

The Way We Screw Our Kids (And Sometimes Get It Right)

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I've been a parent across decades.

My eldest children are now in their late 30s. My youngest son is 16. That's a lifetime of trial, error, love, regret, and learning. Parenting across such a time span feels like watching yourself in a mirror at different angles, seeing what you once were, and what you are now, and realising how often you misunderstood both.

There are things I got wrong the first time round. Things that still leave shadows in my grown-up children's lives. I see it in how they handle stress, in what they fear, in what they question about themselves. These aren't just their struggles, they're echoes of mine. Echoes of the father I was when I didn't know better.

Now, I do some things differently.

I listen more. I lecture less. I show up—not as the expert—but as a real person, flawed, learning, present. I don't believe in perfection anymore. As I often say, it's our imperfections that make us beautiful. And the most powerful thing I can give my son now is presence, not performance.

But I still get it wrong.

I tell him to listen, but forget that kids copy what they see, not what they hear. I think I'm busy with important things, but forget that he is the important thing. I raise my voice in frustration, but forget that my words don't disappear, they echo for a lifetime.



As a top coach to so many top performers, I often forget to listen to my own advice. One of my key strategies when helping people change is teaching them to connect with their inner child. And too often, that inner voice sounds painfully familiar—like my own voice when I was too busy, too distracted, too impatient with my kids. What we say becomes what they believe. Especially the negative stuff. And those beliefs grow into who they are.

Our kids will become us.

**So we must grow into who we
want them to be.**

We parent not from a textbook—but from who we are.

And that's the terrifying truth: if we want to raise kind, strong, emotionally intelligent children, we must become kind, strong, emotionally intelligent adults.

So here's what I know now—not as a perfect parent, but as a real one, still learning:

Three Things to Do If You Don't Want to Screw Up Your Kids:

1. Grow into who you want your kids to become.

"They won't listen to your advice if your life doesn't reflect it. Your children will mirror you, not your words. So stop performing—start evolving."

2. Be real, not perfect.

"Your children don't need a flawless parent—they need a human one. Your vulnerability gives them permission to be whole. Stop chasing perfection. Show up instead."

3. Watch your words—they become their voice.

"Every sharp word becomes an echo in their head. Speak with care. Your language today becomes their self-talk for life."



We all screw up. The secret is to stay in the game. To love hard. To show up. To evolve. Parenting is never done. And the question isn't whether we'll fail. It's whether we'll grow from it.

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