with your life when difficulties have been experienced. The research around resilience suggests that with the right support and right set of skills most people do bounce back and get back on track. But there's a cohort who don't merely recover from difficulty – they grow through difficulty, with their lives taking on new or greater meaning. They, in effect, bounce forward using a negative event as the impetus for growth and development. And that is what we should want for our children – to continually learn and grow from their experiences whether positive or negative.



Is resilience nature or nurture?

Some kids are resilient by nature – their temperament helps them to be mentally and psychologically tough. You know those kids. They get straight back up after a setback or disappointment. Rejection in the playground doesn't faze them. They are flexible enough to cope with changes such as moving from one school to another. They keep working hard in school even if they don't succeed at first. They have a resilient spirit.

Unfortunately, not every child has such natural resilience. The good news is that most of the research on the subject indicates that resilience can be nurtured and developed, particularly when parents themselves are resilient and actively foster this characteristic in their kids.

Resilient kids share four basic skills: autonomy, problem-solving, optimism and social connection. There are many ways parents can develop these skills in their children, but perhaps the easiest and most accessible way is to allow kids to fully contribute to their family. By developing your child's self-help skills, you will promote independence and resourcefulness in them.



Children's life experiences contribute to their resilience

The seemingly small disappointments that kids experience – not being invited to a party, missing being picked in a sports team, not achieving success in a school project the first time – help them learn to cope with hardship and frustration. Coping with minor development issues such as change, sibling conflict and even failure, build up a psychological hardiness that will help them when they face some of life's big challenges in adolescence and beyond.

That means that you, as a parent, need to resist sorting out your children's social problems for them; rather, you need to skill them up to solve their own friendship challenges. Sometimes parents can create problems by interfering in children's disputes. From the resilience perspective you are better off coaching kids through some of their more challenging moments and reviewing what they may have learned for next time.

You also need to put children and young people in situations where they need to draw on their resourcefulness. Camps and adventure activities are great ways for kids to stretch themselves and test their problem-solving and coping skills. My second daughter, Emma (she of the Danish Adventure), believes that a ten-day adventure camp she went on, as a fourteen-year-old was the defining event of her early adolescence. It involved real physical endeavour, which stretched her to the limits, literally bringing her to tears on many occasions. It was the first time she realised that she could cope with being separated from her friends and family as well as the comforts of home. While away in Denmark she frequently drew on the coping skills she had learned on her ten-day camp to overcome homesickness and deal with the challenges of living in an unfamiliar environment for such a long time.

Regular positive parent-child interactions help kids pick up the basic social skills needed to interact with their peers, as well as more subtle resilience skills such as humour, goal-setting and persistence. So, parents need to look for as many opportunities as possible to spend time with and talk to their kids.

Kids also learn optimism from home. Martin Seligman, author of *The Optimistic Child*, found that kids pick up the explanatory style of the parent they spend most time around, usually mothers, by the age of eight. If that parent tends to be optimistic, it's likely the child will be too. In other words, a 'can do' attitude pays off.

Promoting resilience in kids is not a single event but a continual process. It requires parents, teachers and other adults to look for opportunities for kids to stretch themselves socially, academically and even emotionally.





Session Two Activity

1 WHAT DOES A RESILIENT CHILD LOOK AND ACT LIKE?

Spend some time reflecting on the notion of resilience as presented above. Write below what a resilient child looks and acts like. What characteristics do they have? What are their typical traits?

2 HOW DOES EACH OF YOUR CHILDREN MEASURE UP?

Look at your list of resilience traits and characteristics above and consider how each of your children measures up. Use this activity to help you identify key areas to focus on to build your child's resilience

3 FURTHER LEARNING

You'll find more in-depth information about resilience building in Chapter 2 and in Chapters 11 to 14 of *Spoonfed Generation: How to raise independent child*. In these chapters we share resilience-building strategies pertinent to each stage of your child's development.





Parenting for Independence Session Three

Encouraging kids
to be problem-solvers

Session Three



ENCOURAGING KIDS TO BE PROBLEM-SOLVERS

When parents solve all children's problems we not only increase their dependency on adults but we teach kids to be afraid of making mistakes and to blame themselves for not being good enough. That's fertile ground for anxiety and depressive illness.

