

#PERSPECTIVE

Millennials doing it right!



As we advance in life from being toddlers to adolescents, then teenagers and adults, and once we finally embrace parenthood, we begin to decipher the circle of life. Although the stages every individual goes through remain the same, the process is in a constant state of modification as we transition from one generation to the next.

Among the various differences that are prominent between millennials and boomers, putting the spotlight on parenting accentuates our progress as parents. However, no matter which generational cohort we belong to, there seems to always be a constant barrage of critique from the other generations.

Emphasising on this, boomers are blamed for never being satisfied enough with the achievements of latter generations, and reasonably so! We all know about that one boomer uncle or aunt at every family gathering, shaking their head in disapproval, questioning, "What will happen to this generation?"

But is it really justifiable to attribute millennials for the so-called generational malaise they are blamed for bringing forth? Regardless of such negative remarks, among numerous other things, millennials are parenting right in more ways than you can imagine.

Saying no to punishment

Hangers, metal spatulas, leather belts, sandals and wooden utensils – if these were only everyday objects for you, then you must have had an amazing childhood! For the rest of us,

these were equivalent to missiles fired by our parents to rectify our behaviour. In hindsight, we can all agree that this supposed corrective measure did more harm than benefit to most of us.

Millennials, realising its debilitating consequences, are stepping out of the dogma of corporal punishment. Rather, they seem to be more emotionally invested towards their children and are open to help them learn and heal from their mistakes. Millennials, unlike boomers, believe in providing reasonable explanations rather than stating outright what is wrong and right.

This sentiment is echoed by several millennial parents including Sabiha Khondoker, a homemaker and mother.

"With all due respect towards my caregivers, I wouldn't treat my children the way they treated me in some aspects. I think raising a hand on children not only leaves a mark on their body, but creates a deeper, and sometimes irrevocable mark on their psyche," she feels.

Normalising taboo topics

Reminiscing our childhood, we may recall those instances of confusion, which often led to frustration as we had plenty of subjects to figure out by ourselves. On a more direct note, most girls had to understand the mechanism of menstruation from that friend who got it first, rather than their mum.

Adding to that, most of us did not have "the talk" until it was time for our marriage (maybe not even then!). Although it seems funny now, we secretly yearn for a greater

degree of attachment and friendliness with our parents — a mistake millennials are not repeating.

Millennial parents are making the effort to be fully transparent with their children, so that they feel free to discuss any and every topic with them, which ranges from taboos that we were told to be silent about to major life choices that come in tangent with the freedom of making a decision.

Technology: good or bad?

Boomers often dislike change, because of the need to acclimatise to new practices, and this is one area where millennials excel. Technological advancements have opened

when they discover a new device. But it is possible to filter out the content and be responsible enough to restrict screen time," stated Tawsif Arefin, an entrepreneur and father of two.

Ditching superstitious beliefs

We all must have faced that embarrassing moment where our relatives, friends, and even parents laughed at our childhood photographs that had a huge black spot marked on our forehead. We also secretly decided never to create such a situation for our children once we are parents!

Well, the tables have turned, and the time has arrived when millennials are finally disregarding such superstitions in their way of upbringing. Rather than blindly following such beliefs as instructed by boomers, millennials tend to look for logical explanations before performing or restricting any activity.

"Living in a joint family, I am bound to abide by some suggestions given by my in-laws, although I may not agree with them. In case of superstitions, I was pleasantly surprised that many of them are actually backed by scientific data! It's just our parents never bothered to find out but we do," remarked Shagufta Islam, an educator and mother.

The way forward

With the change in time, the style of parenting also continues to change. Despite the plethora of parenting advice boomers have to offer to their millennial kids, there is evidently no right or wrong style of parenting.

"Children should be raised to become free spirits — let them explore, let them grow and learn on their own," said Mehnaz Khan, a mother and final-year university student.

Raising a child is like painting a blank canvas, and it is upon the painter to decide what colours and techniques will be best suited. Albeit according to boomers, millennials will always possess traits of being inept and irresponsible, when it comes to parenting, they are ready to roll up their sleeves and do what's required to provide the best for their children.

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