



Anxious Children

The Burden of Being in Charge

The Alpha Complex

- Children are meant to be in a dependent, resting position.
- When adults fail to take the lead (the 'Alpha' position), children instinctively take charge.
- Being the 'Alpha' is exhausting and highly alarming for a child.

Counterwill: The Instinct to Resist

Counterwill is an instinctive 'no' to being coerced or controlled.

It protects the child from being directed by someone they are not attached to.

An anxious, alpha child will show high counterwill when we try to push them.



The defended heart: When it hurts too much to feel

- If the alarm is too great, the brain protects the child by numbing the feelings.
- The heart becomes "hard."
- Defended children may seem reckless, lack empathy, or appear to "not care."
- Talking Point: We must prioritize keeping the child's heart soft. A hard heart cannot grow.

