



PARENTING



EDITORIAL "CONSCIOUS PARENTING"

Modern age parenting has become a challenging task for nuclear set-up couples without support from the extended family and community. **Families which were centered around traditional culture and local villages, are now centered around the child.** 'Listen to your parents and do as you are told to do' has been replaced with 'listen to your child, understand his needs, and help him make informed choices'. Caring for the entire gamut of needs -physical, emotional, educational, moral, cultural and financial, falls on the shoulders of the parents, away from grandparents and community. The results can never be up to the satisfaction of 'all'. **With changing norms due to technological and international exposure to different cultures, the gap between the generations seems to get wider.** No one understands anyone. All seem to be on their own 'individualistic trip'. So be it.

For modern parents, a few new age commandments to remember are concepts such as, 'respect the child', 'listen to the child', 'agree to disagree', 'learn to apologize when wrong', 'have a dialogue rather than a lecture', 'do not damage the self- esteem', 'give options to choose from', 'teach him to make informed choices', 'be available' etc. The list of do's and don'ts is long and exhaustive and yet incomplete!

Be aware that in spite of following all guidelines, you may still go wrong as a parent! There are no golden and magical rules to ensure success.

The best you can do is be conscious of what personality qualities you would like your child to inculcate as a human and to make sure that you use the best practices to do so. It's like 'have a menu card of good qualities' and learn the methods to inculcate the qualities! The end result may surprisingly make you happy and proud!!

-Rita Aggarwal
Editor

"IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD"

~AN AFRICAN PROVERB, POPULARIZED BY HILARY CLINTON THROUGH HER BOOK, IN 1996.

The terms 'child rearing' and 'parenting' are used interchangeably, but there is a world of difference between these two concepts. Child rearing is a practice of bringing up children with the help of the community. It involves the role of grandparents, near and distant relatives, neighbors and the local community, that is what is meant by "It takes a village to raise a child".

While parenting, is a new age term for bringing up children and is more individualistic. In parenting, the sole responsibility of the child's upbringing lies on the parents. While parenting in a nuclear family has its own benefits, the involvement of culture and community, and different generations of caregivers is essential in the upbringing of children.

It gives a child various flavors of compassion and discipline, helps the child to accept different personality types, different approaches to the same values. I feel that this practice makes kids more tolerant, patient, accepting and emotionally intelligent.

Throughout generations, parenting has undergone profound changes. For example, in the modern day both parents are expected to be equally involved in parenting; food and nutrition preferences have changed; educational and career choices are more diverse; home schooling and holistic education is a growing trend; since both parents are working professionals, parenting and work-life balance is a cause of stress; the discipline around technology is also a major challenge.

In addition to this, most parents are caught up in the race of bringing up perfect and all-rounder kids. **At the expense of bringing up 'successful' kids, the parents and children are missing out on the innocence of childhood and transmitting human values seems to have taken a back seat.**

I believe parenting must involve a blend of tradition and modernity, community and multi-generational care. Despite societal shifts, I advocate cherishing innocence, values, and viewing parenting as a joyous experience rather than a challenge.

For me, the essence of parenting lies in reliving the joys of our own childhood through the experiences shared with our children, basking in the glow of their unconditional love.



PC The New Yorker

-Dr. Geetanjali Jha,
Co-editor Mind Matters,
Head of Cyberpsychology research and Digital Parenting expert at iMature EdTech, Raipur.

DAGMHI 3030 AT REGIONAL 'THE ROTARY FOUNDATION' SEMINARS: MENTAL WELLNESS PRESENTATION.

26th November- Nashik

Dr. Aabha Pimprikar, President DAGMHI 3030, India, informed the participants about Rotary Action Groups, how they benefit Rotary, Global Grant Projects on Mental Health and most importantly about RI President Gordon's Initiative 'Looking Inward'. The anonymous survey was filled by the ones who were present.

Dr. Aabha urged everyone to form Mental Health Committees and conduct various Awareness projects and activities in the club.

3rd December-Nagpur

Rtn Rita Aggarwal, Founder Director, RAG-MHI, spoke on 'Connecting RI President Gordon Initiatives to Districts'. She requested Rotarians to take the anonymous survey of 'Looking Inward' and those present completed the survey. She explained the purpose of formation of District Chapters of RAG-MHI across the globe. As the Regional Representative of Asia, Rita has helped form 10 Chapters in India and one in Malaysia. More are upcoming. She appealed to Club leaders to join the District Chapter and to form mental health committees in their clubs.



