



COUNTERWILL GETS PERSONAL WORKSHEET

This worksheet is designed to give you a clear picture of how, when, and why counterwill is being expressed by your child.

COUNTERWILL IN YOUR FAMILY

Use the space below to specify details about your family's counterwill experience. *Fill in the blanks.*

Who in your family does your child resist most? _____

At what time(s) of day is your child most resistant? _____

In what settings does your child most often exhibit counterwill? (e.g., after coming home from school, at bedtime, during meals, etc.) _____

Under what conditions does your child most often exhibit counterwill? (e.g., when being told what to do, when being talked to in a commanding manner, when no alternative options are presented)

What reactions from you (or other adult on the receiving end of the counterwill) tend to escalate your child's resistance? _____

What responses tend to ease or soften your child's resistance? _____



COUNTERWILL BASICS HANDOUT

This handout is designed to give you a basic understanding of counterwill, how it shows up in our children, and the relationship between attachment and counterwill.

COUNTERWILL OVERVIEW

- It is an instinctual **defensive reaction** to perceived control and coercion.
- All people – children and adults alike – possess counterwill.
- The **primary purpose** of counterwill is to protect us from the influence of “strangers” – people to whom we aren’t connected.
- Counterwill arises as resistance to the “will” – the agenda, motives, wants, preferences, judgments, opinions, goals – of another. It can exist between any two people – spouses, an employer and employee, a teacher and student; two groups – an individual and society, the in-crowd and out-crowd; and even within oneself (think procrastination or resistance to a goal that you think you “must” achieve).
- The stronger the limits, rules, restrictions, controls, commands, expectations, pressure, or force expressed toward a person, the more likely they are to experience counterwill.

COUNTERWILL SHOWS UP OR IS LABELED AS

Resistance	Stubbornness	Rebellion	Back talk
Disobedience	Being argumentative	Rule breaking	Refusals
Contrariness	Defiance	Doing the opposite of what’s expected	

COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT COUNTERWILL

Because we generally don’t understand counterwill, we tend to have the following misconceptions:

- Adults tend to label counterwill behavior as strong-willed behavior. It is generally not so, especially in younger children.
- Adults believe that counterwill behavior is freely chosen. It is not. It is an instinctive reaction.