

Ten Tips to Effective Parenting

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As adults, we often learned to repress our feelings. Encourage your child to feel, express and be authentic about how they feel. Let them know it is okay to feel and that feelings are healthy. It helps them know who they are and to develop positive character traits in life. Be the role model you would want if you were a child.

1. Create a list of five of your beliefs (to start with) about parenting and children. I recommend each parent create his or her own list. We are not just looking for the positive beliefs here, rather an honest assessment of your beliefs. Evaluate your list(s) and determine if each belief truly works for you in raising a child. Again, be honest. Be willing to introspect and discover the source of these beliefs. You won't have to go further than your own childhood. What would have to happen for you to discard the ones that are not working in your relationship with your child and to create ones that will?

2. Listening is an art. How well do you truly listen to your children? As a five-year young client said, "you have to look into each others eyes, then you have to stop talking, then-you have to listen. " Our filters (beliefs) and judgments stand in the way of truly listening to another person. Put them aside, and be aware throughout the communication if judgment surfaces. Notice it, let it go, notice it, let it go. It's a skill.

3. Respect is needed to create joyful relationships and that starts with you. If you want to be respected, you have to be respectful of another as a separate person with individual needs. Each of us has our own perceptions from which we view life--including our children. Their perceptions may not align with yours and this is one reason why quality communication is vital in building a strong parent/child relationship. With effective communication, we can arrive at understanding, which leads to compassion and love.

4. Communication is best when we are expressing from the mind AND the heart honestly and clearly. The prerequisite for effective communication is intention. When we put forth our ideas, it must be with the intention to be heard and understood. We need to ask ourselves what it is we 'intend' to communicate. In addition, by taking responsibility for our communication in every way, we tend to take responsibility in other areas of our lives. By assuming personal responsibility, we are less likely to blame others for the results. With responsibility, there is personal empowerment.

5. Unconditional love is a powerful healer. It is essential in raising an emotionally healthy child. Unconditional love does not include obligation, expectation, manipulation or conditions. It just is. Love cannot demand and love can't hold on too tightly. Love and fear will never align. Love just is. Love is inclusive, not exclusive. Love is about oneness, not separation. It is all your child truly wants--to feel loved, wanted, and accepted--

unconditionally. Your children will become your friends, once they leave the nest, when they have experienced unconditional love as children. Loving another starts by learning to love yourself. You can't give away what you don't have.

6. Positive reinforcement builds self-worth and self-esteem. If we can always focus on the positive behavior in our child, we will start to build a foundation of acceptance and love. No matter what the circumstance, if you can find something positive about it and place the importance there, it will take the resistance out of the situation, and change the dynamic. Miracles happen when we don't resist.

7. Provide your child with the appropriate words to express how he or she is feeling. Start at a very early age to offer the language that will provide words to help them to share their feelings. The terrible twos don't have to be terrible when a child learns how to express feelings. You can take this opportunity to expand your own feelings awareness vocabulary. It's fun to learn together.

8. You are your child's first teacher. They are sponges and take in all they are exposed to. Every word, gesture, and act is a message to your child. They will mirror you and reflect back all that you do. Teach your children about taking responsibility for their thoughts and actions. Teach them the principles of cause and effect by giving them the opportunity to make choices. Honor the choices they make. In addition, be a role model for risk taking and demonstrate the benefits of being a risk-taker.

9. Help your child retain the wisdom of knowing who they are. During the early years, a child is honest, literal, present, resilient, and tells it as it is. Unfortunately, many lose that magical and natural way of seeing life, because of what they learn. Help them to realize that they are powerful and can do anything they set their minds to. They will feel comfortable with this wisdom, because they already know it innately.

10. The laws of the universe will provide your child with everything that is real, beautiful and wise. Experience nature together with them and teach your children how these laws work. We are a part of the universe and our lives operate with the same principles. Teach them to be still, listen to their inner teacher and to trust their intuition, or sixth sense; there is such power in appreciation and gratitude for every thing; life is precious and we can teach our children to respect every living thing. You will be giving them tools for life when you teach these simple truths.

Have fun and laugh with your children.

Be real.

Love them unconditionally.

Accept and honor them.

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