

A photograph of a family of four walking away from the camera in a grassy field. The father is in the center, holding hands with the mother on the left and a young boy on the right. A young girl is walking between the mother and father. The background shows green trees and a bright sky. The text is overlaid on the image in white.

Bridges to Parent-Child Cooperation

An Introduction to Ally Parenting

Cynthia Klein



A Heart-Felt Welcome



Cynthia Klein

I'm honored that you are interested in learning about the Ally Parenting approach to creating a more cooperative and happy family. This introduction will give you a taste of what you will find in my book, *Ally Parenting: A Non-Adversarial Approach to Transform Conflict Into Cooperation*. I believe that the ability to create joyful family relationships begins with respecting the dignity and individuality of each family member without using control and shaming.

An ally parent learns how to connect with and listen to their child's feelings in an accepting and non-judgmental manner. As a result, your family members will enjoy open communication and learn how to solve problems together. An Ally parent also knows how to guide their child toward success with discipline strategies based in mutual respect, clarity, connection, and unconditional love. As you make positive changes as an ally, your children will respond in kind.

In my program, I focus on three areas of the adult-child relationship:

1. The adult gaining self-knowledge
2. The adult gaining understanding of the child
3. The adult gaining skills to either direct or find solutions together with the child

The adult gaining self-knowledge

In my program, adult self-reflection begins with completing the parenting approach and child assessments, discussions, and learning materials. The parent gains greater wisdom about the self and about the parent-child interactions. Understanding the values, beliefs, and thoughts behind one's actions fosters conscious, healthy choices that ultimately lead to connection and harmony.

The adult gaining understanding of the child

Successful skill-building using visuals, situation specific role-plays, learning materials, and practice allows parents to explore and understand their child's needs, beliefs, strengths, and areas for continuing growth. Knowing how to open the door to communication creates the requisite safe and accepting environment for the child to express himself to the adult. This leads to a feeling of connection, acceptance, and love, both of self and between parent and child.

The adult gaining skills to direct or find solutions together with the child

Adults learn and practice problem-solving skills and rule-setting guidelines. These skills and guidelines build mutual trust, respect, and understanding within the adult-child relationship. Practices of "working with" children empower both the adult and the child. The result is a child who is self-knowing, empathetic, courageous, and a confident problem-solver in life. The parent gains self-confidence to positively influence and guide the child. By understanding how to support the fluctuating growth process and stay connected no matter what challenges arise, a parent is well-equipped to accompany their child through his teenage years into adulthood.

Bridges 2 Understanding Ally Parenting Approach

Goals for parents:

Keep parent-child relationship intact.
Connection is vital.
Influence, *not control*
Work together with child,
Experience conflict as a growth opportunity.

Accompanying emotional and physical belief:

“I am available emotionally as often as possible for my family members.”

Qualities adults strive to develop:

Unconditional love
Openness to growth and change
Realistic expectations
Firmness when needed
Supportiveness and empathy
Belief in child’s ability to grow
Setting boundaries on their own behavior
Finding their own emotional support
Strengthening rather than weakening child
Self-reflection about their own behavior



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Child Rearing: An Opportunity for Personal Growth

My own parenting philosophy focuses on emotional connection first, and this focus has enriched my life as a parent immeasurably. My work as a parent educator is based on this goal of improving family connections to enhance the child's well-being and success in life.

What children crave and appreciate from their parents, above all else, is acknowledgement for who they are, much more so than what parents do for them or give to them. The mutual appreciation of one another and sharing life experiences together are at the heart of a joyful parent-child relationship.

When parents prioritize this relationship above the demands of their hectic lives and busy schedules, they can enjoy their children instead of managing them. Just as parents want to highlight positive behavior, we also want to give greater attention to the positive experiences of life with our children. Look for positivity not only in the happy times but also in the joy that is often created through overcoming challenges together.

