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Parenting

By Clive Taylor

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This article on parenting is by a practicing relationship counsellor/therapist, and father.

The following suggestions will be useful for any parent or caregiver who wants to improve their relationships with their children.

In more extreme situations, many of the approaches will still be directly useful, and the overall approach is a guide for what the extreme situation needs to come back to.

It would also be very useful to attend relationship and/or family counselling to uncover the deeper sources of any family conflict.

Main points:

Often, it is the unresolved trauma or early needs in the parents or caregivers that set up the behaviour and feelings of the child, so an absolutely necessary first step is for the caregiver to acknowledge and begin to deal with their own unresolved unconscious processes and reactivity.

The main thing that children need is to be genuinely liked and delighted-in. They instinctively know your feelings about them. Parents need to arrange their lives so that they have enough opportunity to feel and express delight in their children.

Children have a primary need to be played with, and talked to, with actual connection, imagination to imagination – eg, on the floor, both delighting in the building and toppling of the blocks!

The imagination connection has to be real – kids know! It's as real a need as food.

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The second most important thing is that the parent's relationship is the priority - not the children. The children need the parents to be the priority as well, as this gives them stability, security and example.

There is no such thing as "naughty" – there is always a reason for crying and "misbehaving".

How you want your child to be, you need to be yourself - there is no avoiding this, children are acutely aware of hypocrisy and "natural" justice. Be honest about yourself with them - you don't have to be "perfect", just honest.

If children are considered as an inhibition on your "lifestyle", there will be problems – they love to be included in what you do (exclusion is very damaging).

It takes much less effort overall, to actually pay real attention to, and to play with children on a genuine level, than to have them continually whining, crying, sulking and demanding.

Be consistent and sparing with commands and discipline - a continual barrage of un-enforced, or inconsistently, enforced "don'ts" just makes children switch off to what you say. (This can be very dangerous, when an especially important "don't" comes along).

It is very important to consistently apply previously stated consequences to any inappropriate behaviour.

It is also very important that rules are fair and adhered to by the parents as well.

Fairness is very important. Real, and/or perceived unfairness is probably the main trigger of conflict (even with adults).

Give children definite, fair, and un-hypocritical limits that are socially acceptable, and as free as possible.

Your children want your respect and approval, so "discipline" them by withdrawing yourself from them – only for as long as the socially unacceptable behaviour continues. The only "reward" for "good" behaviour is social acceptance – "good" behaviour should be considered as "normal", nothing special.

Children are naturally fully intelligent – they are only lacking experience and information.

Encourage physical and emotional "robustness" so that they can take, and enjoy, whatever textures life has for them. Don't over-protect or smother a child when hurt. Encourage self-reliance by supporting them to help themselves. But beware, this is not an excuse for abuse or neglect, it's a call for diligent, parentally-nurtured self-reliance.

Encourage self-confidence and self-responsibility. (If a child is obsessively over-protected, with the "message" that they are not capable, then they will be incapable).

Uninhibited physical contact is very important - avoid imparting your own phobias and obsessions to

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them. Again, this is not an excuse for abuse - as parents and caregivers we must do the work on ourselves, to become free of our own dysfunction.

Bring about an awareness and appreciation of beauty.

(A person, who is happy, and aware of beauty, cannot deliberately destroy that beauty, or harm others or the planet).

Action and behaviour need to come out of willingness never fear. (Discipline coming out of fear and hate can never allow a person to be "whole" and creative).

Uninterrupted "daydreaming" has been found to be a crucial element in well-being and growth, because lateral thinking, creativity, and internal connections happen in this mind state. Allow children this space - if they over-daydream, it's possible that there is some unresolved issue in the child's life that needs attending to.

Avoid trying to "convince" a younger child with "reason", just state your position and hold to it firmly and lovingly.

Allow children to develop at their own rate, (physically, mentally, and emotionally), while continuing to provide an environment that draws them on.

Try not to limit a child's exploring – exploring is absolutely natural and necessary.

Avoid creating conflict with a child by denying them doing what you are doing, or having, yourself – if you can't change your own ways, (to lead by example), then allow them a minimum of what you are doing or having, (while seeming to allow a lot). Conflict born of (perceived) unfairness is a big problem.

Summary The child needs to be genuinely delighted in. No parent is "perfect" - intention, awareness and self-honesty are what are important. Parents need to be firm, consistent, non-violent (physically or emotionally), non-materialistic, un-hypocritical and loving. No put-downs, no guilt, no devaluing.

Clive Taylor has spent years of research into consciousness, zero-point physics theory, emergence theory, memes and many other new understandings coming out of mathematics, physics, sociology and psychology.

His ongoing work as relationship therapist is bringing deep revelations about the nature of our psyches.

Author/illustrator children's books and co-creator of a music CD.

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By Nadia Alvino

Parenting Is Tough – Make It Easy by Nadia Alvino

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I am an experienced child care professional, parenting consultant, author and pshychologist.

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