

Feel blessed you are a Parent !

Parenting is a tough job ..., it is here that your loving heart rules over your logical mind most of the time, if not always .

Different approaches

Parents of the old school believed that it was their duty to guide their children and protect them from the pitfalls of life. Children were expected to do what they were told and arguments were frowned upon. Unfortunately, this leads to breakdown of communication between parents and children.

At the other extreme, you have the parents of the egalitarian school of thought who believe that children have every right to express their desires and opinions and that this gives a fillip to bridging the generation gap. However, parents who subscribe to the idea that 'children know best' may find that it backfires. Even though children may question your authority and play 'know-it-alls', that does not mean that they do not need parental wisdom and guidance. Leaving them to their own devices will confuse them and cause anxiety. They need to know that you will always be there like a safety net.

Parents need to adopt a middle-of-the-road approach that is neither dictatorial nor too easygoing. It is essential that children learn that they must respect their parents. At the same time, they must be made to feel that their parents respect their thoughts and opinions in return.

As a counselling psychologist I have always believed in empowering parents to combat these problems. There are individual difference but still some fundamental principles that govern all parent child relations. Here I mention some simple ways for parents to invest in a long lasting relationship with their kids of all age group .

Connecting to my child

Most of us take our kids for granted, shutting them up when we're tired, and expecting them to entertain us whenever we're in the mood. Till one fine day, when they're all grown up, we look around and wonder where they've gone. We realise that they're far, far away in a world of their own, which doesn't include us. No one expects to be estranged from their kids as they grow up, and nobody wants it, yet it does happen. Even if your children are not exactly estranged, but if the deep, loving bond is missing, it hurts. So when we have them near us let us consciously invest in connecting to them.

Filling the Memory Chest

Keep some time aside to spend playing a game with your kids. Develop a routine, depending on your schedule. Once a week, or perhaps even every night after dinner, spend an hour or so playing a board game with your kids. Not only will the both of you have a great time playing together, but also these times spent together will provide you and your child with a lifetime of memories you are sure to cherish. Instead of taking a regular vacation this summer, plan an adventure holiday that include activities like cycling, hiking, boat rides, horse riding. These provide lot of time to connect to your child of all age groups . ***"A family that plays together stays together."*** Truer words were never spoken.

Read the album, yes you can read the pictures, remember what all we did at that time, funny anecdotes, touching moments all are stored in our photo albums . It is a very special bonding activity where you read, remember, revisit and revive your relationship with your child.

Make a memory box, keeping collecting those little things, a chocolate wrapper, a card, a mail, favourite T shirt that is now too short, first uniform worn to school, his worksheet with star, etc . Let your child join you in collecting things for the memory box. A few years later you would have something that no amount of money can buy. Once the child leaves the nest this would be your most prized possession.

Train your children to digest disappointments, denials and refusals.

Modern life is not only competitive but also stressful in many aspects. Children have to gradually adapt themselves to this demanding environment at some point of time. This is exactly why parents need to train their young ones accordingly. Children must be taught to take a 'no', not only from parents but also friends, teachers, neighbours and even strangers.

Although parents derive immense satisfaction from fulfilling their children's wishes, and demands they should deliberately leave some wishes unfulfilled. If every whim and fancy of the child is entertained, the child grows up in a illusionary world where all his demands will be fulfilled. Further it also makes the child attach much lesser value to what he has and even his sense of satisfaction gradually reduces from getting what he wanted. Children who cannot take no are emotionally weak and at times even a single 'no' can put him or her off balance. Only one 'no' is seen as I am not loved, I am not important. Children at times can take their whims to an illogical extent. For instance, if they fancy a person who does not reciprocate their feelings, they may get violent out of frustration. Or they might not be able to digest rejection in an examination or job interview later in life. We all want our children to be successful but cannot ascertain it, we can just try for it. However every child will face disappointment and disapprovals, so it's important to teach child to take failure small or big in his stride.

Communicate to connect

Using phrases like "don't ask questions," "just do as I say," "because I said so," will put you and your children in an adversarial position. These are negative statements that will only serve to put their backs up and reinforce their belief that they are misunderstood and that they are being victimized. Use a lot of praise and never be afraid of sharing your genuine feelings whether of love, pride or hurt. Just communicate, it will have a desirable impact.

There are no schools for parenting; it is an on job training. So keep trying, keep discovery and in the process don't forget to enjoy!

Earlier you start better it works,

Lesser time you have more critical it is to work on these basics.

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