Rearing children is an opportunity to stretch, to look beyond your current beliefs. In so doing, you choose to discard the beliefs, thoughts, and values that cause separation and suffering for you and those around you. Instead, you choose to invite in those that create a family rooted in mutual support and growth.

My perspective on child rearing is deeply influenced by having been raised in the United States during the 1960's and 70's and attending the University of California at Berkeley. I studied psychology and education and began practicing Buddhism on a daily basis.

I often read the Lebanese artist, philosopher, and writer Kahlil Gibran's book, *The Prophet*. I was profoundly touched by his poem, *On Children*.

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

In my view, a great parent is someone who continuously self-reflects about their parenting and makes ongoing changes. Here are some self-reflective questions to help you uncover the source(s) of parent-child problems you may be facing so you can then discover effective solutions:

- Am I taking time to sit and listen to my child without interrupting and giving advice?
- What am I saying that is making my child stop talking to me?

- Am I trying to control my child by making him “suffer” in order to change his behavior?
- Why do I hang on to punishing my child? Can I let go of the erroneous belief that a suffering child will be more cooperative in the future?
- Am I afraid of losing my “sense of power”?
- Am I trying to change myself or my child?
- Why do I keep my negative behavior cycle going? What do I get out of it?
- What feelings are being triggered from my own childhood?
- Am I clear on what rules are negotiable and non-negotiable?
- Am I trying to figure out how my child can get their needs met in a positive way instead of taking their behavior as a personal affront?
- Do I know how my child needs to mature in order to gain new freedoms from me?
- Am I looking at my child’s growth as a process that takes time?
- Am I developing the patience needed to become a compassionate parent who loves unconditionally?
Am I working on defusing and changing my angry reactions?
- Am I forgiving myself when I make a poor decision and trying again?

When parents view children as their possessions, subject to the parental authority of pushing and prodding to become what parents want, parents miss the opportunity for personal growth that raising children offers. I realize some cultures believe that ensuring their children’s financial success is equivalent to ensuring their bright future. American children, in particular, are raised to believe in the inherent freedom of will and thought. This belief makes it very difficult for authoritarian style parents to raise children here in the United States.

I offer a roadmap for how to shift from being an authoritarian adversary to a guiding ally. As a guiding ally, you still set rules and expectations to protect and steer children. The difference is that you also learn how to listen to their unique thoughts and emotions as you teach them how to solve problems, both together and on their own, so that they can create a successful life.

Ask the Right Parenting Questions to Find the Right Parenting Solutions

In my experience as a parenting educator and coach, parents who struggle with finding discipline solutions are often approaching their kids from a controlling perspective. They come to me because they've tried every tactic they know to make their kids comply but still haven't been successful.

They are hoping there's another more strategy they haven't learned yet that will fix the problem. They keep looking and hoping until they find me.

First off, let's review the common questions parents ask:

- How do I control my child so he will stop hitting his brother?
- How do I get my teen to do their homework?
- Why is my child so lazy, selfish, uncooperative, or ungrateful?
- Why doesn't she try harder?
- Why is my child so difficult?
- Why do they always argue?
- Why doesn't she try harder?
- How do I get my child off of their phone, computer games, or videos?

Each of these questions comes from a parent's feeling of powerlessness, fear, discouragement, confusion, judgment, misunderstanding, or hopelessness. Parents feel a lack of connection and positive influence with their children. There's a gap that they can't figure out how to bridge.

The common questions listed above are adversarial because they blame children rather than take joint ownership for the struggles parents have with them. This stance creates an "us versus them" mindset. When children are viewed the sources of the problems, then parents must fix them in order to fix the problems. This leads to parental attempts at controlling and managing their children, which often brings out rebellion and revenge in return.

Think of a parent-child equation where the parents' thoughts and actions on one side influence the child's thoughts and actions on the other side. When your side changes, the other side changes in response. You may wonder, "What if I do what you say and they still act the same?" They won't. I have never witnessed an instance in which parents changed and their kids didn't change in return.

