

Parenting: 9 Moral Values to teach your Kids



Martin Luther King Jr is quoted to have said that intelligence with a good character was the true goal of education. Going by King's definition of education, it is almost certain that our children today are not being educated. Parenting in the 21st century is proving to be more challenging than in the good olden days. Not because our children do not seem to study Calculus, but because they no longer seem to learn good moral virtues that could shape their characters and help them grow into responsible citizens.

Here is a little episode, tell me if this sounds familiar: you are home a little late feeling a little tired. On getting home, you find out that your youngest son just crushed the jaw of his best friend over an argument about switching a TV channel. You pay for the medication of your son's friend (like a good parent could). You punish your son and warn him harshly about fighting ever again. All seems fine for a while. But then, after a week, he/she fights again, this time in school. You feel really worked up. You look for a really good stroke of a cane "here! Have your 5 strokes. ...Whack! ...Whack!" With time, you notice that the kid hates you rather than hating fighting. Your efforts seem to be giving undesired results. Oops! What do you do then?

It is like kids nowadays don't get it anymore, do they? "...they look like their grandpa!" "...maybe, it could be a change in their culture" one could argue. But it is also true that not all children exhibit bad

morals; it is just a few bad apples. Which then begs the question: could we be failing to perform some of our roles as parents? What is it that makes some families seem stronger and more bound together than others?

Fruits are a result of the seeds planted...

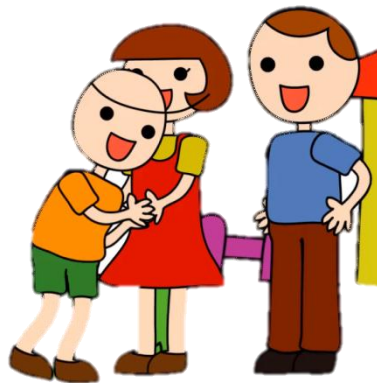
The truth is that kids can only learn what they are told or what they see. Kids are more like bare lands at birth. Nobody is born hating or born a racist. With time, however, we do sow seeds (moral virtues) on kids. Just like a bare land can sometimes attract weeds, so are our children with attracting bad morals. Now, somewhere in the Bible, I had deduced the law of "...you reap what you sow", or "...what goes around comes around" or just "Karma" as others call it. Maybe the problem is that we have fallen to nature morals in our kids as parents. Sometimes, it is not even our fault per se. Just like weeds happen to be on farms, so are bad morals at times. Thanks to the TV's consumer culture, and the "I-look-cooler-than-you" Social Media (that influences our kids' kind of friends and habits), our kids are nowadays bombarded with information that they can digest for their ages.

Looking at the desperate measures parents are undertaking to instill morals into their kids, I find a need to share a few experiences on how to nature morals in our younger generation. This short e-book tries to summarize 9 easy to learn and implement morals that you could train your kid in order to make him/her become a more responsible person. Let's begin with the obvious...

i. Love



had to



Among many things that we have known the word "love" to imply, love is just an emotion of caring and strong affection towards a person, object or even an event. Often than not, "Love" happens to be the first trait that children encounter. Kids learn to say "I love you" or "I love (TV actor)" long before they even understand what love is. Primarily, it is the leading character that makes people be classified as either being "human" or being "inhuman". It is the "glue" that binds all good traits of humanity like being honest, being patient, being caring or any other virtue. This is why it come first in this edition.

What to do...

- a. *Make the kid know how you like to feel loved.* Ask your kid the simple question of "how do you know if someone loves you?" let him/her express his/her views. Thereafter, you can share your own view. Explain to him/her how you like their hug and spend the time to play a game or tell a story. In this case, you might notice and carefully eradicate the popular notion of "love" as being filled with carnal knowledge as propagated by the consumer-oriented TV series.
- b. *Openly show your love for nature and others.* Show him/her the importance of conserving nature. Also, make him/her list a number of people they love and those who they think to love

them. In such a way, you will be supplying them with something to live for. This is nice because, in case they mess at school you can threaten to shame them before someone they really love and how they might miss a few gifts.

ii. Honesty



Has your child ever told you how he/she lied to “Tommy” in order to win in a game? How did you handle the situation? My guess: you probably congratulated the child and laughed over it, right? That’s the problem. Being “honest”, is the act of being truthful both to oneself and to others. Honest encompasses the ability of one to be faithful and not to mislead others for self-gaining. An honest person is also expected to uphold a degree of kindness and fairness to every person.