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-Editorial Team

THE FIRST SUPER HERO - FATHER

The very first superhero in every child's life is not one adorned with capes or superpowers from comic books; it's the father. Every child looks up to his father as the strongest and the best father in the world. **Despite lacking the spotlight often given to mothers, fathers play a pivotal role in child and human development. While mothers nurture the child through physical and emotional bonding, fathers bring in the larger wordly realistic picture with logic and reasoning.**



Beyond mere biological ties, the emotional and psychological dimensions of the father-child relationship significantly influence a child's growth. Research underscores that children with involved fathers exhibit enhanced cognitive, social, and emotional outcomes. **Fathers, with unique parenting styles that compliment mothers, provide a holistic upbringing, imparting crucial values like responsibility, perseverance, and respect.**

Crucially, fathers contribute substantially to a child's emotional intelligence. Active engagement by fathers positively impacts a child's cognitive growth. Through diverse play, fathers stimulate creativity, problem-solving, and cognitive flexibility, culminating in improved academic performance.

Fatherhood is instrumental in shaping a child's social skills. Fathers impart lessons in communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution, crucial for effective social navigation.

As powerful role models, fathers influence a child's moral and ethical development, contributing to self-esteem and identity. Fathers, navigating challenges with integrity, instill these qualities in their children.

The journey of fatherhood, replete with a spectrum of emotions, epitomises a profound sense of responsibility.

Importantly, **this transformative journey also shapes fathers themselves. The responsibilities of fatherhood prompt self-reflection, personal growth, and a deeper understanding of one's identity and values.** The challenges and joys inherent in raising children contribute to the continual evolution of fathers as individuals, enriching their own lives alongside the lives of their progeny.

In conclusion, fatherhood is an enriching journey profoundly impacting a child's growth. The emotional, cognitive, and social contributions of fathers are integral to shaping well-rounded individuals. **Celebrating fatherhood entails recognising and appreciating the significant role fathers play in nurturing the next generation and positively impacting their children's lives.**

-Sripriya Shaji Ph.D
Counselling Psychologist &
Nutritionist
Srisha Counselling, Kozhikode

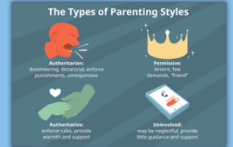
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IMPACT OF PARENTING STYLES

If a child is a piece of marble, the first sculptors are always the parents.

There are four types of parenting styles, which are : Authoritarian Parenting, Authoritative Parenting, Permissive Parenting and Uninvolved Parenting.



PC Verywell Mind

Authoritarian Parents always put forth a strict set of rules which the child needs to follow, even if the child does not completely understand them. These parents have high expectations from their kids which puts a lot of burden on the child. Children often face behavioral issues, may become rebellious, be afraid to make mistakes, always look for validation, have low self esteem and lack of self expression. In South Asia it is common to see parents forcing their own professional choices on children, which they succumb to under emotional pressure.

Authoritative Parents put forth a set of rules with explanation and reasoning. There is an open discussion about setting expectations and goals. These children often have high self-esteem and can make decisions for themselves, are confident, good decision makers and problem solvers.

Permissive Parents tend to be friendly with the child. They are liberal in allowing their child to make their own choices. In such cases, the children may develop an overconfident attitude, may not be able to handle adversities, may develop wrong habits and misuse the freedom given to them.

Uninvolved Parents provide the basic needs to the child but are not usually involved or aware of their child's development in academic, emotional or social, or moral spheres. The child is left alone. These children are usually very independent, and know how to take care of themselves but they may become estranged from their parents. At the same time they may suffer from emotional deficiencies and self doubt, which may lead them to negativity and wrong habits.

-Sara Pimprikar
Member, DAGMHI 3030
Mental Health Ally

SINGLE PARENTING



Single parenting involves only one parent raising the child and is responsible for their welfare. Compared to a typical family, single-parenting families can have difficult individual and social experiences, which may affect both the parent and the children. There can be different reasons for single-parenting which include the death of one of the parents, divorce or separation of the parents, single unmarried biological parent, and single unmarried adoptive parent. Separation or death of a parent is a traumatic experience for children. These incidents bring sudden changes in family structure and socio-emotional and financial experiences. In India, there is social stigma attached to single mothers and their children.

According to recent statistics, globally 320 million children under 17 years of age have been found living in single-parent families. In the Indian context, approximately 2.3 million children live with single parents. [Ref. Bhat NA, Patil RR. Single parenthood families and their impact on children in India. Delhi Psychiatry J. 2019; 22:161-5.]