True power to create greater family happiness comes from parents focusing on how they can change first. This ally approach of standing alongside your children is the most influential and respectful way to address problems and elicit the positive changes everyone desires.

Children, like their parents, don't want strife in the family. They behave as best they can for their maturity level, so that's why it's up to us as parents to make the changes. Recently, I was working with a mom of two teenagers. She felt stuck because she wasn't able to change her son. She asked me adversarial questions to find controlling solutions. Instead, I explained how the parent-child equation works. She was skeptical.

At our first session, I instructed her to go home and tell the children that she's trying to make changes, show them what she's working on, and solicit their input. Two days later, I contacted her to find out her teens' response. This is what she said: "The children were very receptive to my new instructions from you and willing to see what evolves. I did get some feedback on things they'd like to see change in the home as well."

With her willingness to take responsibility for making changes and soliciting input from her children, she has already experienced greater cooperation and happiness in her home. She is now learning to be an ally, walking alongside her children and working together to make everyone in the family happier and more successful in daily life.

Here are examples of ally parenting questions that will lead you to your true power to make positive changes between you and your children:

- How do I create a supportive home?
- How do I listen better?
- How do I help my child?
- What do I need to change about myself?
- How do I manage my emotions and respond with logic when making decisions?
- What will make our family members feel more connected to each other?
- What am I doing that continues this negative cycle?
- Can I open up to my children and have dialogue about how we can improve the family together?
- Can I demonstrate vulnerability and courage to my children by taking responsibility for our challenges without asking them to change as well (knowing that they will automatically)?

Try these ally questions and see how much more hopeful you feel that change is possible. Know that your children want a happier family, too. They are simply waiting for you to lead the way.

Choose the Discipline Path for Family Harmony

Parents want loving relationships with their children so that they will be trusted and their children will seek them out for support and advice. In my parenting classes, it becomes clear that well-meaning parents are resorting to ineffective punishment strategies that hurt the parent-child relationship because they simply don't know what else to do.

Many parents are unhappy with the lack of cooperation and respect they're receiving from their children. They are also unhappy with their own lack of emotional control and how they're treating their children. Under duress, they can quickly resort to the same negative parenting tactics they experienced as children. This approach does not lead them down the path toward the supportive and harmonious family they want.

Parents report using "consequences" (i.e., threats) such as, "If you don't pick up your toys right now, you won't play any video games." Imagine how you felt as a child hearing this type of threat. As an adult, you may think this sounds like a logical consequence, but the tone, word choice, and word placement create a threat. As a result, parents report being mocked, ignored, or even laughed at by their children with comments like, "You're not going to take it away."

Parents are stunned and embarrassed when their kids sound just like them. One mother recounted to me how her son threatened her with, "If you don't let me play, then I won't brush my teeth." The same threats that once put fear into them as kids don't create the close relationships the parents in my classes want with their children.

In an attempt to be nicer to their children than their parents were to them, parents begin with "nicer" controlling strategies, such as asking politely, explaining their reasoning to win agreement, and giving rewards. This approach still doesn't work with many children. When they fail to elicit any positive responses to these "gentler" attempts, parents resort to unsuccessful punishment strategies, such as instilling guilt, pleading, yelling, and threatening.

The bottom line is that using an obedience strategy based on instilling fear and manipulation and expecting cooperation, respect, and responsibility as a result simply doesn't work. It isn't logical. In order to create a successful family, punishment methods must be eliminated and replaced with discipline methods that teach important life skills.

The following parenting strategies focus on controlling children in order to create compliance. Often, children learn, either directly or indirectly, that they are a bad person. Regretting poor choices upon self-reflection is desirable, yet for a child to think of oneself as a fundamentally "bad person" is detrimental to making better choices in the future.