What to do...

- a. *Openly show your child how to discourage dishonesty* e.g. talk about returning an excess change you got from the greengrocery.
- b. *Narrate a story that has an incident of unfairness.* Let the child point out the one affected and ask him/her how he/she would have felt if he/she was the affected party. Then discuss a few bad effects of being dishonest.
- c. *Discuss with your child incidents of unfairness* (chances are that your kid will bring them up regularly like “...why didn’t you buy me a white shirt too?” or “...why don't use the Play Station for the equal duration?”). Here, show your fairness and try to make the child understand it by making him/her reason from the affected party.

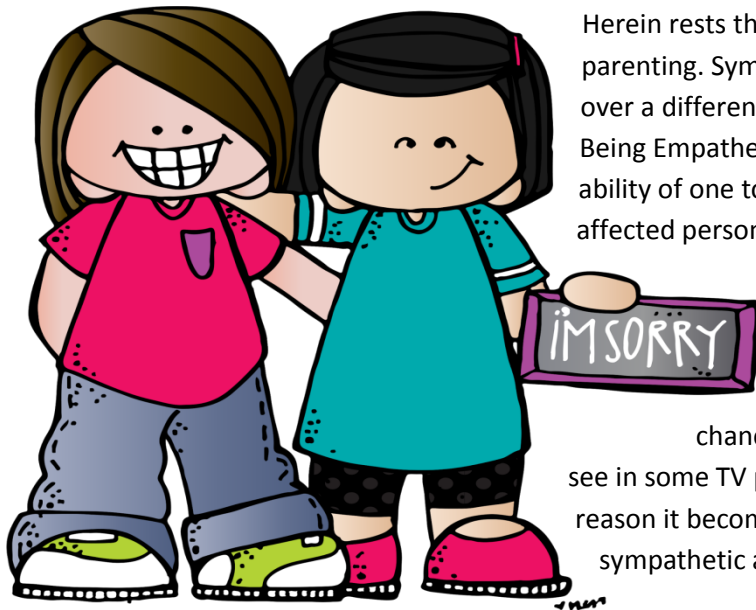
iii. Self-confidence

Self-confident is the ability of a child to believe in his/her ability to express him/herself and to deliver tasks that can be appreciated by others. Self-confidence is closely linked to self-discipline in children. Now, almost always, kids are born having a shy character. With time, we are to train them to become confident enough to express themselves and their opinions. This can help them in their mature ages to avoid peer pressure and make sound decisions. We are also to train them how and when to say “no” or “yes” or just “okay”.

What to do...

- a. *Let him/her tell you what annoyed him/her at school or what he/she enjoyed most.* Such simple expressions create a good rapport that you can utilize when encouraging him/her to do the same.
- b. *Take him/her with you when you are speaking to others or working with others.* Let the child observe how you go along situations that demand to share your opinions with others.
- c. *Let him brag of his achievements in the team.* Encourage him to show individual progress even in teams.
- d. *Explain to him/her when he/she has to make strong choices* e.g. a decision of going to sleep rather than watching a TV Series or going with you for shopping rather than joining his/her peers for a video game. In a sense, you will be training your child to say “no” when he/she has to.

iv. Forgiveness, Empathy & Sympathy



Herein rests the bulk of the burden of modern parenting. Sympathy is the ability of one to feel sorry over a different person who is in a difficult situation. Being Empathetic, on the other hand, refers to the ability of one to reason about a difficult situation like an affected person. Lastly, to forgive is simply to let go of the wrongs done to you by another person. Thanks to the evolution of modern media and media content, our children grow to yearn for the slightest chance of “pay-back” or fighting back as they see in some TV programs and movies. This is always the reason it becomes hard to teach our children how to be sympathetic and forgiving.

