

Questionnaire:

What Fear Stops My Hand?

Purpose: Child autonomy requires the adult to "let go of control." This questionnaire helps you identify the unconscious fear that prompts you to intervene, overprotect, or judge your child's efforts, blocking their learning.

Instructions: Think about the last time you intervened in a task your child (ages 2-6) was trying to do on their own (e.g., getting dressed, cleaning up a spill, buckling their seatbelt), even if they asked you not to. Answer with the option that best describes your thought or feeling at that moment.

Part I: Fear of Failure and Efficiency

Intervention Scenario	Option that best describes your thought or feeling	Identifying the Fear
1. Your child is dressing themselves and puts their shirt on backward.	A. If I don't step in now, they'll be frustrated all day, and it will be a mess.	☐ Fear of the Child's Frustration
	B. I have to do it, because we're already late, and I don't have time to wait for them to do it right.	☐ Fear of Wasting Time (Inefficiency)
2. They are trying to clean up a spilled glass of water, but they just make it wetter.	A. If I let them, they won't do it correctly. It's faster and easier if I just finish it.	☐ Fear of Incompetence / Control
	B. They are going to get wet and then get sick. I need to make sure they do it right so they aren't in danger.	☐ Fear of Physical Risk (Exaggerated)
3. They insist on buckling their car seat alone but fail after three attempts.	A. If they fail, they will feel like a failure. I need them to feel successful.	☐ Fear of Low Self-Esteem in the Child
	B. They are defying me. If I give in and do it, they are winning the power struggle, and I'll lose authority.	☐ Fear of Losing Authority / Control



Part II: Fear of External Judgment and Parental Image

Intervention Scenario	Option that best describes your thought or feeling	Identifying the Fear
4. You are in public (e.g., a restaurant), and your child has a major tantrum because they don't want to eat.	A. If I let them scream, people will think I'm a bad parent and that my child isn't well-behaved.	☐ Fear of Social Judgment / Shame
	B. I need them to obey immediately so the situation ends, and we can return to normal.	☐ Fear of Chaos / Need for Immediate Peace
5. Your child finishes getting dressed, but their clothes don't match or the shoe is on the wrong foot.	A. I'm embarrassed for them to go out like that. I need them to look presentable for the occasion.	☐ Fear of Aesthetic Criticism / Image
	B. Why is this so hard for them? They should know this by now. I have to correct them so they learn to do it correctly.	☐ Fear of Teaching Inefficiency (Doubt about my role)

Results Analysis and Reflection (BNE Perspective)

Count the number of responses you marked in each category. The highest number indicates the underlying fear that is stopping your hand and interfering with your child's autonomy.

Fear Category	Parent Reflection (BNE Focus)
Fear of the Child's Frustration (1A):	You intervene to avoid the pain your child is feeling, but you steal their opportunity to develop resilience and the ability to self-manage that frustration. Allow the pain; offer support.
Fear of Wasting Time (1B, 2A):	Your need for efficiency is prioritized over their need for learning. Overprotection masks your own time-related stress. You need to manage your own schedule before managing their tasks.
Fear of Social Judgment (4A, 5A):	You are prioritizing external image over internal connection. The child's tantrum or mistake does not define your worth as a parent. Let go of outside judgment to be an anchor of calm.
Fear of Low Self-Esteem in the Child (3A):	Believing that avoiding failure builds self-esteem is an error. True self-esteem is built when the child overcomes frustration. Allow them to struggle, and then celebrate the effort, not the result.

Conclusion: The next time you feel the urge to intervene, pause and ask yourself: "Is this really for their safety, or is my fear of [Identified Fear] speaking?" Let the fear stay with you and allow your child to take charge.