

20

PROVEN STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL

Parenting

A path that leads
to profound existence
in peace with yourself



OLYA AMAN

20 PROVEN STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PARENTING

**A Path That Leads to Profound Existence in Peace with
Yourself**

Olya Aman

This book has been written for parents and all conscientious individuals who desire to build a happy family. The incidents, names, locales, and professions in the book are all entirely products of the author's imagination and to make the subject better understood.

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20 Proven Steps for Successful Parenting

“Divinity, eternity, and family – they go together, hand in hand, and so must we!”

- Spencer W. Kimball

Dedication

To my loving and supportive husband, who was always eager to listen and share his insightful ideas with me. He believed in me when I was not sure of the ground under my literary feet. He gave me the courage to overcome my fears and combat obstacles real and imagined.

To my angelic son. You are my muse, my inspiration. Your gentle loving touch gives me the energy to live and create.

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Foreword

“You are born into your family and your family is born into you. No returns. No exchanges.”

-Elizabeth Berg

This book is a summary of my reading and exploring the wisdom of the great.

Here I share with you my insights on the most crucial and life-defining

moments. Be it the evolution of humankind or, just simply said, the personal

growth of a man, both are equally important and deserve careful attention. Most of us have a responsibility to the loved ones that help us every day to be a better husband or wife. Frederick Buechner said: “You can kiss your family and friends good-bye and put miles between you, but at the same time you carry them with you in your heart, your mind, your stomach, because you do not just live in a world but a world lives in you.” Family is a world unto itself and we have a universal obligation when we create one - to raise a better person than we are, to make our kids' life experiences a better journey with more love and less sorrow on their way. Can we guarantee them a sunny path with no stones and pitfalls? Can we make the weather of their lives always comfortably warm and caring? No. But we can try our best to prepare them for the expedition, to make them strong enough to be able to withstand the winds and freezing snows of life. But to make that happen we need to get better at scaling our own brick walls. The power is not in having a strong muscular body, but in having a spirit that endures any kind of weather. The best investment you can ever make in your life is in yourself. This way you will be an overachiever in life – personal, business and family. It all starts with family, continues with family and ends up being family at the end of the hopefully long and happy journey. The way you look at your significant other determines your whole life together. Your kids will follow your example in their own relationships. Your influence transforms the lives around you and sets up a chain reaction for generations to come. Think about the power you have in your hands and responsibility that comes along with it. Start

small: what plans do you have when you open your eyes every morning? What do you expect to see and feel? You will find in everyday life everything that you've prepared yourself for. You encounter on your path only what you deserve at this very moment. And if you want to change it, you need to change yourself first. Let's start this journey together.

Chapter 1: Become a better you

"Once in a blue moon, there's someone who knows it all, someone who knows and accepts you unconditionally, someone who's there for life."

- Jill McCorkle

Love to be alone

"When you look at your life, the greatest happiness is family happiness."

- Dr. Joyce Brothers

Becoming a better person will bring a breath of fresh air to your existing relationships or will help you in your search for a life-long partner. To start this journey of self-exploration you should go to a lonely room, the one you may like to spend time in when a company is around, but now it will be only you... and you.

To live every day with yourself is a challenge. Most people need distractions in their lives as they have nothing to say to themselves to make the lonely time an amusing experience. You should never feel lonely as there is always something to talk about with a smart person (and you should consider yourself to be one). If you want other people to be interested in you, listen to you, agree with your

opinions and enjoy spending time with you – you need to be interested in yourself and to have your own opinion on subjects. Don't make a habit of believing in something only because other people think it is so. We have a lot of examples from the past and present when the truth everybody considered as unquestionable proved to be a false belief or even a plague for the rest of the world. If it is necessary to make a choice, make it using your own judgment. Take a simple example such as going to see a movie. How often has it happened before when the majority thought a film was great and you considered it a timewaster deep in your heart? Don't be afraid to express your own opinion. Still, it is not easy to live with this person that looks at you from the mirror. Directly to this face you say some things that may leave you with no friends and family if you are as harsh to them as you are to yourself. You keep old regrets and offenses under a bright light in your "office-brain-space". Mark Twain said: "We should be careful to get out of an experience all the wisdom that is in it..." The wisdom of this quote is well known but very often we know something in our brains but are not able to accept it in our hearts. If you keep telling yourself something constantly – eventually you don't just know it is true, but you feel it as so. "Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything". (George Bernard Shaw) Remember: everything starts with a thought (first it is an idea then it becomes an action). You are able to change anything in your life, but you need to shift your own thinking first.

Use your energy wisely

“Holding anger is a poison. It eats you from inside. We think that hating is a weapon, that attacks the person who harmed us. But hatred is a curved blade. And the harm we do, we do to ourselves.”

- Mitch Albom (“The five people you meet in heaven.”)

Jack Ma said in one of his interviews: “Any mistake is an income, a wonderful revenue.” We are all learning our way in life until we are about twenty years old, he said. Yes. Sometimes, very often, truly said, we are students of life longer than that. We keep wounding the hearts of people we love with sharp words. Will you agree that the scale of our harshness goes from high to low, and the top chart is given to ourselves and immediately after goes to the ones we love? We keep making choices, big - as a five-year relationship that ends with sorrow and regret, and small - as the wrong exit that adds an extra fifteen minutes to our drive-time. “Every failure brings with it the seed of an equivalent success.” (Napoleon Hill “Think and Grow Rich”) If only we could learn from the mistakes we make, consider them a lesson and move on to a better life right after. Wouldn't it be an achievement? A great experience-investment in future life with less slip-ups. Don't let yourself have regrets about the past. If you do, you'll just waste your energy on something you cannot change. Remember everything happens for a reason. Now you are at this point of your life because of the decisions you've made in the past. Make better choices from now on and bring only positive energy to your present and future. Peaceful acceptance of yourself will not make you wait long. As a bird that changes the fluffy outfit of a

new member of the brood you will enjoy new feathers and the ability to fly. Fly high in the dream sky of your renewed life without destructive feelings towards anything or anybody. And feel love for the closest person in your life. The dearest friend and everyday companion. Learn to treat him or her as the love of your life. Be as gentle to this person as you may be to the most cherished people from your surroundings. You may have a mentor in your life, I hope you do, but even if you don't – think as if you had one. What words would you choose when you ask for guidance and advice? You would be polite and humble, I would guess. But think for a moment about who your dearest and most cherished soul mate is. Who is with you no matter what happens? Who tolerates all your prickly moods and harsh words and is still there to support and give you a shoulder to cry on or better said, finds you your favorite pillow? Treat this person the way you treat your diamond ring: polish and marvel at the sparkling multifaceted beauty. Speak to the inner child of this lovely face in the mirror and give him something to laugh about and something to be amazed at. Learn to be alone and love the company of this smart person who is ever-thirsty for knowledge. Share your ideas with this gorgeous soul and be ready to write down the words of wisdom and love, care and true friendship on the wall of your shared life.

