

parentingourselves

With Lela Iselin

Dear Lela,
Yesterday my two-and-a-half-year-old son Joshua quite forcefully announced that he hated me. I felt devastated. If he hates me when I set boundaries, maybe my boundaries are off. I don't want to impose my own limitations on him, but he has to put on his shoes when we go into town. What do I do if that makes him hate me?
Candice, Kenmore, Canada

Dear Candice,
I do understand your devastation. It is such a terrible feeling to be hated by your own child. On another level, however, what freedom it is for Joshua to be able to openly hate you. Depending on how you are being with that it could very well prove that he knows he can count on your love even if he does not love you back at all times.

Your questioning yourself as to whether

you are putting your own limitations on Joshua or whether you are simply setting healthy boundaries is so important. Are you just being self-righteous? Are your values real or are they just imposed by your inner critic? Do they make the world a more colourful, sparkling place or do they grey everything out a bit? Of course Joshua has to put on his shoes before he goes out into the Canadian winter. There is no arguing there, and there are so many more subtle levels at play here.

We all start out being vibrantly alive babies and toddlers and most of us end up as quite dulled out grown-ups with many ideas about life and less actual ability to really live fully. We all came into this world being so connected with something, all adults *oohed* and *aahed* when we smiled at them.

Over the years we must have felt pressured somehow and then developed quite elaborate behaviour patterns and antics to be socially accepted and loved. What happened? We know how to live without inner limitations — we were all born like that.

I don't know any parents who consciously want to put their limitations on their kids. Everyone wants to avoid that and no one really succeeds. I look at my two teenage sons and I must say that to some degree I failed. They are great human beings, no doubt, and it does hurt to see that they are limiting their potential in order to fit in somehow, each in his very personal specific way. It also is a wake-up call for me.

To be a good parent is such a call to develop and use all levels of intelligence. To discern whether we deal with a situation in a dramatic, mentally stale way or if we take in all available information on different levels of perception and make clear assessments at any given moment. The more we uncover our own potential, the more responsible we are with our own resources, the more sensitively attuned guides we become for our kids.

To be a good parent we need to be in touch with real meaning in our life. Only then can we have meaningful relationships with our kids. Being connected to that we can set real and healthy physical, emotional and spiritual boundaries, taking responsibility for being more experienced with life and able to guide rightly; not budging from real values to be comfortable in the short

run and at the same time being connected with the love we know is there.

To uncover our own potential and connect with the deeper meaning in our lives is not something we have to learn; it's more like a conscious, gentle reconnecting, since we all started like that. It takes being still and vital inside, quietly alive enough to hear the more subtle voices of our being.

I have recently discovered that I can feel the density and colour intensity of my thoughts and feelings. When the inner critic is up, the thoughts and feelings are quite dense and dull in colour. The more authentic I am, the more transparent, nourishing and clear the thoughts and feelings become. When

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that happens all of a sudden the inner and outer worlds have textures and colours that remind me of my world when I was a little girl.

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If you look back at the situation, being still inside, non-dramatic and honest, you may all of a sudden understand why Joshua hated you at that moment. Maybe he was protecting something very much worthy of protection. Maybe he was protecting your connection with him in a more alive and real world.