

5 tips for childraising with joy, kindness and compassion.

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“First learn to love yourself. An empty glass doesn’t quench anybody’s thirst. First love yourself, and show how much you love yourself, and then let people bask in the radiance and sunshine of yours. Then love somebody and you always will live in heavens while on earth.” -Yogi Bhajan

When we become parents for the first time, we very often feel overwhelmed. Everybody has an opinion and there are so many different schools and ways of childraising. Each of us has to discover and give birth to their own parent self based upon inner intuition and self-trust. I had to rediscover myself in order to become a mother. Here I describe some points I found very useful in the discovery of this beautiful path of parenting:

1. Focus on the connection. A secure and strong connection is the key for a happy and trusting relationship. The first hour after birth, the first days, the first weeks, months and years are to build the foundation in your relationship with your child. Even if you had a traumatic birth experience or difficult first days with your child, it is important you then take the time to listen to yourself and your child. And keep on building up connections. As humans, children and adults alike, we crave connection. When we refuse ourselves a connection with our own soul then we refuse to connect with others because of fear to be heartbroken or seen through. Yet only when we connect we can really become fully human, and see the humanness in all. Let us stop judging others, punishing and poisoning ourselves and our children through comparison, competition and criticism. There is nothing more beautiful than a human-to-human connection in an unexpected setting. As they say in real-estate, with children it is “Connection-Connection-Connection”.

2. Keep challenging yourself and your habits. As parents, we also need to outgrow babyhood and all habits we have created when our child as a baby. Tune into yourself and into to the stage of life your child(ren) are in. Then act, not according to the habits or the way you are used to, but according to the best to bring out the challenge they need yet doing it compassionately and kindly. By the third year of life, a child weighs about 4 times its newborn size and has grown twice its height. Also their perception of the world and their needs from parents stretch enormously. This constant change goes on for all life. Never treat a newborn baby as a three-year old, and never treat a three-year old as a newborn baby. They will grow secure with your help if you embrace the law of the universe that “the only thing that never changes is that everything changes”.

3. Learn to lead by example. Children don’t need parents to lecture them, punish them or shout at them, what they need is their parents to take a position. These were words said by my teacher Shiv Charan Singh recently. Of course this is sometimes very challenging, but if you can keep your center and your spine straight, you can survive the stormy times. Most importantly you must be kind and compassionate, to yourself and to them, in your language and in your actions. Recognize what is going on inside and accept you are human. Yet be always wise, never react like an animal. When they see regularly that you are empathic, kind and compassionate, remaining in your center, they will learn to

become like that one day. Learn to lead by example. There is a universal law: you can control 40% of a situation, and trust that the other 60% will be covered by the universe and by your grace.

4. Learn to speak their language. The language of children is the language of play. Once on the way back after a long walk with my 2.5 year old, he was tired and wanted me to carry him back home (I very often do it when I forget my own needs and priorities). Nevertheless this time I simply couldn't carry him, I offered him my hand several (hundred?) times. He made a drama in front of a lot of people, all were looking at us and that made me nervous. I decided to switch the energy and instead of making this more sad and dramatic, I decided to tune into his world, so I let myself be crashed by his tricycle and pretended in a funny voice and exaggerated body language that I needed his help. He immediately laughed and freed me from my misery. And I kept doing this game all the way home. Reversing roles, he was not the victim anymore, he was the savior. He had the power in his hands now. As opposed to me having the power and saying "we go home now!", he felt important, confident and brave when I played the victim. And this time around, all passersby were laughing at us (at me basically) which was a good relief. And we both had so much fun. It took of course a lot of courage and I had to first recognize my own frustration, sadness, anger and then let go of it. Reversing roles is always a favorite game for children and if you can tune into that, it will reward you for the present moment and years to come. It gives you a chance to connect with them in their own ground. Of course it is not easy to become playful as an adult in this big gray serious world. My spiritual teacher, Yogi Bhanjan once said that as a parent, once a day you really need to come down and become a child, so that the relationship with your children will be always healthy. Yes, the first times I tried to be playful were maybe not great but I learnt to relax and tune into it. Children are much more empathic and kind to us if we can let go of our own masks. Connecting with children in their own world is not only what they need, but what they expect from us. The Buddhist Shoshin or the Sanskrit Anurag refer to this: see it all with a beginner's mind, approaching life in an optimistic and creative way, like a child, with joy and bliss and innocence. If we do not become like children at least once a day, laugh and play in their own language, we can miss the greatest chance to see the world anew.

5. Build community and reach out for other mothers. This contemporary world where every single mother is isolated in her own house, cooking for her small family and cleaning her own house, like thousands of us, each of us isolated, is not what our children deserve. A woman needs community. All women need connection, support, sisters of blood or of destiny who can reach out for each other. "We are on this planet to love each other, to serve each other, and to uplift each other. We have come to this Earth to give, not to take" – Yogi Bhanjan

Sukhdev Kaur, originally from Mexico lives in Tallinn since 2004, teaching regularly kundalini yoga, conscious pregnancy, conscious parenting and karam kriya numerology, training Kundalini yoga teachers and supporting families as a doula and placenta specialist. She wrote her MA in Architecture on play and constantly challenges herself to be more present within her own self and her family.