So, how can we raise kids to be courageous problem-solvers rather than self-critical scaredy cats? Here are six practical ideas to get you started.

1. Turn requests into problems for kids to solve

Kids get used to bringing their problems to their parents for them to solve. If you keep solving them, they'll keep bringing them. *'Mum, my sister is annoying me!'* *'Dad, can you ask my teacher to pick me for the team?'* *'Hey, I can't find my socks!'* It's tempting if you are in a time-poor family to simply jump in and help kids out. Alternatively, you can take a problem-solving approach, cuing them to resolve their own problems and take responsibility for their concerns. *'What can you do to make her stop annoying you?'* *'What's the best approach to take with your teacher?'* *'Socks, smocks! Where might they be?'*



2. Ask good questions to prompt problem solving

A problem-solving approach relies on asking good questions, which can be challenging if you are used to solving your child's problems. The first question when a child brings you a problem should be: '*Can you handle this on your own?*' Next should be, '*what do you want me to do to help you solve the problem?*' These questions are not meant to deter children from coming to you; rather, to encourage and teach them to start working through their own concerns themselves.

3. Coach them through problems and concerns

So, your child feels she was unfairly left out of a school sports team by a teacher and asks you get involved. The easiest solution may be to meet with the teacher and find out what's going on. You may or may not resolve the problem but in doing so you are teaching a child to become dependent on you. Alternatively, you could coach your child to speak to the teacher herself and find out why she was left out. Obviously, there are times when children need their parents to be advocates for them such as when they are being bullied, but we need to make the most of the opportunities for children to speak for themselves. Better to help your child find the right words to use and discuss the best way to approach another person when they have problems. These are great skills to take into adulthood.

4. Prepare kids for problems and contingencies

You may coach your child to be independent – walk to school, spend some time alone at home (when old enough), catch a train with friends – but does he know what to do in an emergency? What happens if he comes home after school and the house is locked? Who should he go to? Discuss different scenarios with children whenever they enter new or potentially risky situations so that they won't fall apart when things don't go their way. Remember the Boy Scouts motto – be prepared!



5. Show a little faith

Sometimes you've got to show faith in children. We can easily trip them up with our negative expectations, such as by saying *'Don't spill it!'* to a child who is carrying a glass filled with water. Of course, your child doesn't want to spill it but you've just conveyed your expectations with that statement. We need to be careful that we don't sabotage children's efforts to be independent problem-solvers with comments such as, *'Now don't stuff it up!'* *'You'll be okay ... won't you?'* *'You're not very good at looking after yourself!'*

6. Applaud mistakes and stuff-ups

Would a child who accidentally breaks a plate in your family while emptying the dishwasher be met with a *'That's really annoying, you can be clumsy sometimes'* response or a *'it doesn't matter, thanks for your help'* type of response? Hopefully it won't be the first response, because nothing down shuts a child's natural tendencies to extend themselves quicker than an adult who can't abide mistakes. If you have a low-risk-taking, perfectionist, consider throwing a little party rather than making a fuss when they make errors so they can learn that mistakes don't reflect on them personally, and that the sun will still shine even if they break a plate, tell a joke that falls flat, or don't get a perfect examination score.



Session Three Activity



1 PUTTING PROBLEM SOLVING INTO PRACTICE

Ten year old Jemma comes home from school complaining that her teacher didn't pick her for the netball team because he said she didn't come to an important practice session. However Jemma knows she was at practice so she felt upset by the injustice.

Which of these reactions shows a problem-solving approach by a parent:

- a) You phone the school to talk with the teacher concerned.
- b) You suggest that your daughter talk to the teacher about the mistake he has made.
- c) You coach your daughter about how to communicate how she feels to the teacher concerned.
- d) You tell your daughter to get over it.

Solution:

Both b) and c) are indicative of a problem-solving approach with

Seven year old Harrison comes to you telling tales about how his elder sister won't leave him in peace.

