

PCI Parenting Styles Inventory

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Name _____ Date _____

The *Parenting Styles Inventory* is a valuable tool you can use to learn more about your unique parenting strengths. The inventory helps you focus on what is most like you in three distinct areas:

- **The first column asks you to identify what you value most for your children and what you value in your interactions *with* your children.** For instance, you may stress creativity with your children and consider yourself a “big picture” thinker most of the time. Or you may be more detailed and put a lot of emphasis on structure, planning, and organization in your family life. When you go through this checklist, it’s very important to remember that you may value many things in each of the four styles—who doesn’t want well-behaved children for instance? But “well-behaved children” is placed as a value for a certain parenting style (the Practicality and Results Style) because it would mean that this is really important—more important than the other values in the other three stylistic categories.
- **The second column lists your Parenting Strengths**—what you do well, easily—your natural propensities as a parent.
- **The third column helps you see what you hear yourself saying to your children *most* often.** If you are apt to think or state this particular group of phrases often, then that particular parenting style would be your strength.

Every parent operates a little bit in all of these four styles, *but usually one or two styles predominate.*



DIRECTIONS

Find a quiet time to devote at least an hour to this process. Read over all four pages, examining the three columns on each page, before you choose. Then re-read each page carefully, and thoughtfully check off which is **most** like you **most** often.

Afterwards read the section ***What Are the Strengths of Each Style?*** for ideas and insights that will help you apply your strengths in your day-to-day parenting decisions.

Some other ways to use this inventory:

- You and your spouse can observe each other over the course of a week or two and check off what you observe. Discuss afterwards. Sometimes the people closest to us can identify our strengths better than we can!
- Take your time with the inventory. Read it over each day for a week and observe yourself for a week or longer before you check off what is most like you. Your patterns over time can give you important clues to your parenting strengths.
- Choose one style and focus on it solely for one entire week. After a month, you will know more about your strengths in each of the four styles.
- Do you have a teen or an adult child who would be game to give you feedback? See what he or she has to say about your parenting strengths.



PCI PARENTING STYLES INVENTORY



THE CHECKLIST FOR THE FOUR STYLES

Parenting Style That Emphasizes Personal Guidance (PG)

VALUES

- Child as independent thinker
- Creativity of self and child
- Freedom/unstructured environments
- Personal experiences
- Artistic expression
- Big picture
- Uniqueness
- Listening to “gut”
- Child’s imagination/play
- Independence in self and child

PARENTING STRENGTHS

- Keeps household energy high with lots of projects, ideas, and dreams
- Gives child plenty of diverse experiences
- Teaches self-trust and importance of self-knowledge
- Helps child become self-reliant through careful guidance
- Makes quick, yet usually “right on” decisions
- Models a creative and fun approach to life for child
- Tolerates uncertainty and ambiguity well
- Uses personal knowledge gained from past experiences to guide child
- Encourages child to explore/
- Accepts teen’s need to experiment with boundaries
- Inspires family with encouragement to expand personal qualities

APT TO SAY TO CHILD/TEEN

- Trust yourself.
- Dream big.
- Listen to your inner voice.
- Just be yourself. /Be proud to be yourself.
- What else would you like to do?
- Aren’t you glad you discovered that on your own?
- You learn through your experiences.
- Don’t worry about what others think of you.
- Experience is the best teacher.
- The important thing is what you think of yourself.

Parenting Style That Emphasizes Practicality and Results (PR)

VALUES

- Well-behaved children
- A work ethic
- Ordered and predictable environment
- Concrete outcomes
- Practical ideas and do-able strategies
- Completion of projects
- Persevering to a sound outcome
- Clear goals
- A clear roadmap to definable results
- Self-control

PARENTING STRENGTHS

- Helps child to problem-solve
- Consistent disciplinarian
- Keeps a smooth-running household that is predictable to children
- Seeks to practically apply parenting ideas/ Can be very attuned to needs at various developmental stages
- Realistic approach
- Stresses formation of good habits/routines
- Level-headed and rational in explaining things
- Makes family time a priority/ Plans ahead to attend well to child
- Patient and effective when helping with homework
- Teaches child value and meaning of time and money

APT TO SAY TO CHILD/TEEN

- What did you learn from this?
- How will you use what you learned?
- Keep your room clean.
- Let's organize your schoolwork/day/ schedule/ party/vacation.
- It's important to plan ahead.
- How can you be in control of this situation?
- Being loyal is a wonderful quality.
- Your commitment is what's important.
- If you're not getting the results you want, maybe you should try something else.
- A good decision often takes time. Let's just keep at it even though we are tired right now.

