



JOY

Experience your own sense of achievement when you see your child rejoicing in his successes.

If you want to experience true joy in your life, then imagine what it is like to see your child experiencing personal joy as a result of his/her successes in life.

Let yourself be motivated by that image. Take into account what it would actually mean to your life to have contributed so meaningfully and effectively towards your own child's development that you experienced the unequalled joy associated with knowing that you did in fact, parent that child. You did not hinder them to the point of crippling them and then live to regret your own lack of foresight.

Foresight is a great thing.

Foresight is much more powerful than any one of us actually imagines it to be.

So many times we humans think about things in a backwards fashion. All too often we develop 'insight' into a situation long after it has passed. Then we comfort ourselves by saying, 'Well I did the best I could with what I knew to do at the time!'

But what comfort is that when you see your adult children trying to overcome the effects of your lack of 'foresight'.

Why not develop some foresight and let your children benefit from it. One thing is certain, if we could see the future, it would motivate us to act or behave differently in the present.

As parents we need to actively decide what it is that we want to provide for our children. We need to take into account their needs and the society we are immersed in. We need to understand our role and fulfil it.

This is not to be a guilt trip though. We must be careful to develop foresight and let it motivate us to act and behave in such a way as to make a difference to the lives of our children. But we must never let the foresight become a 'fear-driven' force in our lives.

Rather than looking ahead and focusing on all that could go wrong in the future in our children's lives, make sure that you look ahead and decide what you want it to look like for your child.

This is important because if you let the foresight focus on the negative possibilities it will influence you to be motivated by 'fear'. This is not what you want. You will not experience much joy in your own life, let alone help your child find joy if you are motivated by fear.

You must take control of your thoughts and decide actively and purposefully, based on what you know about your child and their needs/wants, strengths/weaknesses and their personality, what it is that would bring joy to their lives, and then you must act on that positive vision. Take steps every day to move in that direction.

Let that positive image motivate you.

Make sure however, that you do not distort your own image of your child. There is no point in you trying to live your life and your dreams vicariously through the accomplishments and achievements of your child.

For one thing, the joy will be 'bitter-sweet'.

You must accept as a parent that your child's path is not necessarily going to be what you imagine for them.

We must understand that who we are today is a complete and absolute result of our hereditary and our experiences. We are who we are, and we want what we want because of 'our past' and our 'genes'.

Your child's past and their 'genes' are different to yours. For this reason, you must be completely tuned in to them. They will give you cues, to indicate their interests, aptitudes and needs.

Here are some ideas to help you tune in to positive foresight in ways that support those positive outcomes for your child:

- Tune in to your child. Stop. Look. Listen.
- Notice the behavioural cues your child gives as to their personality, needs and preferences. Take note.
- Verbalize what you have noticed. Help your child and others confirm or deny whether your observations are correct.
- Help your child to tune in to their own desires, personality and preferences.
- Help them learn to express their own perceptions and observations about themselves.
- Create an environment where it is the 'norm' and it is accepted by each child that they are indeed going to grow into adults one day and that within the family, you each have roles to fulfil that will support that process and provide the most opportunity for each child to develop the skills and thought processes that they need to function successfully as adults. (In some homes, it is viewed as a power-struggle between adults and children and that the adults only win, because they are bigger and have the money. That is a 'dreadful' environment for a parent to try and have a positive influence on their child).
- Make sure your child understands your role in the family, and theirs.
- Help your child to partner with you to work towards some goals that support their development in the direction of their dreams and potential.
- Understand that your child needs a thousand times more encouragement and building-up than what you think they do.
- Give that encouragement and support.
- Teach them to review their day and to notice what went well, what didn't and what to do differently.
- Also teach them to understand that struggling to not repeat mistakes is what makes them able to reach their goal in the end.
- Help them to not view their setbacks and their struggles as part of a picture of 'failure'. Rather help them to view struggles and setbacks as normal elements of 'success'.

- Keep your vision. Do not lose sight of the big picture. Tomorrow is another day and progress can be made even if today it is difficult to see how.

You have to always understand that your joy in life is largely tied up in your child's joy in life. It is natural.

Sometimes, as parents we forget that and then we wonder why we don't experience more happiness and joy. Once we become parents, we can't help wanting our legacy to be one of 'success and happiness' for our children.

Their joy is our joy. Their sadness is our sadness and their accomplishments, though different to our own, are in many ways a result of our actions when they were children. So it is no wonder that we take such pleasure in their joy.

We cannot claim the glory and nor should we want to. We just know that we did our best to get out of their way and not hinder them through our own short-sightedness.

And this is where much joy in our own lives can come from and why we experience our own sense of achievement when we see our child rejoicing in his/her successes.

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