Something That Doesn't Quite Fit Either Role

Not a fan of the general parenting discussion of whether or not you are your child's friend or parent. I find that the dichotomy generally stands at whether or not you should be your child's boss (in an authoritarian or, at least, authoritative sense) or you should care mutually about each other's approval and treat you child like any other friend. There are people who have different definitions of each role and have made fine defenses of both stances, but I generally side step the issue and defend a different outlook.

I am a leader for my family. I introduce my children to the world and show them the values I hold and believe in through my words and actions. I take the role as leader in order to inspire a good relationship between my child and myself, but also to help guide and assist them in discovering the world and their place within it. I believe this is best achieved by making sure the relationship I have with my children inspires high regard, mutual respect, patience and empathy.

I am friendly with my children and I care deeply about the relationship I have with them, but I don't desire the same sentiments that I generally have with my friends. I do not seek the same resources from my young children as I do with my adult friends. My children have their own problems to handle and it is problematic for me to unload my issues on them. It is problematic for me to seek many types of visibility from my children that I would desire from my adult friends given the role I play in their lives. Once they are adults, some of that will change, but the role I play for them shouldn't be burdened or complicated by me looking for the resources in them that I should be searching only in my adult friends.

Many people use the friend verse parent (boss) dichotomy to defend a punitive and petty style of parenting where people give out orders, manipulate through anger and approval, punish behavior that doesn't conform to the adult's wishes, and generally become a total asshole. This is total shit leadership that inspires nothing but combativeness and resentment.

I think the best mindset for a parent is to take responsibility of the culture of the family and tone of the relationship. Accept their role as leader, but focus primarily on inspiration and being a role model for your child to respect and desire to emulate. Focus on helping guide them through life and maintaining a productive cooperative relationship. With this mentality, I think it side steps the friend verse parent (boss) mentality and focuses on something that doesn't quite fit either role.