

1-2-3 Magic Parenting Newsletter – January 2014

What's Your Parenting Style?

Promoting the self-discipline and self-esteem of one's children often requires an emotional juggling act by parents. It is not easy to be firm and demanding one minute, then warm and affectionate the next. In addition, some adults naturally have personalities or temperaments that predispose them toward one parenting style or the other.



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Authoritarian Parenting

Parents who tend to overemphasize the discipline side of the equation are referred to as authoritarian. Authoritarian parents are demanding in the worst sense of the word. They are intimidators, requiring obedience and respect above all else. They become overly angry and forceful when they don't get that obedience and respect. Their love and acceptance appear totally conditional to the child. They do not listen to their kids or explain the reason for their expectations, which are frequently unrealistic. They often see their children's individuality and independence as irrelevant or threatening.

Research has shown that authoritarian parents tend to produce children who are more withdrawn, anxious, mistrustful and discontented. These children are often overlooked by their peers. Their self-esteem is often poor.

Permissive Parenting

Parents who overemphasize the self-esteem side of the equation are referred to as permissive. They may be warm and supportive, but they are not good disciplinarians. They make only weak demands for good behavior and they tend to avoid or ignore obnoxious behavior. They seem to believe that children should grow up without any anger, tears or frustrations. They reinforce demanding and inconsiderate behavior from their children. Their love and acceptance are "unconditional" in the worst sense of the word, for they set few limits on what their children do.

Research has shown that permissive parents tend to produce children who are more immature, demanding and dependent. These children are often rejected by their peers. Their self-esteem is often unrealistic and hard to interpret, for they often blame others for their misfortunes.

The Authoritative Parenting Model

Parents who are able to provide for both the discipline and self-esteem needs of their youngsters are referred to as authoritative. They clearly communicate high—but not unrealistic—demands for their children's behavior. They expect good things from their kids and reinforce those things when they occur. When kids act up, on the other hand, authoritative parents respond with firm limits, but without fits of temper. They are warm, reasonable and sensitive to a child's needs. They are supportive of a child's individuality and encourage growing independence.

Authoritative parents tend to produce competent children. These kids are more self-reliant, self-controlled and happier. They are usually accepted and well-liked by their peers. Their self-esteem is good. Logic and research, then, support the idea that children need both discipline and self-esteem to grow up psychologically healthy.