

## Parenting Challenges



Parenting was never meant to be easy.... In fact, parents grow only when a child is born into or lovingly adopted by a family.

No manuals, books, videos, and resources will prepare you entirely for parenting. At best they may serve as a set of quick insights that you act upon and see if it works for your child. And if you have more than one child you already know by now that the things that work for one child never work for another. It's fairly easy to be a great parent when children fall in line with your expectations. The child that listens to you and follows through, the child that is able to study and score marks, the child that keeps his/ her space clean and helps around household chores, the child that communicates what happened in school clearly and tells you there is homework, the child that switches off the television as soon as you ask for it..... Many of these are just modeled after the adults in the home... Meaning you. Having said that..... It's easy to take credit for your parenting when things go well and your child is the "perfect" child that everyone is in awe of. This is not the biggest challenge you face as a parent. When do you really grow into the shoes of a great parent and walk with them?

The answer to this is when your child let's you down, does something they are not meant to, falls

short of your expectations and when they fail.

The toddler was unable to adjust to the new school no matter how hard the parents tried. The school was supportive but they did not know how to help beyond a point. The "father" resorted to threats and the "mother" cried all the time while emotionally blackmailing the child. The toddler developed severe separation anxiety because not only was going to school overwhelming... He now was totally puzzled by the extreme reactions of people who were meant to be his supportive caregivers. All he needed here were two loving people who could reassure him through the process of adjusting into a new routine and place that did not involve the two adults he spent all his time with. He needed love and he needed to be truthfully guided into his routine. The young girl could not write as fast as her classmates in school. The ill-equipped teacher victimized her and shamed her in class worsening the situation. The mother ended up sending the child for handwriting classes and tuitions and the father kept telling people that his girl was a slow learner and that she was the only one in the family who was academically inept. She did not understand what was expected of her. All she needed was a supportive home environment that could nurture the skills required to develop writing.... What she faced was the ire of a moron masquerading as a teacher and two parents who let their emotions run high and let the child feel that she was a disappointment to them. The boy struggled to make friends in school. He preferred his world of books and cars that he imagined could go to mars. He found the peer group loud, violent and completely addicted to cartoons and video games that made no sense to him. He studied well and did his own thing. To the father who was an outgoing socialite so well known in the community and on social media... The boy was out to shame him. The boy was forced to mingle with peers and he slowly slipped into depression because all he wanted was a parent who could understand that he was content in his world and that he would make friends when he was truly able to sync with someone. The girl was the most talented, studious child any south Indian family could have had. She was the one everyone spoke highly of because there was not a flaw that could be found in her. As she moved into the higher grades, she naturally gravitated towards the peers and towards small habits that her parents found inappropriate. This included talking to friends over the phone, using a little makeup that made her happy and becoming a little secretive when earlier she would share everything with her family. The parents found every opportunity to shame the girl especially in front of guests who came home and belonged to a generation that could not understand the normalcy of the choices. All she wanted was to be understood and for an opportunity to be heard. The boy was sent into higher secondary and found that many of his classmates in the hostel smoked cigarettes and watched porn. He was never exposed to this at home. As part of the initiation into hostel, he was forced to smoke and the boy unable to make sense of the experience had a sudden drop in studies. The parents lectured him about his academics but were unwilling to listen to what was really troubling him. The teachers (as in many schools) chose not to get involved as the issues in the hostel were none of their business. They were meant to teach and make students score marks. The stress of the situation led to faulty coping where he started using smoking as a way to deal with his problems and inability to regulate emotions. All he needed was to be heard and supported through dealing with change. He never meant to become addicted to smoking. The girl found the boy who lived around the corner very interesting. He was unlike the others she had met. She spent hours on the balcony some days looking at the boy who seemed so in control of his life, so

respectful to adults, so focussed in his work. She often nurtured a dream of living a life with him. She was unaware that this was an infatuation. She used her journal to write about it sometimes. Her friend who heard about her fantasy approached the boy and told him about it. The boy began to reciprocate her little waves from the balcony..... Natural and totally harmless. The aunt on vacation witnessed this and ended up shaming the parents and making it an issue of character and upbringing. The parents refused to speak to their daughter for over a week. She was devastated because no one understood. She then resorted to being silent and alone most of the time. She refused to speak to her parents and when she had to.... She was rude and disrespectful. She actually just gave back to them what they modeled for her when all she needed was a support to understand the confusion and the excitement of infatuation. Instead, she was shamed and made to feel persecuted. None of the achievements up till that point were of any use to shield her or nurture trust in the parents. Each one of these situations reflects times when we needed to be parents but failed our children. It's also on smaller moments when we force our children into competitions when they are not willing or interested or are terrified, when we do not allow them to follow a career of their choice, when we shame them for small things instead of creating opportunities to learn from the experience, when we use lecture and extreme consequences instead of patiently listening, supporting them to find ways to cope with or deal with the situation and encouraging them in the direction of desired change. If parenting is not built on unconditional love and relies on right vs wrong children struggle to find their strengths all through life and settle for less than what they are worth just to be able to please others often giving up the very things that make them unique.



**Your relationship  
with your child  
requires a firm  
foundation. It's a  
foundation built on  
truth and love.**