Make the best investment

“When everything goes to hell, the people who stand by you without flinching - they are your family.”

- Jim Butcher

Now that we filled the space that used to be chilling and lonely with some comforting words and loving energy we can grab a good book and take some time to think.

John C. Maxwell said: “Thinking is hard work; that’s why so few do it”. Be one of the few. Replace the TV-hungry guy with a friendly educational-video buddy. It is another way to fill in your brain with useful information and ideas for self-development. Make conscious choices here as you are going to feed your mind. This is crucial so that you can eliminate controlling forces from outside and take the reins into your own hands. Do not just turn on the TV and allow yourself to take what you are given without your sensible approval first. You will find by doing so how growth begins. The effect of building slowly will work its magic. You cannot build a castle in one day. It takes small steps to create a piece of art. Your mission is to invest your time and energy in building a mansion of unseen beauty that will be able to withstand any weather. This architectural masterpiece is you. When you make that decision life changes and people suddenly want to confide in you and ask for your opinion. Be grateful, and provide your expert advice knowing the rule of the trust game: “what comes my way stays my way”. Your circle of friends will change considerably. People you surround yourself with are supposed to help you accomplish your goals. They make you or break you, so choose wisely. You will be amazed to find out that people you thought “fly-too-high and out-of-the-way” are actually very responsive when asked to help out. Successful people have gone through a lot of hardships on the way to

the top. Now they know the path and can tell you the shortcut. It is vital to frame your life in a “better-people-around-me” way. Your social environment is as important to your mental health as nature (the outside environment) is to your physical one. It literally determines the trajectory of your life. Why?

“Eventually, we start to eat what they eat, talk like they talk, read what they read, think like they think, watch what they watch, treat people how they treat them, even dress like they dress.” Darren Hardy gives enough reasons to be selective in this respect. Do not let yourself just drift with a stream of life, paddle the way You want to go.

Value your time and enjoy the moment

“Gratitude is the heart’s memory.” (French Proverb).

By some odd universal law, we are not taught to appreciate what we have and should cherish. Interesting fact: we do not control when the last day, the last hour, or the last moment of our life will be. So why not to make this day, this hour, this moment special. And it might not be any different day from yesterday and the day before. But it is in your power to make this moment singular by enriching it with thoughts You pick, feelings You define, and images Your eyes want to see. If you set yourself up to see the bare tree and a foggy gloomy day with no sun in the sky to brighten your “now” – you exclude yourself from the beauty of smoky-bluish-grey sky, the freshness of misty-dewy air, the soft whispering of the wind and the magnificence of sleeping nature getting ready, growing strength to bloom with colors in spring that is just around the corner.

You have the control and you are able to consciously fine-tune your inner radio-wave to a “happy-sunny-mood” station. Every breath is precious, every sound is unique, and every glance is dear, so again - love yourself and love every moment. Before you open your eyes after leaving the warm embrace of sleep think about the good you want to bring to this day. Think about the person you want to make happy and what can you do to bring a smile to this lovely face. “Enjoy the little things for one day you may look back and realize they were big things.” (Robert Brault). Gratitude is your playmate in this happy-game of life. There are so many things we take for granted and this is the biggest mistake ever made. You are given sight – say “thank you”, you can walk – be appreciative, you are healthy – that is the greatest gift anybody can have. There is no need to go far in search of a brave heart that in spite of physical limitations or severe health issues inspires people by its example of unconditional love and beauty of their souls. Look around and you may find such person living just a few steps from your threshold and open your eyes and ears to the messages these people share by an example of their life. Nowadays they use media to reach to the hearts of people all over the world.

Listen empathetically

“Strangers are just family you have yet to come to know. No life is a waste. The only time we waste is the time we spend thinking we are alone.”

- Mitch Albom (“The five people you meet in heaven.”)

There are many things that we learn early on but think insignificant and omit in

the process of our upbringing. One of them is the very success-defining skill – empathetic listening. That skill involves all our senses: ears, eyes, posture, mimics. It is vital to learn to listen using all of them, and not just to “listen” without even capturing the meaning as we think at this very moment about what we are going to say next. Most of us do that. Pay attention next time and you’ll see the living proof. We need to listen twice as much as we talk. We have two ears and one mouth. Isn’t it a sign to be more attentive when someone is sharing information with us? But here again we need to rein in our egos. We think that no one can give us anything valuable, which is such a big mistake. Every person in our lives comes with a definite purpose and you just miss it when you do not pin your ears back and give yourself in full to this moment of shared wisdom. Imagine a foreign language course in your curriculum. And you decided to skip a lesson or two. How hard is it to stay at the same level of knowledge as your more responsible classmates? You feel you need to put so much extra work in now to acquire the same speed they learn with. Of course, in a classroom environment it is easier to grasp the meaning of some rule that is difficult to understand, as there is always someone who will ask the right question that will cause you to understand the teacher’s explanation. The same thing in life: you may miss that particular opportunity to listen, think and ask the right question and the life you want to live becomes a few steps farther from your reach. We need to master the art of asking questions. And to do that we need to listen and think. And of course, to have the end result in mind (I mean “why I need to

listen” and “what I need to learn”).

The vital ability to think requires some training and a lot of practice time. The way you go to the gym to make your body fit and strong is the same way you need to train your brain to think consciously on subjects of everyday life. I know it is insane to force your mind to think: “take a toothbrush in your right hand and brush the upper left side...” and so on. Our subconscious mind keeps us sane by relieving us of the necessity of tracking every routine movement. But simply by trying to use your left hand more if you are right-handed and vice-versa makes a world of a difference. Small steps like that create a habit of using our thinking muscles more frequently and making them all weather resistant. Remember, every achievement starts with the unremarkable little steps that we take every day in the direction of our ultimate goal.

Be willing to change and trust the world

“Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.”

- George Bernard Shaw

People change and it is normal to think one way today and to have a completely different point of view the next day. You may have in your circle of friends and acquaintances some people that always keep their old beliefs strong as a brick. These people do not even question the validity of those beliefs and don't consider any judgments, believing, that just the idea of obtaining extra information (to clarify and make sure what they think is true is actually still this

way at the present time) is an offense. If you have someone like that around you, you know how hard it is to talk with that kind of person. And you most likely try to either not even talk on that matter or do your best not to be left alone with that person at all. It is absolutely normal to change your mind on this or that subject. There is a ton of new information circling around us every second. And something we believed was good yesterday is not that way anymore today. Look at the medical world: a few years ago mothers were made to believe that breastfeeding is not as beneficial for babies as a formula is. But scholars changed their minds and revealed the undisputable benefit of mother's milk. We should grow. Without growth, life is not sweet at all, and growth requires change.