Parents must replace the following authoritarian punishment strategies:

- Isolating children when they are upset, sometimes called "time-outs," as a means to teach them that emotional outbursts are not acceptable
- Using shaming and judgmental language to belittle, such as "You should have ..." or "You're so stupid, careless, etc."
- Creating rewards and bribes to control behavior

- Designing a contrived consequence that feels unfair, resulting in a barrier of anger and resentment against the adult rather than self-reflection by the child
- Ignoring, discounting, or ridiculing children’s thoughts and feelings
- Yelling to gain compliance

I recommend using an ally discipline parenting approach to break this cycle of authoritarian power over children. Parents announce their new approach to family members as they gradually replace their punishment strategies with new discipline strategies.

Here are examples of how to guide and teach children:

- Take responsibility for the impact of your behavior by choosing your actions with this question in mind, “Is what I’m about to say or do going to build up or break down my relationship with my child (because, ultimately, that’s all that matters)?”
- Listen openly, with curiosity about their thoughts and feelings, so children can get unstuck, build trust with you, and feel safe.
- Use respectful directives, such as “After you (work), then you can (play)” or “It’s time to (work).”
- Solve problems together so that children can learn how to think logically and creatively.
- Set clear negotiable and non-negotiable rules that will shift as your children mature.
- Seek out your own emotional support so that you can parent from wisdom rather than fear.

If your goal is to create a family who sticks together through thick and thin, then continue to explore the benefits of my Ally discipline approach. A good first step is to use the “After – Then” strategy mentioned above as an effective directive to gain cooperation rather than commanding, asking, or threatening.

Build Influence and Cooperation through Ally Parenting

Interacting with your child can feel like walking on eggshells, where any comment or action could crush the “egg” and create a gooey mess. Cleaning up after conflicts is challenging and time consuming. Instead, I recommend learning how to interact as an ally rather than an adversary. An ally has greater positive influence than an adversary. This ally approach to conflicts will create more cooperative and peaceful interactions with any child.

Historically, parents have had adversarial relationships with their children. Every parent I know can easily recall examples of parenting statements that put them at odds with their children. Examples include, “Because I said so. I’m the parent. Do what you’re told.” Learning how to become an ally requires study, effort, and practice.

An adversarial parenting position can be identified by two main characteristics. The first is that a disagreement ends with the parent winning and the child losing. This disempowered and demeaning position of win/lose is not graciously accepted by many children. The second characteristic is disregard for the child’s feelings and thoughts during a disagreement. In the adversarial parenting position, the quality of the parent-child relationship is not the primary concern, so the child inevitably ends up feeling misunderstood, unheard, and/or unloved.

By contrast, the ally parenting position strives for a win/win resolution to conflicts. The parent is still the final authority, yet the child doesn’t feel inferior to the parent because the parent values the relationship and the child’s emotional well-being during their interactions. Even when the child doesn’t get what she wants, she still feels that her parents value her opinions and will try to reach a win/win solution, if possible.

Let’s translate this theory into a real-life situation in which your child asks to go to the movies and your answer is “No.” You’ve already made plans to visit grandma, and you don’t want to change them. Imagine a future interaction if your child is not yet at this developmental stage.

First, let’s explore how the adversarial parent would respond:

Child: “My friends asked me to go to the movies with them on Saturday afternoon. Can I go?”

Parent: “No, you can’t go.”

Child: “Why not? I really want to go, and my friends are going. You never let me do anything.” (Resentment builds up against an adversarial parent, often leading to magnification and confrontation.)

Parent: “No, we’re doing something else.”

Child: “I want to go with my friends!” This argument will continue with everyone digging in their heels and trying to win rather than trying to problem-solve together. In the end, no one will be happy.

An ally-in-training interaction might sound like this:

Child: “My friends asked me to go to the movies with them on Saturday afternoon. Can I go? Can I?”

Parent: "No, honey. You can't go because we're visiting grandma that day."

Child: "I'd rather go to the movies. Can't you go without me?"

Parent: "Going to the movies sounds fun, and I know your friends are important, **BUT** visiting your grandma is more important."

Child: "I want to see my friends instead."