The challenges faced by single parents, whether they are fathers or mothers, are significant and varied. There are multiple struggles that single parents face. Some single parent stories are heart-wrenching but for the few who walk out of a toxic relationship, being a single parent can be a relief. Some common difficulties for single parents include financial strain, social isolation, emotional stress, limited personal time, being the sole decision-maker, lack of support, burden of playing the role of both parents.

By recognizing and addressing the unique challenges faced by single parents and children, a collaborative network of single parents can be of great help in dealing with specific concerns of children from similar families. Consulting a psychologist is also a good option. Being a single parent comes with its trials and triumphs. In spite of single parenting being a tumultuous experience, with persistent efforts and steely resolve, it can surely be turned into a positive life experience.

-Dr Sahithyaa Raghu,
Psychologist, Chennai

SIBLING RIVALRY

A 3-year-old “accidentally” sits on his 2-month-old brother lying on a play mat. When he was asked what happened, he said, “I don’t like the baby! I don’t want him to live here anymore.” This feeling of not being loved by parents after the arrival of a new baby leads to **sibling rivalry**. This may happen to the younger sibling as well, when parents compare the kids with each other. If I look into my life, I was constantly compared with my elder sister in school as she was the topper. The comparison still continues silently.

Sibling rivalry means **competition and jealousy among brothers and sisters**. It is a constant battle among siblings for appreciation and unconditional positive regard from the parents.

Although it may sound like something very innocent, sibling rivalry can take dangerous forms if not handled sensitively. It can lead to feelings of abandonment, low self esteem, envy, depression, and a constant need for validation. Moreover, sibling rivalry can have a long lasting impact on personality and can persist in adulthood too.

Adults who constantly feel the need to prove that they are better than their sibling/s, cannot bear to be in the presence of their sibling/s, or fight dirty for rights and property etc. are examples of unresolved sibling rivalry.

Sometimes extremely pampered children feel abandoned because their sibling is sharing the attention of their parents. They may develop an undue sibling rivalry if they are scolded or ignored. Parents need to identify, address and rectify the feelings of jealousy.

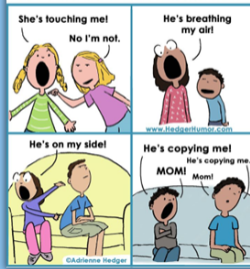
Some suggestions for parents-

1. Treat all children fairly. But remember equal treatment isn't necessarily impartial treatment.
2. Avoid comparisons.
3. Identify the actual cause of fighting and the underlying negative emotions.
4. Don't always punish the elder one.
5. Make family rules clear to the children and make them understand your expectations.
6. Counsel the child or seek professional counselling.

The sibling bond is an extremely precious one, it is irreplaceable and must be built on healthy mutual respect and appreciation.

-Shalmaly Chatterjee,
Consultant Psychologist and special educator,
Kolkata

Classic Sibling Arguments



PAREN-TEEN CHALLENGES

“Terrible twos”, “Navigating adolescence”, “Tween years” “Teenage Challenges” are burning topics among parents.

According to eminent psychologist Eric Erikson, an individual at every developmental stage goes through some form of challenges and maneuvering them successfully will aid to healthy personality growth. As per his theory children between 12-18 (Adolescence) go through the conflict of creating an identity. At this stage, the teens go through tremendous physical, emotional and social growth. It is an extremely sensitive period when **they look for good role models while exploring their own identity and building up a good personality.**

Due to the growing autonomy, and exploratory behavior, teens like to experiment with ‘adult’ activities that are prohibited to them, with the help of their peer group. Activities such as high risk taking behavior, alcohol use, substance use, dating, smoking etc. appear very attractive.

A parent who accepts this as a normal behavior of a growing teen will allow an open discussion, sharing of experiences the child is craving or going through. This helps the parents to involve the teen in the experience without over indulging them. This allows for responsible behavior to be learned by the teen.

It helps if parents start letting them take **age appropriate responsibilities** for themselves and help them **make informed choices**. There needs to be **open and non-judgmental communication with the teen, respecting their emotions** helps parents gain their teen's confidence. **Setting boundaries which are mutually agreed upon** makes them feel the rules and regulations implemented are fair. It is important for parents to **validate and praise the teens' positive behavior and also express their displeasure and disagreement on their unacceptable behavior.**

The parents need to be **vigilant about any form of sudden deviance in their teen's behavior** in terms of food habits, sleep routine, mood swings etc. if they persist. If required they need to seek professional help for the same. The parents should also be watch out for their own stress and be kind to themselves in the journey of parenting.



