

Except from
Joyless, Selfish, Children
by Robert Shaw

The Biggest Modern parenting Mistakes

- ❑ Failing to establish a strong emotional bond with your child by not spending the necessary time and attention.
- ❑ Not reading to, talking to or playing with young children to provide the experiences we know help them acquire literacy.
- ❑ Accepting the idea that excessive non-parental care will be an adequate substitute for your relationship with your child.
- ❑ Not having firm rules and routines that you administer calmly, fairly, assertively and without guilt or hesitation.
- ❑ Not conveying to your child – through both actions and words – the moral, ethical, and spiritual values you believe in (or not having moral, ethical and spiritual values in the first place).
- ❑ Allowing your child inappropriate control over his life. A certain amount of control, doled out as a child is ready to handle it, is wonderful; too much control when your child is ill prepared for it is disastrous.
- ❑ Yelling at and threatening your children. You can be firm and reliable in reinforcing rules without resorting to these tactics. When you lose your temper, it says that you have delayed handling an issue until your frustration and impotence have become overwhelming. You can act firmly right away; you don't have to wait until you get angry.
- ❑ Over-identifying with your child, to the extent that you assume he wants what you want, will fulfill your own aspirations, or will perform in a way that will enhance your self-image. In short, expecting your child to build your ego and solve your doubts.
- ❑ Expecting too much while demanding too little. For instance, letting him loll around playing video games all day, then expecting him to win honors at school.
- ❑ Not allowing your child to experience the rewards of earning and achieving on his own.

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- ❑ Overexposure to media.
- ❑ Not giving your child the type of activities and experiences that promote his ability to sit quietly, concentrate and listen, then expecting schools to “fix” him. Not even the very best private schools or stellar public education systems can accomplish the same goals with underdeveloped children as they do with those who are well-adjusted and ready to learn.
- ❑ Failing to talk things through. Direct, honest, complete communication should be the constant characteristic of your relationship with your child.

When parents commit these all-too-common mistakes in an effort to suit their own needs and concerns or through their own ignorance or lack of energy, they thwart their child's natural course of development. When you put off toilet training because you're too busy to deal with it, or allow your 6-year-old to keep crawling into your bed at night because you're too tired to put up a fight, or dole out money on demand instead of insisting on an allowance, or let curfews slide, you will cripple your child in the long run. These developmental tasks can feel endless at times, but it's naïve to think that children will turn out fine if you just leave them alone. Values are not instinctual; they are passed on to your children day after day, in your every interaction with them. That is why, with effort, even very deviant children can be helped to gain the values they need.