



Parenting Problems?

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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I definitely do not blame parents for all the problems that they have with their children but, at the same time, realize that there are strategies parents could use to make the job easier. Unfortunately, in our society, we don't usually offer parenting courses until the problems have already begun.

Here are a few things to consider:

1. It is not your job to keep your child happy - Often I see parents buying or doing things because they love to be a "hero" and see their child smile. Consider the reasons why you are indulging them? If your child is "spoiled" you could be setting him/her up for a lifetime of disappointments. Remember, they are definitely not going to get everything they want in life just because they are cute.
2. Expectations are important - It is okay to assign chores, tell children to do well in school and teach them to talk in a respectful manner. The child needs to know very clearly what the expectations are because they are not mind-readers.
3. Negotiation means the child wins - Say what you mean and mean what you say. When you find your child trying to change the rules or justify why s/he shouldn't have to do something you are sunk. The best response to their protests is to calmly and firmly repeat your position without offering an opening for discussion.
4. Do not reward bad behaviour - When a child does not do what is expected, then they miss out on the fun. For example, not cleaning their room means that they do not go out with friends. They do their work FIRST and then are rewarded. This takes strong resolve on the part of the parent but pays off in the long-run.
5. Boundaries are a good thing - The child is not your therapist and definitely should not know about all of your personal problems. They need to know that you are not an ATM that will dispense cash into their adulthood. Why should you be faithful in going to your job while they lounge in the basement without contributing because they decided to quit school and not work? Set boundaries, communicate and enforce them.
6. Consistency makes it easier for next time - Sometimes we are tired and let the child get away with not doing what is required or expected. That just causes problems for the future. Self-discipline is a learned behaviour. Just think about how you feel if you don't pay your bills this month and then have to face double next month. As a parent, you need to be consistent in your own responsibilities and in ensuring that your child does his/hers.
7. You can be the bad guy - Sometimes children need to have an excuse for not doing something. I know several who are relieved to know that they can say "My parents would kill me if I did that!" It lets them off the hook.
8. Your job is to work yourself out of a job - I know that you love to cook, clean and do laundry for your family but if you don't show them how to do these things, they will be at a disadvantage in the future. Teach them how to manage their money and look after themselves without you so that they can succeed in life.
9. You do not have to make up for your parents' failings - I often hear parents say that they want their children to have everything they had as children that was good and everything they didn't have. Wow! Good luck with that one!
10. Be a problem-solver or get one - Teach your children how to think and make good choices knowing that there will be rewards or consequences. Often children listen better to someone other than the parent so if they are not doing well, perhaps it would be best to enlist someone else to help them get on track.

Parenting is a difficult job but it can be very rewarding. You might need some help to build your confidence and skills. That's okay! Considering what you need and then get it!

I remember my mom saying "If I can just live to get these girls raised." My sister and I were in our forties at the time. Perhaps she would have benefited from having a therapist to help her to let go?