Which of these reactions shows a problem-solving approach by a parent:

- a) Ask Harrison if he can handle the problem himself
- b) Ask Harrison how he'd like you to help him
- c) Go to Harrison's sister to find out what she is doing.
- d) Leave Harrison to sort it out himself

Solution:

Both a) and b) both invite Harrison to think about his problem and come up with possible solutions. Solution d) could be described as taking a problem-solving approach if Harrison is capable of sorting this out himself.



2 HOW ARE CHILDREN'S PROBLEMS-SOLVING SKILLS?

Reflect on your children's ability to resolve every day problems and dilemmas. How much do they rely on you? Consider what you can do to encourage your children to be resourceful and resolve their own problems and challenges.

3 FURTHER LEARNING

You'll find a more in-depth look at problem solving and the mindset you need to develop in Chapter 3 of *Spoonfed Generation: How to raise independent children*.



Parenting for Independence Session Four



Bringing some
cat and dog to
your parenting

Session Four



BRINGING SOME CAT AND DOG TO YOUR PARENTING

Partners who work well together as parents often share the roles of cat and dog; it's a family variation of the infamous good-cop–bad-cop routine. It's not that one parent deliberately sets out to play a particular role, but usually one parent will by default be either the firm or the warm parent, leaving their partner to assume the other role. This natural preference is usually determined by personality, our own experience of being parented, and our beliefs about child rearing.

The gender of both parents and child plays a part when it comes to the cat and dog roles parents take. Many fathers are very firm with their sons, always driving them to achieve and do more. They frequently expect their sons to put in a great deal of effort in any endeavour that they tackle and at times can be overly tough and unforgiving when their sons don't meet their lofty standards. Many mothers, on the other hand, offer their sons the warmth and nurturance they need, the counterbalance if their father is too firm.

On the other hand, many fathers are like puppy dogs in the hands of their daughters because they have vastly different expectations about behaviour than they have for their sons. Youngest daughters almost always have their father wrapped around their little finger.

Many mothers have difficulty being the firm cat when they parent their sons, particularly their youngest son who so often stays a baby for life. Yet these same mums can be extremely cat-like when they parent their daughters, especially when their youngsters make the transition to adolescence.

The firm-cat, warm-dog roles fit the authoritative parenting framework that serves children so well, with one parent compensating for the shortfall or perceived failings of the other.



Cat and dog is situational

Some situations require parents to be cat-like while others require the dog to take over. It's apparent to parents of preschool and early primary school children that transition times in families are one of the most difficult times for parents to manage. The type of parenting approach used can make a huge difference at these pivotal parts of the day.

Cats take over from dogs in transition times

Those transition times in families – when children move from one activity to another; from playing a game on their own, to being in car; from having fun, to joining the family for dinner; from enjoying a game, to going to bed – are challenging for many parents. These are the situations when children are most likely to procrastinate, argue and resist. Dog-like parents will invariably remind their kids to cooperate and to hurry along when kids drag the chain. Some will become whiny dogs making comments like, *'Come on, you know you should be going to bed. You don't need me to remind you. Just clean your teeth and go to bed, would you!'* The alternative tends to be the angry dog that barks out instructions. *'How many times do I have to tell you! Move it! Now!'* Either way, children remain dependent on their parents when they channel their inner dog during these times of transition.

Cats, however, take a different approach. The whole aim of redundancy parenting is to make children less dependent on their parents. That means children self-govern or take responsibility for their behaviours, especially around transition times. It's fascinating to note that parents in large families generally don't report the same level of discontent with transition times as parents of smaller families. I suspect that this may be for a couple of reasons. Firstly, siblings in larger families tend to take over many parenting roles, managing the movements of children at those traditionally difficult times of the day such as getting up and getting off to preschool or school, transitioning to the evening meal or managing bed-times. Second, in the absence of siblings as surrogates, parents have less time and propensity to involve themselves with children during transition times. They may for example just simply get ready to drive the car to school in the morning than hang about the house rounding up dawdlers. In the absence of a dog to round them up, most children will make their way to the car on time ... well, nearly on time.



THERE ARE A NUMBER OF WAYS A CAT WILL APPROACH TRANSITION TIMES. THESE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING.