The arguing will probably continue with poor resolution because the child feels unheard and hurt. In this example, the parent started out with an empathetic ally statement, "Going to the movies sounds fun, and I know your friends are important," and then made a very common mistake. They said "but." When a person hears "but," everything said before is no longer felt or heard. The empathy is lost, and the child suddenly views the parent as an adversary because she hears, "visiting your grandmother is more important" than your friends are.

Here is how an accomplished ally parent might proceed:

Child: "My friends asked me to go to the movies with them on Saturday afternoon. Can I go?"

Parent: "I see. I had made plans for our family to visit your grandma that day. I forgot to tell you."

Child: "I really want to go to the movies. It's important."

Parent: "I wouldn't feel good cancelling with your grandma. Can we talk more and see if there's a way you can do both?"

Child: "Okay."

The underlying belief of the ally parent is, "How do I keep the parent-child relationship intact and try to meet everyone's needs? My goal is to find win/win solutions." One of the best ways to receive respect, cooperation, and appreciation from your child is to work toward becoming an ally rather than an adversary.

Why Kids Reject Our Help

When I first learned about communication blocks as an Active Parenting Course instructor, my life changed. I realized that if I didn't take some responsibility for my daughter's, husband's, or other people's negative reactions to what I said, I wouldn't be able to improve my relationships. The more I took responsibility for learning how to build bridges to better understanding rather than barriers or blocks, the more I could create connected and close interactions.

I was motivated to change by a deep desire for a close relationship with my daughter. This desire began when I was a suffering teenager due to a lack of closeness with my mother. I knew I wanted to feel close and have trusting conversations with my future daughter.

Any change requires self-reflection and a motivating force to drive you through the unpleasantness of acknowledging the need to change, trying new ideas, failing, and then trying again until you succeed. What's your motivation to change? Perhaps your driving force is a vision of a happier and more cooperative family.

The core of many family problems is the inability to listen openly to a suffering child without trying to eliminate their pain in some way. Instead of making a child feel better, your loving "help" can have the opposite effect. Your attempts at fixing can make your child feel undervalued, unimportant, and unsupported; the exact opposite of what you want. Your well-intentioned choice of words and actions can turn into barriers rather than bridges to understanding.

Key barriers include our defensive emotional reactions that interfere with our ability to focus on what our child is feeling, thinking, and needing from us in the moment. We interpret resistance to our attempts at fixing as rejection. Rather than remaining focused on *how I can help my child cope with their feelings and thoughts*, we can become self-focused on *how I can protect my own hurt feelings*.

Your and your child's needs to protect yourselves when you feel hurt can be expressed negatively through revenge. It's difficult to acknowledge our vengeful words, feelings, and actions that shut down loving and helpful communication. Once we start defending ourselves, we create an adversarial relationship where no one ends up feeling good. It's up to us as parents to stop the hurt, connect emotionally to our kids' needs, and offer meaningful problem-solving communication.

Here's an example of how a negative, defensive interaction might play out.

Situation: Your child is struggling with homework, and you want to help so they don't continue suffering. You decide to give advice. Often, children don't want advice because the underlying message is that they can't find their own solutions, and this hurts. Your advice, regardless of your intention, is perceived as a communication block or barrier.

Parent's advice: I think you should work on your homework for 30 minutes, take a 10-minute break, then work on it for 30 more minutes.

Hurt child's possible responses: I'm not going to do that. I'll never get it done if I do it that way. You don't understand. You think I'm stupid.

Triggered parent's possible thoughts: She thinks I'm stupid. She's rejecting my idea. She never listens to me. My older siblings never listened to me. Everyone always told me to shut up. She's so mean. I'm not going to help her anymore. She's a spoiled and ungrateful child.

Triggered parent's possible defensive responses: I wasn't saying you're stupid. Don't be so sensitive. I'm just trying to help. Don't talk to me that way. We don't allow that kind of language in our house. That's disrespectful. You can just do it on your own, then. Don't blame me if you fail. You are so unappreciative of everything I do for you. I would never have spoken to my parents the way you talk to me.

