

THE FOUR TYPES OF PARENTING STYLES

Every parent and child, without exception, has a way of interacting with each other. Sometimes those interactions are highly positive and affirming, at other times they are volatile and counterproductive. Your style and whether it meshes or clashes with your child's, strongly influences the relationship dynamics in your family and how successful you'll be as a parent and a family in general¹.

Many articles on different types of parenting styles have been written over the years and the following four basic styles have stood the test of time in guiding parents in understanding their own parental role and responsibilities. Once you have a clear understanding of the different styles, it will be easier to define your own strategy that fits with your personal value system. As you read through these different types of parenting styles, think of yourself and what style *you* seem to exercise. You may recognize a style of a friend or other parent you know. Most parents find themselves to be a mixture of a couple of different styles².

1. Authoritarian Parenting:

In this style of parenting, children are expected to follow the strict rules established by the parents. Failure to follow such rules usually results in punishment. Authoritarian parents fail to explain the reasoning behind these rules. If asked to explain, the parent might simply reply "Because I said so". These parents have high demands and are not usually responsive to their children. Authoritarian parents tend to be obedience and status orientated, they often expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation. Authoritarian parenting styles generally lead to children who are obedient and proficient. These children do however often rank lower in happiness, social competence and self-esteem.

2. Authoritative Parenting:

Like authoritarian parents, those with an authoritative parenting style establish rules and guidelines that their children are expected to follow. However, this parenting style is much more democratic. Authoritative parents are more responsive to their children and are willing to listen to questions. When children fail to meet expectations, these parents are more nurturing and forgiving than punishing. These parents monitor and communicate clear standards for their children's conduct. They are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are supportive, rather than punitive. These parents want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible, self-regulated as well as cooperative. Authoritative parenting styles tend to result in children who are happy, capable and successful.

3. Permissive Parenting:

Permissive parents, sometimes referred to as indulgent parents, have very few demands to make of their children. These parents rarely discipline their children because they have relatively low expectations of maturity and self-control. Permissive parents are more responsive than they are demanding. They are non-traditional and lenient, do not require mature behaviour, allow considerable self-regulation and avoid confrontation. Permissive parents are generally nurturing and communicative with their children, often taking on the status of a friend more than that of a parent. Permissive parenting often results in children who rank low in happiness and self-regulation. These children are more likely to experience problems with authority and tend to perform poorly in school.

4. Uninvolved Parenting:

An uninvolved parenting style is characterized by few demands, low responsiveness and little communication. While these parents fulfil the child's basic needs, they are generally detached from their child's life. In extreme cases, these parents may even reject or neglect the needs of their children. Uninvolved parenting styles rank lowest across all life domains. These children tend to lack self-control, have low self-esteem and be less competent than their peers³.

Free online parenting style questionnaires are available at:

<http://www.comprehensivepsychology.com.au/assets/pdf/PARENTING%20STYLE%20QUESTIONNAIRE.pdf> and https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn.activeparenting.com/downloads/Parenting_Style_Quiz-printable.pdf

For a list of references and links to more information on this topic please visit

<http://www.christinedarney.co.za/Psych-Ed/psych-ed.html>

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