



45 Ways to Be a Better Parent and Raise Well-Balanced and Responsible Kids

Simple Tips, Valuable Resources and Tools for Effective Parenting

**By
Marie Magdala Roker**

“If you bungle raising your children, I don't think whatever else you do well matters very much.”

- Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis

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Acknowledgements

This ebook was inspired by my loving and intelligent son, Nygel, who encourages me every day to be a great parent. I must also acknowledge my parents who have taught me that good parenting requires teaching your child core values as well as learning from your child.



About 45 Ways to Be a Better Parent and Raise Well-Balanced and Responsible Kids

Dear Parent,

This book is designed to help parents become more informed and how to build a healthy and happy family. This practical guide is ideal for all parents and caregivers who want to foster self esteem, a positive attitude and who want to encourage healthy behavior.

Happy Reading!

Marie Magdala Roker



Tip#1 - Keep your child out of adult conflicts.

“The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother”.

~Theodore Hesburgh

Many single, separated and divorced parents do not realize how they refer to the other parent in the presence of their child (ren) leaves a lasting impression. No matter how you feel about your ex, give your child a chance to form their own opinion. Do not subject your child(ren) to adult conflicts. Do not punish your child by alienating them from their father or mother. Help your child to have a healthy and positive outlook on relationships. They'll respect you more for it.

Valuable Resources:

- Need help with co-parenting? Try this free, secure co-parenting system for activity management and information sharing: <http://sharekids.com/Sk.asp>
- To help kids deal with divorce: <http://www.kidsturn.org/index.html>
- Divorce Parenting Guide -<http://hop.clickbank.net/?smartbee/rgbengg>



Tip #2 –Let your child dream!

“You see things; and you say, “Why?” But I dream things that never were; and I say,
“Why not?”” ~**George Bernard Shaw**

What childhood dream have you given up? Can you remember a well meaning adult telling you that your dream would never be fulfilled or that you wouldn't make it in life with that dream? Suppose Bill Gates or Oprah Winfrey had given up on their dreams? Children need to explore possibilities in life. As parents, it is our duty to nurture, encourage and support our children as they search for their purpose in life. Discover your child's strengths, abilities and talents, and help them to develop these gifts. It can sometimes be a challenge to accept our children as they are, however it is important that we love and support them unconditionally. The world is filled with adults living in regret for missed opportunities and broken dreams, give your child a chance to make their dreams come true.

Valuable Resources:

- Quiz on Famous Dreamers in History
<http://www.familyeducation.com/quiz/0,1399,1-3930,00.html>
- To Achieve Your Dreams, Remember Your ABCs<http://www.crayne.com/abc.html>
- Greatest Parenting Secret in History!
<http://hop.clickbank.net/?smartbee/raisingkid>



Tip #3 –Teach your child to be responsible for his/her actions.

“The price of greatness is responsibility.” ~**Winston Churchill**

As parents, we want to always protect our children from any harm. Sometimes we try to protect them from themselves. When they are young and dependent on us, we are responsible for their care and well being. As they get older, we have to teach them to be responsible. In order for your child(ren) to become self sufficient and self reliant adults, we have to instill in them the importance of being responsible. Don't always rush to help or rescue your child(ren) or help them to solve their problems. As they get older, they will rely on others to solve their problems for them. Teach your child to not blame others for their mistakes or misfortunes. Help them to develop a healthy sense of self.

Valuable Resources:

- Helping Your Child to Learn Responsible Behavior
<http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/behavior.html>
- Teaching Your Child Responsibility
http://nhnh.essortment.com/techingresponsi_riws.htm
- Tools for Relationship Building and Effective Communication
<http://hop.clickbank.net/?smartbee/hoducom>



Tip #4 Offer your child options and choices.

“I believe that we are solely responsible for our choices, and we have to accept the consequences of every deed, word, and thought throughout our lifetime.”

~**Elisabeth Kübler-Ross**

One of the best ways to develop your child’s critical thinking skills is to help him/her make decisions. By offering options, you are empowering your child to think for him/herself. Having the confidence to make decisions increases your child’s self-esteem and sense of self worth and fosters independence. This also leads to less of a power struggle for control of the situation. Help your child to make healthy responsible decisions in the future, let them be part of the decision making process.

Valuable Resource:

- Joyful Parenting E-book <http://hop.clickbank.net/?smartbee/jpebook>



Tip #5 -Teach your child to forgive.

“Nothing worth doing is completed in our lifetime;

Therefore, we are saved by hope.

Nothing true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of
history;

Therefore, we are saved by faith.

Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone.

Therefore, we are saved by love.

No virtuous act is quite a virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as from our own; Therefore, we are saved by the final form of love which is forgiveness.” ~**Reinhold**

Niebuhr

It takes a great person to fully forgive. No matter how much we love, have faith or give of our time, money and resources, we must practice forgiveness. Are you teaching your child to be a forgiving person? Does he/she see you say you forgive someone, yet harbor feelings of resentment and anger towards the supposed forgiven? Help your child to understand that forgiving is empowering and liberating. Let them know that sometimes they need to forgive someone even if that person hasn't asked for forgiveness. Let your child know that forgiving the person doesn't make the offense less painful, but that will help them through the healing process. Teach your child to learn to forgive him/herself as well. In forgiving yourself, you are able to forgive others. Show them how to forgive by setting an example.