The same is true with the people that surround you. You may find comfort in the company of a few select friends mostly because at this very moment they think in a similar way and you share similar views. And you still can be close, although your life path leads you to a different destination. You find new people to share your thoughts and to teach you new skills. It makes life an incredible adventure when you let in new impressions that new people bring. You may not be as open to taking the first step and saying "hi." That's not a big deal. There are plenty of people that enjoy doing it, so you just need to welcome that approach. The more people you meet, the more you listen to them – the more receptive your brain becomes to the "people reading" skill. And to develop it is one of the main keys to success in life.

Create good habits

“The strength was always in you. All you had to do was find it.”

- Katherine Givens (not worth quoting – use just the idea)

Sometimes the fastest way to get to your destination is by slowly taking small steps. There is no need to hurry if it leads to a complete stop in the middle of the road. Let's say you want to exercise and get in shape. But you have not been to the gym in a couple years. So now if you decide to go every day and invest an hour and a half or two hours in your workout - you may continue for a week or two, but you end up exhausting the resources of your body and spirit. One day you will find some excuse not to go. The same will happen the next day and as a result you stop fighting yourself. But if you take a different approach you will get into the positive habit of physical exercise and will eventually crave that feeling of healthy energy in your body. By just taking it easier and giving yourself rewarding gifts you will get to this point. Twice a week for thirty minutes you force yourself to go, promising to get a healthy ice-cream on your way back, that although is not the same as the one you used to treat yourself with but is actually pretty darn close. Next week you add one more day, in a month you sometimes feel like adding fifteen more minutes and already after a year you wait for gym day, you enjoy your hour training and you have a couple sets of very nice looking sportswear. If you take the same approach in almost everything and have an ultimate goal of creating a habit, you will go very far by moving slowly.

Take responsibility

“Maybe, sometimes, it’s easier to be mad at the people you trust because you know they’ll always love you, no matter what.”

- Ann Brashares

We need to stop blaming everything and everyone for the mistakes we make. We tend to look for weaknesses in other people to justify ourselves. It is a simpler path, but it is the longest road to happiness and it may not even lead you to the right destination – too many distractions on the way. The solution to almost all our problems is in understanding the power we hold in our own hands. Your decisions, your choices and your actions made this happen. When you take control you will feel you have the power to adjust the course of your life. There are so many things in life we do not notice but regret on the day of the final scene. The play is over and you do not have all the time in the world as you used to think, postponing the time spent with loved ones (later, another day); taking vacation to see an old relative and asking the right questions to find out about the roots of your family tree (now it is too late); to take that vacation you’ve been dreaming about (next year – turns to be several years and now you are not healthy enough to travel long distances). On your deathbed you get to understand that new car you bought not having money for it and putting more debt on your shoulders deprived you of enriching your life with real valuable things – impressions and experiences that only new places and acquaintances can provide. It is a sad play. Don't wait until it becomes your reality. Love

yourself and love everybody and everything around you. Eliminate any negative influences and impressions (TV-horror movies, people that make you feel miserable; places that tend to bring bad memories – anything that can change the state of tranquility). It is not an easy thing to do. But to consciously control your focus is a perfect way to direct your energy flow.

Chapter 2: A Person Beside You

“When you can feel someone else’s pain and joy as if it’s your own, that’s when you know you really love them.”

- Ann Brashares

Know what you want

“Family faces are magic mirrors. Looking at people who belong to us, we see the past, present, and future.”

- Gail Lumet Buckley

We judge people by the way they look when we meet them the first time. Is this right? No. But this is the way it is. We look for recognition and respect from some folks we value, but that happens later, when the look takes a second place in our people-scale. Whether you have a lifelong partner or are waiting for one, what does your ideal look like? What personality traits should he or she possess? What is important for you? Think these questions over but remember you can go just as far by only looks. You may already have learned the hard way that pretty face may be empty inside, and later you have nothing to talk about. But when you give enough time to learn about the person and you like what is inside - you

start to see that face in a different light. So no rush. Take time and pay attention. Life may be short or long, and no one knows how much time you have. Who is the one to share it with you? Be your soul mate, your trusted friend, love of your life. Patience in every aspect is crucial.

As soon as you learn to live with yourself in harmony you will be able to attract the right person to be your companion, your lover, and your friend. Family can be the most magnificent experience of supreme understanding and affection.

This is the most nourishing and fulfilling relationship that can help you to grow and prosper. Just think about the purpose of a family partnership. What does it mean for you? You have to be exact when you take the “search-for-a-soulmate” train. Know where you want to go. Know the end point of this voyage. You will find yourself in a place you’ve created in your mind and believed in. If you are looking for a person to smooth over your loneliness – you will get that kind of a person that can just be there, present but meaningless. And you will get tired of each other at some point. Nothing to talk about and no need to spend time together. And here you are: scheduling and overscheduling yourself just so that you don’t have to come home. People you don’t really want to see, but the more the better – no need to think of the gloominess of your life.

But you can come to a more certain ground if you are more specific about what you expect from your significant other. Think about everything from outside decoration to the filling inside. Be precise about what you expect from your partner and what You are ready to lay on the table of this feast. There is no way

to get a delicious culinary masterpiece that will make others marvel at your skill unless you put effort and creativity into it. The same in relationships. The effort you put into making the defining decision in your life will pay you tenfold. You are the most important ingredient in this universe-recipe. You influence people around you and when you get better, someone beside you advances to a different level as well. Very often to bring fresh air to your relationship you need to start with yourself. And if you are alone at this very moment – the effort in altering the usual course of your thoughts, and consequently behavior - attracts feelings you've been longing for.

“Happiness unshared can scarcely be called happiness; it has no taste.”

Make an effort in relationships

“There can be no disparity in marriage like unsuitability of mind and purpose.”
- Charles Dickens (*“David Copperfield”*)

There is no such a thing as "give-me-and-I-give-you" relationships. Start every encounter with 100% effort to do the best you can for the other party and that will transform your life. That desire to own someone completely settled in every heart. And from there this unruly person puts together selfish schemes. He puts "must-s, has to-s, should -s" in your way, so that you only give if you know that you will get something back. Stop thinking that anybody must, has to and should do this and that for you, because You did a good deed. Let your left hand create unconditional kindness and do not let the right one know about it. Do not expect any payback. Either from that person or in any other form you will get twice as

much. The universal law of boomerang doesn't make mistakes. It regains more speed and comes back with much more force, good or bad – you decide. The same law governs the "country of two people". If both of you give 100% of your love, care, attention, understanding, respect – you can get a hold of happiness. When you put into force the power of devotion and unconditional love; when you take the person beside you as a gift to you and you relish this gift with care and admiration; when you consider that person your soulmate, the one that is going to be always with you no matter what, in good or bad – then you will get what you expect. But if you ponder your relationships as something “not-for-ever”, “today-here-tomorrow-not”, and take it for granted – you also get exactly what you expect. George Eliot expressed the significance of this union like no other: “What greater thing is there for human souls than to feel they are joined for life – to be with each other in silent unspeakable memories.”

