

1 Raise a Child by developing his/her Strengths



It is obvious that every child has his/her strengths and weaknesses. There are children who are good in sports but weak in their studies. There are also children who can draw very well but do not possess good communication skills, etc. No one is good in each and every aspect of life.

At a time of great challenges and high competitiveness, fear sets in and causes parents to think, "If we don't train our child to do this, his/her future will be miserable!". This forces them to look for various solutions to overcome their child's weaknesses. Most of the time, the child is sent for tuition or relevant courses to overcome his/her weaknesses. Of course, it is necessary to help a child overcome his/her weaknesses as much as possible. However, weaknesses cannot be totally eliminated.

By forcing a child to try to totally eliminate his/her weaknesses, there is a possibility that the child "will lose motivation in other fields" during this process of elimination. In raising a child, one of the most important objectives is "to build confidence and initiate motivation". On the other hand, one should avoid a child from being "demotivated" due to loss of confidence.

The following are examples of adults who have lost their self confidence due to excessive correction of their weaknesses:

"I was very weak in mathematics when I was in primary school. When in standard 4, my mother noticed this. Thinking of giving me a better future, she sent me to a mathematics class nearby to help me master the concept of high speed calculation.

Immediately, I was asked to take a level assessment class. I was quite upset when the results showed that my calculation ability was only at primary 3. This made me lose confidence.

Furthermore, in order for me to catch up, the tutor provided me with a lot of homework. Instead of improving, I started to worry about my weakness in math and given the huge amount of homework, my condition deteriorated.

Finally I lost confidence towards my ability in solving mathematical problems. Also, I felt nauseous when I had to deal with numbers. Even now, when I need to calculate or use numbers, I become nervous and feel helpless."

This experience started when a mother wanted to help her child overcome his weakness in mathematics. Instead of assisting, the extra classes “added fuel to fire”. The following example provides a total opposite scenario. Albert Einstein was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics at the age of 42.

Did you know that Einstein was in fact, a poor grade student?



Einstein was extremely weak in subjects such as history, foreign languages, etc and was given the nickname “Idiot”. When he was in secondary school, his Latin language teacher also commented, “absolutely nothing has gone right with him”. Finally, he dropped out of high school.

However, Einstein’s strength was that he was able to solve difficult equations easily. Einstein focused in expanding his strength thoroughly. As a result, he was noticed by a university in Switzerland and from there, he further enhanced his ability.

For example, if we can extend our ratio of strength to weakness from 5:5 to 10:5, our strength becomes remarkable. Therefore, instead of focusing on the weak subjects or weak areas of a child, we work on the strengths of the child. From here, we are able to channel this new found confidence as energy to handle the weak subject and weak area. This method is more effective. With confidence, children will approach their poor subjects and areas proactively with the appropriate attitude. When this happens, children will have the attitude of “IF THERE IS A WILL, THERE IS A WAY”.

We are not suggesting that parents to need only enhance the child’s strengths and ignore his/her weaknesses. We believe that parents need to praise and enhance their child’s strengths first, then improve his/her weaknesses. This will ensure the rapid growth of the child.

2 Raise The Child Based On The Individuality of The Child, Not By Comparison to Other Children.

Most parents label a child "good child", when they study hard, do well academically and listen to their parents' instructions. On the other hand, a child who does not study, produces poor results and does not follow instructions is labeled as a "bad child".

However, many great individuals in this world, belong to the latter group. Among others, Albert Einstein, Galileo, Mozart, Wright Brothers, Leonardo da Vinci, John Lennon, J.F Kennedy, Thomas Edison, Ryoma Sakamoto, etc. were all said to belong to the ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) group. (Reference: 「ひらめきすぎる人々」 ロクスケ摘著、VOICE Magazine). The child possesses 3 major symptoms; short attention span, impulsive and unable to stay calm.

Probably you too can imagine how difficult their daily lives were, from their preschool to their teenage years. The environment they lived in did not provide the best conditions to produce excellent students. Although they were not categorized as good students, these great individuals created job opportunities and made this world a better place for us. Some time ago, Nobel Prize award achiever, Prof. Koichi Tanaka also said that .