Valuable Resources:

- Forgivenessweb.com- <http://www.forgivenessweb.com>
- Forgiveness Institute.org- <http://www.forgivenessinstitute.org>
- [WhyForgive.pdf](#) -Free ebook on forgiveness



Tip #6 -Reinforce what your child learned in school--at home.

“It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education.” ~**Albert Einstein**

It is important that you help your child understand that there is more to what they learn in school. If your child shows an interest in a particular subject or subject matter, encourage him/her by giving more facts and information. Think back to what you learned in school, surely there was more to Christopher Columbus' discovery and Martin Luther King Jr.'s life. Play math games, go to science museums, buy an atlas for your child, read classic literature, or study American history.

Valuable Resources:

- Geography and Puzzle Games
http://www.playkidsgames.com/problem_solveGames.htm
- Fact Monster-Atlas, Almanac, Dictionary & Encyclopedia
<http://www.factmonster.com>
- A+ Math -Improve Math Skills <http://www.aplusmath.com>
- History for Kids <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/KidsClick!/midamer.html>
- Ask Dr. Universe-Science Questions and Answers
<http://druniverse.wsu.edu/>



Tip #7 Teach your child to be true to him/herself.

“I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false, and to incur my own abhorrence.” ~**Frederick Douglass**

Younger children like to pretend to be someone else. Think about when you were a child. Was there someone you admired? What was it that was so magical about this person? While it is important for children to have role models, it is also important that they remain true to themselves. Help nurture and support your child's strengths and talents. Teach your child (ren) to be proud of their accomplishments, their culture, and their religion. Help your child to empower him/herself and not allow peer pressure or the media to divert their goals and aspirations.

Valuable Resource:

- I Could Be.org <http://www.icouldbe.org>



Tip #8 Instill core life values in your child.

“If you as parents cut corners, your children will too. If you lie, they will too. If you spend all your money on yourselves and tithed no portion of it for charities, colleges, churches, synagogues, and civic causes, your children won't either. And if parents snicker at racial and gender jokes, another generation will pass on the poison adults still have not had the courage to snuff out.” ~**Marian Wright Edelman**

What are your core values? Is your child aware of them? Don't assume that your child knows the core values because you've casually mentioned them. Live your life according to these values. If you value trust, show your child (ren) that you trust him/her. If you value education, articulate to your child the importance of a good education. Be consistent with your behavior and your choices. Set an example for your child (especially young children) so that they will incorporate these values in to their lives.



Tip #9 Focus on your child's strengths, not weaknesses.

“What we see depends mainly on what we look for.” ~**John Lubbock**

In society, we are urged to develop our weaknesses, not our strengths. One of the most common questions on a job interview is, "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" With children, if a weakness is highlighted more than strength, these children begin to concentrate on this blemish instead of all the wonderful gifts and talents they possess. Help your child to identify what he/she is good at. Make a list of all the things at which your child excels. Emphasize your child's strengths and help your child to identify with these strengths. Encourage your child in the areas in which he/she excels instead of focusing on your child's deficiencies.

Valuable Resources:

- Strengths Quest for Students
<http://education.gallup.com/content/default.asp?ci=901>
- Personal Learning Styles Inventory <http://www.howtolearn.com/personal.html>
- VA Strengths Scale <http://www.positive-psychology.org/strengths/>



Tip #10 Let your child's voice be heard.

“Children are our most valuable natural resource.” ~**Herbert Hoover**

Gone are the days when children should be seen and not heard. Children have basic needs: to be loved, to be respected, to be understood, to be heard. Your child needs to be able to express him/her self. Take some time today to ask your child his/her opinion about different topics. Let your child tell you what his/her needs are. Children who are listened to are less likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors and give into peer pressure.

Valuable Resources:

- How to Listen to Your Child
<http://childparenting.about.com/library/howto/htlistenkids.htm>
- Listen to Your Child
<http://www.extension.umn.edu/specializations/youthdevelopment/components/6141-10.html>
- Joyful Parenting E-book <http://hop.clickbank.net/?smartbee/jpebook>



Tip #11 Teach your child to be proud of their culture/religion/ethnicity.

“People grow through experience if they meet life honestly and courageously. This is how character is built.” ~**Eleanor Roosevelt**

It is important that children are proud of their culture/religion/ethnicity because it makes up who they are and how society will relate to them. Teach your child about foods, traditions, holidays and festivities from your culture. Help your child to not be ashamed of their heritage. The Western society is full of stereotypes. Help your child to know that they do not have to identify with any of those stereotypes. The world is full of racism and prejudice and perhaps at one time or another this may be an experience for your child. Ask your child what do they want their legacy to be? Ask yourself the same question.

Valuable Resource:

- Proud to Be Me

http://www.fci.org/elementary_education/DifSamePDF/Proud_to_be_Me.pdf



Tip #12 Teach your child to take healthy risk.

“What you risk reveals what you value.” ~**Jeanette Winterson**

One of the things that I have learned from my son is that children are born risk takers. Think about when your child was a toddler and exploring his/her environment. Who was the one who went running frantically if that toddler took an unexpected adventure? Granted, you probably were trying to protect your child from being hurt. When children get older, they need to be able to trust themselves to make healthy decisions. Let your child know that these risks are really challenges that everyone in life must overcome. Playing it safe has its advantages, but healthy risk taking is an important part of self growth and learning.

