

NEW-AGE PARENTING

On Children's Day, today, delve deep into generational shifts and the importance of adapting as parents

HT City · 14 Nov 2022 · 03 · Dr Anupam Sibal Dr Anupam Sibal is a senior paediatrician and the author of the best-seller, 'Is your child ready to face the world?'. He is the president of the Global Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (GAPIO).

Most parents believe that the way to raise their children is to follow the same way they were raised. After all, most parents have “done well” in their lives and so should their kids by adhering to the same school of parenting. The old-school notion needs tweaking as times have changed and continue to change at an unprecedented pace. A generational shift, in terms of what is acceptable and what is the norm, is not 20 or 10 years anymore; it is 5 years now. This poses a big challenge as parents need to adopt, adapt and be open to change.



New-age parenting requires parents to embrace new parenting styles. While the fundamentals in terms of instilling virtues such as humility, honesty, compassion and forgiveness remain unchanged, the approach on how to get through to kids needs recalibration.

How does one communicate with children who don't want to hear? One can do that by having a meaningful twoway communication with the child driving the conversation — the topic, the duration, the frequency, the flow and when to end. The conversation has to be devoid of sermons and comparisons.

While such a conversation can take place with an older child, it is important to note that young children are remarkably perceptive. Their eyes closely observe, their ears intensely listen and their minds keenly process what their environment has to offer. These experiences at a young age can have a lifelong impression. Parents should not forget what author Jim Hansen had said: “They (your children) don't remember what you try to teach them. They remember what you are”.

While conventional parenting expects children to show deference, accept without protest what a parent wants and not engage in a debate or argument, that is an unrealistic expectation today. Children have access to a lot of information and will accept only what agrees their knowledge of the subject.

Children will respect their parents but that needs to be earned. It can no longer be taken for granted. A strong bond needs to be formed with children at a young age and then as the child goes older, the bond needs to evolve into a deep friendship. A child will always need someone they can turn to, who will love them unconditionally and won't be judgemental. Who can be better than a parent at that.

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