

How to Raise Emotionally Healthy Children

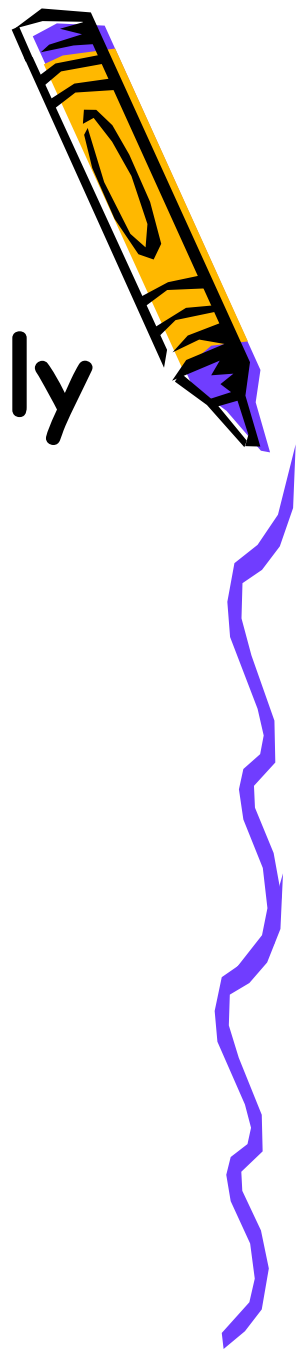


How To Raise Emotionally Healthy Children

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Why is parenting so difficult?

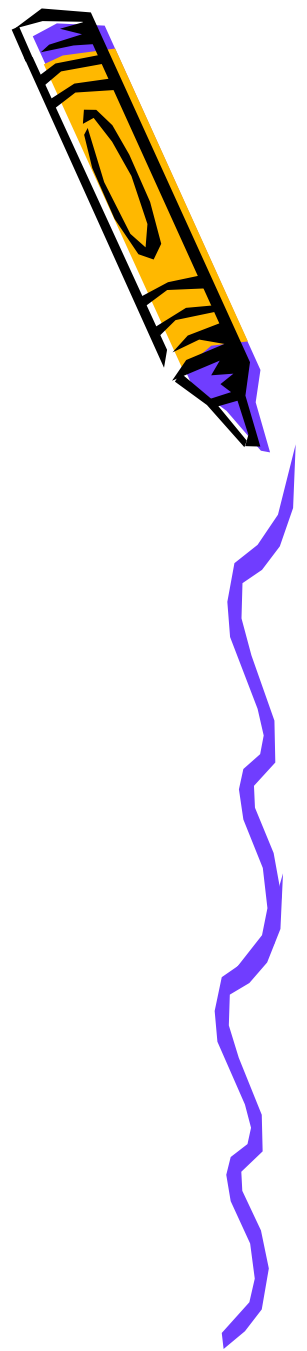


WANTED: cook, dishwasher, housecleaner, coach, nurse, chauffer, teacher, entertainer, spiritual guide, laundress, repairman, maid, and other duties as assigned.
24 hours a day, no pay, no vacation

- The number of different roles and tasks
- No real training
- Too many distractions and influences
- Not enough serious consideration to role of parenting



The Five Critical Needs of Children



1. Need to Feel Respected
2. Need to Feel Important
3. Need to Feel Accepted
4. Need to Feel Included
5. Need to Feel Secure.

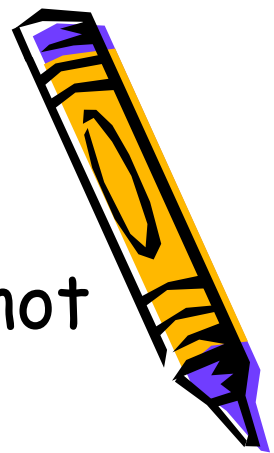


The need to feel RESPECTED

- Children need to feel respected. For that to happen, they need to be treated in a courteous, thoughtful, attentive and civil manner- as individuals, deserving the same courtesy and consideration as others. One of the best ways for children to learn about respect is to feel what it is like to be treated respectfully and to observe their parents and other adults treating each other the same way.



Not feeling Important



- It seemed I was frequently being told not to do something.
- My father was an unhappy person. He would often tell me that I would not amount to anything
- We were never part of the decision making. One time we moved cities and my parents didn't ask our opinion or about our feelings.
- My mom was on the phone a lot, and would not get off to answer our questions or talk with us.



- If we want children to grow up feeling respected and treating others with respect, we need to avoid sarcasm, belittling, yelling; we need to keep anger and impatience to a minimum; we need to avoid lying; we need to listen more and talk less; we need to command less and suggest and request more; we need to learn how to say "please," "Thank You," "Excuse me," "I'm sorry," -Yes, even to children. We will strive to be conscious of our mistakes, willing to admit them, and ready to make corrections, and we will try to cultivate these values in our children.



Feeling Important



- My parents made time in their busy schedules to sit down and listen to me.
- They occasionally shared with us what was going on in their lives.
- My parents gave me choices about clothes, food, friends, etc. When they did not give me a choice, they explained why.
- As an older sibling, my parents trusted me to watch over my sister as an early teen.



The need to feel ACCEPTED

- Children have a need to feel accepted as individuals in their own right, with their own uniqueness, and not treated as mere reflections of their parents, as objects to be shaped in the image of what parents believe their ideal child should look like. This means that children have a right to their own feelings, opinions, ideas, concerns, wants and needs. Trivializing, ignoring, or ridiculing a child's feelings or opinions is a rejection which weakens the relationship. Paying attention to and discussing them, even when you do not like or agree with what you are hearing strengthens the relationship.



