

Ep #29: Traits of successful parents

This is episode 29. Let's get started.

Hi. Today, we're going to talk about how what all successful parents do. What are the characteristics of successful parents? So, let's begin.

Smarter Parenting welcomes you to our podcast series, the Parenting Coach for ADHD. Here to heal and elevate lives is your parenting coach, Siopé Kinikini.

Hey everybody. Hello, my friends. I hope everybody's doing well today. I am doing fantastic, and in fact, today is a wonderful day because I celebrated some very important milestones in my life, that of getting a little bit older. My daughter actually is now involved in a lot of different things and she's branching out into more independent things because she is a teenager. You know, with being a teenager there's a lot of things that come with being a teenager. But for our approaches, we've wanted to raise her to be ready for more independence, and so we've been more lenient in allowing her to make bigger decisions on our own. That has led to some very interesting conversations with me and my wife on what do we allow and what do we not allow and where do we set very specific boundaries to protect her from herself?

Because with too much freedom, she's going to go bananas, right? As any child would. So, how do we set her and prepare her for a world where we are no longer a part of it. That sounds really painful and I know a lot of parents are thinking, "Ah." You know. "I've raised a child and ugh." You know, they're just such an integral part of our lives, children, that we actually as successful parents are raising them for a life without us. That seems really bizarre cause we were there from the very beginning and we've seen them go through all of these milestones, and yet we are getting ready to help them move on.

My work with other parents and helping them transition their children into adulthood actually tends to be very interesting, because I get the parents who are struggling with that transition. A lot of times they're not ready to let the child go. A lot of times the child is stuck into a role that doesn't foster independence or growth.

Today, I wanted to talk about what it is that successful parents do in order to help their children grow into responsible adults. That is a touchy subject, I know, for a lot of parents, because they struggle with that. They struggle with letting go or how to let go. Again, I think what's important is for people to keep in mind that, you are preparing this being that has been in your life from the beginning to live without you. That's how you know you've done your job is that they can, when the time is right, move on and be responsible adults. They can contribute to society, and they can be independent, right? Those are the primary goals that we all have for our children.

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Now, how do we get to that point? One of the things that I have noticed with the parents that have worked with, and in my own parenting of my own child, is the need for consistency. And that's consistency and follow through with everything that you do with your child. If you're going to establish rules, [being able to follow through with those rules](#). Being consistent about [consequences](#) and rewards over time, and learning how to adjust them as the child is growing.

The first part of being a successful parent is learning that how to be consistent. How can you be consistent with everything that you need to be consistent with your child? If you are going to establish rules in your home, you have to be consistent in following through with the rules. Right? And if you are going to give a punishment, you're going to be consistent in the way that you're going to do that. You're going to be consistent in the rewards that you give, and so that teaches them stability. Right? And they can trust authority figures. It actually creates this relationship with you and your child where they know, "Oh well, my parents are stable, and everything is what it is," right? There's no surprises. Consistency is one.

Then [learning to adjust as your child grows older](#). The rules that we had for our daughter when she was three or four or five have completely changed now that she is 15, 16, moving into that age. What we've done is we've allowed those rules to adjust and to change, maintaining our consistency as the changes have happened.

Now we allow her more time with friends afterward, after school, but that is dependent on her ability to complete her work. We are very values-based parents, my wife and I, where we want to teach her that work needs to come before play. The reason that we feel that that is so important is if she's going to go to college, and I'm not saying college is for everybody, but I'm saying if she is going to go to college, then she needs to know that she needs to do her work first and that the social aspect of college needs to come afterwards. That way she can go through college and be successful in getting that done.

That's the way it is with work, right? I mean, we all have friends that we want to go and do crazy things with, and travel around, and enjoy our lives. However, we have to work. We have to pay our bills. We have to be responsible. I mean, those things are ingrained in us as adults and those are the things that I'm ingraining in my daughter right now with her responsibilities in getting her work done, both at home and at school before she plays and mingles with friends. We've, over time, have allowed longer curfew, so she's allowed more time with friends.

Now what we are doing is we're allowing her input into what that means and how that works. So we're like, "Okay, well what do you think? When do you think curfew should be?" Then we put in our input, then we come to a compromise that is meaningful. So she feels like she has a say in what's happening, right? That actually helps us problem-solve with her what the rules are so she can learn to develop rules based on the values as she gets older.

Now, all successful parents do this. All successful parents are consistent over the life-span of their children. They find a consistency in the way that they're parenting their child. Then they

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adjust. They make these adjustments, and then they allow their child greater independence and the ability to make decisions as they get older.

Let me tell you the benefit of doing something like this, especially with my own daughter, is that now that she's learning to use a little more independence in problem-solving on how she's supposed to navigate through making decisions on things, she actually will be able to [problem-solve](#). That's a skill in the Smarter Parenting website, so I'm just giving you a plug on that. Jump over to the Smarter Parenting website. You'll find problem-solving there, and that skill is super helpful. But she's able to problem solve things before she brings them over to us to discuss as a family.

