

Free to choose?

Sometimes parents find it useful to give their young child more than one choice.

The first choice may be to do exactly what the parent wants right then and there. A second choice can then be offered which is much less favourable to the child. This may influence the child to accept the parent's first choice!

Here is a delightful encounter which took place between my grand-daughter and my five-year-old great grand-daughter.

The five-year-old expressed to her mother a desire to watch a particular DVD using her mother's computer. But at the time her mum was using the computer, so it wasn't available.

My great grand-daughter then gave her mother a choice! This was to either let her watch the DVD now, or instead let her watch a particular TV programme that she knew her mother did not approve of!

She had effectively offered her mother two choices – a reasonable one, and one she knew her mother would disapprove. Here was a five-year-old serving up to her mother the very choice-making approach her parents sometimes used on her!

To cap it off, the five-year-old said, “Of course we don't always get our first choice, do we mum?”

Guess who won that encounter.

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We make decisions, then our decisions turn around and make us.

Ken Packer