Not feeling Accepted



- I am 58 years old and my parents still criticize my decisions.
- I felt as if my parents were always focusing on my faults.
- Our parents never let us argue. They made us feel we were bad, rather than teach us how to disagree and work things out.
- If I did poor in school, my father said he did not want to hear excuses and wouldn't talk about it.



Feeling Accepted



- My parents never objected to having my friends over, everyone was welcomed.
- When I wore my hair differently and got flak from relatives, my mom said it was what is inside a person that mattered.
- I always loved raw onions. My mother always saw to it that I got raw onions.
- My parents didn't get upset when I expressed a strong opinion, even if they disagreed. We talked.



The need to feel INCLUDED

- Children need to feel included. They need to be brought in, to be made to feel a part of things, to feel connected to other people, to have a sense of community. It happens when people engage with others in activities and projects - some fun, some challenging; when parents and children share feelings - some positive and others troublesome; where secrecy is kept to a minimum. People who do things together feel closer to one another.



Not feeling Included



- Our family did very little together.
- I felt excluded from my father's life. I wonder if he would have acted differently had I not been a girl
- When I was 10 my mother remarried, but she never discussed it with me beforehand.
- When my sister got counseling, my parents went with her but I was left out.



Feeling Included



- I always looked forward to holidays, family trips and family get-togethers.
- When decisions were made for our family, we always discussed them and I was asked my opinion.
- Sometimes my mom would let me help her pick out a gift for my dad and include my name on the card.
- My parents would read the Sunday paper together with us in bed, read the comics and "tickle-fight."



The need to feel SECURE

- Children need to feel secure. Security means creating a positive environment where people care for each other and show it, where people express themselves and others listen, where differences are accepted and conflicts are resolved constructively, where enough structure exists for children to feel safe and protected, and where children have opportunities to actively participate in their own evolution and that of the family - e.g., regarding discipline, establishing rules and consequences becomes a family activity

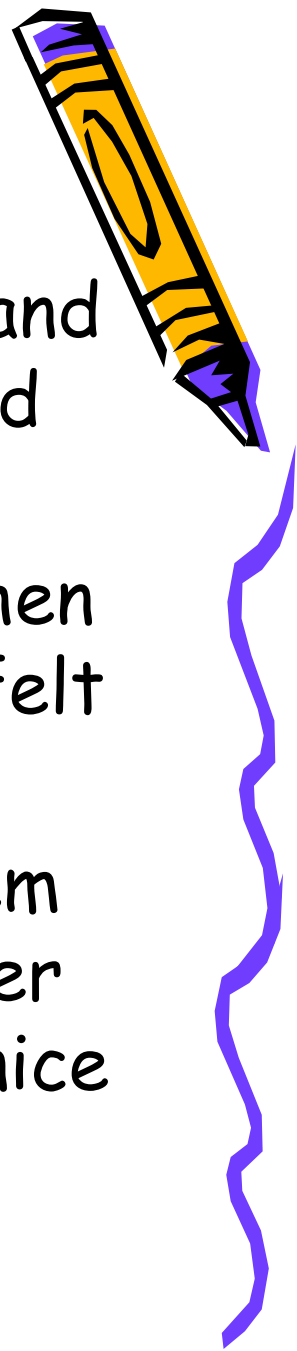


Not feeling Secure

- My parents' divorce was devastating, especially because they never discussed it.
- Our parents fought a great deal, with lots of anger. We never say they make up.
- Mom was out of the house a lot. We didn't feel she was around or available much.
- My mom said she was fat and ugly. I thought I was too since we looked alike.



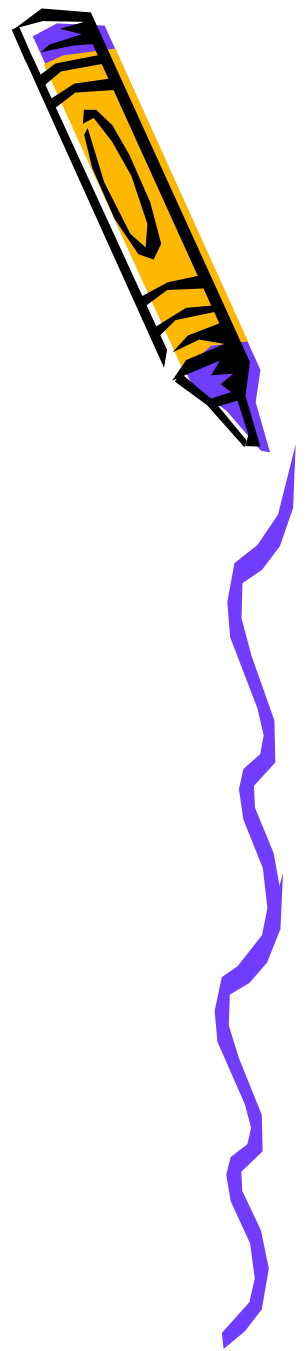
Feeling Secure



- My parents “tucked me in” every night and our days began and ended with a hug and kind words.
- My mom always made me feel better when I was sick, scared or got in trouble. I felt secure because I knew she cared.
- My parents divorced but neither of them let us feel bad because of it. They never talked bad about each other and were nice when we were around.



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