Cats cue rather than continually remind

Cats are self-contained and so they don't wish to continually remind others to cooperate or move to the next activity. They do, however, understand that some children need assistance to transition – so they may use of a timer to let toddlers know when it's time to pack up; primary-school children should know in advance when it's bedtime so they can be prompted to keep an eye on the clock. Alternatively, key times such as bedtime can be anchored to other activities such as going to bed at the end of a particular program. Cats will invariably be on the lookout for strategies that make it easy for children to remember their responsibilities including sticking to normal household routines rather than constantly reminding them and taking the responsibility away.

Cats consistently stick to routines

Above all else children love routine – those step-by-step predictable processes we put in place that make family life simple and easy to follow. Some children may fight the restrictive nature of routines, but this is natural in many ways. Routines provide children with the type of structure they need to feel like they are in control – and children crave control. Cats stick to routines and don't cave in when children push against the boundaries. They stand their ground, or, even better, make themselves scarce during transition times so kids can't argue or pester them to change their mind.

Cats use consequences to teach

Dogs are naturally noisy, so they'll almost always use their voice to get more cooperation. Like sheep dogs that yap at the heels of wandering sheep, some parents will continually harangue, remind or chastise their children to elicit cooperation. Cats rarely make a sound at the point of conflict, preferring to scratch or inflict something unpleasant. Well, as parents we don't need to resort to physical means when children drag the chain or try to keep us involved during these times of transition. However, we can use logical or natural consequences to encourage children to self-manage more at these times. So, procrastinating kids can go to school without breakfast in the morning; latecomers will miss bedtime stories; and toys not packed away can be removed by the silent robot overnight and withheld for a few days. Cats also deliver consequences calmly and nonchalantly, indicating to children that they won't get involved in arguments.



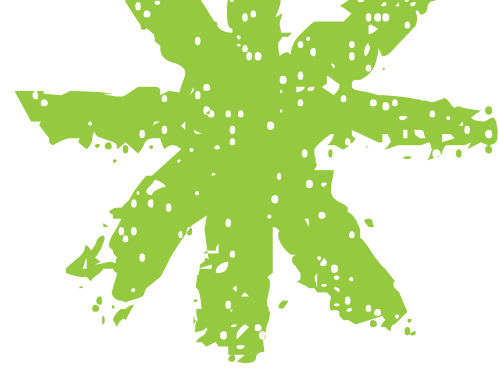
Parenting solo – cat and dog

The hardest part for parents who raise their kids on their own is not so much that they have to do the myriad parenting jobs themselves, rather than share with a partner - by far the most challenging part of parenting on your own is that you have to play both the role of firm cat and warm dog – usually simultaneously. It's not just single-parent-led families where solo parenting occurs. Many intact families are led by a solo parent because one parent, more likely to be a father, works away from home for significant periods or else lives at home but keeps their parenting participation to a minimum. From observation those solo parents who are most successful have a full understanding of when they need to be firm and when warmth is called for. Put it another way: they know when to be cat-like and when to be dog-like with their children, and they don't let guilt stand in the way of doing what needs to be done. The cat/dog framework is a practical way for sole parents to offer their children the type of parenting they need to suit different situations.

Bring some cat and dog to your parenting – a final word

Your ability to switch between cat and dog will impact your effectiveness as a parent. Many parents, indeed many people, switch automatically and unconsciously between firmness and friendliness. Those people are naturally charismatic. It's my experience that you can consciously switch between the two modes but it takes both awareness and practice. It's best to understand what comes easiest for you – in my case, cat is easiest for me to access and be conscious of when the other side is required. Personally, I have to put some effort into being more dog-like – I remind my self that my face should light up, I need some inflection in my voice and that I should make solid eye contact when I'm giving a compliment. That's my battle. You may do the dog-like behaviours easily but have to work a little harder at the cat behaviours when you need to manage and be firmer with your kids. In time these transitions become automatic as we take on new habits and new ways of working with our kids.





Session Four Activity

1 WHO'S WHO IN YOUR FAMILY?

Take some time to reflect on the cat-dog approach to parenting. Record your reflections below. In particular, think about whether you typically default to cat or dog. Does it vary according to your mood; the child involved or the situation? What's type does your partner default to??