Some people tend to expect a change in their partner and prepare themselves for it as a protective mechanism: "when it happens – I will be ready, and it won't be so painful, so I better love him/her less." In this case an essential ingredient for your happiness is missing: the ultimate trust and belief in you both. Think about it for a moment: your kids will love you – yes, but they will have their own lives with their own spouses and children; you need someone who will belong to you only and entirely. Someone who won't care how your looks change, as you get just more beautiful as the years go by, with all those wonders inside. To grow together, to prosper, share ups and downs, support each other every step of the

way... Don't you want that to be your reality? Let it be. Be ready to give 100% of yourself to a loved one. "Our most basic instinct is not for survival but for family. Most of us would give our own life for the survival of a family member, yet we lead out daily life too often as if we take our family for granted." (Paul Pearsall) Don't take it for granted. Say thank you every day and not just once.

Have a purpose for your relationship

"This is part of what a family is about, not just love. It's knowing that your family will be there watching out for you. Nothing else will give you that. Not money. Not fame. Not work."

- Mitch Albom

Have you thought about the underwater waves in the ocean of the union of two? Why do we need each other? Some say that 'loneliness' is suitable only for God. Is it only to fill empty space that we are looking for a companion in our daily life? Most of us want and strive to find that one unique person created specifically for us. Some find peace in a lonely life. Their daily partners are objects, not people. Maybe books or paintings, work or traveling. The purpose seems to fill in space with someone or something. What does family mean to you? Do you want to live a peaceful life in a cozy house and bring up kids? There is meaning in everything and nothing happens without reason. What I mean by that is whatever you are looking for has its own spirit. It can be soothing and curative, treating your suffering soul. The joy you feel may help another being to learn to laugh and feel pleasure from life. God may not give you

your own kids but might give you an abundance of love that you want to share. There is a child that needs his mommy and there is a father that needs to be present for the wellbeing of a little guy. Spirit of love, care, companionship or healing spirit. There is for sure one that is determined for you and when you sense it don't let it slip away from your grasp, hold it tight. It is the one that carries your happiness in a backpack.

“Human lives are not pieces of string that can be separated out from a knot of others and laid out straight. Families are webs. Impossible to touch one part of it without setting the rest vibrating.”

- Diane Setterfield

Two people decide to live together. Everyone has a calling that makes life inspiring. The two have a purpose to their union. The success of this newly created merger depends on the oneness of their mission. If one of them brings thoughts about status and acquisitions, and the other wants to serve people – do you think they will be able to maintain peace in their relationship? Each will be pulling in opposite directions their family-blanket and it will eventually tear.

There is no happiness if each is driven only by egocentric ideas, without considering the needs and wants of others. When you create a family – you become one organism, living and breathing through one source, looking and moving in one direction. The meaning of the words of Dr. Wayne Dyer:

“Remind yourself that there is no way to happiness; rather, happiness is the way.” – is deeply rooted in the understanding of the importance of every

moment of your life. And the moment you decide to unite your life with another person, first you need to understand that he or she makes you happy now.

Happiness comes from inside not from the outside sources that you think may produce joy. The combination of you both, creating a universe of your own – this is the happiness of never being alone anymore. Your best friend and your lover will be pulling the carriage of your future with you. If every move you make brings you delight, the path to your ultimate goal will be easier. You will meet the right people on your way, great opportunities will open their doors and you will find yourself always in the right place at the right moment.

When you have the very person beside you and decide to be together and bring to this world a better version of you both – then you agree on a major transformation. This decision and the responsibility that comes with it will make you both change dramatically. Now not only does your happiness depend on the decisions you make, every turn you both take on your way to a family may lead to your child's well-being or failure. Do not fear the responsibility, but do not take it too lightly. The beauty of parenting and the prickles of it make your family's journey fascinating. Very often you will be surprised by what you encounter on your way. You may feel sad and disappointed - do not let hardships scare you. Be brave and strong, flexible and open to change. You will be constantly adjusting yourself and learning every step of your fatherly/motherly way.

Chapter 3: Understanding of Parenting

“Be grateful for the home you have, knowing that at this moment, all you have is all you need.”

- Sarah Ban Breathnach

Raise a child able to trust the world

“Under heaven all can see beauty as beauty, only because there is ugliness. All can know good as good only because there is evil. Being and nonbeing produce each other. The difficult is born in the easy. Long is defined by short, the high by the low. Before and after go along with each other. So the sage lives openly with apparent duality and paradoxical unity. The sage can act without effort and teach without words. Nurturing things without possessing them, he works, but not for rewards; he completes, but not for results. When the work is done, it is forgotten. That is why it lasts forever. ”

- Lao-tzu 2nd Verse of “Tao Te Ching”

Dear reader, from now on I will be writing about kids. You will see that I use pronouns “he” and “she” interchangeably. It is intentionally that I do so.

This way I’m not giving any preference to one or the other gender.

This verse from the book of wisdom teaches us about paradoxical existence. We live in a world of contrasts. To understand and appreciate beauty we need to learn about ugliness. We can see white because we know what black looks like. The truth is born in lies. Pain makes pleasure so alluring. As a mature parent, you know the harsh and bitter taste of betrayal. You learned about the spiritual agony of a suffering heart and the physical soreness of broken bones. Your

desire to protect your child from all the hardships of this world is understandable. Is it possible to put him in the shell of your care and safekeeping? Yes, but this existence is miserable. He won't be able to recognize true friendship and companionship without knowing how disappointment and treachery hurts. Will he value and cherish his good health unless he knows how bitter the taste of medicine is and how sore the bruise is from a clumsy fall? The minute you are not around anymore... what do you expect him to do? To learn how to clear up the road without ever holding a machete in his hand. Now without your warning and mentorship he'll cut and bruise his gentle hands severely because they are not used to hard work.

Your mission on this parenting-journey is to create an environment of trust and security so that your child feels love in the quantity he needs. Respect his emotions and value his innocence. Never ridicule his pure soul. Show an example of a principle-centered life. Do not think that if you teach him to trust he may be too naïve when the time comes to stand on his own two feet. He will develop the intuition and sensitivity to read dishonesty if he knows the value of true feelings. Seeing your loving attitude, he will be able to note any trace of betrayal ahead of time. He will still make mistakes here and there but they will be few in comparison with the disastrous consequences that could've taken place in a different case scenario. Imagine a child growing up in a family where he is scolded and misunderstood. The environment of selfishness and lack of love: where whatever love he gets is controlled and given in small amounts. Later in

life he won't be able to see white and black in people and relationships. He won't be able to trust his friends or spouse. He will be looking for a deceitful motive in any person's actions towards him. He'll suspect unfaithfulness everywhere. And the pain of it he will taste in full because choosing the right person will be hard. Without experiencing true love and care he won't know if what he's got is good and if what he has is worth cherishing. He will see a gaze of humiliation and think it may be a loving one, because he saw the same coming from the very people he used to trust with his whole heart.