"The most important matter is to be enthusiastic in what a person loves to do".

Therefore, firstly, we must respect a child's individuality and his interests in life. It is important to get to know the child as an individual instead of comparing him/her to other children or his/her siblings.

The world's greatest inventor, Thomas Edison did not attend primary school and merely learnt from his mother. In fact, his curiosity and eagerness to learn developed, because he did not attend school. Edison's mother did not stop him from experimenting and his natural abilities were further developed thereafter. At a later stage, Edison said this, "The reason I have become what I am today is because of my mother. She understood my heart and encouraged me to study what I love." Even if we, as parents disallow our children to do everything he/she likes, it is firstly important to understand a child's individuality and feelings.

Initially, Edison's mother was labeled as a fool. She continuously praised Edison a genius no matter how many times he failed. She continuously "believed" in him. Following the example of Edison, if a child is shown "I believe in you" by his/her parents, he/she will demonstrate absolute power.

All parents will worry about their children's behaviour and their future. However, if we are constantly helping them for the purpose of alleviating our worries, the child will have fewer opportunities to act on his/her own initiative. As a result, they are given less chances to gain confidence and achieve success based on their own actions.

Besides, by comparing one with another individual, the child's "ability of believing in oneself" will also be crushed. Therefore he/she will grow up with a disparaged heart. When a child challenges an idea or teaching, do not compare him/her with anyone else. Recognize his/her individuality and "trust" the possibilities. If we continue to believe in our child, one day he/she will definitely reward our "trust".

3 Do Not Be Caught In the Dilemma of T-Score Education and Academic Snobbism Education

Ever wondered why so many parents work hard to ensure that their children achieve high T-score and academic results?

I don't think they want their children to become high performers in examinations results alone! If one can get a good education, that is to study in a good secondary school, high school and university, he/she will be able to get a good job in a top ranking corporation.

In other words, is it not true that parents want their children to be successful in their social lives as well? "No. Not really. I don't really want him/her to be so called successful. As long as he/she gets a good income and is able to live a stable life, I am satisfied." Perhaps some mothers have simple thinking such as this. But in this restructuring boom period, as long as he/she does not fail, let us consider them as successful.

However, I would like to ask "What does success really mean?" Would you call a person successful just because he has received a high level of education and is working in a top ranking corporation, or is a successful business person having businesses globally, but is experiencing a family break up? Who actually decides what success means? Success is a word that is translated to how good a person feels. In other words, I think it can be replaced with the term happiness. This means that whether a person is successful or not depends on his/her expectations.

"Success of the child = Happiness" can only be decided by the child himself/herself. During the period between the preschool and teenage years when one is susceptible and able to easily fall in love with what he/she wants, the child's interests might not be discovered if he/she is required to study for examinations most of the time.

Organizer of "Japan BE Research Centre", Mr. Tetsuo Gytoku mentioned the following during a dialogue with Prof. Shifu Yoshimura. This conversation took place during the flight of Mr. Gytoku's friend when he was travelling from Kagoshima to Haneda. A child sat next to him, pouring coffee and eating sandwiches. He asked the child,

"Where are you going boy?" The boy answered, "I am on my way to Tokyo's tuition centre. Every Saturday afternoon I go to the airport directly after school and have my lunch on the plane. I attend classes every Saturday afternoon and I will get the last flight on Saturday and then fly back to Kagoshima. This is my regular routine."

Mr. Gytoku said, "I do not want to offend the tuition centres. What I really want to say is, do not spoil a good human being. What have tuition centres instilled in our Japanese children? Japanese education has been spoilt by that promotion of so-and-so seminar organized by so-and-so tuition centre. What this young child really needs is to play with mud under the sun." It is obvious that in the recent years, entrance examinations have become highly competitive in our society.



Chapter 1 8 Points to Bring Out the Best in Your Children

Children as young as 10 years, have only 10 minutes to eat their dinner, and then proceed to tuition centres to study until late night. This form of arrangement is bad for a child's mental condition. Parents who focus too much on T-scores or academic results will not be able to understand a child's true heart anymore.