2 FURTHER LEARNING

You'll find a more in-depth look at how to bring some cat and dog into your parenting in Chapters 8, 9 and 10 of *Spoonfed Generation: How to raise independent children*. Research shows us how important parenting style can be when raising kids to be independent and resilient.



3 TAKE MY PARENTING FOR INDEPENDENCE AUDIT

The following audit will help you assess if your parenting is aimed at setting kids up for independence.

Give yourself a score from 0-10 on the following eight questions.

- 1 Do you insist that your children do daily self-help tasks themselves on a daily basis? (Self-help tasks refer to every age-related day jobs such as feeding themselves, making their own beds, making their own school lunches, asking a coach for assistance) Do they help at home? _____
- 2 How much do you expect children to help at home without being paid? _____
- 3 How much opportunity do you give kids to organise their own lives and take responsibility free from constant reminders and rescuing when they muck up? _____
- 4 Do you provide opportunities to expand their horizons and take positive risks? (Positive risk-taking includes navigating their neighbourhood, walking to school, taking public transport and going to friend's houses) _____
- 5 How much do you allow your children to make their own decisions about the issues that affect them such as the choice of clothing, hobbies and friendships? _____
- 6 Do you encourage your children to keep themselves occupied? How good are your kids at keeping themselves occupied rather than rely on you to amuse them or spend time with them? _____
- 7 Do your children cooperate and behave well without constant reminders, or do they generally behave well independent of you? (Score higher for never having to remind them) _____
- 8 Are your children well organised or do they need constant reminders for every day activities such as taking things to school; remembering special days and organising themselves? (Score higher for being well organised) _____

TOTAL _____

SCORE:

75-80: Wow! Your kids will be out of your hair before you know it.

65-74: Well done. Pretty normal really.

55-64: You/they may have an area or two to pick up on.

45-54: Hmm! You're kids could lift their game a little.

0-44: Let's say there's room for improvement. Pick one area to work on at a time.

How did you go? Did you score higher on some questions than others? Would you score differently for different children? If so, that's quite natural as parenting is rarely even across the family as we adjust our expectations to suit different kids.

This audit gives an insight into the different aspects of Independence and self-sufficiency (1. Self-help 2. Helping others 3. Responsibility 4. Expanding horizons 5. Autonomy 6. Self-occupier 7. Self-discipline 8. Self-organisation)



