

Andrea watching TV.

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demanding to be carried home. Mai-Britt tried to explain that she couldn't carry her *and* the groceries, but her logic hit a stone wall. Stine was not impressed.

In the end, Mai Britt was reduced to walking back with a three-year-old who screamed all the way to the cabin. Nor did it end there. After the situation had been once again explained to an obstinate Stine, she was asked whether she would henceforth agree to walk alongside Mummy; she flatly refused. Left alone in a room to contemplate her mother's request, Stine decided to move outside the open doorway to a strategic point on the staircase which allowed her screaming to be heard in every corner of the building. In despair, and in order to convince the neighbours that she was not actually torturing the child, Mai-Britt sat outside at the cabin entrance, in the snow. A pair of strikingly healthy lungs allowed Stine to keep up the racket for almost two hours.

The next day, the situation repeated itself, with two small variations in that Stine's demand to be carried was issued at a different locale and her subsequent screaming session at the cabin lasted for a mere one and a half hours. The pattern continued thus, with each day seeing a small reduction in the length of the shrieking fit. Several years later, Mai-Britt recounts this story with a haunted look in her eyes that leaves the listener in no doubt that this was one of the moments in any parent's life that makes them wonder if continued contraceptive use would not have been a better option!

This example illustrates one of the most difficult dilemmas for any responsible parent the need to balance the profound love usually found in the parent-children relationship, with the need to take the occasional tough decision because in the long run it will benefit a child more than parental submission to their whims. I think that almost any parent struggles with the challenge of not spoiling their child by giving them everything that they want. And when they lose that battle, it can sometimes have peculiar consequences like the friend of a friend who was so doted upon during her childhood, that she did not hesitate to make singularly unreasonable demands of the adults around her. This included, on one occasion, an imperious command to restore the skin of a peeled banana!

Even worse, in the course of potty training, it led to regular and piercing queries about where the poop went when the toilet was flushed and why it disappeared occasionally, this was even accompanied by insistent demands to bring back the vanished materials.

Of course, these things are relative, and the situation was considerably worse for another set of parents who were puzzled by their young daughter's penchant for flushing her panties down the toilet. Despite all efforts to persuade her otherwise, she persisted in a high rate of re-offending, for no better reason than that she liked the sound it made (which was apparently considerably more interesting than when the toilet was flushed for any regular purpose...)