

01 How to Fill up the Emotional Tank of Children

Do parents love their children? This seems an unnecessary question. 90% of parents love their children meticulously.

But is your true love enough? It is not easy to answer. Many parents rack their brains sending their children to school to acquire attainments. They think that they have done their best for their children and it is love. Actually there is deviation and it is not enough.

Children have needs in all aspects in the course of their grow-up, especially the emotional needs. Parents should not ignore this emotional need. The psychologist tells us that if we want our character to grow healthily, we have to experience "loved by" and learn "to love"; we have to know how to show and express our affection. Let us take an example that everyone has a tank of emotion. It is like a tank of gasoline in a car. This tank must be filled with gasoline in order for the engine to start. It's the same reason that the emotional tank of children need to be filled with emotion of their parents in order that the spirit of children be lubricated and sprinkled.

1. To express love by language

In Chinese societies, parents generally inherit the Chinese culture ways of expression "low profile" and "reserved". This is just like what is described in the book «Receding Figure» written by Zhu Zi Qing. The father accompanied his son to the train station and took care of everything for him, but could not know how to express his concern and love to his son verbally.

I always encourage parents to use more language (include body language) to express their love to their sons and daughters. When a child is small, we can clasp him and hold him in arms more. When we return home after work, we can give a hug to our child and kiss his cheek to give him some warm feelings. Parents may say more words like "I miss you!" to their children.

Chinese always think that these words are "disgusting". Absolutely it is not. Expression of emotion needs to be shown clearly in one's words and manner. If parents hope to have "mutual understanding" with their children, they must express their emotion straightforwardly; to children, it not only makes them feel warm, in addition, it helps to open up their world of emotion and allow them to express their own feelings when they grow up.

2. To cultivate a heart of thanks

Try to think about, when a child receives a bowl of rice from his parents. Will he say "thanks" sincerely? When he is helped or presented a gift by others, will he feel thankful sincerely? When you feel thankful, it means you realize this fortune and treasure this fortune.

Nowadays children are very rich materially, which brings to them the character of "self centered" and "everything is of course". They do not know how to think of the others. They are living in a materially rich environment and can get everything they want. To them everything is of course. Whenever they cannot get what they want, they make troubles.

There is an important element which cannot be lacked in one's emotional tank which is a heart of thanks. If you know how to thank others, you know how to love. A child who grows up in love must be happy and healthy.

The following ways can help you to cultivate a heart of thanks for children:

1. Set example by parents: to demonstrate gratitude and mutual help. For example: always say "Please", "Thanks", "It is appreciated", and show filial obedience to parents.
2. Carry out more services: guide your children to share the household duties; parents participate in volunteer services of communities; allow your children to realize and recognize the importance of reciprocating.
3. Talk with thanks: mention events and persons that you thank to during family gathering or birthday parties to encourage mutually with your children.
4. Teach children that there is better fortune "to give charity" than "to receive gift": send unnecessary toys, clothes and books to those who are in need and help others happily.
5. Put into action: visit nursing home of the elderly, children hospital, ward of the dying. You can personally feel being fortunate while bringing warm feelings to others.

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3. Help children to face frustration

The grow-up of children is not always without a hitch. There must be painful experiences of defeat and setback. Therefore, in the emotional tanks of children, some "antibody" element is necessary to face frustration.

I remembered that some years ago I went to the beach and piled up the sand with my sons. They piled up a long time and a grand sand castle was nearly finished when suddenly a child came and collapsed the sand dune with a kick on his foot. My son had no choice but felt helpless. I could see that they were disappointed and sad. Immediately I approach them and encouraged them to continue to pile up a new sand dune from the very beginning. I pat on their shoulders and said: "It doesn't matter. Take it easy. I believe you can pile up a much bigger sand castle."

It needs courage, strong will and confidence to accept failure, face failure, and stand up again. Generally parents are concerned only about how to press to "Success", but they rarely help their children to face failure. The result is that once their children encounter frustration, they will be thrown into confusion and do not know what to do. This is quite a pity.

4. To build up a warm atmosphere in family

The emotional development of children is closely related to their families. The atmosphere in families has close relationship to the cultivation of the characters of their children. A good family atmosphere should be warm, respectful, supportive and acceptable.

The followings are several simple suggestions:

1. Democratic ways of teaching: do not use authority to suppress your children, but encourage and teach them with respect.
2. Good parents and children relationship: you can use music, sports and games to shorten the distance between your children and you.
3. To stay with your children more: it is true that parents careers are important, but, your children need you to spend more time and stay with them; listen to their aspiration and discuss with them about pieces of things in their homework and life.
4. To give happy experiences to children: don't let out your anger on the children irrationally; allow them to feel happiness and family congenial atmosphere in different occasions, e.g. memory day and birthday.
5. To give them the chances to care and look after their relatives: specially in respect of the elderly relatives and aged, take care of elders; to commemorate the deceased when paying tribute to the ancestors at the graveyard.

The grow-up of children should be "comprehensive". A rich emotional world is one of the links that cannot be missing. Schooling is important, "add value" and "earn a living" are important too. But if the emotional tank is not full or filled with gasoline which does not meet standards, the children's moral and temper will be falsified and have imperfection. Therefore parents should never belittle the need of your children in this aspect.

Sze Yuen NG (Chairman of Soul-mate Company Ltd.)
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