Remember – love is the key. Respect is the door. And happiness in life is the path that this door leads to.

Your assignment in this journey of life exploration is to be a guide, not a guard; to explain the nature of things, good and bad, not hide their existence. Do not try to clear the road but predict the stony ground or the dark path through a forest full of dangers and prepare him, equip him with the right gear for the hard trip.

Help your child to fulfill his destiny

“Love begins at home, and it is not how much we do... but how much love we put in that action.”

- Mother Teresa

Family is a spiritual experience for both spouses. Success is determined by understanding each other's roles and trust between the two. Father is wisdom in the face of difficulty. Mother is compassion and love. The combination will form the child's personality and develop her character.

A child is born with her personality written in her own life-book. Our goal as parents is to help to open this book and teach our child to read it. We should not in any way try to change its contents. The main secret of this book is that we cannot read it right away. We also need to learn how to do it by gently helping our kids through this process. We see just blank pages at the beginning and only later start noticing some signs and strive to learn this language and understand it fully. We carry unlimited power in our hands and used unwisely it can ruin this book by rewriting it. This happens if you are lazy about learning: “Why learn a new language when I can just write what I think is right? Isn’t that much easier?” Our kids do not belong to us. When born, they already have everything of their own. You can trace the strong spirit early on as well as discover gentle softness right away. By trying to be a writer, not a reader you may ruin the exquisiteness of this book. Eventually you will lose interest in reading it. Instead we just need to guide our kids gently on their way by sincerely being willing to know them and admitting the existence of their perfect nature.

Acceptance is the key. Take your child’s hand and start this thought-provoking journey without trying to force or judge. Do not compare – but respect.

Harmony in a child’s inner place (the place where she keeps her most sacred soul belongings) is vital. This precious personality that grows in love comes to understand the internal peace within herself. The child in this atmosphere will obtain a strong belief in her importance and will be ready to defend her personality in any circumstances (playground, school, work) not being afraid of

ridicule.

When the time comes, a child reveals her dreams to an adult. In most cases this all-knowing wise individual bitten by the world wants “to protect” the little girl and put her back on the ground first before the cruel world does that in a less gentle way: “Wait, my friend, reality will show its sharp teeth to you. You better think about how to finish school and find a good paying job.” – he says with a gloomy smile on his face. What are we without dreams? Mere automatons.

Dreams make us move, create masterpieces, and make new scientific discoveries that save millions of lives. Dream driven actions make a king from a peasant, and a king without dreams becomes a vagabond. By supporting our kids when they strive for happiness and greatness, we make them believe in the imaginary reality and help them make it real.

Very often we do not pay as much attention to our children’s character as we do to teaching them to hold a spoon and eat, to brush their teeth and make their bed by themselves (to free a bit more time for ourselves). Patience is the highest rung on the “child-care ladder”. With this capacity in our hands we can help our kids to attain up their “dream realized life”.

Do not force your little one to imitate anyone or compare him to other children. In striving to imitate, the child becomes like a crow in an old parable. He vainly tries master flying in the skies in an attempt to become a sparrow. As he strives, the little crow forgets how to walk on his own.

Look at the child in his first year of life. This is his fairytale where there is no

need to pretend that you like something when you don't. He is the king of this land, comfortable in the presence of loving, devoted parents and fierce if he doesn't like someone, even if this someone is the monarch of the neighboring state. This king is brave in everything he does, not afraid of doing something wrong. His power to be himself should be respected because it brings him peace. Parents as his chaperones on his way through his kingdom should show support and unconditional love: "We love you as you are. You will never make us love you less." In this land they have discussions and arguments, they have different opinions, listen to each other with respect, learning from their differing points of view and solving problems together. When the ruler asks "what" the chaperone answers with patience and honesty, explaining the "why". Parents know that the explanation should not be misleading as it is hard to correct this mistake and keep the same level of trust afterward. We should remember to not pressure our kids by instilling in them the behavior that we think is appropriate. The main emphasis is on playing and making it joyful. Even such a thing as brushing teeth can be fun. And if the question "why should I do it?" is asked, patience and creativity work here to make the answer reasonable in a childish way but with a truly grown-up meaning.

The child is entrusted to you. Do not consider him a source of pleasure for yourself: giving love when you feel like it, and if your mood is blue – considering the child as a mere hindrance on the way to a quiet sleep on the couch. Listen to the baby's needs, look for signs of spiritual openness, pay

attention to the dreams communicated in the baby's language.

Do not condition your love

“Blessed is the home where each puts the other's happiness first.”

- Anonymous

The mother's body is like a tranquil old-fashioned clock that soothingly counts out heartbeats. For nine months a baby lives in this dark peace. The mother should try her best to stay calm and avoid any distractions that may disturb her peace. The spiritual bond between the baby and his mother is so strong that it continues after the birth of the baby for 4 more years. This little body feels safe in his mother's presence and scared of the world full of unfamiliar sounds when she is not around. The pace with which the clock ticks governs the gentle and deliberate motion of a child's life. He eats slowly, tasting the food; takes time to dress himself and tie his shoes – don't hasten this learning process. Life shouldn't be about speed, unfortunately we tend to exhibit little patience as we are always in a hurry. That causes stress. We need to slow down and at the very least let our kids live life the way their internal clock tells them to. The natural flow of life, unhurried and consistent should be respected.

You need to let your child experience life in small but meaningful ways. Let him get cold so he knows why he needs to put on several layers of clothes, let him get hungry so he wants and asks for food. By chasing your child with a spoon in one hand and an extra pair of socks in another you won't show him the reasons behind your actions. Let him understand things around him.

A child is naturally curious and it is important not to damage this desire to learn as it is a distinctive feature of human beings. When forced to learn something, children behave as adults. When you are told to submit a paper on a topic you are quite interested in under a threat of some kind, will you enjoy the process or will you experience stress and resentment? Children feel the same and by constantly forcing them by whip and candy, their curiosity may vanish. Then we witness a child with a learning disability. And the reason is simply a disturbance in the natural flow of things. They wonder “why” – encourage them to explore further under your supervision.

“What can you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family.”

- Mother Teresa

In a child’s world everything is real: a friend can be a giant lion, that lets him ride on its back, or a small kitten, that he holds in his tiny hands and feeds with imaginary water. Their imaginations are vivid and realistic, senses are sharp, and beliefs shaped and shaken by parents. Be careful what you tell your children and what you want them to accept as true. They feel any false note, but they trust you fully so they think “it is the way it should be since mom deceives me in this way, it is ok for me to do the same”. You tell your little girl that the sweet piece of cake you eat and that looks so inviting is a harsh remedy that doctor prescribed, and it is not tasty at all, on the contrary – it is very sour and bitter. You try to protect your little princess from the allergic reaction she has on her lovely skin each time she eats too much sugary stuff, so you invent this “white lie”. Next

time you playfully ask her to share a little piece of an apple that you've just given her, she tells you that it is not good for you and you may cough if you eat it. Oh, how skillfully they mirror everything we do, consciously and unconsciously.