What to do...

- a. *Openly show acts of sympathy to people or other animals.* Kids will pick it just right. When your cat is unwell, let your kid hold it and tell him/her that your pet is in pain. Let him/her take care of it in treatment. Also, show compassion to the elderly and other sick or disabled people while your kid observes.
- b. *Make him/her reason from the side of those who are affected.* Ask him/her how he/she felt when he/she was sick. Try to make him/her understand that the other person feels the same. In some cases, when the child acts unsympathetically, try to make him reason from as the person who is affected. E.g. in a fight between your son and Tommy (where Tommy is hurt), try to ask

him on "...how do you think Tommy feels right now?" after punishing him. This will prick him to reason over his actions. This can also teach him how and when to forgive and forget.

v. Teamwork



Encouraging children to learn and work together with others is a crucial element of boosting their social attainments. This could help them to associate better with their peers, boost their leadership skills and also minimize chances of them being depressed when faced with challenges.

What to do...

- a. Encourage him/her to take part in sporting activities.
- b. Sometimes, join him/her in the competitions. Whenever you are free, just join him/her in the games. Cheer him/her and make your child feel great. If you can, just join him/her in the game and let him/her "defeat" you a few times. This is the best way to encourage your child.

vi. Generosity

Generosity is often interlinked with empathy and teamwork. Often than not, children that learn to be generous early enough are considered brighter than their counterparts. Now, it is normal for kids under the age of 6 to find it hard to be generous. However, adequate actions should be taken to teach kids how to share with others.

What to do...

- a. Introduce sharing in the aspect of team-games. Make it fun from the beginning. Have games where your child has to share with others. In so doing, he/she will be learning gradually on how to share.
- b. Allow your kid to have the sense of "ownership" and free will to share. If you notice that your kid snatched a toy you bought for him/her from a friend, you can make him feel the pride of owning it yet share it. For instance, you could tell him like, "...Tommy, why won't you give your friend your new Teddy Bear for a moment?"

vii. Courage

Courage in kids can only be attained by self-confident children. This is the value that enables children to stand out of everyone and preserve their individuality and personality. To foster courage in your child, you might need to instill a strong sense of morality in the child and then encourage him every time he

takes a good moral step/judgment. For instance, you should encourage him every time he resists fighting despite being provoked to fight or when he resists his peers' sway to smoke cigarettes. You should always be keen to study your child's weaknesses and encourage any step he/she makes to minimize the weaknesses.

viii. Goal setting

Goal-setting is one of the key values to teach your child as early as he/she starts to learn how to read/write. Just as adults have projects with goals, so are our children. Now, take an example of when your child is taking time to draw "mummy" or "daddy". As a good parent, you should help the child to learn how to subdivide such a huge task into smaller components that are attainable. Teach him to draw the eyes, then the nose, the ears, hair, and finish with a face. When she shows interest in cleaning utensils like mum does, just do the same. With time, you will be perplexed at the intelligence of your child.

ix. Temperance

"...Too much of something", they say, "Is dangerous." This is the reason why the virtue of temperance is a pivotal quality to instill in our children. Nothing in this world should be done without having adequate measures. Your child should always learn that there exist some measurements in all we do; beginning with measuring time: time to sleep, and time to awake, time to watch a TV and time to tell stories. By doing such, we encourage our kids to be more responsible and reasonable.

Here is my final take: Let this be a gradual training

Don't worry if your kid repeats the same mistake 20 times in a day. Correct the mistake every single moment of the 20 incidents. Let the training and development become gradual. Motivate his/her slightest moves that could show the development of a good character. Make every moment with your child to be a moment of teaching him/her something new. Every improvement should be recognized, every good act should be encouraged, and every good goal attained should be rewarded. This is the surest way to implant good morals to our kids.