

DISCIPLINE: PART 1:

THE 4 PARENTING STYLES

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PARENTING STYLES: (Grolnick, 2003:31; Gupta and Theus, 2006:21) agree that the way parents deal with issues related to their children's behaviour and generally interact with them, has come to be known as a parenting style.

ie: *the way in which the parents raise their children.*

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THE 4 PARENTING STYLES

1) Authoritative Parent: (Let's talk about it")

- Baumrind (in Grolnick, 2003:6): demanding and responsive
- positive parenting
- “demanding” ie: limits/ boundaries but flexible leaving both parties satisfied
- “responsive” ie: listen and attentive to needs of child
- mannerism: warm and accepting, gives information and reasoning/ explanations
- Dobson (2002:35): “Children thrive best in an environment where these two ingredients, love and control, are present in balanced proportions”.

2) Authoritarian Parent: (“Because I said so!”)

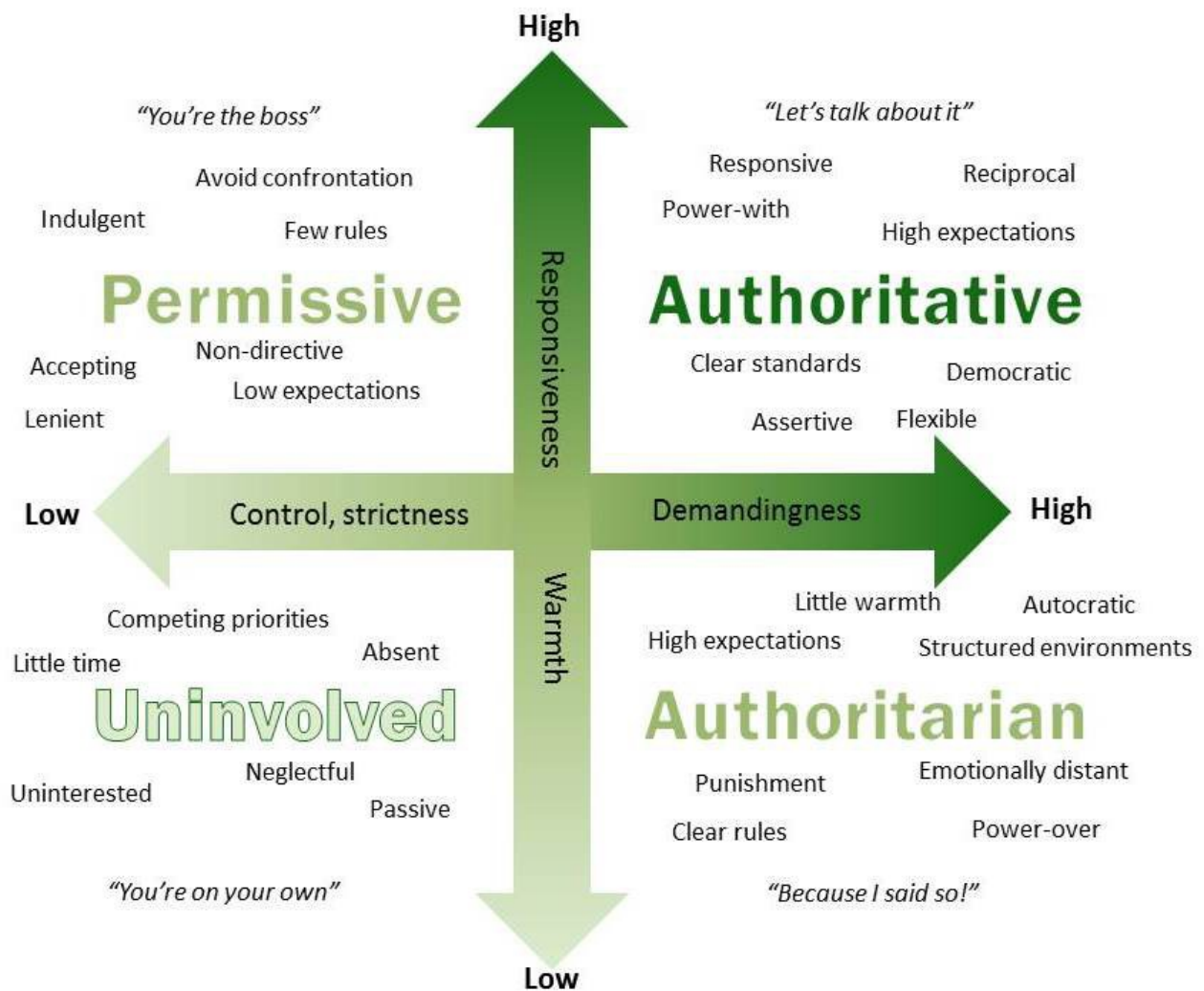
- Baumrind (in Grolnick, 2003:6): demanding and not responsive
- punitive/ punishment parenting
- “demanding” ie: very demanding, too many limits/restrictions
- “not responsive” ie: no understanding or reasoning
- mannerism: demanding/ strict, the need to feel powerful and “win”, the need to feel in control and keep their authority, often has much self-respect but lacks respect for child.
- “.... reasoning while punishing children for bad behaviour and feeling irritated and angry with their children can be destructive, especially if parents have uncontrolled aggression....talking, yelling and vehement arguing can only make the situation worse” (Brink, 2006:31).

