

DIVORCE

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Children and Divorce Article

WHOS' IN CONTROL — You or Them?

By Stacy D. Phillips, certified family law specialist

In an ongoing series of articles—excerpts from the book *Divorce: It's All About Control – How to Win the Emotional, Psychological and Legal Wars* (ExecuPro Press), by Stacy D. Phillips, certified family law specialist based in Los Angeles, California, Ms. Phillips has shared insight with us regarding the "Divorce Wars." In this, the third in a series of six articles regarding "Who's in Control – Your Them," Phillips defines the different "types" of controlling children and how they control, manipulate or manage their parents during the divorce process. If you're a parent see if your children fit into any of the following categories.

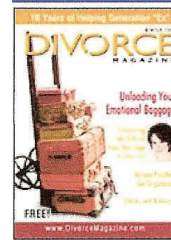
Children are often casualties of the Divorce Wars, but then again, they can actually manipulate or even *instigate* them! I have seen more second, third and fourth marriages break up because of conflicts with, or over, the children. Their power can be nuclear!

I have listed a few varieties of child types to see if you can identify where your offspring or your stepchildren rank, and also to get you in better touch with who it is that is in control, you or your child.

The "Opportunist" This type will look for the right time/place to take advantage of one parent, grandparents or others in his or her immediate circle. Many children of divorced parents cannot resist seizing opportunities to get what they want. Getting what they want might include not only material things (the largest percentage of opportunists use their charms for just that purpose), but also extended curfews and other privilege-oriented perks they may not always get with one parent or the other. They may also want more affection.

The "Dualist" These youngsters go out of their way to placate both parents, not wanting to offend either of them or fall out of a parent's good graces. The Dualist wants peace at any cost, and he or she may try to play both ends against the middle in a quest to achieve it. Dualist children are often in deep inner turmoil, for if their parents are at odds, they seem to be caught, innocently, in the middle. They often feel it is their fault.

The "Plotter" These "children" can be people of any age, minors or grown-ups, who spend hours strategizing how to control their parents. They may launch mini-wars just to gain control. For instance, a Plotter may drop an emotional bomb on mom about dad's new girlfriend, just to check out her reaction. When they find they can throw mom off center, they feel powerful. There is nothing more



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- Children: WHO'S IN CONTROL - You or Them?

seductive than power, especially to children.

The "Trickster"

is a "Plotter-Light." Though they try to fool mom or dad into falling for their tricks, they do not necessarily spend hours or days plotting strategies. Their actions are often more impulsive, glomming onto an immediate opportunity (yes, they are somewhat an Opportunist) in order to get what they want. They are quick thinkers and planners and extremely crafty. Keep your eye on the Trickster! This type is the Passive Aggressor of the young set.

The "Navigator"

These children, young or old, work hard at staying out of the crossfire caused by their parents, and they also make efforts to stay out of the Marital Wars altogether. Their goal is to wade through the everyday parental conflicts of warring parents with agility and grace. These children are often the ones who quietly leave the room when dad is yelling at mom on the phone. They are also quick to change the subject at the dinner table when mom starts complaining about dad. These children are considered the diplomats of divorced parents, for they are brilliant at finding safe detours around the landmines of parental controversy.

The "Resilient"

These are the children who bounce back no matter what injuries they suffer in a Divorce War! They elect neither to control nor to be controlled. They seem to flourish and grow even in oppressive circumstances. These children are saints in my book, for most often they are sunny in disposition and always see the positive rather than the negative. They are known for not taking advantage of a parent's weakness by playing one against the other; they are also not apt to try to use tricks or plots or opportunities to gain control.

While I realize that most children will easily dart back and forth between several of these category types, or overlap, most display predominant characteristics of one of the types. Also, when there is more than one child, there can be just as many types among them.

Stacy D. Phillips' book may be purchased through Amazon.com, Barnesandnoble.com and in all major bookstores throughout the country. Visit her website at: www.controlyourdivorce.com for more information.

