

## Conscious Parenting 101

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Emotional Intelligence is a popular term. Many times when I address an audience of parents, they already know that EQ is desirable. But what is it and how do you get there from here?

EQ refers to social connectedness; i.e. social skills that come from the heart. It is the foundation of self-esteem and the ability to take responsibility for oneself and one's conduct, a.k.a. "character". The emotionally intelligent person does more than use social etiquette; he/she is able to understand another person's point of view, feelings and perspective.

This is the seat of compassion and love. It is the ability to give and to receive positively. In my parenting course, I teach that self-esteem consists of knowing that "I am lovable and capable". Yelling, punishing (including harsh "time outs"), shaming and blaming are unproductive in the long run. Why? These approaches "break the child's spirit".

Emotionally intelligent people nurture their spirit and relate in emotionally healthy ways with others. This is the essence of the mind-body-spirit relationship we hear about. It forms the basis of wellness: the ability to remain balanced in knowing that "I am lovable and capable". How many adults do not know this one? Be honest! People who engage in practices like road rage, price gouging, gossip and other forms of one-ups-man-ship are missing the point of living well.

Our job as parents involves modeling emotionally intelligent behaviors and values for our children. In my book, *Loving the Children: Healing Through Parental Awareness*, I describe why so many adults feel disconnected and unfulfilled in their daily lives. Somehow today's affluence and materialism do not correlate with feelings of satisfaction and security. These are external to our core values. There is something innate in each individual that must be nurtured in order for us to feel peaceful and content. This is our source, the place where the spirit resides.

It is this very source that we must nurture in our children in order to build their character, or EQ. Many great sages have said the same thing: feeling successful is an inside job. How I feel about myself affects everything I think, do and say. Parents are in a unique position to affect the future of our world: raising your own EQ not only affects your own life. It helps to create the next generation of leaders: your children.