

# Being the BEST MOTHER I can be

*Sharmini Hensen shares her experience of being a coach and a mother,* and gives us a few inspiring tips on how you can educate your child in this 21st century.

**I** listen to many mothers; who work and stay home, face challenges with their children, young and teenagers alike. I hear the frustration in their voices and feel the desperation in their actions. They are working hard at having the same yelling matches with their children about the same issues and yet expecting miraculous changes. Einstein said "Doing the same thing over and over again, expecting different results is insanity". Many mums will testify to that!

So what do we do now? First, we acknowledge that we learn how to parent from our parents. And it's not working with our own children! Our parents did the best they knew how and now it's up to us to do different. So, let's explore a new and different style of parenting.

My personal aspiration to learn to be a coach was specifically to improve my relationships. The coaching mindset as a parent has transformed my relationship with my children; what I believe about my children, focusing on what is important to me when raising them and most importantly, how I support them to be successful at what they choose.

As a coach, I empower my children to take responsibility for their life, empower them to look inside for resources and solutions so they create results that they are proud of which makes them feel good and confident. The cycle continues and they create better results. I have two beautiful children, Tashwin, 11 and Kayla, 6. I am sharing my personal experiences with them so you may be inspired to change your parenting style.

At times, I sounded very much like my own

mother; screaming the same lectures and threats, acting the same way I vowed I would not be with my own children. I wanted so much to learn to change. The most important question that motivates change is, "What is important to me?" I remember expressing to my girlfriend, my fear that I would damage and hurt my children psychologically for life and she clearly said, "Sharmini, focus on their gifts and make it bigger!" That statement inspired me to be a better mother everyday. So, how to do it?

## Establish responsibilities

Mums, as a coach, the very first thing to do with your client (your children) is to establish responsibility. There are 2 types of people in the world; one who causes things to happen (responsible) and the other is on the effect side of things (victim). The best way for your children to learn this distinction is to allow them to feel the effects of their actions. Stop protecting them from being hurt. Remember the only way they learnt to walk was to also fall.

## Don't punish them for misbehaving

Allow your children to misbehave and disrespect you without consequences. A case in point, I get up in the morning to prepare Tashwin's breakfast and pack his lunch for school. I would give him choices for lunch. One morning, I did not hear him when he changed his mind. And he got upset. He crossed the line when he threw his lunch bag at me. I calmly reminded him that I choose to wake up in the mornings and help him get

ready for school because I love him, that's the way I show I care. I could also choose to continue my sleep.

As I walked back to bed, I told him I give respect and appreciation, and I expect it in return. Before he left for school that morning, he knocked and opened the door and whispered, "I am sorry, Mom. Thank you for getting up and making me lunch. I love you." It takes a lot of strength to just walk away. Sometime it is what is needed. Actions speak louder than words. Sometimes no action makes an even greater impact. I believe the best discipline is the discipline to love anyway especially when you don't feel like it.

## Manage negative behaviours wisely

All parents think their little girl is an angel. I am no different. The challenge is to keep them that way. Kayla has a gift of expressing and giving love. I find what works is to acknowledge her, encourage and mirror her loving actions all the time. Cheerleading is best way to promote good behavior. Each time, I see her demonstrate a positive behavior, I get so excited, animated and I make a big deal of it!

When handling negative behaviours, separate the child from the behaviours. Labeling is the worst thing we do as parents. "You are stupid!" "You are lazy!" "You are a liar!" We might as well brand them for life. The behavior demonstrated is silly, lazy, lying, be specific. The child has the resources to change the behaviours and we need to help them find it.

I find it easier to praise my children than

to criticize. It's the glow of pride on their faces when I do, that motivates me. I pick moments when I can do it in front of an audience; family, classmates and teachers. I am always asked what if they get big-headed and arrogant? It's better than a meek, low esteemed child. Plus, we can always tell confidence from arrogance.

I also consciously project what I want to see in them. A good example, my son had a hard time adjusting from kindergarten to school. He misbehaved, had poor grades and I was called to school many times. Scolding him was pointless, he was punished enough. I slowly nurtured his confidence by projecting what I saw in him; being a leader, smart and a well liked student. This is what I specifically said to him; "Son, your genius has not arrive yet.

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Soon it will be here! I believe in you!”

I repeated it many times, especially when I did not believe it myself. Today, Tashwin is a school prefect, his grades have improved, he finishes his homework on his own and his teachers assure me he is well behaved. Our children rise up to what we believe of them, always. Our role is to empower them to believe it for themselves. **H&B**

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**Sharmini Hensen** is a Life Coach trained as Master NLP Practitioner. She inspires her clients through personal coaching, SISTAS Network, parenting workshops and her upcoming television show. She can be reached at 012-3912272 or you can visit her website at [www.sharminihensen.com](http://www.sharminihensen.com).

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*Courtesy of Health & Beauty magazine, August 2008 issue.*