3) Permissive Parent: (“You're the boss”)

- Grolnick (2003:4) states that the permissive parent includes fewer restrictions and the enforcement tends to be less firm.
- dismissing and giving-in parenting
- “not demanding” ie: no limits or boundaries or structure
- “over responsive: ie: gives in too easily, dismisses child and child is “in control”
- mannerism: shows little interest in what child is trying to communicate and ridicules child's emotions, believes child's emotions/ feelings are irrational and does not know how to problem-solve with the child, over-indulgent, lenient and avoids confrontation
- or can be overly affectionate and has little or no control in their right

4) Uninvolved/ Neglectful Parent: (“You're on your own.”)

- These parents are emotionally uninvolved as well as absent in child's life.
- neither demanding nor responsive parent
- “not demanding” ie: no limits or boundaries or structure
- “not responsive” ie: no attention, interaction or nurturing
- mannerism: parent is either absent or if present doesn't know how to interact or nurture, has no or low-control and is a low-affection parent
- these parents have no goal or only their own goal



TYPES OF PARENTING STYLES AND HOW TO IDENTIFY YOURS AND THE EFFECT IT HAS ON THE CHILD.

By Bianca Mgbemere and Rachel Telles

(<https://my.vanderbilt.edu/developmentalpsychologyblog/2013/12/types-of-parenting-styles-and-how-to-identify-yours/>)

There are four major recognized parenting styles: authoritative, neglectful/ uninvolved, permissive, and authoritarian. Each one carries different characteristics and brings about different reactions in the children which they are used on. It is important to keep in mind that every parent child relationship is different, so there is not one sure way to go about parenting. This is a simple guide to help decode your parenting style and provide general suggestions on how to raise a happy, responsible, productive member of society.

AUTHORITATIVE:

Authoritative parenting is widely regarded as the most effective and beneficial parenting style for normal children. Authoritative parents are easy to recognize, as they are marked by the high expectations that they have of their children, but temper these expectations with understanding and support for their children as well. This type of parenting creates the healthiest environment for a growing child, and helps to foster a productive relationship between parent and child.



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How to recognize if you are an authoritative parent:

- **Does your child's day have structure to it, such as a planned bedtime and understood household rules?**
- **Are there consequences for disrupting this structure or breaking the household rules?**
- **Does your child understand the expectations that you have for their behavior, and are these expectations reasonable?**
- **Do you have a healthy and open line of communication with your child? That is, does your child feel that they can speak to you about anything without fear of negative consequence or harsh judgment?**

The traits described in the above questions mark a healthy household with an authoritative parent. Of course, parenting styles will naturally need to differ in order to accommodate different children, and you may find that this style does not work for you if your child has behavioral problems or other traits you have difficulty handling. In this case, it is best to adjust your parenting appropriately, and to seek out help from a licensed therapist if you feel overwhelmed.