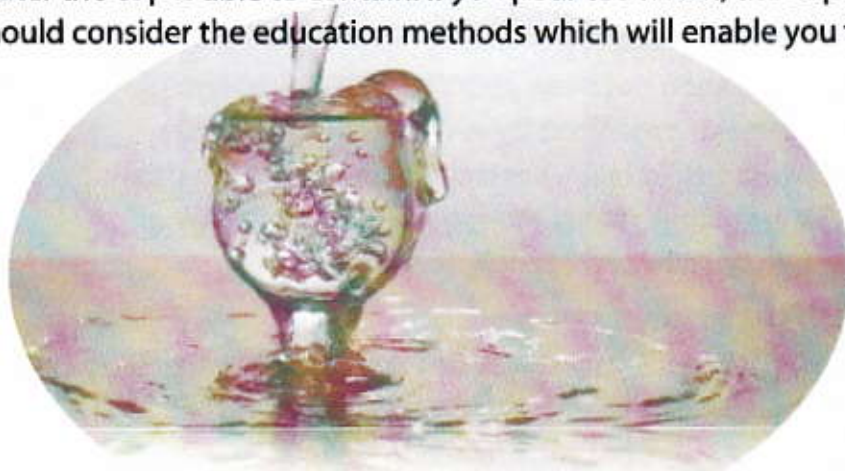
Recently, it is said that elites who work for top ranking corporations and/or hold high ranking positions are no longer accepted by society. There seemed to be a growing number of cases where they have become psychosomatics, or in the worst case scenario, suicidal. A child's ability which is a useful skill in this world cannot be mastered by achieving high scores in our highly competitive entrance examinations. Becoming a "winner" in such an examination will not lead to a child to "Success"= "Happiness".

However, the fact is, Japan is an academically and career-oriented driven society. If one achieves high education, the child will have a wider possibility of choices. Therefore, it cannot be said that entrance examinations of secondary or high schools are all bad events. Now, what we need is an education that allows a child to live the life of a child.

An education that enhances the capabilities of the heart (EQ), provides a child with some spare time, and still enables a child to study for school academic examinations in a relaxed manner. Brain physiologists already know that a normal human being uses only 3% of his/her brain. By training the undeveloped brain during a child's preschool period and guiding him/her to link the usage between the left and right brain depending on the given situation, one does not need much time to remember the knowledge required for the entrance examinations.

In the United States of America, there are TV programs that introduce children as young as 10 who are already graduates from universities. It is found that their brain structure is no different from ours. The only difference is, they are using more portions of the brain compared to a normal adult. The first thing you should do in education is not to focus on feeding the brain with facts and figures, but to enlarge the "container" of the brain itself. However, most tuition centres and schools do not conduct activities that assist in enlarging the brain "container".

Picture this, if you try to pour in streams of water into a cup endlessly, there will still be no change in the amount of water the cup is able to contain. If you pour too much, the cup will just overflow. Therefore, you should consider the education methods which will enable you to enlarge the size of the cup.



+ + 4 Nurture Your Children by Adding Points Instead of Deducting Points

The point deduction method cultivates negative motivation. For example, if an employee is threatened by his/her boss, "If you fail again, you are fired!" What will happen? Unless he/she is a tough person, in most cases, one will feel intimidated and will always be afraid of being fired. This will cause the employee to feel more useless and the chances of failing will be higher. Since the old days, Japanese education has been applying the point deduction method.

However, this method does not yield good results. Instead, it shatters a child's courage. Opposed to this, the point adding method is a development method that provides positive motivation, and assists in a person's goal setting process by giving encouragement or praises such as "if you can achieve this, then we will..." or "you definitely can do it because you are so-and-so". Using this method, a child will be able to master the skill of self-motivation. Once a child is self-motivated, he/she will be able to progress and gain achievements without being forced to do so.

Coach Koide, who successfully trained the famed athlete, Naoko Takahashi, is an expert of this point adding method. He continuously used and applied positive language, using phrases like "You can do it" when training Takahashi who was not yet a first-class athlete. Finally Koide using this point adding method successfully trained this unknown athlete to be an Olympic gold medalist.

