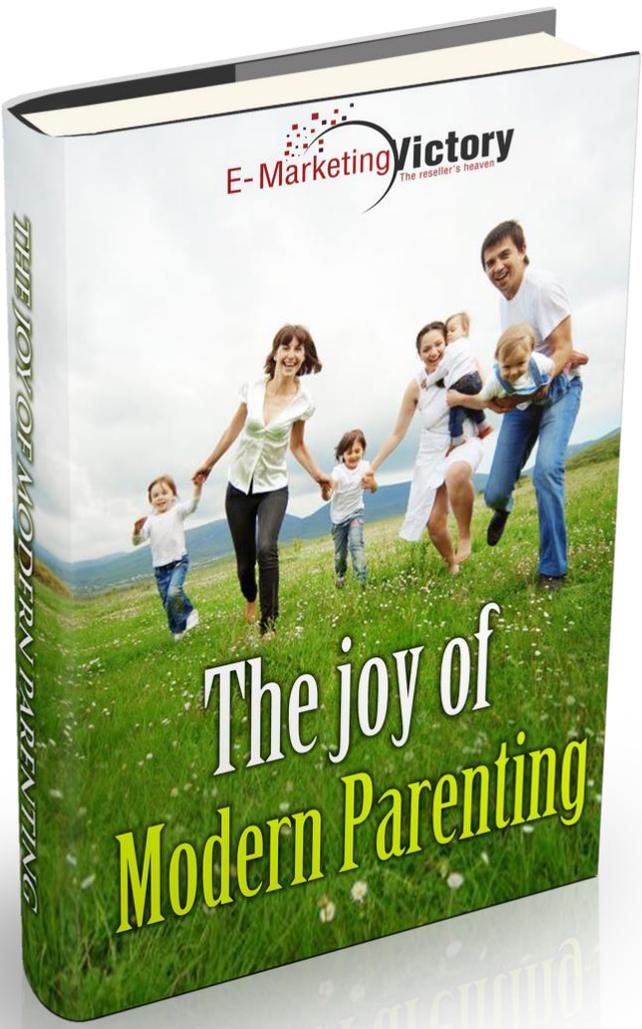


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THE JOY OF MODERN PARENTING

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Teach Your Child to Give Respect, and They'll Gain Respect in Return

One of the most important things you can teach your child is respect, and the best way to teach respect is to show respect. When a child experiences respect, they know what it feels like and begin to understand how important it is.

Keep in mind the saying, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Respect is an attitude. Being respectful helps a child succeed in life. If children don't have respect for peers, authority, or themselves, it's almost impossible for them to succeed. A respectful child takes care of belongings and responsibilities, and a respectful child gets along with peers.

Schools teach children about respect, but parents have the most influence on how respectful children become. Until children show respect at home, it's unlikely they will show it anywhere else.

How can you show respect to your child? If you do something wrong, admit it and apologize. Don't embarrass, insult or make fun of your child. Compliment them and let your child make choices and take responsibility. Listen to your child's side of the story before making a decision on an issue or problem. Be polite and use "please" and "thank you" when asking them to do things. Knock before entering your child's room. Keep promises. Show your child that you mean what you say. And give your child your full attention.

And most importantly, teach your children that respect is earned. Make sure that you are leading by example and modelling respectful behavior. Be a law-abiding citizen. Show concern for your environment, animals and other people. Openly and honestly discuss examples of witnessed disrespect.

In addition, teach your child to respect themselves. Self-respect is one of the most important forms of respect. Once we respect ourselves, it is easier to respect others.

Help them set and achieve goals. Encourage honesty and teach them that people make mistakes, and that they are the best way to learn.

Most importantly, praise your child often for good deeds, behaviors or traits, and tell them you love them at least several times each day. You're sure to raise a child capable of giving and gaining respect.

Teach Children to Respect by Treating Them with Respect

In order to teach a child to treat others with respect and dignity, they must also be treated that way, and childhood is a time for children to learn about the world, including how to get along with others. Parents play an essential role in teaching children how to form healthy relationships and grow into socially adept individuals. This social competence allows children to be cooperative and generous, express their feelings, and empathize with others.

The most effective way to teach children this lesson is by modelling the behavior you want to encourage. Every time you say "please" or lend a helping hand, you are showing your children how you would like them to act. Ask for your children's help with daily tasks, and accept their offers of help. Praise your child's good behavior and traits often, and help them realize how good it feels inside to do a good deed or be generous with another person.

Socially competent children are ones who have a strong sense of self-worth and importance. When a child feels good about themselves, it's easy for them to treat others in a positive, helpful manner.

Encourage acts of generosity through sharing and cooperation. Let your child know when it's someone else's turn with a toy or on the swing and praise their ability to recognize this on their own. Thank them for being polite and respectful and for sharing and cooperating.

Children know from their own experiences that words can hurt, and that name-calling, teasing, or excluding others affects how people feel. Children want to be treated fairly, but they don't always understand how to treat others the same way. One way to teach fairness is to explain a rule to your child, pointing out that it applies to him or her as well as to others.

