

# CHINTAN

## Tips to be a truly great parent

*A few hundred years ago, John Wilmot, an English lord, said something significant about parenting: "Before I got married, I had six theories about bringing up children. Now I have six children and no theories." So what should you do in terms of parenting? Look back at yourself when you were a child - what kind of parents would have been the best? Remember what it was like to be a child, and you will clearly know.*

*Unfortunately, people have been made to believe that children are all born improper and we have to correct them, which is not true. If you look at parents and children, generally, at least children below ten years of age are definitely more joyful. Then who should be the consultant for life - those who are more joyful, or those who are falling apart within themselves because they do not know how to handle their offspring? Children want to emulate what you do. If you set an example as someone worth looking up to, you do not have to do much parenting.*

### **#1 Evaluate Yourself**

*Before you decide to have a child, you must evaluate yourself in every aspect - the way you sit, stand, speak, and react to situations. Ask yourself, if you were a five-year-old, would you like and look up to this person? Another thing you could do is spend sufficient time with children to see if they like you, and if you like them. This way, a lot of wisdom would blossom, and fertility clinics would close down.*

### **#2 Create the Right Atmosphere**

*If you already have a child, all you have to do is create a loving, supportive, and invigorating atmosphere. There is really nothing to teach. You came here a few years earlier than the child. What you know about life that the child does not know are just*

*a few tricks of the world, how to survive and how to make a living. But you do not know a deeper dimension of life. These tricks need not be taught to children too early. They will learn them later on. Right now, when a child enters your life, it is time to learn, not to teach. Children may not know what is dangerous, what is nice, and things like that. But hopefully you have a certain wisdom about life around you, which children may not have. If they are moving towards danger, exercise your wisdom. Otherwise, children are able to conduct life more joyfully than you. Learn those aspects from them.*

*Do not teach them commandments that have not worked for you, and that you yourself could never follow. In every society, there are some kinds of commandments. If everyone practiced them, the world would be very different. Obviously no one practiced them, but still these commandments survived because people teach them to their children. If you want your children to be better than you, the first thing you have to do is to establish integrity, because wherever they go, this will sustain them. If you try to teach your children things that you are not able to follow yourself, obviously they will see through that after some time.*

*Your words and your behavior should match. If you create a loving and vibrant atmosphere, they will be fine.*

### ***#3 Skip the Toys, Climb a Tree***

*You have to physically nourish and mentally ignite children about things. The simplest way is to take them out into nature, where everything, from an insect to a flower, is exciting. But most parents today want to buy some stuff, throw it in the children's room, lock it - everything is padded so that they cannot hurt themselves - and the parents can go to a party. That is not parenting.*

*Billions of dollars are spent every year on toys for twenty to thirty percent of the children on the planet, while the remaining seventy percent never get a toy in their lives. Those who are bought these toys are the ones who suffer most, on a mental and*

*emotional level. The others may suffer because of lack of nutrition and other basic requirements. But the affluent ones are going through inner turmoil.*

*If instead, you take the trouble of taking your children out, making them climb a tree, walking somewhere with them, taking a swim or some such thing, the child will grow up physically and mentally healthy.*

#### ***#4 Prepare Yourself for a 20-Year Project***

*Once you have a child, it is a twenty-year project - if they do well. If they do not do well, it is a lifelong project. If you are not ready for that, you should not get into it. Unfortunately, many couples think that for their marriage to survive, they have to have a child. A child is not a personalized project. We are creating the next generation. In some way, the next generation should be at least one step ahead of where we are. If we do not aspire and work towards that, we should not have children. What is the point if the next generation is going to be just like us, nothing more?*

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*And above all, humanity is not on the verge of extinction - there is no need for everyone to reproduce. It almost looks like we are trying to compete with the insect population in terms of numbers. It is time we slow down in many respects.*

*Those who decide to have children must have dedicated time for them, because this is about making the next generation better than who we are. And above all, you must fix yourself. You must be a kind of a person the child will look up to and love to be with. Then, even time can be adjusted. If they are really looking up to you, five minutes of contact can be worth five days.*

*The responsibility of having a child requires involvement. Suppose you made the mistake of having a child without being able to offer the necessary involvement, please hand over the child to someone who is loving, caring and joyful, someone who*

is able to give his or her life to the child. You can provide the financial support. Whether they are the biological parents or not - the child does not care. Whoever is most loving, most joyful, is the one who children would like to hang around with.

#### **#5 Explore the Positive and Wonderful World**

Nowadays it's not uncommon to find three-year-old kids glued to the television or smartphone screen. And we don't know what they are taking in and how they understand what's shown there because even you can't figure what's going on. One moment, somebody is talking about creating a beautiful world, the next moment there is a bombing happening, the next moment something else.

Every parent needs to think about what they want to expose their children to. The exposure that they have had is what will stick with them for life, not a moral teaching. You must expose them to all the positive, wonderful things in life. Positive things do not mean right versus wrong - simply life the way it is.

This may sound extreme, but I think if people want to have children, they should be ready to withdraw with them to a natural space for at least two months in a year, rather than living in city burrows or bird nests of apartments. Even if you have to live in a tent somewhere, children need to be in nature if you want them to be physically and mentally healthy and balanced, which is the most important thing.

#### **#6 Provide Emotional Security**

The number of people going crazy today is too large. In the European Union for example, which has enjoyed economic wellbeing for much of the last two centuries, thirty-eight percent of the population has psychological problems. This is mainly because they grew up in conditions where they were uncared for. There was emotional insecurity even about their parents. They did not know if their mother or father would leave them at some point. Now as adults, there is serious emotional insecurity about their spouses and partners. That man or that woman may leave you anytime. When there is no emotional security, human beings become psychologically imbalanced. If you want a generation of people to be productive, they either must be

*conscious or they must have emotional security - otherwise, they will go crazy. We have destroyed all these things, and then we wonder why we are not living well, why our children are acting crazy, why our children are shooting someone or shooting themselves. This is so because right from childhood, there is no emotional security.*

*Emotional security is absolutely important, because emotions are still the largest dimension of most human beings.*

*For most people, I would say emotions make up at least eighty percent of who they are. Being such a big power, if you do not harness your emotions, if you do not make them into a positive force in your life, they can smother and destroy you. Today, being emotional is equated with having negative emotions. When we say someone became very emotional, it means he went a little crazy. We have to change this concept in the world. Why do we not acknowledge that joy, bliss, love, devotion and ecstasy are emotions?*

*Emotional security is absolutely important, because emotions are still the largest dimension of most human beings. If one becomes really conscious, then emotions do not matter. But until then, emotions play a significant role. So, if we want to bring up our children well, there should be a loving atmosphere around them all the time - not just at home, but also in school and on the street.*

**~Sadhguru**