The most important thing that parents need to remember is to **strike a fine balance between consistency and flexibility of the rules and regulations they set.**

-Kunali Muchhala,
Practicing Psychologist/ Therapist,
Mumbai

“LOVE TRIUMPHS!!!”

A CHILD IN NUCLEAR FAMILY VS A CHILD IN JOINT FAMILY

It was yet another weekend in the lives of the Gargs and the Guptas. As neighbors, the children, 4 years old Aarav Garg and 5 years old Manya Gupta, were looking forward to the fun picnic planned by the families. Aarav being a single child, enjoyed the undivided attention and love of his parents. While, Manya was growing up amidst a family bustling with grandparents, uncle, aunt and her parents.

Aarav's normal days were filled with love and a set routine with his mom cooking, dad playing board games and they taking turns to tuck him in with a bed time story of his choice. Whereas, Manya's day was filled with unexpected events. Every day came with a new revelation. Her days were filled with laughter and new things to learn from the people around her. There was never a dull moment in her life, with a new story filled with wisdom waiting for her at bedtime, by her grandparents. On the day of the picnic, the Gargs packed a small meal while the Guptas packed a feast, with every house member cooking or packing something of their choice.

Aarav at the picnic, reveled in the personal attention and care. On the other hand, Manya was running around from one family member to another learning, chattering and playing. When the sun went down, every one hustled in for the most essential photo of the day. The Gargs were smiling on the exquisite connection and the Guptas were filled with the euphoria of the bond they shared.

Both children are much adored and cared for in their own ways. Aarav is learning the importance of individual connections and the strength of a small, tight-knit family. Manya, on the other hand, is embracing the richness of shared experiences and the support that comes from a larger, extended family.

When they grow up, **Aarav will value the independence and self-reliance instilled in him by his nuclear family, while Manya will carry forward the bonds of loyalty, cooperation, and unity learned from her joint family.**

-Shivangi Garg
Certified Trainer - Child Safety and Sex Abuse
HR Recruiter, Nagpur



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PSY-BER MATTERS PARENTING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Parenting in the digital age marks a significant shift in the way families navigate the complexities of modern life. The advent of technology has reshaped the very fabric of parenting, introducing challenges that previous generations did not encounter. **The omnipresence of screens, from smartphones to tablets, has altered the dynamics of family interaction, prompting parents to face the screen time dilemma.** Unlike the past, where concerns might have centered on traditional parenting issues, today's parents must compete with the impact of technology on their children's development and well-being.

The digital age has given rise to an environment where online safety concerns loom large. Parents find themselves not only guiding their children through physical spaces but also through the vast and wildly unpredictable landscape of the Internet. The traditional role of the protector has expanded to include safeguarding against cyber threats, inappropriate content, and the ever-present specter of online predators. Moreover, the face of parenting has evolved in response to the constant influx of digital distractions. **Where family time was once characterized by shared activities and conversations, the intrusion of screens requires a reevaluation of how households engage with one another. The challenge now is to strike a balance between the benefits of technology and the need for genuine, face-to-face communication that nurtures family bonds.**

Social media, a phenomenon that was nonexistent in the parenting landscape of previous generations, introduces a new dimension. Parents must guide their children through the intricacies of online interactions, helping them navigate the pressures of cultivating a digital identity while ensuring they remain safe and grounded in reality.

To navigate the digital age successfully, parents must stay informed about the latest digital trends, apps, and platforms their children are using. They should model healthy tech habits, engage in open communication, and educate their children on online etiquette and digital citizenship. By doing so, families can create a balanced and positive digital environment, fostering healthy relationships with technology.

-Dr. Geetanjali Jha
Co editor Mind Matters,
Head of Cyberpsychology research and Digital Parenting Expert
at iMature EdTech, Raipur

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

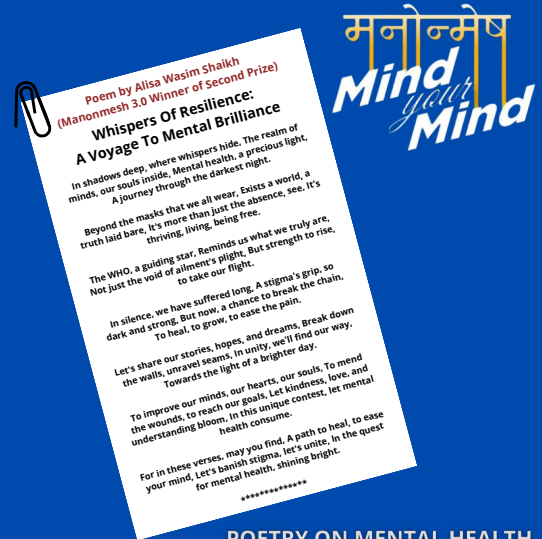
The ability to talk and express thoughts clearly makes humans a unique species, but when it comes to having a good conversation with our own progeny, it seems like a humongous task. So let us see what, when, and how to interact with our children to have effective communication.