Before the Sydney Olympic Games, Coach Koide conducted the sharing image training session with Takahashi among other training sessions. A few days before the competition, it is said that Takahashi even asked, "Coach, what should I wear when I am on the victory stand?" Before the competition itself, she had already visualized and believed that she has won the gold medal. In our society, individuals with positive image of thinking such as "When I accomplish this, I shall..." or "It would be wonderful when I achieve this" will demonstrate greater abilities as compared to individuals with negative image of thinking such as "What if I can't do it", or "If I can't achieve this, it will be a disaster".

To raise a child by using the "Point Adding Method" is to develop the child's positive thinking and image. Furthermore, this will enhance the child's ability of cultivating positive phrases such as, "I believe I can do it" (positive self-image).

One of the common points among top players in sports and individuals, who demonstrate great abilities, is the possession of a positive self image. They are constantly reminding themselves, "I can do it." Let's do away with the method of punishment when one cannot achieve, and bring up our children using the "Point Adding Method" which uses phrases such as "if you can do it, we will...".

5 Nurture Your Children by Observing the "Kindness" (Zen) Within Them Rather Than the Disguised Behaviorism



If a child creates problems, there have to be reasons for him/her to behave as such. For example, if a child shoplifts, parents will scold harshly to prevent the child from engaging in such "misconduct" again. But this will actually cause a reverse effect upon the child.

From a psychological viewpoint, the reason a person shoplifts is because he/she feels lonely, or "his/her need for love has not been satisfied". It is difficult to accept that a child, who is currently mentally fulfilled, should get involved in illegal activities such as shoplifting. It is apparent that in most cases when a child conducts "bad actions", there are messages behind these actions.

Parents have always seemed to be misled by their child's obvious appearance of misconducts. Children are not originally born to create such bad behaviour. He/she does it under certain influences. When you think about it, initially a child's existence is based on good faith. If parents strive hard to search for the truth, then their child's appearances and actions must be closely observed. This will enable the hidden messages to be uncovered and made known.

Thus, parents will become a child's most trusted confidants. This existing trust relationship, will then cement a strong relationship between parents and their children, connecting their hearts and emotions. Eventually, this strong relationship will be a power source to be depended upon to overcome various difficulties in the future.

6 Bringing Up a Child by Understanding the Various Growth Processes

The most troublesome time of growth for children is during the "rebellious period". Generally it happens at the ages of 3, 8 and 14. This is a period which both children and parents would very much like to avoid. But also, it is during this difficult period that the children grow significantly.

Children experience various seasons during their growth; similar to the four seasons of the year - spring, summer, autumn and winter. There are various suitable handling methods for parents in accordance to their children's different stages of growth. This is similar to stating that one should avoid wearing a swimsuit during winter or an overcoat during summer.

If you are knowledgeable of the various handling methods, you will be able to deal with the troublesome period in a more appropriate manner. This will reduce encounters with unforeseen trouble and lessen worries and stress when raising children.

One of the appropriate ways of coping with the rebellious period is to encourage "open communication" and "handle each situation with humor." It is inevitable that there will come a time when children will consistently resist our teachings. When this happens, most parents will think, "If I give up now, I may lose my status as a parent," etc. and will continue to enforce their authority on their children. This will create more troublesome results.

During this time, do not take the word/words of the children seriously. The art of handling children is to communicate with them open-heartedly with a sense of humour. When your child starts to smile, you have won the game.

Besides the "rebellious period," children will also experience the "obedience period." During the obedience period, parents are able to handle children using stricter measures. It is important to build character during this period. Instead, most parents pamper their children during this period. As the children are cute and they love to smile, parents are rarely strict with them. This results in bringing up children who do not listen to instructions.

The rebellious period is the time when parents cannot be too strict with their children. Instead, parents become stricter because their children have adopted a good-for-nothing attitude, resulting in more intense arguments and confrontations. It is important to study a child's growth process, as this will encourage meaningful growth in his/her parents as well.