Now when she becomes 18 in two years, right, she's going to be an adult. Now, I say adult loosely, because she's still going to be dependent on us for some things, and in order to help her progress on beyond 18. However, we want her to be able to function and be able to make decisions on her own that are independent from us.

Yeah, it's kind of this very interesting dynamic that I'm experiencing right now with my own child because it's learning to accept that the decisions she is making and that she will be making are independent from me. Right? They're not a reflection on me or my parenting, They are reflection on her and the values that we have taught her and that she's adopted into her own life.

That's scary thing, right? The parents that struggle the most are the ones that want to maintain the control all the way through until they're 18 and then the child leaves and is usually out of control or trying to figure it out and trying to work it out. It's tough. It's super tough. It's emotionally draining for the parent because the child is no longer under their umbrella, and yet the child still needs them for a lot of things.

We as parents have adjusted the rules to allow her a lot of freedoms to make some decisions. We would prefer that she fail now and learn how to deal and cope with that and struggle with that and then we work with her, rather than letting her have all that freedom later on where it's a lot more tenuous and where we're not as involved. You know what I mean?

The things that all successful parents do are those two things. It sounds really simple, but there's a lot of emotional baggage attached to that, right? I mean, we are connected to our children. From the day they're born, we are so invested in so connected to them. And yet we need to learn to wean off of them as they continually grow and progress and move on in their own lives. To make their own decisions that will be devoid of us and devoid of maybe our values. They may choose something completely different.

Yet, at the same time, I feel like the way that we've approached the parenting with our daughter has been a very intentional and very specific and by doing this, I'm confident, not that she will always do what we want her to do, but that she will always make decisions based on values and not just on a whim. If that makes any sense.

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That has been my goal all along as a parent in raising her. I've been fortunate to work with so many families over the years that I've realized that helping parents become successful as parents, or at least happy later on as their children grow on and move on, is being able to create that independence over time. Again, that just remains a consistency and actually follow through with that, and then create this environment of independence.

Of course, I know my child is not going to be perfect and she's going to make mistakes along the way, but what we intentionally tried to do while we raised her was to create options for her to make decisions now while she's young enough that we can help her through those times. So she knows what disappointment is like. She knows what making a mistake is like. She knows what all of those things entail. Making a decision and having consequences follow those decisions, she knows what that is like. So later on when she's on her own, she's not surprised by it and then we're not shocked by it and we're not involved.

The flip side has also been that we have learned too, by giving her more independence in making those decisions, we have also learned where our boundaries are. Remember, boundaries are interesting things because boundaries help establish where we can love her and we can love ourselves simultaneously.

I mean, boundaries allow us to love other people in their space and in our space at the same time without intertwining and intermingling in a way that's unhealthy for either one of us. Right? So, we've established really great boundaries that way. So when the time comes that she marries and she moves on and she does her own thing, that we realized that that that is going to be her life and she's going to move on and be able to do that, and we are going to have a new life.

My wife and I are going to be independent from that part of it. And our role from parents where we had 100% decision making, everything we decided for her as a young baby, has evolved over time to where we've granted little bits of independence and Decision Making along the way to where we are no longer that way. We will be consulted as parents, but anyone who has adult children knows that their relationship is changed. It's completely changed. It's one of they will seek your advice if they want it, but they won't do necessarily what you want. It's almost like, okay, now we move into this phase of a relationship where we are friends, right?

I'm still your parent and I am influential like a friend, but they're not relying on me to make decisions for them anymore, and that's actually the sweet spot that we want them to be in. It's being able to change over time, but being able to be consistent over time. Change to their level of autonomy and their level of freedom. Their level of being able to comprehend the world and make decisions based on the values that they have. Anyways, I feel like I've given a Ted Talk. It's kind of weird. Anyways.

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What I do want to say is that Smarter Parenting is offering some [coaching](#). If you feel like you're stuck in between this phase. If you feel like you cannot be consistent, then really there are some very specific things that you can do. You know, jump over to the Smarter Parenting website. You can sign up for some coaching. We can coach you through that. We can walk you through that. We can help you design something that'll work well for you based on your child, where they're at, and their level of independence.

If you feel like your child is never going to be independent, and that happens to a lot of parents, trust me, your child is going to grow into that phase whether or not we're ready for it. And so we need to find ways to prepare them for some greater independence as we continually work with them to move forward. Now, you may not trust them 100%, but there are little slivers of things that you can do to create that independence and continually move them forward to greater independence over time.

Again, jump over and sign up for some coaching. We would love to coach you. Especially if you have a child with some ADHD issues, to guide them along this process, and to also help you along this long road that you have in helping your child develop and become more independent.

That's it for me. I'm super happy to be able to do this podcast. We rely on the generosity of donors, and if you feel like you can donate, please do. Help us out. Until next time, I will talk to you later. Thanks. Bye.

Resources discussed in this episode

[Behavior skill: Decision Making](#)

[ADHD Parenting Coaching Session](#)

[Do consequences really work?](#)

[Why it's important to have low parenting tolerances](#)

[Teaching kids self-governance to improve family life](#)

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