And when you make your love conditional by saying: "Eat this porridge. You'll make mommy love you even more." Or "Behave, little man, don't upset your father, he doesn't love the kids that act this way." And unnoticeably that little heart is wounded with the realization that mommy will love him "only" and "if" he will be just like that boy who lives next door. The consequences of this conditional love are harsh. Someday your little darling won't be so dependent on you and feeling the taste of freedom he will lose the connection with you, who loved "only" and "if" in search of real love, but not believing in its existence. And this lack of trust in the purity of compassion will follow him wherever he goes. Don't make this happen. Don't ruin the trust and loving power of the heart you were entrusted to bring into this world.

Trust the nature

"What one loves in childhood stays in the heart forever."

- Mary Jo Putney

A baby born is one of the most benevolent and impeccable creations. The child has his dharma already written and there is no need to put too much pressure on ourselves thinking over all the possible scenarios for the play of his life. We often write a script of step by step acts of this play: kindergarten, school, college;

who should he hang out with and what should he do to earn his living in future. To follow the written plan too closely in this life is no use. However, it is important to be adaptable to the ever-changing social and business environment. We do not have the right to decide our kids' destiny. The time will come and they will be out of your nest, building their own. Do not strive for full control over your children. Let them make their own decisions. Trust their judgment. They naturally know better what is better for them. Intuitively their body tells them to eat slowly – it is good for digestion. Your daughter may have a different view on how she wants to look today and she's putting on this pair of socks because of the color, let her do so even though it does not match the rest of her outfit. Being small and vulnerable she used to sleep and eat just at the time she needed it. How different would've been our life if all of us could've listened and actually heard our body's language?

If your child behaves different or misbehaves, to be more exact, often when you are around and plays an obedient kid when you are not there – it is very normal. He reveals his true self in front of the person he loves and trusts the most. Analyze your own acting in front of others in the office and at home with your spouse. You come home tired and let your irritation out – she or he will understand. Do you remember those moments? You need to express self-control to calm yourself down and not to put all your troubles on your spouse's shoulders. Everybody needs a place where one can relax and be himself, even if at this very moment it is not the best version of you. Kids need to have their

freedom atmosphere where his most cherished people will always be and understand.

The result of too much pressure in trying “to teach good habits” may be the lack of time and effort to cultivate a strong personality. If your child obeys you all the time she ends up living a life to please others and think that to be happy she needs to make others happy. You want a resolute child, one who knows what she wants from life, whose world is full of colors and deep emotions. Develop her sense of trust by giving her the opportunity to comfortably express herself within her family. Let her share her feelings with you, do not think they are not serious and childish – for this little soul it is ultimately important to find support and compassion in her parents.

Build confidence in your child

“One of the luckiest things that can happen to you in life is, I think, to have a happy childhood.”

- Agatha Christie

To build confidence in your child is to add a building block to the house of human dignity. You should take charge of a very important place in your child’s emotional world – a place of honesty and persistence. This will help to shape a sensitive and at the same time, a powerful personality. Do you want to raise a child that depends on you or do you want to bring up a resolute strong character? To do so you need to work on your own character. If you are brave and honest – this task is for you. Some people perceive weakness and want to raise a

submissive child. In this case the little girl at some point forgets how to show her real feelings as she gets so used to pleasing her parents for the love they give. She may lose the connection with her true inner spirit and will wear a mask all her life without even realizing it. Do you need a child that hides herself from you and from the outside world? This way you may never say that you know who she truly is, and you don't know what to expect from her. Time comes and we all lose that connection with our parents either for a while or forever and then the main role in our life is taken by 'society': friends, coworkers and so on. Now you cannot predict how her character will shift to please other people around her, whom she considers more important at this point of her life.

We all lead by example and this is the most important thing to remember in raising a child. Parenting is a never-ending learning process for both parties: parents and kids. Your child may teach you many things. And the most important here is your desire to open your heart and read the words of true love inscribed in it. Love yourself as you are and love your child unconditionally. Be open to exploring your true emotional world so you can become sensitive to your baby's sacred needs. Your goal is to grow genuine admiration, when a child is obedient because she trusts and respects her parents and not because of fear.

Understand the 'self' inside

"There was a place in childhood that I remember well, and there a voice of sweetest tone bright fairytales did tell."

- Samuel Lover

It is important to understand the mechanisms that govern our emotional world. To do so we need to go to our 'inner place' and find the 'self' – the personality that tells you to be depressed when it is sunny outside, the guy that brings intuition into play and by means of it tries to tell you how to act or how to perceive this situation or person, it is the one that brings to the surface thoughts of suicide in a person whose life seems harmonious and fulfilling to an outside observer. You cannot deny the existence of that 'self' within you. You should admit this presence and learn how to live in harmony with it. This is crucial for a thoughtful upbringing. You will be able to read the cause and effect of defense mechanisms that are turned on and off by the 'self' inside of every human being. Don't think that every conflict between you and your child is a competition you need to win. It is just the way children protect their dignity. Imagine someone telling you that you are irresponsible – your first reaction to such an offense will be to prove the opponent wrong and you blush and start to defend yourself. The same happens with your child when you tell him that he is untidy. His defensive reaction is not intended to offend you but to protect his inner 'self' – his dignity. Even babies do their best to protect their 'self'. They cry if they sense any threat from a person looking at them. When you constantly tell your little one, "you are lazy, too slow, forgetful, clumsy" and so on he will get into the habit of fighting the assaults and can even reach a violent state. No one wants to be perceived negatively, especially by the people closest to them – family members. But eventually he'll get tired of being defensive. He will feel like an alien in his own

house. You need to worry when your child stops protecting himself from harm and becomes silent. That means he has become too tough to understand his feelings or to be sensitive to any outside intrusion. An insensitive child doesn't have strong principles to live by. He loses his identity. This is a real disaster. The child that became tired from constant attacks and became desensitized loses the taste of life, the joy of creation. Only the one whose inner place was cherished can experience with his heart not just senses the smell of a flower, the touch of wind on his hair, or the taste of a berry.

A mother's arms should be an always present shelter from all calamities, big or small, coming from a father or an older brother or sister, or the outside world. Mother will understand. She will be just but will love her child no matter what. Always remember that words are like birds – you let them out, and you will never be able to catch them again. Words create deep wounds in a heart that burn and can even leave scars that will last a lifetime. Be cautious about the birds you let fly out.

Do not try to be a conscience for your child. He already has one and needs to act accordingly. If you try to govern his actions all the time, he will follow the path you've chosen and forgets how to react to the inner call. He needs to see what is right and wrong through his own conscience, this way that skill will be with him forever. To make conscience an always present friend a child needs to get used to it always being around. Allow him to make mistakes and understand the cause and effect.