Hurt child's possible responses: I hate you. Why are you so mean? Leave me alone. I didn't ask for your help. You don't understand. I hate my life.

The continual breakdown of communication can lead to yelling, crying, slamming doors, tantrums, isolation, and more hurtful words. You have the power to change this negative dynamic in your family.

This process begins with your determination to change your triggered thoughts and defensive responses. When you take control of your emotional center and utilize your logical brain, you are not only creating more positive interactions with your kids, you're also teaching them how to become more emotionally aware and intelligent.

Let's say you gave unwanted advice, and your child responded with hurtful comments similar to those listed above. You've realized your mistake, and you want to reverse the hurt that you didn't manage to avoid from the beginning. Here's an example of how you might respond as a supportive parent.

Parent's thoughts: I've hurt her feelings. She just wants to be listened to right now. She doesn't need my advice.

Parent's response: I'm sorry. You don't need my advice. You're feeling really bad about your homework right now.

Child's response: It's horrible. I just can't do it, and I'm not going to. They give way too much homework.

Parent's response: I bet you would rather be doing anything but homework right now.

Child's response: Yeah! I'd love to watch a movie and forget about all my work.

Parent's response: I know.

Child's response: It just isn't fair. Why do they give so much?

Parent's response: That's something to think and talk about. What about tonight, though?

Child's response: I know I have to do it, but I just don't know how to do it all.

Parent's response: How about if we talk about ideas together and come up with a solution to try?

Child's response: Okay. Thanks.

Your ability to listen openly will lead your children to their own thoughtful solutions.

The Key to Making Positive Parenting Changes Stick

As children grow older, they want and need to become more independent. This emerging independence can be challenging for parents because it often means that kids don't want to be told what to do. This separation and individuation process can lead to increased conflicts and power struggles. It's important to evaluate your parenting approach now and decide whether it's going to be effective as your children mature. If not, you can choose to start making parenting changes now.

Chances are you've read numerous parenting books and attended parenting classes to find answers to your parent-child challenges. If you've tried some solutions, such as ways to control your anger, you may be experiencing difficulty making your parenting changes stick. The solutions sound good, so you follow through for a while, but then your old habits emerge again, and you feel discouraged.

The key to permanent behavior change is to create consistency between beliefs and actions. When you focus solely on changing your actions without learning the complementary beliefs, your success is minimal. To make changes stick, you must first understand the underlying beliefs and attitudes behind your ineffective actions. Then, you learn the new beliefs and attitudes that match your new desired actions.

The Think-Feel-Do Cycle teaches us that what we think triggers how we feel and how we feel influences our actions. Complementary to your side of the Think-Feel-Do Cycle is your child's Think-Feel-Do Cycle. You can respond reactively to their actions, and they can then respond reactively to you. This can become a vicious cycle in which you give up your personal power and feel controlled by your children. You regain your power by breaking the reactive cycle through positively changing your thinking side of the cycle first. This, in turn, brings about more positive changes in your children.

A common misconception about changing kids' behavior is that parents have to directly change what their child does. You can experience how ineffective this approach is when you loudly command, "Quit hitting your sister!", "Turn off the TV!", or "It's time to go to bed!" with no compliance. In response to your overt attempts at parental control, your child becomes an immovable object.

Here are some common parental beliefs behind these types of commanding statements. These beliefs are often learned in childhood.

- Parents are right because they are the adults, and children need to learn how to follow rules. Whether parents and children feel connected isn't as important.

- Children act badly because they're trying to get back at or manipulate their parents.
- My children need to live up to my expectations of them without questioning or disagreeing with me. My goals are more important than theirs.
- When children start to get out of control, I need to put more controls on them.

Alternative discipline approaches that bring out more cooperation with children are the After-Then approach, listening to emotions, stating expectations clearly, and problem-solving together. Implementing these approaches requires a shift from believing that you need to control children to believing that you can guide children by working together with them.

