

Intelligence That Comes from the Heart

Every parent knows the importance of equipping children with the intellectual skills they need to succeed in school and life. But children also need to master their emotions. *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child* is a guide to teaching children to understand and regulate their emotional world. As acclaimed psychologist and researcher John Gottman shows, once they master this important life skill, emotionally intelligent children will enjoy increased self-confidence, greater physical health, better performance in school, and healthier social relationships. *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child* will equip parents with a five-step "emotion coaching" process that teaches how to:

- Be aware of a child's emotions
- Recognize emotional expression as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching
- Listen empathetically and validate a child's feelings
- Label emotions in words a child can understand
- Help a child come up with an appropriate way to solve a problem or deal with an upsetting issue or situation

Written for parents of children of all ages, *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child* will enrich the bonds between parent and child and contribute immeasurably to the development of a generation of emotionally healthy adults.

A significant gift to parents and children." —COMMON BOUNDARY

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RAISING AN EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT CHILD JOHN GOTTMAN, PH.D.

Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child

♥ The Heart of Parenting ♥



JOHN GOTTMAN, Ph.D.
 with JOAN DECLAIRE
 Foreword by DANIEL GOLEMAN
 Author of *Emotional Intelligence*



SIMON & SCHUSTER PAPERBACKS

of times you said "true" for the items in List No. 1 below, and then subtract the number of times you said "true" for the items in List No. 2 below. The higher your score, the greater your awareness.

List No. 1

1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 44.

List No. 2

2, 6, 9, 13, 14, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43.

If you responded "don't know" more than ten times, you may want to work at becoming more aware of anger in yourself and others.

SADNESS. To compute your score for sadness, add up the number of times you said "true" for the items in List No. 1 below, and then subtract the number of times you said "true" for the items in List No. 2 below. The higher your score, the greater your awareness.

List No. 1

4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 18, 21, 24, 31, 35.

List No. 2

1, 2, 3, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40.

If you responded "don't know" more than ten times, you may want to work at becoming more aware of sadness in yourself and others.

TIPS FOR EMOTIONAL SELF-AWARENESS

After taking this test, you may find that you want to develop a deeper awareness of your own emotional life. Common ways to tap into your feelings include meditation, prayer, journal writing, and forms of artistic expression, such as playing a musical instrument or drawing. Keep in mind that building greater emotional awareness requires a bit of solitude, something that's often in short supply for today's busy parents. If you remind yourself, however, that time

spent alone can help you to become a better parent, it doesn't seem so indulgent. Couples may want to take turns getting out alone for early morning walks or taking off for a weekend retreat from time to time. Single parents may want to trade child care with one another for the same purpose.

Keeping an "emotion log" is also an excellent way to become more aware of your feelings moment by moment. The chart on the next page is an example of a weekly checklist for keeping track of a variety of feelings as they come up. In addition to the checklist, you may want to keep a brief emotion diary for writing down thoughts about feelings as you are experiencing them. Such logs can help you to become more aware of incidents or thoughts that trigger your emotions and how you react to them. Do you remember, for example, the last time you cried or lost your temper? What was the catalyst? How did you feel about having the emotion? Did you feel relieved afterward or ashamed? Were others aware that you were having these feelings? Did you talk to anybody about the incident? These are the types of things you might note in an emotion log. You can also use the log to take note of your reactions to other people's emotions, particularly those of your children. Each time you see your child angry, sad, or fearful, you can jot down notes about your own reaction.

Emotion logs can also be helpful for people who feel scared or anxious about their own emotional responses. That's because the process of labeling an emotion and writing about it can help people define and contain the feeling. Emotions that once seemed mysterious and uncontrollable suddenly take on boundaries and limits. Our feelings become more manageable and they're not as frightening anymore.

As you work with the emotion log, notice the kinds of thoughts, images, and language your feelings elicit. Look for insights in the metaphors you choose to describe your feelings. For example, do you sometimes see your anger or your child's anger as destructive or explosive and therefore frightening? Or are you more likely to perceive it as powerful, cleansing, and energizing? What do such images tell you about your willingness to accept and work with negative emotions in your life? Do you notice attitudes or perceptions about emotion that you'd like to change?

Week of:

EMOTION:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
HAPPINESS							
AFFECTION							
INTEREST							
EXCITEMENT							
PRIDE							
DESIRE							
LOVE							
LOVED							
THANKFULNESS							
STRESS							
HURT							
SADNESS							
IRRITATION							
ANGER							
PITY							
DISGUST							
GUILT							
ENVY							
REGRET							
SHAME							

BEING AWARE OF CHILDREN'S EMOTIONS

Parents who are aware of their own emotions can use their sensitivity to tune in to their children's feelings—no matter how subtle or intense. Being a sensitive, emotionally aware person, however, doesn't necessarily mean that you'll always find your child's feelings easy to understand. Kids often express their emotions indirectly and in ways that adults find puzzling. If we listen carefully with open hearts, however, we can often de-code messages children unconsciously hide in their interactions, their play, their everyday behavior.

David, a father in one of our parenting groups, told how an inci-

dent with his seven-year-old daughter helped him to understand the roots of her anger and showed him what she needed. Carly had been "in a dark mood" all day, he explained, picking fights with her four-year-old brother, taking offense at all sorts of imagined insults, including the classic: "Jimmy's looking at me again!" With every interaction, Carly cast Jimmy as the villain, although Jimmy seemed to be doing nothing wrong. When David asked Carly why she was so angry at her easygoing sibling, his questions elicited only silence and tears. The more he probed, the more defensive Carly became.

At the end of the day, David went to Carly's room to help her get ready for bed. There he found her pouting again. He opened her bureau to get her pajamas and found just one set clean—a tattered, outgrown pair with feet in the bottom. "Do you think these will fit?" he asked with a weak smile as he held them up for his lanky girl to see. David fetched a scissors, and together the two cut the feet off the pajamas so she could wear them. "I can't believe how quickly you're growing up," he told her. "You're getting to be such a big girl."

Five minutes later, Carly joined the family in the kitchen for a bedtime snack. "She was like a different kid," David remembers. She was chatty, upbeat. She even managed to crack a joke for Jimmy.

"Something happened during the business with the pajamas but I'm not sure what," David told the other parents. After tossing it around the group, however, the answer was clearer to him. A serious, sensitive kid, Carly had always been jealous of charming, sweet-natured Jimmy. And for some reason, on that day in particular she may have been needing reassurance of her own special place in the family. Perhaps she wanted to know that David loved her in a way that's different from the way he loved Jimmy. Perhaps her father's sweet acknowledgment that she's growing up fast was just the ticket.

The point is, children—like all people—have reasons for their emotions, whether they can articulate those reasons or not. Whenever we find our children getting angry or upset over an issue that seems inconsequential, it may help to step back and look at the big picture of what's going on in their lives. A three-year-old can't tell you, "I'm sorry I've been so cranky lately, Mom; it's just that I've