

## 10 Talents of Parenting

For some people, parenting seems to come easily. They play, respond to children's needs, understand children's feelings and trust themselves. The rest of us need to work at it a bit more. But that's OK, we don't have to all be naturals. Each of us can develop those traits that will make us the parents we want to be.

### **The Importance of Playfulness**

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### **Responsiveness: Recognizing and Responding to your Child's Needs**

The key to providing security to children is recognizing and meeting their needs. It isn't always easy. Babies' needs are pretty obvious: feed them when they're hungry, change them when they're wet, hold them when they want to be close, show them the world when they are curious. But as children grow up, their needs become more complex.

### **Finding Emotional Balance**

Finding emotional balance is hard when we are filled with our own anger, frustration, anxiety or resentment. These feelings knock us off balance, and parenting is already challenging enough when we aren't wobbling - or falling all the way over!

### **Understanding and Empathy**

If we look under the surface of our children's behavior, at how they might be feeling, we are often in a better position to get things back on track. How have you nurtured that talent of looking deep inside, understanding where a child's behavior is coming from and seeing the pain behind the problems?

### **Reflection: Why and How to Reflect on Being a Parent**

Reflecting on parenthood - stepping back to think, write or talk about what life is really like for us - is worth the time, because it helps us become better parents.

## **Resolution: Resolve the Past to Be a Better Parent Today**

Every person alive has experienced some form of loss. We may have lost a parent or a sibling, or lost our sense of safety because of being abused or neglected as a child. We may not have lost anyone to death, but instead lost their love and affection because of illness, depression, addiction, anger or stress. These old losses can have a big impact on our ability to be effective parents.

## **Self-Acceptance How to End the Blame Game**

Letting go of self-criticism doesn't mean that the quality of our parenting doesn't matter. But listening to that same old radio station, the one that keeps playing that same lousy song, doesn't help us or our children. So change the station! Find one that celebrates your successes and accomplishments, or that treats you with tender sympathy - not harsh put-downs - when you mess up.

## **Connection**

Focusing on relationship to ease power struggles with your child

## **Reaching Out - Reaching Out for Support**

Rarely does a parent who gets enough support - either practical or emotional support for the joys and despair of parenthood. How have you managed to get support? Who listens and pays attention to you - after you spend all day paying attention to your kids? Do you know how to ask for the support you need?

## **Trust - Turning Worry into Trust**

Perhaps the opposite of worry is trust - trust in development, trust in your parenting, trust in the power of friendship, and trust in children's resilience.

## **Conclusion: Putting the 10 Talents in Perspective**

The parents on the 10 Talents forum at Parenthood.com wrote about a variety of ways that they nurture their parenting abilities. Many wrote about playfulness, saying that they tried to remember to make it a part of every day.

Source: Lawrence J. Cohen, [www.parenthood.com/article-topics/10\\_talents\\_of\\_parenting.html/full-view](http://www.parenthood.com/article-topics/10_talents_of_parenting.html/full-view);  
[www.playfulparenting.com](http://www.playfulparenting.com)