Effect on the child:

One of the most important traits to emulate in the authoritative parenting style is the open communication style with the child. If a parent can foster the ability to speak to their child without judgment or reprimand, they will be more likely to have insight into the child's life and understanding, providing the child with a deeper understanding of the world around them.

AUTHORITARIAN:

Authoritarian parenting, also called strict parenting, is characterised by parents who are demanding but not responsive. Authoritarian parents allow for little open dialogue between parent and child and expect children to follow a strict set of rules and expectations. They usually rely on punishment to demand obedience or teach a lesson.



How to recognise if you are an authoritarian parent:

- Do you have very strict rules that you believe should be followed no matter what?
- Do you often find yourself offering no explanations for the rules other than “Because I said so?”
- Do you give your child few choices and decisions about their own life?
- Do you find yourself utilizing punishment as a means of getting your child to do what you ask?
- Are you reserved in the amount of warmth and nurturing you show your child?

While the structure and rules of an authoritarian parent are necessary for healthy child development, all good things can be overdone. It is important to balance out the provided structure with open communication so the child knows exactly why it is important for them to follow the rules placed in front of them.

Effect on the child:

Children of authoritarian parents are prone to having low self-esteem, being fearful or shy, associating obedience with love, having difficulty in social situations, and possibly misbehaving when outside of parental care. A therapist can once again be contacted if adopting open communication proves to be too difficult to achieve by oneself.

PERMISSIVE:

Permissive parenting, also known as indulgent parenting is another potentially harmful style of parenting. These parents are responsive but not demanding. These parents tend to be lenient while trying to avoid confrontation. The benefit of this parenting style is that they are usually very nurturing and loving.

The negatives, however, outweigh this benefit. Few rules are set for the children of permissive parents, and the rules are inconsistent when they do exist. This lack of structure causes these children to grow up with little self-discipline and self-control. Some parents adopt this method as an extreme opposite approach to their authoritarian upbringing, while others are simply afraid to do anything that may upset their child.



How to recognise if you are a permissive parent:

- Do you not have set limits or rules for your child? Do you often compromise your rules to accommodate your child's mood?
- Do you avoid conflict with your child? Child's best friend rather than their parent?
- Do you often bribe your child to do things with large rewards?

The traits described in the above questions, mark an unhealthy permissive parenting style. It may seem as though this would be a child's favorite parenting style as it provides a sense of freedom without consequences, however, children crave a sense of structure to make them feel safe and secure. It is important in a child's development for there to be clear cut parental and child roles.

Effect on the child:

Permissive parenting can have long-term damaging effects. In a study published in the scientific *Journal of Early Adolescence*, it was found that teens with permissive parents are three times more likely to engage in heavy underage alcohol consumption. This is likely due to their lack of consequences for their behavior.

Other damaging effects of permissive parenting include:

- **insecurity in children from a lack of set boundaries**
- **poor social skills, such as sharing, from a lack of discipline**
- **self-centeredness**
- **poor academic success from lack of motivation**
- **clashing with authority**

It is important for the permissive parent to begin to set boundaries and rules for their child, while still being responsive before it is too late. If enacting new structures proves too daunting, it is advised again to seek out the help of a licensed therapist.

NEGLECTFUL/ UNINVOLVED:

Neglectful parenting is one of the most harmful styles of parenting that can be used on a child. Neglectful parenting is unlike the other styles in that parents rarely fluctuate naturally into neglectful parenting as a response to child behavior. If a parent recognizes themselves as a neglectful parent, or if a friend recognises that they may know a neglectful parent, it is important to understand that those parents (and the children involved in the situation) need assistance so that they can get back on track to having a healthy and communicative relationship within the family.