I am a mother of 3 kids ages 13, 7, and 5, each of them has different requirements. With the younger kids, it's easier to communicate with our actions rather than our words, because they catch subtle interactions and gestures more than our words. Robert Fulghum, an American author rightly quoted - **"Don't worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you"**. We must be kind yet firm in our approach and practice what we preach. This age group needs a very delicate and dedicated communication like a soft voice, (especially when they are angry), eye contact at their level, politeness, slow and easy to comprehend language. Most important is to listen to them attentively as if it's the most important question for an upcoming exam.

Talking to older children, especially teenagers, can be a different art altogether. First, we need to understand that they don't need us for everything, and they don't like being told about everything. The best approach is to listen more and talk less, it helps us to understand their likes, dislikes, their social circle, etc. Let us try not to interrupt them with unnecessary comments in between the talk. Share your experiences as a teenager. This helps in mutual sharing. Avoid being judgmental. Be in touch with the current lingo and trends.

Remember that you can not measure them with the same yardstick that you grew up with, as the times have changed. Parenting has always been a process of unlearning what we know and relearning things from our children's perspective. In any case, keep the communication on, for it matters the most.

-Sushma Dwivedi
Educator, Reiki grand master, multimodality healer
Tarot card reader.
New Delhi



POETRY ON MENTAL HEALTH
Online Competition by DAGMHI 3030

UPCOMING BOOK INTRODUCTION DIGITAL PARENT TRANSFORMATION -A JOURNEY FROM DIGITAL PARENT TO DIGITAL LEADER BY DR. GEETANJALI JHA

"Digital Parent Transformation" is one of its kind books written for the 21st century parents. It navigates the intricacies of raising children in the digital age. In this insightful book, the author draws parallels between the traditional parenting styles with digital parenting styles, with the help of an innovative questionnaire. Addressing the full spectrum of online threats and risks, from cyberbullying to addiction and identity theft, the book serves as a beacon for parent awareness in an increasingly complex online world. Notably, it sheds light on the myriad opportunities the Internet offers for a child's growth, drawing on success stories to inspire parents to harness the positive potential of digital platforms.

The book places a significant emphasis on cultivating **Digital Citizenship and Internet Maturity**, presenting them as essential life skills for 21st-century children. It emphasizes proactive digital parenting to prevent issues before they arise. Introducing an innovative blend of principles of behavioral psychology and digital development, the book offers a holistic approach to parenting in the age of social media. It underlines the importance of open communication between parents and children, fostering a stronger bond in the face of evolving digital challenges. Motivated by real-life cases encountered as a counselor, the author propels parents towards the goal of making every child Internet Mature. In essence, "Digital Parent Transformation" is a beacon of guidance, combining research, practical advice, and real-life examples to empower parents for proactive digital parenting in the 21st century.

Expect the release of the book in January 2024, it will be available on Amazon and Flipkart.

PARENTING NOMENCLATURE (COLLECTED FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES.)

- Threenager:** A rebellious and strong-willed three-year-old.
- Tweenager / tweeny:** Age group 10 and 13, who is too old to be a child and too young to be a teenager.
- Adulthood:** To treat the child as an adult (which might actually harm the child).
- Adulthood:** Youngster's behaviour which is in a way characteristic of a responsible adult.
- Childproofing:** Earlier - Make things inaccessible (to avoid damage, tampering). Now - Make it safe for the child.
- Genite parenting:** You discipline the child without 'Shame, blame and Punishment'.
- Co-Sleeping:** Sharing bed with your child even after weaning.
- Co-parenting:** Mutual responsibility shared by both the parents even if they are separated or divorced.
- Kinship care:** An arrangement in which children live with and are taken care of by another family member.
- Childmind:** To take care of someone's children in your home while that person is doing something else.
- Play date:** An arrangement for children to spend time together and play.

Compiled by Dr. Aabha Pimprikar, Co-Editor