Valuable Resources:

- Adolescent Risk Taking <http://www.middleweb.com/adolesrisk.html>
- Get Close to Your Teenager <http://hop.clickbank.net/?smartbee/sdm33>



Tip #13 Teach your child to forgive him/her self.

“If you haven't forgiven yourself something, how can you forgive others?” ~**Dolores Huerta**

Let your child know that everyone makes mistakes and that a judgment in error does not make him/her a bad person. Help your child to have a positive perception of him/her self. Children need to practice self forgiveness in order to have self-worth. Let your child know that he/she does not need to punish him/her self in order to get past the mistake. Help your child to understand that it is important to practice self love and to let go of the guilt, resentment and regret. Also, don't remind your child of past mistakes or make him/her feel bad about it constantly. Let your child know that no one is perfect and you love him/her unconditionally.

Valuable Resources:

- Self Forgiveness <http://www.coping.org/growdown/forgive.htm>
- Self Forgiveness Guide <http://www.iloveulove.com/forgiveness/pfpself02.htm>
- Lightening Your Load of Guilt By Forgiving Yourself
<http://www.learningplaceonline.com/relationships/forgiveness/yourself-script.htm>



Tip #14 Keep your promise.

“One must have a good memory to be able to keep the promises that one makes.”~**Friedrich Nietzsche**

Your child may not always remember all the great things you have done for him/her, but he/she will never forget a broken promise. When children are young, they believe in their parents, and have unrealistic expectations of their parents. When parents make promises, but do not keep them, children start to question their parent's credibility. Children feel betrayed by broken promises. You are setting an example for your child and not keeping your word lets your child know that it is ok to not keep his/her word. If you are unable to keep your promise because of an emergency or illness, communicate the circumstance clearly with your child, so that is no misunderstanding. Do not over commit yourself to the requests of your child. If you can not be available for something, don't lie and say "Yes", just to please your child. Be honest about what you are able to do.



Tip #15 Teach your child to not take life for granted.

“If you want to see what children can do, you must stop giving them things.” ~**Norman Douglas**

I often hear adults today say how kids take life for granted. How did these kids get that way? Isn't it our responsibility as parents to help our children to have values, be responsible and independent? Children do not think about their mortality and therefore take life for granted. They occasionally take their parents for granted too!

If parents aren't honest with their children about the realities of life, children will face adulthood unprepared. Build the foundation at home for your child to have strong character and ethics. Let your child know that he/she is fortunate without preaching or lecturing. Encourage your child to volunteer his/her time or donate to a worthy cause. Make a commitment today to help your children appreciate his/her blessings and gifts.

Valuable Resources:

- Mother- Don't Take Her for Granted
<http://www.kingssite.com/inspirations/motherdonttakeherforgranted.html>
- Volunteer Match.org <http://www.volunteermatch.org>
- Character Counts.org <http://www.charactercounts.org/>
- Whootie Owl's Stories http://raspberry.forest.net/FMPro?-db=whootie.fp5&lay=weblay&-format=/whootie/choose.htm&-SortField=b_pizzazz&-view



Tip #16 Teach your child to trust his/her instinct.

“Creativity comes from trust. Trust your instincts.” ~**Rita Mae Brown**

We are born with natural instincts for our survival. Observe a newborn and how he/she trusts his instincts to breastfeed. Babies and toddlers have natural instincts to do what is pleasing to them. As children grow, they tend to rely less on their instincts because in the past doing what pleases them may have gotten them in trouble. Help to build your child's awareness of his/her instincts. Let him/her know that it is ok to trust a "gut feeling". Your child's instincts may help him/her to become more self aware and street smart. Children that trust their instincts are less likely to be abducted or to get involved in unhealthy peer pressure. Encourage your child to listen to his/her inner voice and to follow his/her heart. Help your child to make the right decision when something doesn't feel right. It will help your child to build self-trust.

Valuable Resource:

- How to Create Your Own Instinct Story
http://www.cybertip.ca/childfind/cybertip/activities/2_instinctstory.pdf



Tip #17 Help your child to develop street smarts.

“Shrewd awareness of how to survive in an often hostile urban environment.” ~**The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition**

Children need to be made aware of the potential dangers in their environment. We often give children conflicting or unclear messages such as "Don't speak to strangers", yet when a stranger says, "Hello" to our child, we urge them to reply. In order for your child to develop street smarts, you must be honest and straightforward with your child about the realities of life. Sheltering your child will not prevent them from any unfortunate circumstances. Make sure to set-up special codes with your child for pick ups and be specific and clear about your expectations. Make sure your young child learns his/her address and phone number and the older children know the rules for when they are alone. Speak to your child about online safety.