Here are beliefs and attitudes that match the positive parenting approaches listed above:

- My parenting actions are based on the belief that "I am emotionally and physically available" for my child as much as possible.
- My child is his/her own person, and it is not for me to mold her/him into my own expectations. I will hold my judgment and criticism in check so as not to be hurtful.
- The relationship between me and my child is more important than being right all the time.
- Children's basic nature is to love their parents. A feeling of disconnection from others can lead to misbehavior and poor thinking. I try to view their misbehavior from their perspective to help them meet their needs positively.

Take some time to write down all the thoughts you're having about your child and yourself during a recurring conflict. Are your beliefs creating the relationship you want? Which ones are you willing to replace? Then, explore which new beliefs will support your new actions.

Practice saying these beliefs to yourself before the conflict occurs again. At the beginning of the conflict, stop yourself and repeat your new beliefs silently to yourself. With your new beliefs, the corresponding effective actions will come more naturally. When you falter, simply try again. With renewed determination, you will gradually make your positive parenting thoughts and changes stick, resulting in greater happiness for yourself and your family.

How Cynthia Can Teach You or Your Group About Ally Parenting

About Cynthia

Cynthia Klein's passion is to create world peace by first creating peace within each family. Through her 23 years as a parenting coach, educator, and author, she has discovered that parents often use ineffective strategies. Unknowingly, parents use a leadership style that creates adversarial relationships in the family. In order to create the desired family harmony, they need to shift from an adversarial to an ally authority figure.

Cynthia is a University of California at Berkeley psychology graduate, adult education instructor, and former elementary school teacher. She coaches parents privately and designs and presents parenting education workshops for organizations, schools, and businesses. Over the past 23 years, Cynthia has taught more than a thousand parenting classes and private coaching sessions.

In April 2017, Cynthia published her book, *Ally Parenting: A Non-Adversarial Approach to Transform Conflict Into Cooperation*, where she synthesized the parenting educational process and wisdom she teaches parents. In *Ally Parenting*, Cynthia offers practical parenting solutions and strategies and humorously shares her own experience of raising a daughter using examples of dialogue and parent success stories.

Through Cynthia's approach, parents are inspired to look within, take the new information, and develop their inner wisdom about how to rear their children. The success of her Ally parenting philosophy is based on parents realizing that the power to transform any conflict into cooperation begins with changing themselves first, and then their children will follow. This philosophy leads to parents feeling empowered and successful at creating greater respect and happiness in their home.

You can contact Cynthia for more information about her approach at cynthia@bridges2understanding.com or 650.679.8138.

Presentations to Your Group

Cynthia loves speaking to groups as small as in-home workshops to groups as large as 100 + attendees. She has spoken at companies such as Hewlett-Packard, Children's Health Council, Stanford University Work/Life Program, Kaiser Permanente, Parent's Place, and over 60 schools and libraries along the San Francisco Peninsula.

She teaches a variety of topics related to improving family relationships. Go to <https://bridges2understanding.com/parenting-speaking/> for her current list. You may also ask Cynthia to tailor a presentation to meet your needs.

Private one-on-one coaching sessions

Often, parents want answers specific to their family challenges. Cynthia works only with the parents, not the children, to guide parents away from their current ineffective strategies towards ally strategies that build bridges to understanding and cooperation in the home. Her solutions

are based on her ally parenting approach and she often creates new solutions to fit you and your children's personality. Cynthia is an educator, not a therapist, so please contact a therapist if you or your children need their services. As of February 2018, insurance does not pay for parenting education.

You can find details on her unique coaching style on her website at <https://bridges2understanding.com/parenting-coaching/>

To purchase Cynthia's book, *Ally Parenting*, go to your favorite online store to purchase her soft cover or ebook.

Here are some to choose from:

[Amazon](#)

[Active Parenting](#)

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