Parenting Style That Emphasizes Reason and Expectation (RE)

VALUES

- The world of theories, ideas, and logic
- A child who reasons and expresses self well in the world
- Refining and beautifying forms and environments
- Deliberation and debate
- The processes of thinking and problem-solving
- Challenging assumptions and conclusions
- High expectations and standards
- Rational explanations
- Precision and quality execution
- Practicing and using one's talents

PARENTING STRENGTHS

- Child's mental skills and school success are important priorities
- Welcomes, and may even instigate, debate and contentious dialogue
- Places high priority on school success and literacy development
- Formulates theories and ideas about parenting/ Evaluates what works best and what doesn't
- Sets boundaries well/ Effective with a broad-range of discipline techniques
- Often encourages the child to elaborate on an idea or creative project
- Helps child appreciate beauty/ aesthetics
- Excels in thinking through problems and taking time to make a thoughtful decision which s/he usually executes extremely well
- Models successful approaches to life's challenges
- Undaunted by child's demands, whining, nagging, and arguments

APT TO SAY TO CHILD/TEEN

- Doing your best is what matters the most.
- What do you think?
- How would you solve/approach...?
- You could always add/do/think about/figure out/elaborate on/consider/decide to...
- Debate is healthy./ Opposing ideas need not be feared.
- Let's sit down and talk this over.
- Your school work comes first.
- No, and that's final.
- Let's stop and consider the consequences.
- I want you to pause and think about what you just said.

Parenting Style That Emphasizes Care and Nurturance (CN)

VALUES

- Relationships/friendships
- Making and keeping child/family happy
- Unity/common goals/shared experiences
- High self-esteem
- Living with a sense of purpose
- Fun/play/humor
- Emotional security
- Sensitivity to a broad-range of emotions in other people
- Understanding self and others/ Being understood
- Inspiring ideas

PARENTING STRENGTHS

- Excels in empathy and understanding
- Listens well and responds effectively to child's emotional and social needs
- Uses loving care and daily nurturance as core components in his/her parenting
- Appreciates and affirms child's attempts and successes
- Loves to talk with child and draw out child's feelings
- Leads the family in making sure everyone is connected through family rituals, regular meetings, frequent conversations, activities, etc.
- Extremely facile in creating a nurturing home environment
- Understands child's needs and consistently conveys love and care to the child
- Encourages child's artistic expression and imaginative thought
- Knows the importance of being a model to the child and conveys values and ideals

APT TO SAY TO CHILD/TEEN

- How are you feeling?
- Does this feel right to you?
- Let's talk about it.
- You are doing great!
- What shall we do for fun today?
- I want you to participate in family dinner/conversation/ weekend activity.
- You are very special to me.
- You have a special place in the world.
- Sure, bring your friends over. Yes, you can have the party here.
- Are you OK?

What Are the Strengths of Each Style?

Read the descriptions of each of the styles and consider the questions for enhancing your parenting strengths in your daily life with your children. You may want to discuss the questions with your spouse to gain a deeper understanding of each of your key parenting values, strengths, and communication. Each style carries certain challenges with it. By identifying your specific challenges, you can learn to enhance both your parenting style as well as your relationships with your children and your spouse.

Parenting Style: Personal Guidance (PG)

You strongly believe in giving your child independence and guiding him or her to think for him or herself in every situation. Strong in intuition, you usually learn parenting skills through experience, trial and error, and going by your “gut” feelings. Your child’s abilities for self-discovery and exploration are very important. The Personal Guidance parent often prefers solo activities or activities with a few close friends, usually avoiding large social gatherings. You enjoy spending your time with family doing things such as hiking or some sort of artistic, creative project. Promoting the child’s creativity and unique talents at every opportunity, you possess a high capacity for innovation.

You tend to keep your household energy high with lots of projects and ideas, giving your child plenty of rich, relevant activities. You naturally teach self-trust and the importance of self-knowledge. You have a knack for helping your child to become self-reliant through emphasizing his/her unique talents and by assigning meaningful household chores. A spontaneous decision maker who usually doesn’t need a lot of time to make up your mind, you will choose wisely for your child from your inner wisdom. This is a reliable guide since you know your child on deep levels through your intuition and instinct. Your child can’t easily put one past you! For instance, you will know if he/she is lying or trying to hide something from you. You probably can multi-task well and you handle a lot of chaos and complexity better than most. You enjoy novelty and introducing your child to new experiences. In fact, you go out of your way to make sure your child has a broad range of experiences in order to discover many parts of him or herself. You allow your child to experiment and learn through experience. You are comfortable with your child’s growing needs for personal freedom and you encourage it at every turn.

Questions to Consider:

1. What fuels your own creative spirit so you have the energy and zest for life you want to have to be fully present to your child/ren?
2. How can you tap into your intuition in order to communicate to your spouse what your child needs?
3. How do you distinguish between “being in the zone” and “being overwhelmed?”
4. What works for you to have quality playtime with your children individually and with your family in general?
5. What exciting experiences are you currently planning for your children? Your family? How can you best communicate to others in your family that these experiences are important?
6. Do you value your inner wisdom? How do you know?
7. Consider the parenting challenges typical for a Personal Guidance Parenting Style. Which ones are your challenges?

