

# What sort of parent are you?

**1. Your children have made a big mess in your living room. Do you:**

- a) Tell them they won't get any dinner until it's clean and tidy
- b) Tell them you'll time them to clean it up and see if they do it in under 5 minutes
- c) Ask them to clean it up, but when they go off end up doing it yourself



**2. When your children are put to bed:**

- a) They are expected to stay there
- b) They sometimes take a while to settle, but you've worked out a routine and it's working pretty well
- c) They never want to stay there, so it's easier to let them decide when they're tired

**3. You ask your child to sit down while they drink their juice. They say no! Do you:**

- a) Tell them off for disobeying you and pour the drink down the sink
- b) Tell them that if they don't sit down they'll spill their drink, instead you suggest they sit on a cushion in the sun to drink
- c) Ignore them thinking they'll be less likely to spill drinks as they get older

**4. Your child wanders out your front gate and is found by a neighbour up the street. Do you:**

- a) Yell at them and tell him never to do that again
- b) Remind everyone to make sure the gate is always shut, tell your child you were worried about them and they must tell you if they want to go for a walk
- c) Wish they weren't such a wanderer

**5. You think that:**

- a) Too much praise and affection will spoil your child
- b) You need to talk with your child as much as possible
- c) Children will find things out in their own way and don't need much guidance



**6. Discipline is:**

- a) Your child knowing right from wrong
- b) Guiding and teaching your child the things they need to know
- c) Really challenging for you, you hate your child getting upset

**7. Going out with your children is:**

- a) Fine if they sit still and behave
- b) A great way to do things together
- c) A nightmare, your children are all over the place

**8. Your child tells your neighbour they're ugly. Do you:**

- a) Send them to their room?
- b) Explain to them that they really hurt their feelings?
- c) Laugh and tell your neighbour your child is a rat bag?

**Turn over to discover what kind of parent you are**

Lot's of parents feel worried they aren't being the parent they want to be. Remember, this is normal! There is no such thing as the perfect parent.



## The rock

mostly a's



The **rock** is a stricter style of parenting, that perhaps you've had modelled to you by your parents. It can be hard and inflexible, with strict rules and harsh consequences. Rock parents sometimes think they need to be tough on their children so they'll learn important values and lessons.

### It might be worth reflecting on a few things around being a rock:

- What type of relationship do you want your children to have with you? Often the rock style can be a bit scary, and you may not be the first person your children come to for support. Was this true for you and one of your parents?
- What is your child learning about themselves when you're always 'in charge'? Sometimes this can impact our children's self-esteem and they can look to others throughout their life for guidance, rather than relying on their own instincts and ideas.



## The tree

mostly b's



The **tree** parent relies on a respectful, loving relationship with their children, and a consistent approach. It's a style of parenting that's fair and flexible, but strong and grounded when needed. Research suggests that parenting more like the tree than the rock or paper is best for children.

### Tree parenting will mean that you generally:

- Provide lots of love and warmth for your children
- Talk and listen with your children and respond to their views
- Provide guidance and understanding when they make mistakes
- Support your children through the natural consequences of their mistakes
- Set consistent limits and boundaries and respect them, including by you
- Provide structure and routine so your children live in a world of no surprises.



## The paper

mostly c's



The **paper** is either 'hands-off' or too overprotective. This comes from a loving place, but doesn't support our children to be very resilient. It can see us rescuing them from tricky emotions or situations to avoid conflict. Sometimes this style may give in too easily and crumple, just like a piece of paper.

### Perhaps reflect on these few things to better support your children:

- What are the benefits of being able to learn from mistakes?
- What are the things that your children are really good at, and how might you support more of this?
- Think about the last time they asked for your help – have you been able to support your tamariki to do things, even when they're finding it tricky?



## Everyone has their own way of parenting

Most of us are a mix of the styles. But when we become aware of the three types, we can work towards becoming more like the tree parent. Tree parents watch, explain and encourage, viewing their children as capable even while they're learning. This means providing lots of love and warmth, just like you do now, but being wary of 'taking over' or giving in too easily. Allow them to have some autonomy (like choosing their t-shirt for the day) and let them make mistakes as they learn.