

What does it take to parent your child without shame? It's important to recognize when you are reacting from your shame. Pay attention. Start evaluating your responses and reactions to your child's normal childhood needs, foolish behavior and a personality that annoys you. When it comes to parenting without shame, you are the one who needs to change, not your child.

What Should You Do?

It may surprise some, but the truth is that your children want to please you. You are the one they want to acknowledge their accomplishments. Despite of all their arguing and defiant behavior you are the sun in their sky.

All children will do things that leave us baffled, angry or frustrated. The important thing is to have a thoughtful reaction when they do. Our response determines whether those mistakes break their spirit or teach a life lesson. Our response needs to be about the action, not about their character.

Name calling, haranguing, telling others in front of your child, mocking them or other character killing responses instill shame in a child.

Our response should be to talk to them about what they did, not attack who they are. If you are too angry at the moment, send them to their room and simmer down. Take a minute to think things through. Then talk to them about what they did. Outline the consequences if it was direct disobedience.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the ability to not just feel but to have a sense of our own emotions.

Sometimes your child may act out because of something deeper that is bothering them. They may overhear a private conversation and fabricate a story out of the pieces they know. They may be scared, worried, or upset over a situation they do not understand. It is up to us as parents to establish a relationship of trust and help them put their fears and bad feelings into words.

The key to this is *dialogue*. Dialogue is the act of both talking and listening. Using dialog is important and there are rich opportunities to do so, even when your child is misbehaving. It is okay to let your child know you are upset or angry by their behavior.

Be the Person You Want Them to be

Children watch everything we do, and what we do, without realizing they are watching us, is powerful. There is no greater way to influence them than to be the person we want them to be and to respond the way we want them to respond to others.

It is our actions and reactions that shut us down or open us up. We are the crucial component in this. Changes are not going to come quickly. It takes time. But the rewards are well worth the efforts – raising children who will become happy, well adjusted adults.