A Final Word



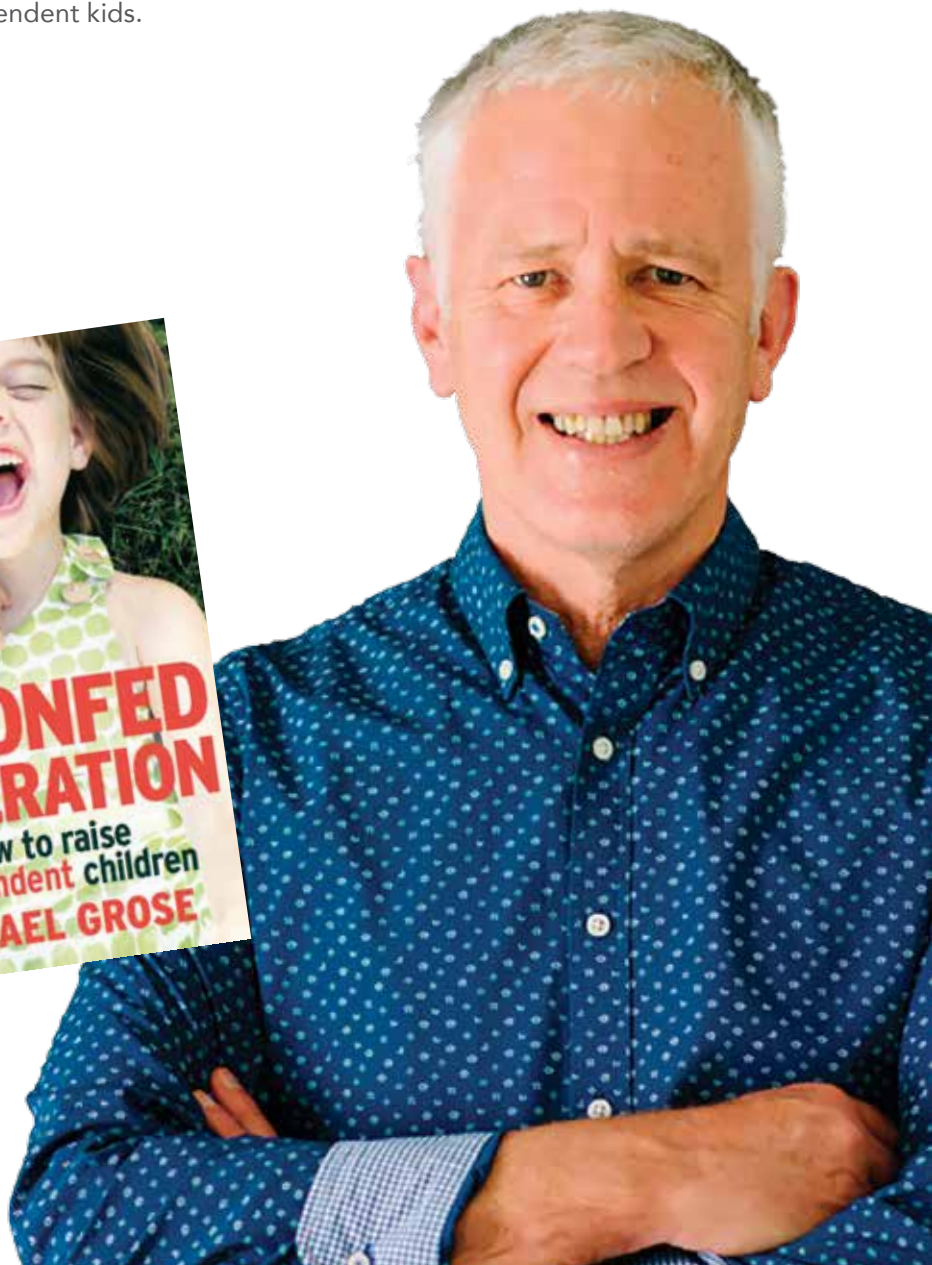
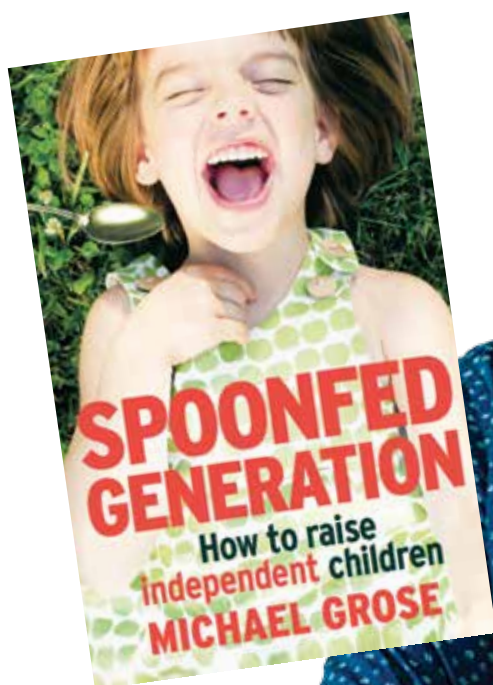
I hope you found this course a useful introduction to the Parenting Ideas community. We feel strongly that developing independence and resilience is at the heart of effective parenting. That's why we've made this course freely available. If you found it valuable please let other people know that they can get this course for free at our website - parentingideas.com.au

We believe that parents need new skills and know-how to successfully raise kids in this fast-paced, ever-changing world. We've dedicated ourselves to continually create you new courses to give you the skills, knowledge and confidence you need to guide your kids successfully through their different (and difficult) stages of development.

Check out our range of practical online courses available now at parentingideas.com.au

Here's to raising happy, confident and independent kids.

Michael Grose
Founder,
Parenting Ideas



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