Valuable Resources:

- Helping Children Develop Street Smarts
http://www.familytlc.net/street_smarts_teen.html
- Hip Kid Hop: Don't Talk to Strangers Book
<http://www.bookcloseouts.com/default.asp?Ntk1=Default&Ntt1=safety+for+kids&Ntx1=matchall&Nsl=0&Ix=4&R=0439313856B&Rt=9&Nty1=1>
- Fun Street Smarts Quiz for Kids
http://www.funtrivia.com/playquiz.cfm?qid=96391&origin=http://www.google.com/search_QN_q=children+and+street+smarts_AND_hl=en_AND_lr=AND_client=firefox-a_AND_rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official_s_AND_start=10_AND_sa=N



Tip #18 Teach your child to learn from failure.

“Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm.”

~Sir Winston Churchill

Children make mistakes, but it is imperative that parents help children to deal with disappointment and failure. Children need to be able to use these experiences as a learning tool. As a parent, you can help by sharing with your child about your mistakes and failures. Children need to be reassured that failure does not equate failure as a person. Help children to develop healthy ways of dealing with failure by redirecting their self talk. Self-talk is the mind chatter that goes on when one is evaluating decisions or choices. Give your child positive feedback and help him/her to find solutions for any problems they are having.

Valuable Resources:

- Helping Children Overcome Failure <http://sheknows.com/about/look/3623.htm>
- Talking to your Children About Failure
<http://www.ext.nodak.edu/extpubs/yf/famsci/he457w.htm>
- The Complete Self Esteem Workbook
<http://hop.clickbank.net/?smartbee/dranfield3>
- Positive Attitude Builder <http://hop.clickbank.net/?smartbee/positive4u>



Tip #19 Be consistent with your rules.

“Actions lie louder than words.” ~**Carolyn Wells**

Do you set rules with your child and then change them when it's convenient for you? If you tell your child "No television during the week", but then allow them to watch it on a weekday, then you are confusing your child. Children need consistency in their lives in order to understand core life values and boundaries. This often happens with divorced or separated parents. Help family members and other caregivers to understand and respect the rules that are set. Communicate clearly with your child if you have exceptions to the rules. Whatever your message is, repeat it often to your child. Constantly changing the rules makes your child unsure of when the rules apply. Children need stability and predictability. Remember to model the rule that you are enforcing. If you want your child to be honest, do not ask him/her to lie for you. The credibility of your message depends on how you live by the rule you are implementing.

Valuable Resources:

- Warm Consistent Discipline
<http://members.aol.com/violencia1/warmdiscipline.html>
- Consistency in Discipline <http://ianrpubs.unl.edu/family/nf153.htm>



Tip #20 Practice self care.

“Look to your health; and if you have it, praise God, and value it next to a good conscience; for health is the second blessing that we mortals are capable of; a blessing that money cannot buy.” ~**Izaak Walton**

Do you take good care of yourself? Does your child see you practicing good eating habits? Help your child to deal with issues such as stress, a crisis by setting an example. Do not deprive yourself of sleep, nutritious foods and medical attention when you need it. As a caregiver, you need your health in order to be able to take care of your children. Make quality time for yourself as well as for your family. If you are a single parent, enlist the help of others when you need it. Do not feel guilty about your need for self renewal. If you are feeling high levels of stress, find healthy alternatives for dealing with your situation. Meditate, pray, exercise, take a walk, talk to a friend, coach, licensed therapist, volunteer, and cry, relax, or take a warm bath. Follow the example of the Serenity Prayer:

*Grant me the serenity to
Accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.*

Valuable Resource:

- Benefits of Busy Parents Practicing Self Care

<http://library.adoption.com/Single-Parent/Benefits-of-Busy-Parents-Practicing-Self-Care/article/3232/1.html>



Tip #21 Give your child guidance, not answers.

“Parents can only give good advice or put them on the right paths, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands.” ~**Anne Frank**

Do you give your child the opportunity to think for him/her self, or do you provide all the answers? If you provide your child with answers, your child may not be motivated to make decisions for him/her self. Your goal is to get your child to be independent enough to make responsible and healthy decisions. In order for your child to learn this skill, you must guide him/her to analyze and evaluate information. Help your child to consider alternative solutions. Practice problem solving with your child. Read newspapers or magazines and ask your child's opinion about a story. If your child gets stuck with homework, ask your child to explain the assignment to you. By doing so, he/she might be able to work through the homework.

Valuable Resource:

- How To Build Relationships That Stick
<http://hop.clickbank.net/?smartbee/hoducom>
- **Game- What Would You Do?**

Read a story about someone who was in a predicament. Ask your child what they would do in the situation. Have him/her write down the process of working through the problem.



Tip #22 Teach healthy pride.

“Self-conceit may lead to self-destruction.” ~Aesop

Are you constantly praising your child? Do you tell your child that he/she is incapable of doing wrong? Babies and toddlers tend to be self directed. As children develop, they tend to seek attention and praise from their parents. They take pride in getting the attention of their parents.

Help your child to develop a sense of achievement without thinking that he/she is better than others. In order for your child to achieve feelings of self worth, your child must believe in his/her abilities. However, if you exaggerate your child's qualities, you are helping your child to be boastful.

Valuable Resources:

- Nurturing Children's Self Esteem
<http://www.cpccounseling.com/articles/Nurturing%20our%20Children.html>
- How Are You Raising Your Children Today?
<http://www.theallineed.com/family/05012003.htm>



Tip #23 Teach your child to have a healthy relationship with food.

“Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are.” ~**Anthelme Brillat-Savarin**

What are you teaching your child about food? Encourage your child to eat the best quality foods by offering your child healthy and tasty options. Start your child early with good eating habits. Listen to what your child likes to eat and agree on alternatives or substitutions. Make your meal preparations appealing. For older children, have them escort you to the supermarket and plan dinner together. Help your child to identify fruits and vegetables by the texture and appearance.

Valuable Resources:

- Inherited Healthy Relationship with Food
http://chealth.canoe.ca/health_news_detail.asp?channel_id=44&news_id=3952
- The Feeding Relationship in Toddlers, Preschoolers and Children
<http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/hecomm/nal/ToddlersPreschoolers/FeedingRelationship.pdf>



Tip #24 Acknowledge your child's presence.

“It is not a bad thing that children should occasionally, and politely, put parents in their place.” ~Colette

Do you include your child in family discussions? Do you give your child the opportunity to respond when a question has been directed at him/her? Today, make a commitment to acknowledge your child when he/she is in a room. Unless you are having a private conversation that is inappropriate for your child, include your child. Ask your child for his/her opinion or suggestion. Value what he/she is saying and thank him/her for being so helpful.

Valuable Resource:

- Five Finger Approach to Good Communication
<http://www.workplaceblues.com/relationships/fivefinger.asp>



Tip #25 Have fun with your child.

“The happiest moments of my life have been the few which I have passed at home in the bosom of my family.” ~**Thomas Jefferson**

When was the last time you had spontaneous fun with your child? Have you been so involved in work, school, or other projects that you can't remember? Make a commitment today to have fun. It doesn't take long and you can make a difference in your child's day. Draw together, play board games, ask your child 25 questions about him/her self and she if you can answer them correctly, bake cookies or cook dinner together, listen to your child's favorite songs together (don't critique it or say it is noise), exercise together, jump rope, paint pictures together, play with toys, dress up dolls, play a video game, play an on line game, whatever you do, make it fun!

Valuable Resources:

- Keeping Kids Busy
http://smartbeecoaching.typepad.com/smart_tips_for_parents/files/keeping_kids_busy.pdf
- Show Kids the Fun <http://www.showkidsthefun.com>



Tip #26 Stop, Look and Listen!

“There are people who, instead of listening to what is being said to them, are already listening to what they are going to say themselves.” ~**Albert Guinon**

In early childhood education, teachers say to their students, "Stop, Look and Listen", to which the students reply "OK!" It is a way for the teacher to get the attention of the class. It is an ideal way to show your child that you are paying attention to them. What do you do when your child wants to talk to you? If you're like most busy parents, you give the time to talk, but are already thinking about how you're going to respond. It is an easy process to follow:

1. **Stop-** Stop whatever you are doing. Be focused on your child and the conversation. When you are engaged in other activities, you can miss something that was said or miss important non verbal messages.
2. **Look-** Look directly at your child. Let your child know that you are paying full attention and are very interested in what he/she is saying.
3. **Listen-** Listen with your ears, mind and heart. Listen attentively, listen without interrupting.

Resource:

- Listening So Your Child Will Talk
http://www.raisingkids.co.uk/4_9/pri_htp08.asp
- Listening To Your Children
<http://eesc.orst.edu/agcomwebfile/edmat/html/EC/EC1291-E/EC1291-E.html>



Tip #27 Value your child's opinion.

“Don't judge a man by his opinions, but what his opinions have made of him.” ~**Georg Christoph Lichtenberg**

Do you seek your child's opinion? By allowing your child to express his/her thoughts and feelings, you are helping your child to be able to validate his/her opinions. Allow your child to express his/her thoughts and suggestions. Ask questions about how he/she views the family, your politics, the media, music, TV shows, etc. Play this game with your child:

Write down a list of rewards you think would be most important to your child. Have them list them in order of preference: 1 being first choice and so on.

___ To be famous

___ To be rich

___ To be respected and well liked

___ To get good grades

___ To have a good relationship with your parents

___ To be popular in school

___ To have a happy family

Write down on your own list how you think your child respond. Compare the results to see if you were able to determine what your child truly values.



Tip #28 Give your child a dose of reality.

“Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away.” ~**Philip K. Dick**

Do you shelter your child from the truth? Are you sparing his/her feelings? Your child needs a dose of reality from time to time to help him/her cope with life's issues. As parents, we want to protect our children forever, but when we do not prepare our children for the future, we are not helping them to understand the realities that exist in society. Approach the situation in an age appropriate manner. Older children are more able to understand racism, sexism and other -isms. Today, make a commitment to empower your child to discern reality from fiction.



Tip #29 Be passionate about life.

“Be glad of life because it gives you the chance to love, to work, to play, and to look up at the stars.” ~**Henry Van Dyke**

What are you passionate about? What gets you going in the morning to face the day? There are many adults living an unauthentic life because they are not living their passion. In order to help your child have an appreciation for life and all that it has to offer, you must set the example. If your child hears you grumbling about work and/or life, your child will make the assumption that life is about struggles and disappointments. Let your child see you at your best. Today, share your passion for life with your child!

Valuable Resource:

- Five Steps To a Passionate Life <http://www.fivestepstoapassionatelife.com>



Tip #30 Teach your child to have a healthy relationship with money.