Understand pleasure seeking ‘self’

“It was nice growing up with someone like you – someone to lean on, someone to count on...someone to tell on!”

- Anonymous

Another danger that occurs when a child’s conscience is sleeping, long forgotten, is when a child cannot cope with his own internal desires. When all that he knew throughout his life is orders and expectations to behave a certain way – he loses self-control and the skills to judge what is good and what is bad by himself.

You have seen examples of falsely obedient children. They behave as expected when they are at home, trying to eliminate any conflicts with their parents and siblings. And as soon as they leave home they try everything as if they are rebelling. Some end up drug addicts, others find pleasures in uncontrolled sexual behavior, and there are individuals that cannot say ‘no’ to a tasty high-calorie snack and end up overweight. They hate themselves for the weakness they have no strength to fight.

The reason for all of this is the lack of personal identity. Let your child experience life. Be close by to explain and lead by example instead of forcing him blindly to follow your instructions just because you think this is right. These little adventurers need to experiment early on and learn how to live in peace with their consciousness. When a four-year-old feels discomfort when he makes the blunder of breaking a toy he took forcefully from a smaller child – he wouldn’t

do that again not because it disappointed you, but because he felt ashamed and saw the tears of another little child. You know that life is not all about joy and pleasure. They need to learn that as well with your help and support. Let them fly but keep your arms always ready to catch them if they fall, to embrace them and treat their wounds.

Learn about spiritual protection

“Very often we travel the world over in search of what we need and return home to find it.”

- George Moore

We all are equipped with the perfect defense system to keep our inner selves at peace from outside intrusion. Some are experts in this art, some are good, some forget how to turn on the safety barrier.

But we are born with it perfectly adjusted. Look at a child who just lost everything he ever loved and cared about: his parents, his house with his dear toys – everything. And you see him smiling and playing in a sandbox. This behavior doesn't mean that the child is insensitive. That only tells us that his soul cannot tolerate it and to protect the peace within him he denies what happened.

Remember one of the numerous stories when a child completely forgets what happened as well as a few days or years before or after an emotionally devastating trauma. Such cases are known not just among kids but among adults as well. Our perfectly structured brain mechanisms work without fail unless we

forget how to operate this system. The same defense triggers a child to suppress her emotions when she is not given enough love at home. To protect herself she learns how to be satisfied with less although her whole being cries for more and more. If she is faced with constant threats, comparisons with other 'better' neighbor's kids and constant reproaches, she learns how to satisfy others to avoid conflicts. It is a straight route to developing a fake personality. In her adulthood she will be constantly looking for what others expect from her, and how she needs to be perceived by them in order to be liked. That leads her to a 'lie-life' when she says things that are considered lies and doesn't feel any pricks of conscience as she just got so used to pretending. She feels that it is normal and safe to say what is better for others to hear or for her to be praised without even considering the moral side of things.

If a child was constantly abused at home and was forced to bottle up her feelings for protection in that environment, she may develop internal aggressiveness that eventually will be released and directed either towards her younger siblings or other kids at school. Later in life she may seek a profession where she will have an opportunity to be authoritative and forceful towards others without judgment. She may choose to become a policeman, teacher, senior manager or even a nurse – any profession that gives her some power. "Violence only breeds violence." And forms of this demoralizing act can be physical, emotional or psychological. Someone said: "Advising a person in public is like insulting him." This is one of the forms of violence as well as slapping a child and continuing to abuse him by

asking: “Why are you crying?” The physical punishment may not be painful in terms of bodily suffering but it may cause a little child’s soul to bleed severely. Sometimes a child develops feelings of affection towards the person tormenting him. A parent constantly causing a little person to be stressed and afraid may find an increase in love from her child. This kind of love is deceiving and changes when a child grows up and feels freedom from his parent’s bonds. The same happens when a teacher develops a dislike for some of her students. The very child experiencing disrespect and continuous reproaches tries to find all possible ways to get into the teacher’s pet circle by maybe peaching on others or starting to falsely believe that he likes what the teacher likes and starting to behave in a similar way. This mode of action is destructive to the personality as well. Again a false personality takes charge of a child’s inner world and his true emotional peace are lost and forgotten.

If a child faces a constant need to use protective mechanisms she starts to fear life and lose trust in humankind. To avoid this pitfall in upbringing your child needs to know that no matter what, even if she misbehaves, her mom and dad are going to love her just the same. An authoritative regime will lead to disastrous consequences. Children are very sensitive to honesty and sincerity. They sense any ‘white’ or ‘black’ lie and develop the idea that it is normal to do so as the very ones they trust and love behave this way. Be aware of this and show an example of noble spirit. There is no need to lie to hide your mistake and by doing so maintain the child’s respect. Show that mistake is possible, and

everyone can make it – even you, a highly praised and loved parent. The child understands that she can fall and come to you for comfort rather than telling a lie to justify her ripped trousers and dirty shirt. The truth is always a better choice and it should be the only one.

Create natural surroundings for your child. As if outside in nature, when there is nothing to worry about: no one to disappoint, no furniture that you cannot draw at, no books you shouldn't touch. That atmosphere sets your child free and you too feel more open to her and more willing to understand. Let her express her emotions and know that she will not be humiliated. Only when you understand and admit in your heart of hearts that the being you are entrusted with is perfect and deserves respect can you bestow this world with a true gem of humankind.

Know the difference between emotional freedom and behavioral discipline

“Family discussions, with old and young alike taking part, can be as stimulating as sparks that ignite a fire.”

- Spanish saying

Every child is born with the growing desire to discover the unknown. Curiosity governs his actions and you need to satisfy it and help it to develop into a conscious longing to learn, that in later years will determine his success in life. He perceives you as a magician that knows everything and has numerous wonders. You reach into your bag, take out the phone and put it to your ear and listen and talk back, you put it back and grab a bottle of water, put it on the table and place a cookie on it that you just pulled from the same charmed sack. Don't

be surprised when this little adventurer approaches your bag as soon as you put it down and starts his discovery process, taking everything out and examining every object. Let him satisfy his curiosity, when he is done he probably won't disturb the contents of it anymore. But if he continues to do so every time you leave the room or just turn around, and you can tell that now it is a mere play – not curiosity; then you can show him a sign of your disapproval. He is a smart little guy and will read the expression on your face: knitted eyebrows and stiff lips. If you are careful when distinguishing between curiosity and misbehaving, you will reap the fruits of your efforts soon enough. One day traveling you visit a wonderful ancient church with colorful frescos, golden candelabras, and stained glass windows. You come a bit earlier to have enough time to wander around and then to listen to the organ music. Your son will look around with his eyes wide open and a smile on his face, taking time to examine each painting. When you quietly call him to have a seat beside you he will show ‘behavioral discipline’ and sit beside you and listen with you, maybe still occasionally looking around. You did a great job thinking ahead and coming earlier to give him time to contemplate the beauty of the place. You may see another family with kids. They came just in time to sit down and listen to the music. The mother keeps reproaching the kids for not sitting still. The father may threaten them with what he may do when they leave the place. And the little ones try to obey and hide the burning desire to look around and see what is on that wall behind them and the one on the left, and to learn why there are multiple colors and sun comes

through the windows in rainbow-like rays. These kids will get used to bottling their emotions up to save themselves from scolding.