If you suspect you or a friend may be a neglectful parent, consider the following:

- **Do you care for your child's needs—emotional, physical, and otherwise?**
- **Do you have an understanding of what is going on in your child's life?**
- **Does the home provide a safe space for the child where they can share their experiences and expect positive feedback rather than negative or no feedback?**
- **Do you spend long periods of time away from home, leaving the child alone?**
- **Do you often find yourself making excuses for not being there for your child?**
- **Do you know your child's friends? Teachers?**
- **Are you involved in your child's life outside the home?**

If the above describes you or someone that you know, a child is at risk of being damaged by a neglectful household. Parents who tend towards neglectful parenting styles can be easily helped through education; this education can be found by talking to, or going to a therapist or counselor.

Neglectful parenting is damaging to children, because they have no trust foundation with their parents from which to explore the world. Beyond that, children who have a negative or absent relationship with their parent will have a harder time forming relationships with other people, particularly children their age.

ASPECTS THAT CAN INFLUENCE THE PARENTING STYLE

1) Parent's Own Past Experiences As A Child:

- Parents' methods of dealing with their children are greatly influenced by their own experiences of the way they were treated by their own parents.
- Therefore if treated in a punitive manner they too practice that method on their children as they didn't see it as having any harm on themselves.
- The total opposite of course can happen, they then try to become more loving, warm and affectionate towards their children compared to the way their parents were towards them.

2) Bi-Directionality Principle:

- ie: the behaviour of one influences the behaviour of the other.
- Parents and children arouse behaviours and emotions in one another
- eg: parents dealing with an angry child will have the task of containing their own behaviour and also the anger displayed by the child. There are times when parents can be caught up in the moment and as a result are not able to think properly and react in the same angry manner.
- Parents' behaviour can influence the child in a longer term. Parents' influence is greater in shaping their children's behaviour, than the other way around.
- Parental influence not only has an effect on the children's overt behaviour but also on the way they start internalising standards and expectations which they have gained as of a result of their interaction with their parents.
- Therefore children internalise these behaviours and often generalise or "use" them in other situations and relationships.

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3) Stress:

- Stress factors can influence children and parents' behaviour.
- Besides facing typical stress outside of the family structure for eg: work, finances, school pressures..., pressures or stress undermine parents' and children's abilities.
- Therefore, if parents are able to cope with stress fairly effectively, they are likely to be able to help their children cope with theirs and to serve as role models showing children how to cope with difficult situations.

4) Boundaries:

- Boundaries or limits, a system of rules or conduct, corrections and training towards obedience and order within a particular system, such as family or community.
- Childhood pressures and parents' stressors are dealt with better when parents have a set of guidelines, rules and values, enjoy healthy open relationships with their children and discuss with them the reasons why certain boundaries are set.
- Discipline: from the Latin word, *disciplina*, or “teaching”, not punishment (*more info on Discipline in next Heart and Soul- 14th and 17th August 2019*).
- Children who are overassertive and unaware of their human limitations are a result of parents struggling to set clear boundaries.
- Parents are crucial in the development of initiative in their children by encouraging them to try out new ideas, by showing respect to their children, by giving them choices and allowing them to take responsibility by facing the consequences of their actions.

5) Culture:

- Discipline prepares a person to fit into the existing social order and the social order naturally depends on the culture within the family.
- Parents from different cultures adopt some similar and some different approaches to childrearing.
- People who set up residence in a new country, are faced with the task of adapting their customs to new codes of social conduct.
- Therefore parenting behaviours must change in order to integrate with their new living conditions. Parents might have to change their styles of educating and socialising their children.
- Changes are not always achieved harmoniously and certain societies have strong pressure to assimilate and therefore the rupture with traditions becomes a loss of identity which causes a stressor. Eg: Expected school behaviour may be quite alien and social skills taught at home may not work in school.

CONCLUSION:

Certain factors may influence the Parenting Style, and there may not be such a thing as universally “good” parenting but rather, that parenting depends on the positive impact it has on the child and his/her development as a whole.

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