“Never work just for money or for power. They won't save your soul or help you sleep at night.” ~**Marian Wright Edelman**

How do you view money? Do you see it as just something tangible or is it energy to you? Chances are, if you do not have a healthy relationship with money, your child will not have one too. Examine your spending habits and how you interact with money. Your child is observing what you do with your money and learning your relationship with money. Do you talk with your child about money matters? Does your child understand the concept of banking? Also, be aware of how you use your debit/ATM card. If you are constantly withdrawing money in your child's presence, your child will view the bank machine as a money dispensing machine without understanding how the money is taken out. Today, make a commitment to take small steps towards healing your relationship with money (if you have to) or speaking to your child about money.

Valuable Resources:

- Heal Your Relationship With Money
http://www.artofabundance.com/heal_your_relationship_with_money.htm
- Ideal Relationship With Money http://www.affirmware.com.au/Sculptor-Private/relationship_with_money.html
- Who's Teaching Your Child About Money?
http://www.childcare.net/childcaregroups/html/content.php?c_category=articles&c_section=602&c_regard=67
- Money Smart Kids <http://www.kiplinger.com/columns/kids/archive.html>
- Money Instructor <http://www.moneyinstructor.com/>



Tip #31 Set realistic expectations.

“Unhappiness is best defined as the difference between our talents and our expectations.”

~Edward De Bono

What are your expectations of your child? Are you setting realistic goals for your child? Think about how well you understand your child's abilities. Children base expectations of themselves on the messages they receive from their parents. Reasonable expectations from parents help children to avoid redefining their own expectations. Encourage your child to define his/her own expectations instead of trying to measure up to your expectations. Today, make a commitment to help your child develop healthy expectations of him/her self. Remember that you play an integral role in your child's perception of him/her self.

Valuable Resources:

- Helping Children to Have Realistic Expectations <http://www.nara-licensing.org/realisticexpectations.htm>



Tip #32 Teach your child patience.

“One moment of patience may ward off great disaster. One moment of impatience may ruin a whole life.” ~**Chinese Proverb**

We live in a society that wants everything immediately. People want instant gratification. Our lives are so fast paced that we often forget what or where we rushing to. Is your child caught up in the frenzy? Young children have difficulty with patience because they do not understand the concept of time and are still concerned with only their needs. You can help your child to be patient by setting boundaries and enforcing them. If you constantly give your impatient child immediate attention, your child will assume that it is acceptable to for your to meet his/her needs ASAP. Set limits for yourself and your child and be consistent with your message. Model patient behavior for your child when you are shopping or running errands. Teach preschoolers and elementary school children patience by helping them to learn to wait their turn. Read chapter books in installments or plant a seed and wait for it to grow. Today, make a commitment to **S L O W D O W N**.

Valuable Resources:

- Teaching Children Patience in an Impatient World
<http://community.healthgate.com/GetContent.asp?siteid=utmedgroup&docid=/healthy/parenting/2000/kidspatience/index>
- Foundation for a Better Life
<http://www.forbetterlife.org/main.asp?section=values&valueID=40&language=eng>



Tip #33 Teach your child self respect.

“To free us from the expectations of others, to give us back to ourselves--there lies the great, singular power of self-respect.” ~**Joan Didion**

It's often said that we teach people how to treat us. Would you say that's true in your life? Think about your relationship with your family, friends, and work colleagues. Have you set up boundaries with them that they respect? It is important to teach your child that he/she has the right to be respected, but first your child should respect self. As parents, we focus on teaching out children the value of respecting others, yet it is important that your child learns to expect respect. Start today by showing respect to your child. If you hold the belief of an authoritarian style of parenting, this will be difficult for you. However, remember that your child is another human being that should be respected. Let your child know that that he/she has the right to be respected by you. If you can extend respect to a stranger, surely you can do the same for your child.

Valuable Resources:

- You Teach People How to Treat You
<http://www.rally37.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/articles/teachtreat.htm>
- Teaching Children Values http://www.valuesparenting.com/monthly_value.php



Tip #34 Teach your child to set goals.

“The world makes way for the man who knows where he is going.” ~**Ralph Waldo**

Emerson

Do you set goals? Perhaps, you have your goals in mind, but are too busy to think about them or put them into action. What good are goals if you're just setting them but not acting upon them? Help your child to set goals by giving them a head start on goal setting. Even if you're child is a preschooler, you can still teach him/her the concept of goal setting.

Preschoolers:

Children's books and television shows often have a theme in which a character has something in mind to accomplish. For example, when watching Dora the Explorer, as your child is trying to follow along with Dora on her adventure, ask your child questions about why Dora is looking for these items. Help your child to set his/her own goals, by creating a chart and using numbers and colors to identify how close he/she is to reaching the goal. For example, if the goal is to go see Dora Live on Stage, give your child the date of the show and use a chart to color in how many days are left until the show begins.

Older Children:

Help older children to identify what they are trying to accomplish. Perhaps your child wants to pass a test, help your child to make a list of what needs to be done in order to them to pass the test. Make goal setting fun instead of another bore chore. You will help your child to set disciplined goals as he/she gets older.