7 The Impressions and Expectations Parents and Teachers Have on Their Children will Influence Their Results and Performance

Do you know what the "Pygmalion Effect" is? It is when a child grows up in accordance to the image portrayed by his/her parents or teachers. Referring to a case study, a university professor developed a test that measures the potential ability of children. He conducted this test on children in a primary school through the arrangement of the teacher-in-charge. After marking the papers, the professor concluded, "Although child B, D and G obtained bad results, they will excel later in their lives."

Later, these children proved to be excellent students and achieved outstanding results. As you read this, I suppose you would say, "Of course. These children were evaluated and tested upon." But, part of the story has been omitted. The university professor did not mark the test papers. He randomly selected child B, D and G to be excellent students. In fact, the test that was supposedly to be able to measure potential ability was an evaluation without any proven evidence. It is only by the random results given by this authorized professor that created the belief of the teacher-in-charge towards child B, D and G. This belief raised the teacher's expectations and this resulted in the excellent results of the students.

The expectation of parents or teachers on the child contributes significantly towards the growth of that child. Even when a child makes a mistake, the adult should never think or say phrases like "This child is an idiot" or "When this child grows up, he/she will definitely misbehave", etc. The child will be what you say and think of him/her.

Lou Tice, founder of T.P.I, who has a track record of coaching more than 10 million individuals worldwide said in his book IF YOU THINK...YOU CAN DO IT! (Nikkei BP., Inc) the following:

"I have coached individuals or groups during their journey towards success for more than 25 years. Before that, I was a football coach of a high school. I wanted badly to help an ordinary person who had no specific skill to achieve significant results in his/her life. Finally I realized the answer can be summarized to 2 principles. The first principle is that, the belief placed upon a person's accomplishments greatly influences the person's achievements. The second principle is that the results will be totally different depending on the kind of support obtained."

From these findings, we can conclude that the expectations of parents and teachers greatly influence their children's achievements and beliefs. Besides that, these expectations also form the base of their self-image. Parents are an essential part of their children's life. The image children have of their parents will definitely become the "self-image" of these children.

It is important for parents to continuously uphold strong positive impressions and beliefs for the goodness of their children. Phrases such as "This child will demonstrate great ability in the future", or "This child can definitely achieve it", etc are encouraged to be used in whatever situation even when the children are not performing in accordance to our expectations.

8 Respect and Recognize the Existence of the Child

Studies performed by psychologist Alfred Adler, shows that the actual reason why children behave in a troublesome manner is because they are experiencing "Their lost sense of self-belonging" and an inability to "exhibit courage". Children always want their existence to be respected and recognized. Dreikurs, a student of Alfred Adler said that when children have lost their sense of self-belonging, they will take the following 4 stages of action:

Stage 1 – Unaware of their actions, they will appeal to their parents and teachers to be more concerned of their well being. (When the children do not get their parents' attention by getting a good evaluation, they will try to attract their parents with bad evaluation. These children are deliberately trouble makers.)

Stage 2 – The children will show off their abilities and challenge the leadership of their parents or teachers. (Unaware of his/her behaviour, the child will act albeit in a difficult manner to acquire his/her sense of self-belonging.)

Stage 3 – They plan for revenge. For example, through acts of misconduct, or suicide. These are methods of revenge against parents or teachers.

Stage 4 – When a child gets tired of plotting for "revenge", he/she will adopt behaviour that lacks vigour or vitality.

When a child reaches stage 3 or 4, it is usually difficult and no longer possible for parents to solve the problem. At this point, help from a third party is necessary. In recent years, the number of cases of young children driven into such situations has increased. When a child has lost his/her sense of self-existence, he/she will start acting out the four stages mentioned above.

"Respect and recognize the existence of the child ." This is a very important matter. We as parents, no matter how busy we are, must not forget this matter. Only when we encourage children with a "positive language", can we encourage them to fully utilize their natural abilities and possibilities. A child is also a magnificent human being. We as adults, have similar needs as them, such as a strong feeling of "wanting to be loved" and "wanting to be recognized". Firstly, we need to "respect" the child as a human being. Let's start by encouraging them daily with words that bring joy and motivation.