Create emotional freedom in your house, it will determine your future success as a parent and you will be proud of your children. Discipline is important. The goal is to create true harmony between the emotional world and conscience. If you govern in your household by the rules you never explain properly so that little soul may understand and admit them – you teach external discipline – one without understanding. Kids will obey because of fear of punishment, not because they internally comprehend the importance and meaning of these rules. And when the very person who introduced the rules is gone, the kids won't follow them anymore – there will be no threat to force them to do so. But if you take time to explain every disciplinary action to your child in a way so that his conscience will recognize and acknowledge it – whatever happens in future, with you beside him or when you are gone – his conscience will remind him the good and bad, true and false, love and hate. Conscience is the most sensitive scale that perfectly distinguishes between right and wrong. Be an example of a principled centered life, governed by your conscience and this way you will teach your child to balance the emotional world with the help of internal discipline. Sooner or later the time will come when only those treasures will help him to be a good person. Make sure you supply him with all he needs and you will be proud of your child for making this world a better place.

Conclusion

“Family teaching is by example only.”

- Chinese saying

To reward this world with a person who will be driven to bring glory to his community, country, nature and the whole world is a parent's main goal. And the process requires a lot of self-assessment and consideration. Sometimes when you see some signs of undesirable behavior: lying, open aggressiveness or quiet anger - you need to step back and analyze what could have caused it. If you try to raise a child who is always obedient and pride yourself on your ability to discipline your little one, you may expect sooner or later rebellion in a disagreeable form: he may take drugs, bully others in school or in the streets – giving way to his emotions and perceiving personal pleasure as the main thing. Another pitfall is to strive to instill an individualistic point of view in your child. You may think that by praising without measure and often without reason you will create a winning spirit. You bestow love and create an impression of ‘the world is mine and all is made for me and for my good’. This child later in life will put herself on a pedestal and take no excuses when it comes to her personal success. She won't care about the rest of the world and suffering around her. If she feels it more convenient for her she'll put her elderly parents in a nursing home instead of sacrificing her time and maybe her career to take care of them. Make every effort to raise a child that sees his success in harmony with the world around him, who don't think a moment choosing between the need to take care of a cat suffering as the result of a fight and being late for a meeting. It may

not sound like such a good example, but if suffering in any form (experienced by a person, animal or any creation) initiates compassion – this is the outcome you've been looking for. This child considers himself a member of society. He can empathize and see the world around him through the glass of his emotions. He lives in harmony with nature and humankind. He won't break a tree branch just for fun. He'll never even think to graffiti his name or any other writing on the wall of a store. He'll never attempt to throw a stone into a shop window just to hear the alarm and then speed away. He will cherish and respect the result of other people's effort and the result of the effort of The One, Who created this world... So he won't pollute his body with nicotine, alcohol or drugs, not just for his own good but for the good and well-being of others around him and the ones he loves the most.

We are all born with our characters defined and a skilled and observant parent can trace some unique features right away. A baby may be quiet and cry only when hungry or he can call for your attention every other minute. Children are all different from the time of their birth. If you consider your little one, coming to this world and changing your life as a welcomed and 'respected guest' – you will give him due attention and care, listen to his needs and come to his aide whenever it is required, answer his calls for love each and every time without restrictions – that will be enough to make him a happy addition to your family. Open your heart and create a safe environment where the innocence of your baby won't be taken advantage of. Govern your actions with respect to his

emotional world and always try to put yourself in his tiny shoes to try and see the world through those innocent eyes full of love and devotion.

Afterword

"In every conceivable manner, the family is linked to our past, bridge to our future."

- Alex Haley

Now when I am a mother I realize how challenging and rewarding this role is. Every possible color on an emotional spectrum is present in my life. I didn't know how fast and easy you can go from being exhausted to angry and impatient then right away feel regret and shame for not controlling this flow that ends up with laughter and tenderness after all. Raising kids is not easy, and knowing that I am not the only one who does not know how to react to screaming and rolling on the floor and how to perceive some bad temper towards other kids in a friend's house – helps me to strive for more knowledge by listening to the ones that are more experienced, and by reading the others who learned a lot and sometimes a hard way. This is a life exam and I decided to study to pass it. This process involves a lot of explorative reading. And not until I got acquainted with the works of Alice Miller, Adem Gunes and some other pedagogues, psychologists, and teachers - I found answers to some questions crowding in my head.

What I came to realize is that strategies my parents used happened to be not the best ones and, although I may think that if I turned out pretty good and it won't

harm my kids if I use the same schemes and rules, it is still unpredictable if the same guidelines will lead to the results I want to reach. There is no way anyone can predict the future of their kids – you cannot predict to 100% certainty if your tomorrow will turn out to be exact with your plan. But I wanted to make sure I do the best possible choices and make right decisions concerning my kids every day with the goal in mind to raise not ‘good’ (which means in parenting language ‘obedient’ kids) but happy and loving, kind and caring, thoughtful and creative, responsible and confident, independent and fulfilled children. ‘Good’ = ‘obedient’ is not always desirable and some resistance to parents can be a positive sign. When fear is used - kids do whatever they’re told without thinking, just to please and obey adults. These children may become what their parents want them to be and lose themselves on the way. There is a difference if a child does something and believes in it rather than just following the instructions. The first way creates independent thinkers and the second leads to unpredictable results. Today this kid is listening to his parents without questioning and does everything he is told immediately and tomorrow he does the same – but now he listens to someone else, his peers – and these people may not be the lot you’d pick. If your ultimate desire is to help your kids to set and meet their own goals – then be prepared to find out that they may make choices and embrace values that aren’t the same as yours.

It is not easy to keep big picture in mind and focus on long-term goals rather than on immediate compliance, to consider what our children need rather than

just what we're demanding, to see the whole child rather than just the behavior especially when one of your children is screaming in a public place – but it is worthwhile.

“Twenty Proven Steps for Successful Parenting” is my journey as a mother. I went through a transformation and the path was not an easy one. There were mistakes on my way and I learned a lesson. Motherhood is a never-ending learning process, and there is no one book to suit every scenario and one rule to follow in each situation. Every family is a different book to write and every mother is a craftsman of a unique kind. I found major principals that helped me to polish my motherly style and I hope if not all of them so at least some may be of some help to you. If so – my mission is fulfilled.