

Preparing to Be Parents

Raising Muslim kids in some non-Muslim countries at this time is not an easy task. Actually parenting in general is not easy anymore; since the challenges are different we are no longer able to depend on how we were raised by our parents. One of the most common mistakes that parents all over the world do is when they use the same method their parents used with them long time ago; and the topic here indicates also how to raise kids in such a way that is Islamic and scientific as well.

Being an educator in America for 10 years taught me that we have to follow the love and logic style in parenting. This is what Prophet Mohammed (peace upon him) had used 1400 years ago with the second generation. In fact, that was the reason behind having all those Muslims strongly adopting Islam, and the Islamic values as a way of life at the time. If you look further in the [Qur'an](#) you will surprisingly find out that Allah (SWT) insisted on making love and logic the two fundamental elements in Islam.

Allah asks the population of the earth to look around and think about everything in order to believe in Allah. “أفلم يسيروا في الارض فينظروا” “قل سيروا في الارض فانظروا” In another words, Allah did not use his superiority as the only proof to make people to believe, yet, Allah, wanted to make sense to the population of the earth to believe in Him (SWT).

If we [translate](#) this to parenting, we will find out that the majority of our parents completely had gone astray from this direction using their superiority, and forcing their kids to abide by the Islamic rules. When we base our parenting on force rather than logic we may get them to do what we want at the moment, but we lose them in the long run. We lose them in couple different ways:

- We lose them indirectly by making them hate the behavior we encouraged, and which they engaged in unwillingly.

- We lose them when they develop a sense of hypocrisy and duplicity, which occurs when they get used to performing what they do not believe in just to please others, or to avoid a punishment.
- We lose them when we unintentionally diminish their self-esteem; therefore, they lose the ability to choose when they grow up because they were always forced to do what their parents wanted them to do.
- We lose them when they become disconnected from us as their parents. Too often I hear “why does he/she not want to talk to me?!!!
- We lose them when they do not feel that they belong any more. They do not belong to our/their religion, they do not belong to our/their values, they do not belong to their homes, or parents. Consequently, they face role confusion which may lead to the despair at the latest stage in their lives as Erikson referred to in his theory.
- The situation may get worse in some cases if the love in the relationships is very minimal, and the use of force is high so the child may develop some psychological symptoms such as [depression](#), stress, and anxiety.

So the only thing we achieve is a temporary change in the behavior, and a complete loss of our second generation.

We need to apply the primary laws of love in our journey of parenting:

- Acceptance vs. rejection
- Understanding vs. judgment
- Participation vs. manipulation

Those laws are very significant to build such a healthy relationship with our kids. We need to consider those laws while interacting with our kids throughout our daily life. As I clarified earlier we may become absorbed in the process of changing the behavior to the extent that we may misplace one of those laws.

Our children need to feel that we always accept them no matter what they do, and they are never rejected. They are always looking forward to belonging, and they will never belong to where they are rejected. Sometimes, we send messages of rejection to our kids when we are trying to set them straight. That does not mean accepting their mistakes by any means, but we need to differentiate between rejecting the action and rejecting the person.

Also, our children need to be understood in the homes instead of being judged. Some parents tend to judge their kids and label them rather paying more attention to the psychological motives, and biological needs which their kids are going through. We need to understand first before we ask them to understand us, and our value system. We need to understand them in order to get them to adopt our ways, otherwise the gap will keep widening, and we will find no way out.

Finally, we need to walk them through instead of lecturing them. To practice love and logic in parenting we are no longer ruling from a superiority approach we are hand in hand with our kids putting in place everything together with joy.