Valuable Resources:

- Free Charts <http://chartjungle.com/>
- Setting Your Goals
http://smartbeecoaching.typepad.com/smart_tips_for_parents/files/Setting_Your_Goals.pdf



Tip #35 Apologize when you are wrong.

“An apology is the superglue of life. It can repair just about anything.” ~**Lynn Johnston**

No one likes to be wrong. It takes a lot of courage to admit when you are in the wrong. Help your child to understand the importance of being able to admit to not always being right. Take the first step by apologizing to your child when you have said or done something wrong.

Valuable Resource:

- Learning to Apologize http://www.parents.com/articles/ages_and_stages/3093.jsp



Tip #36 Discipline with love, not fear.

“Some are kissing mothers and some are scolding mothers, but it is love just the same.”
~**Pearl Buck**

Do you want your child(ren) to be afraid of you? Do you demand respect instead of offering reciprocal respect? Children need to be respected, just as they need to give respect. A parent's job is not to control a child's behavior, but rather to guide and explain to a child how he/she should behave. Children have rights, just as adults and their rights and boundaries should be respected. Trying to control or use power to influence your child will only lead to a power struggle. Disciplining does not mean having your child obey through fear. Help your child to understand the importance of cooperation, respect and honor. Involve your child in decision making (if it is appropriate) and help him/her to understand family rules and the consequences of not following them.

Valuable Resource:

- Sensitive, Loving Discipline Promotes Responsive Obedience
<http://www.forgottenvirtue.com/mpuchapter12.htm>



Tip #37 Help your child to develop a sense of humor.

“A sense of humor is part of the art of leadership, of getting along with people, of getting things done.” ~ **Dwight D. Eisenhower**

Why is humor important? Laughter releases chemicals called endorphins which you feel good. Laughter stimulates the all the systems in the body and relieves pain.

According to child development specialists, children develop a sense of humor in their second year of life, when they can engage in fantasy or make believe. As children develop, they take delight in silliness, riddles and humor in stories. You can help your child develop a sense of humor by being playful- (make silly faces, use physical humor), telling funny stories or riddles, make a joke of your own mistakes, (let him/her see you laugh at yourself), help him/her to understand that humor does not make other people feel bad, and to understand that laughing at someone who has a physical or learning disability is not appropriate.

Valuable Resource:

- Sesame Street-Sense of Humor
<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/parents/advice/article.php?contentId=738&>
- The Learning Power of Laughter
http://www.earlychildhood.com/community/news/news_feature.asp?docId=103050



Tip #38 Respect your child.

“Every human being, of whatever origin, of whatever station, deserves respect. We must each respect others even as we respect ourselves.” ~**U. Thant**

Do you believe that respect is a two way street? Do you believe that your child should be treated with respect? Many parents think that although their children should respect them, they do not have to respect their children. If you want your child to value or honor you as a parent, isn't it fair to extend the same to your child. Respectful behavior towards your child does not mean that you are giving in to your child, just that you are showing consideration for your child as another human being. One way to show respect is to listen to your child just as often as you want your child to listen to you. show your child that you care about their opinions and ideas. Refrain from name calling or teasing. Model the behavior you would like your child to emulate. If you treat your child the way you want to be treated, you can avoid power struggles and conflicts.

Valuable Resources:

- How to Respect Your Teen
http://www.troubledwith.com/stellent/groups/public/%5C@fotf_troubledwith/documents/articles/twi_015024.cfm?channel=Parenting%20Teens&topic=Communication%20Problems&sssct=Life%20Applications
- Thirteen Ways to Model Respect with Your Child
<http://www.janebluestein.com/articles/respect.html>



Tip #39 Teach your child tolerance.

“Human diversity makes tolerance more than a virtue; it makes it a requirement for survival.” ~**Rene DuBos**

What are you teaching your child about tolerance? Unless you live in a remote, secluded part of the United States, you realize that America is a melting pot of cultures, religions and ethnic groups. Most of us are American children of immigrants who came here looking for a better opportunity. Our society is increasing in diversity with the recent polls showing that the Latino population is the fastest growing ethnic group. As parents, we have a responsibility to teach our children to respect different cultures, traditions, religions and ethnic groups. By exposing our children to cultural differences, we are helping them to embrace diversity. Teach your child to value and learn from different people. If your child is not exposed to different cultures at school, take your child to a library or museum. Let your child see you interact with people of various backgrounds. Talk to your child about stereotypes and prejudices. Let your child know that it is unacceptable to use certain racial slurs. Refrain from making offensive jokes about different people. Help your child to appreciate different cultures and to celebrate diversity.

Valuable Resources:

- Teaching Acceptance, Tolerance, Diversity
<http://www.parentsource.com/diversity.article.9.99.html>
- Teaching Tolerance
http://msnfamily.healthykids.com/hk/story.jhtml?storyid=/templatedata/bhg/story/data/Coping_War_teachingtolerance_03072003.xml
- Legacy Project <http://www.legacyproject.org/index.html>
- Understanding Stereotypes
<http://school.discovery.com/lessonplans/programs/stereotypes/>



Tip #41 What is your life message?