Parenting Challenges of Personal Guidance Parenting Style: Keeping order and structure in personal/professional life and helping child to do the same; balancing personal needs with parental responsibilities; quick decisions made may be wrong for others involved; may seem too distracted and uncaring in eyes of child; providing child with predictability and structure; understanding child’s need to fit in with peers; accepting own limitations; communicating need for personal freedom to spouse and children; may be stressed or overwhelmed if your creative spirit isn’t fed regularly.

Parenting Style: Practicality and Results (PR)

You value well-behaved children and giving your child a work ethic. You stress the formation and regular enhancement of good habits and the benefits of a well-ordered life, encouraging your child to make plans and carry them out to the best of his/her abilities. You operate better in an ordered, predictable home environment and encourage your children to keep things tidy and neat. “A place for everything and everything in its place!” You excel at supporting your children in the completion of projects. You get results because you can plan well, organize accordingly and implement practical strategies to successful outcomes.

You are “down-to-earth” in your parenting and making sense is an important component of any type of technique you will employ. You ask, “Does it make sense to do this at this time?” Consequently, you excel at meeting your children’s individual needs. You have a keen knack for applying the parenting technique that will work best in specific situations. You seek to help your child or teen learn to problem solve and to use his/her talents wisely. You are good at communicating the information and skills needed to live-day-to-day successfully. You usually enjoy each developmental stage as an opportunity to help the child learn new things and acquire a different set of competencies. You are prone to seek as much parenting information as possible and will sift through mounds of information in order to extract the most useful. Parenting classes, support groups, and ongoing learning are usually integral to your parenting process. You probably possess above-average determination and perseverance; your “can-do attitude” is infectious, bringing energy and enthusiasm to even mundane activities like cleaning out the garage.

You put out lots of personal energy in parenting, making sure that your children are competent and capable. Emphasizing efficiency in household management, your children will have meaningful chores. You are usually level-headed and rational during arguments and can be counted upon to come up with workable solutions. Family time is a priority. You enjoy seeing your children’s accomplishments and growth and development over time.

Questions to Consider:

1. How are you investing energy into your own self-care so that the energy you invest in your children and your family will pay dividends?
2. How can you maximize your skills in planning, organizing, and efficiency to further your dreams for yourself and for your family?
3. How do you distinguish between “being in control” and “being in charge?”
4. What works for you to balance family household chores with family play times?
5. What are the most successful ways for you to communicate to your spouse and to your children what is meaningful to you about a smooth-running household?
6. Do you adequately value your down-to-earth nurturing, your ability to get results, and your keen skills to meet your children’s developmental needs? How do you know?
7. Consider the parenting challenges typical for a Practicality and Results Parenting Style. Which ones are your challenges?

Parenting Challenges of Practicality and Results Parenting Style: May appear to be controlling and inflexible by the child/teen; can be too strict of a disciplinarian with unrealistic expectations for age/stage of development of child; uncomfortable with uncertainty and chaotic environments; may take on “peacekeeper” role at the expense of others learning how to mediate and resolve conflicts. May be impatient with no results. Your own industriousness may mean other members of the family do not have to contribute; your focus on timelines and deadlines may seem like you are not considering others’ human limitations; your logic and/or practicality can interfere with emotional responsiveness and/or how your child or spouse responds emotionally to you. Spontaneous activities may seem frivolous to you—like you are not “being productive;” family may misinterpret lack of spontaneity with being “too rigid”.

Parenting Style: Reason and Expectation (RE)

You use reason, logic, and high expectations as core components in relating to your children. The world of ideas attracts you and you want to pass on your love of learning to your children so they will be able to reason and express themselves well. “Think before you speak” is something you do naturally, deliberating carefully before taking action. You analyze parenting decisions, thoughtfully weighing the pros and cons before making a choice. You attend to refining and beautifying, delighting in high quality whether in clothes, your home environment, or personal standards of conduct. You love to challenge assumptions and to help your children really consider all sides of an issue before taking action. You desire a full, satisfying life for your children and encourage them to exceed perceived limits and overcome self-doubts. Precision and execution are very important to you. You probably formulate theories and ideas about parenting and use them, learning by evaluation what works best and what doesn't. You carefully craft your approach to each of your children's needs with much thought, relying on research, tried and true ideas, and a compilation of successful techniques you have acquired. You probably are drawn to parenting programs and strategies that have been tested through research and proven successful based on theoretical frameworks that emphasize reasonable, successful approaches. With any new learning, you are more apt to choose carefully the information to implement, questioning and challenging others' assumptions. Your child's mental skills and school success are important priorities and you probably welcome, and may even instigate, debate and contentious dialogue so your children will reason and apply higher level thinking skills. Your ability to remain calm, even-tempered, and emotionally objective during stress acts as a stabilizing force. You often encourage your children to elaborate on an idea or a creative project. You value your children's language capabilities and will make literacy development and family conversation high priorities. An effective communicator yourself, you ask great questions and bring energy to your family through your wit, word play, and clarifying ideas. You want your children to be successful and to value success.

