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**The Toddler's Guide To Perseverance**

**By Maria E. Andreu**

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My two year old daughter asks me for ice cream about one hundred times a day. You think I'm exaggerating for effect, but I am really not. She starts when she first gets up in the morning, requesting it as her breakfast. (I say no). She asks mid-morning, several times. She asks for it as an appetizer to her lunch, asks for it when my mother is caring for her (I'm blissfully not privy to that, as I am in the world of grown-ups, coaching!), asks at snack, dinner, and about 70 other times during the day. Sometimes she employs tactics of terror, kicking and screaming until our very nerves tremble. Sometimes she flashes the sweetest smile.

And of the hundred times she asks per day (I made it a nice round number, but I suspect it's probably higher than that) she gets ice cream maybe once every two or three days. Sometimes she wears me down once a day for a few days. Now, before you start thinking this is an article on parenting techniques (as in, what NOT to do), I'm actually using this headstrong toddler as an example. An example of what TO do. Yes, an example for even you to follow.

Because what is her success rate? On a good day, it is one percent. ONE PERCENT. She FAILS 99 percent of the time. She tries a variety of approaches, and finds that 99 times out of 100, they do not work. And yet, she gets a bit of what she wants just about every day.

Why? Let's examine. First, she makes it very clear what she wants. She tells me color, flavor, in detail, in her request. She starts early in the morning and doesn't let up until nighttime. She actually hits up her father more than she does me, knowing he's more of a softy, so she knows the proper venue for her request.

Lesson to be learned: Be REALLY clear on what you want. It's hard to expect the world to give you what you're looking for if you don't quite know what it is. Define the color and flavor of what you want.

Second, failure is not any kind of deterrent for her. She is the embodiment of the old adage, "No' just means try again later." She puts no negative spin to herself for the 99 times she fails to get what she wants. She doesn't say to herself, "Oh, I've failed. Maybe I'm not meant to have ice cream. Maybe I

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should just learn to like this broccoli stuff. Why –oh why– do I never get what I want?" She just asks time number 83. And 84. And 85.....

Lesson: Failure simply means TRY AGAIN. It does not mean anything about you, that you are not worthy or not special or not meant to have what you want. You just have to keep trying.

Third, she learns from her mistakes. I notice she's refined her request time to times when she considers me most vulnerable. She gets me when I'm tired or otherwise occupied, or when there is someone else around and I'm not as likely to stand firm.

Lesson: Learn from your failures. You'll eventually be able to cut them down if you learn what NOT to do.

Fourth, she's flexible. At times when she sees I'm steadfast in my refusal to provide her drug of choice (ice cream, before you go off to summon the proper authorities), she starts to negotiate for an alternative. Lollipop? Gum? Chocolate? Raisin? She usually gets me with the raisin.

Lesson: Be flexible! Maybe you can't get EXACTLY what you want, but you can get an approximation. Ask for raisins!

Fifth, she eats like a pro. She eats broccoli, seafood, any crazy healthfood I decide to feed her. It makes me more likely to give her ice cream when I see she's "paid her dues" and eaten all the good stuff I want her to.

Lesson: Pay your dues. Life rewards the hardworking and the diligent. Eat your broccoli and you're more likely to get the ice cream.

Lastly, she loses with a big smile. Sometimes it turns into a joke and we laugh. So even when I "win" (and I don't really suspect I ever truly do), we stay friends and go on to negotiate another day.

Lesson: Take life's bumps with a smile. You never know when life is just two requests away from giving you a great big ice cream cone.

Well, there you have, the toddler's philosophy to perseverance. Before you laugh and dismiss this as the ramblings of a proud mom (guilty as charged!), take a moment to reflect on how much more successful we would all be if we faced life's challenges with the aplomb of little children. Sure, they drop on the floor and wail when they don't get their way (and just imagine how cathartic THAT would be if you could do that at your next meeting!) but they get right back up and try again, unafraid and unstoppable. A pretty good way to approach life, wouldn't you say?

Maria E. Andreu is a Life Coach, author and speaker. Her works have appeared both in print and online media. She offers free teleclasses and a free 10–Session E–Course. E–mail [maria@MariaEAndreu.com](mailto:maria@MariaEAndreu.com) for more information

## **Toddler Tantrums**

**By Anne Cavicchi**

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Toddler Tantrums!

Remember the adorable little cherub you brought home from the hospital?

Ah, It seems like only yesterday. Now your baby has grown into a toddler. The world to them is filled with wonderment, learning and discovery... and frustrations. Things are wonderful, when all of a sudden, your little cherub turns into a little monster.

Your toddler has just shown you the power of the 'T' word... Tantrum. It is something every parent dreads, but it is inevitable at one point or another.

A tantrum is like an emotional blown fuse. It is not something your child can prevent. Tantrums generally occur when your child is very frustrated. The load of frustration builds up inside him until he is so full of tension that only an explosion can release it. He may run around the room wildly screaming, he may throw himself on the floor kicking and screaming. He seems to be totally out of control, and he is.

So what's a parent to do?

You can help to prevent tantrums by organizing your toddler's life so that frustration stays within his tolerance limits most of the time. This is not easy. You will not always manage to strike the right balance between the amount of frustration that is useful to your toddler's learning and the amount which is too much.

When a tantrum does occur:

Prevent your child from hurting himself or hurting others during a tantrum

Don't scream or yell at your child

Don't argue with your child

Don't let the child feel rewarded or punished because of a tantrum

Don't let tantrums embarrass you into giving in to your child's demands in public

No matter how much you hate your toddler's tantrums, he hates them more! If your child has frequent tantrums, take heed. Toddlers who have a lot of tantrums are often lively children who are also highly intelligent. Remember, it's not easy being a toddler! The good news? As they grow up, they will grow out of it.

Until they are teenagers.

Anne Cavicchi is a Canadian wife and mother of one boy and two step–daughters. She also owns Annie's Maternity Corner where you'll find everything you need for pregnancy and baby! Great products, articles, information and more to see you through pregnancy and baby's first years at Annie's. <http://www.maternitycorner.com>



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