“My life is my message.” ~**Mohandas Gandhi**

What does your life say about you? What core life values is your child learning from you? The way we live our lives say a lot about who we are as people and as parents. Since we are role models and our children's first teacher, we must guide our children by setting examples in how we live our lives. What does your child know about you? What does your behavior, characteristic, likes, dislikes, dreams, goals, values? What are your priorities in life? What life lessons are you teaching your child by how you conduct your life? What are you passionate about? When you have successfully identified your life message, you can help your child to develop the tools to create his/her own life message when he/she grows up.

Valuable Resources:

- My Legacy.pdf
http://smartbeecoaching.typepad.com/smart_tips_for_parents/files/My_Legacy.pdf
- My Life is My Message Questionnaire.pdf -
http://smartbeecoaching.typepad.com/smart_tips_for_parents/files/my_life_is_my_message_questionnaire.pdf (Courtesy of International Institute for Humane Education)



Tip #42 Encourage a reluctant reader.

“Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.” ~**Joseph Addison**

Reading is a skill that is necessary to succeed in life. Without good reading skills, children are unprepared for the future. As parents, we can help our children develop good reading skills by being supportive and attentive. If your child does not show an interest in reading and you have eliminated the possibility of a learning disorder, there are a few tricks you can do to help your reluctant reader.

- 1) Buy books that your child would enjoy to read, not you. The idea is to get him/her interested in reading. Let your child read something fun and interesting. For books for reluctant readers, check out Capstone Press Books: <http://www.capstonepress.com>
- 2) If your child is a reluctant reader because he/she is having difficulty with reading, then buy books that are easy for your child to read, but will keep their interest. As your child gets more comfortable, get them more challenging books.
- 3) Use books on tape to encourage and support auditory skills.
- 4) Tell stories to your child using your child as the main character.
- 5) Buy books in which your child has seen the movie to and let your child read the book in sections. For reading comprehension, ask your child what differences there are between the book and the movie.

To best determine your child's reading level, try the [Mindplay Free Online Reading Assessment](#).

Valuable Resources:

- Reluctant Reader
<http://www.scholastic.com/familymatters/read/reluctant/choosebooks.htm>
- Guys Read- <http://www.guysread.com/>
- Books for Boys <http://www.boysbookshelf.com/>



Tip #43 Ask your child open-ended questions.

“One who asks a question is a fool for five minutes; one who does not ask a question remains a fool forever.” ~**Chinese Proverb**

Do you ask your child questions? I don't mean interrogate them, but ask questions to find out what they are thinking or how they are feeling. Often parents ask many closed-ended questions, such as *"How was your day?"* which can lead to a one word response. By asking open ended questions, you get to know more about your child without appearing to be distrustful. Open-ended questions begin with **How** or **Why** and develop your child's critical thinking skills. An example of an open-ended question to your child is: *"Why is it important to you to hang out with your friends this weekend?"* Open-ended questions encourage your child to share his/her opinion or thoughts. It is also a great way to stimulate a discussion with your child.

Valuable Resource:

- Asking Open-Ended Questions

<http://www.fortleavenworthmwr.com/cdsresource/OPNEND.html>



Tip #44 Model appropriate behaviors.

“Children are natural mimics who act like their parents despite every effort to teach them good manners.” ~**Author Unknown**

Children learn more from what we do than from what we say. Children conduct themselves by watching how their parents behave. If you want to shape how your child behaves, it's up to you to behave appropriately in a given situation. In order for parents to help their children learn proper behavior, a parent needs to be a role model for that behavior. If your child sees you yelling and cursing at people when you are upset, your child will assume that it is acceptable to behave the same way. Treat others with respect, demonstrate confidence, and develop better communication skills so that your child will do the same. Exhibit self discipline and responsibility and your child will too.

Valuable Resource:

- Modeling Appropriate Behavior

<http://www.ces.purdue.edu/providerparent/PDF%20Links/Modeling%20Behavior.pdf>



Tip #45 Ask your child to teach you something you can't do.

“You can learn many things from children. How much patience you have, for instance.”

~Franklin P. Jones

If you want to give your child an instant boost of confidence, ask your child to teach you something you can't do. Children love to teach and share what they know, even teenagers. By letting your child lead, you will build your child's self esteem and help him/her develop leadership qualities. It's also a nice way to bond with your child. When you let your child teach you something, it can be a valuable learning opportunity. You will teach your child many skills, but the one you learn from your child will be worthwhile.

Valuable Resource:

- What You Can Learn About Life From Your Children <http://www.family-content.com/articles/data/20040927115816.shtml>



Always remember that what makes you a great parent is spending time with your children and listening more than you speak.

I'll end this book with this inspiring quote from Diane Loomans

*"If I had my child to raise all over again,
I'd build self-esteem first, and the house later.
I'd finger-paint more, and point the finger less.
I would do less correcting and more connecting.
I'd take my eyes off my watch, and watch with my eyes.
I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.
I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.
I would run through more fields and gaze at more stars.
I'd do more hugging and less tugging."*

~Diane Loomans, from "If I Had My Child to Raise Over Again"



About the Author

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Ms. Roker is passionate about working with young people and parents and helping them to identify their strengths and potential. She has worked with numerous youth groups and has helped dozens of young people to unlock and nurture their potential. Ms. Roker believes in finding what is “right in your life” instead of what is wrong with it.

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Completing Masters in Health Education at Teachers College, Columbia University
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