

#RELATIONSHIPS & FAMILY

RAISING EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT CHILDREN

Because feelings matter more than grades

Emotional intelligence, also known as EQ, is the ability to understand and recognise one's own emotions as well as those of others around you. It is important because EQ enables an entire generation to manage themselves and others, paving the way for an empathetic culture. Daniel Goleman, an American psychologist who popularised the term, argued that emotional intelligence matters more than IQ, the conventional idea of intelligence.

Yet, parents have been known to overlook its importance, mainly because the previous generation was unable to pass this torch of parenting to the next. However, it takes only one conscious generation to break the vicious cycle.

By following these tips, as parents of this generation, you can instil EQ into your children's behaviour.



Encourage them to express their emotions

Teach your children that it is okay to feel angry or sad because things did not go their way. They may not have developed the vocabulary to express what they are feeling.

As an adult, it is your job to listen to their complaints and label their emotions. This way, they will know that all human beings feel such emotions and that there is



nothing wrong with them. Using phrases like "I can see that you're really upset about this..." will help them validate their emotions.

This will help them not only be better at handling their own emotions as they grow up but also be able to comfort their younger siblings and even others when they feel indignant.

As Abraham Lincoln famously wrote in a letter to his son's teacher: "Teach him (his son) how to laugh when he is sad if you can. Teach him there is no shame in tears."

Give them small responsibilities

Try to give your children small responsibilities so they understand from an early age how it feels to be held accountable for something.

Assign small tasks to them, such as making their bed, setting the table, or watering the plants. This will help your

children develop a sense of responsibility.

First, it makes them aware of the effort that goes into everyday tasks. This will help them empathise with the less fortunate in society. Second, when children take responsibility, they begin to appreciate the value of hard work and the importance of contributing to their surroundings.

Celebrate their small wins

Try to encourage your child to participate in everything. Praise them for their efforts rather than for winning. This way, your child will understand, from an early age, the importance of incremental growth. This will result in a "growth mindset" that will prepare them for future success.

Your child will thank you for this in the future. Do not compare them with other children because every child is unique in their own way. Comparing them with others and not valuing them for their uniqueness

would be like killing a mockingbird.

More importantly, create an environment where they feel comfortable to make mistakes. But make it a priority for them to remember the lesson from each of their mistakes.

Be an example for them

Children learn what they see. So, try to be an embodiment of the adult you would want your children to be when they grow up.

Research shows that till the age of seven, children heavily rely on learning through imitation. That's why children love games involving make-believe and pretend-play so much. It is a natural response to their cognitive development.

If you want your children to read more, pick a book yourself and start reading. They will see it and imitate you. Likewise, if you want them to be kind to other people, treat your neighbours and house-help with respect yourself.

Children learn by observing. If you show and tell the acts and habits of kindness, patience, and emotional control, they will learn it better than they would have just by getting instructions.

Developing emotional intelligence will help your child build better relationships later in their life. This ability will matter in the long run, teaching them perseverance and empathy. As parents, if you do your job right, your children will not only be able to regulate their own emotions but will also influence others with this skill which will pay off forever. As Frederick Douglass, American abolitionist and orator, said, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults."

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