Questions to Consider:

1. What knowledge and learning excites and energizes you, helping you be the parent you want to be?
2. How can you best use your gifts for communication to support your children's optimal development?
3. How do you distinguish between “challenging assumptions” and “pushing people too far?”
4. What works for you to move smoothly between the world of ideas and the concrete world of here and now with your children?
5. What are the most successful ways for you to communicate to your spouse your commitment to high standards?
6. Do you fully appreciate your parenting strengths of careful consideration, thoughtful approaches, and well-considered actions? How do you know?
7. Consider the parenting challenges typical for a Reason and Expectation Parenting Style. Which ones are your challenges?

Parenting Challenges of Reason and Expectations Parenting Style: Objectivity or emotional detachment can seem cold and distant; a habit of challenging assumptions may appear confronting and non-accepting. May escape too often into world of ideas, “out of touch with reality.” May seem too lecturing to the child; high confidence may look too authoritarian and dogmatic. May miss workable solutions because too focused on acquiring more information; can take too much time deliberating a decision at the expense of moving forward. May be perplexed by emotional outbursts of child; can be non-understanding of child's emotional needs or confused how to meet them; seeking refinement and precision, others may respond to you as if you were a perfectionist; your objectivity may frustrate others when they want or need an emotional component to your response, especially if they seek assurance and/or consoling.

Parenting Style: Care and Nurturance (CN)

You use loving care and daily nurturance as core components in your parenting. You want your children to be happy, satisfied and to feel loved. You live from a high sense of purpose and want your children to do the same. “I know how you feel” characterizes your amazing ability to show empathy—really be able “to walk in someone else’s shoes.” You naturally appreciate and affirm your children as an integral part of your relationship with them. You are usually open to new ideas and probably delight in doing a variety of things in a variety of different ways. In seeking out parenting resources, you may find the most useable ideas over coffee with a friend or through weekly support groups.

You are very adept at talking with your child to draw out his/her feelings. You possess an innate instinct to understand your child’s needs and a proficiency in meeting those needs in timely ways. You encourage your children’s imagination and artistic expression. Sometimes you are like a kid yourself, enjoying playing with your children and talking with them on their terms or through their activities. You know the importance of being a model to your child, making it a priority to convey your values and ideals. (You value values!) You enjoy making sure all family members are connected and that there are lots of opportunities for family rituals, regular meetings, frequent conversations, activities, etc. Your relationship skills are superior and you use them to communicate authentically and deeply with your children as they grow. You may enjoy early childhood and young children’s play more than the teen years, but you have the ability to change/adjust parenting techniques to match children’s ages and stages of development. During stressful times, you are able to focus on what is truly important, often providing strength, encouragement, and inspiration to other family members. Your own imagination is a fertile place for you to develop new ways of parenting if older ways are not as productive as you would like. You excel in creating a nurturing home environment, energizing and engaging your family through sensitive care and open generosity.

Questions to Consider:

1. What self-nurturance ideas and strategies can you put in place to renew yourself as a parent?
2. How can you best use your gifts to enhance your relationships with your children? With your spouse?
3. How do you distinguish between “nurturing care” and “being a push-over?”
4. What works best for you to set boundaries while still keeping your connection to the other person?
5. What are your ideal ways to communicate what means the most to you?
6. Do you fully value yourself and your role in your family? How do you know?
7. Consider the parenting challenges typical for a Care and Nurturance Parenting Style. Which ones are your challenges?

Parenting Challenges of Care and Nurturance Parenting Style: May have difficulty encouraging independence, or letting go as child matures. May seem smothering or nosy to the child when you ask questions seeking relational connectedness. Can take what child says personally and become easily upset; difficulty separating own feelings from real facts and from the feelings of others. May meet child or family’s needs at expense of own. Can get out of touch with own needs; when this happens may become a martyr or “silent victim” unable to meet one’s own needs. Can over-react and wear “heart on sleeve.” May be prone to excessive worry, wanting to keep child from encountering difficulties and be overly protective. At times may be reluctant to set boundaries because of difficulty being consistent in following through with expectations and/or enforcing rules. Child can manipulate you by tugging at your heart strings, especially when you are tired, hungry, and /or under stress. May feel the “weight of the world” as you struggle to separate yourself from the sufferings of others and maintain your empathetic, compassionate spirit.