Successful Two-Way Communications with Your Child

One of the most frustrating challenges we face as parents is communicating effectively with our child. Though we strive to open an honest two-way line of communication with our child, we become frustrated when it appears as though their attention isn't solely on us or the conversation at hand. Yet we seem to find it's perfectly acceptable to discuss things with them while reading the paper, folding clothes, or working on the computer, and then are often left wondering when the lines of communication broke.

Children are by nature easily distracted and not always responsive to their environment. It is the responsibility of the parent to emphasize positive patterns of communication and ensure the child learns that ignoring communication is not acceptable. Early prevention, in the form of educating your child about the proper forms of communication, is the key to ensuring that the non-verbal agreement does not take hold. Teach your child by example. Remain completely and totally focused on them and the conversation at hand. Turn off the television, allow calls to go to the voicemail, or go into a room where there are no distractions.

Talk to your child, and explain to them in age-appropriate terms how they are communicating and why their method doesn't work. Show your child how to communicate effectively, even when the questions are hard.

Make yourself an active listener. Let them voice their opinion or side of the story and ask questions to ensure you understand their viewpoint.

Be constant in the manner in which you communicate with you child. Send the same message with each and every interaction. Allow your child to see that you will call their attention to those times that the unwanted behavior rears its ugly head.

Kids will be kids, and they will sometimes be distracted and non-communicative. You are the expert in knowing your child's behavior and can best judge the improvement in their communications. The best way to ensure healthy communication patterns is to model positive communication skills.

The Detrimental Effects of Verbal Abuse and How to Stop the Cycle

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me."

That's just not true. Name-calling hurts— especially when the person doing it is a parent, a teacher, or a coach. Yelling and screaming might have been the way you were brought up, and you might think it worked for you, so why wouldn't it work for your kids? But did it? Remember how it made you feel. You probably felt belittled, devalued, and insignificant. You certainly don't want your own children to feel that way. It may cause emotional trauma that can result in long-term hurt. Among other things, verbal abuse can undermine your child's self-esteem, damage his or her ability to trust and form relationships, and chip away at his or her academic and social skills. Name-calling, swearing, insulting, threatening bodily harm, blaming or using sarcasm are all forms of verbal abuse.

What are the signs that a child is suffering from verbal abuse? They may have a very negative self-image. They may commit acts that are self-destructive, such as cutting, hitting or scratching themselves, as well as other reckless and dangerous activities. They may exhibit physical aggression, be delinquent in school, or display interpersonal problems. They may hit other children, frequently fight with classmates at school, or be cruel to animals. They may also exhibit delays in their social, physical, academic or emotional development.

Recent research suggests that children who suffer from verbal abuse are highly likely to become victims of abuse later in life, become abusive themselves, or become depressed and self-destructive later in life

It's normal for most parents, at one time or another, to feel frustrated and angry with their children. They may lash out verbally in these instances and say things they later regret. It's when these instances become more and more frequent that there is cause for concern. If this describes you, it's imperative that you seek professional help to learn more positive, meaningful and constructive forms of discipline, and for help in learning methods to control your anger. Remember to give yourself a time out if you feel an outburst coming on. Try to refrain from saying mean, sarcastic or belittling things to your child. Remember, your child learns what he or she lives. Don't be a bad example and teach him or her bad behavior early on.

Remember that your child is a precious gift and should be treated with love, kindness, respect and tenderness. If you exhibit these to your child on a daily basis, they will learn what they live and grow to do the same as adults.

Our Ever-Changing Role as a Parent

We watch our children grow right before our very eyes. It seems like yesterday they were a baby learning to crawl, walk, and feed themselves, and now they're in school, involved in activities, making friends, and learning to be more and more independent. Parents before us have said that from the time they're born, we are constantly learning to let go. As a result, our parenting strategies have to change. As our child grows, develops, learns, and matures, so does our parenting role.

As your child has grown, you undoubtedly have discovered that they have their own unique personality and temperament. You've probably unconsciously redeveloped your parenting skills around the individual needs of your child. And no two children are exactly alike, and therefore, your parenting style shouldn't be either. Some children may need more guidance and feel more unsure of themselves, so we've become used to having to guide, lead, show and encourage that child consistently through their childhood while still trying to encourage independence and give praise in order to build their self esteem and confidence level. Yet another child may be very intrinsically motivated and very willful and not need a great deal of guidance or leadership from you. While you encourage their independence, it's also important that you also encourage their ability to ask for help when needed and continue to praise good deeds, actions, and traits.

The most important tools we have in order to successfully adjust our parenting skills are our eyes and our ears. We have to see what's going on with our child and we have to hear what they are telling us. It's important that we encourage our child to be their own individual, while still being available to them at whatever level or degree they need us to be. Sometimes it's situation-specific as well. A child may not need us to be as directly involved with their schooling to ensure their overall academic success, but they may need us to be more involved in their social life as they may be feeling a bit shaky or scared when it comes to making new friends or meeting new people.

So the bottom line is this: as your child grows and changes, so should your parenting skills. Keep your eyes and ears open and communicate honestly and openly with your child, and you'll both mature gracefully.