

Effective Parenting Styles

Looking for the best parenting style to build a positive relationship with your child? Here's a summary of three different parenting styles that may help you reflect on your relationship with your child.

Autocratic Style:

The autocratic parenting style, also known as the authoritarian style, has an evident rigid structure. Parents use excessive control and fear of consequences to micro-manage their teen's life. The main control strategies used are punishments and rewards.

The autocratic parenting style may cause the following consequences for teens:

- Rebellion or passive compliance/ indifference, as teens are not allowed to express opinions and feelings
- Becoming secretive and lying to parents to avoid consequences
- Resistant to helping others unless there are external rewards.

Permissive Style:

Unlike the other parenting styles, the permissive style lacks structure — “freedom without limits”. There are no recognizable rules or guidelines and instant rewards are arbitrarily given to the teen. This parenting style may involve pampering in the forms of parental over-protectiveness and/or “rescuing”.

The permissive parenting style may cause the following consequences. Teens:

- Often interpret permissiveness as a sign of weakness and may seize power given by parents.
- May easily be led by their peers.
- Can become obnoxious, spoiled, and/or scared and vindictive.
- May lose self-confidence and be in constant need of attention and help.

Effective, Balanced Style:

The effective, balanced parenting style is best described as “freedom within limits”. The structure of this parenting style is firm, flexible, and functional. Mutual respect is present and teens are given freedom along with responsibilities. Because of this, teens learn from their own mistakes – providing them with life-long lessons.

The effective, balanced parenting style can achieve the following goals. Teens will:

- Learn how to think, not what to think.
- Demonstrate self-esteem.



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- Grow up in a healthy learning atmosphere not filled with blame, shame, and hopeless thinking.
- Learn to balance responsibility and freedom.

Be Authoritative not Authoritarian:

In order to raise a healthy and responsible teen, your parenting style should be a combination of warmth and firmness. The balanced parenting style promotes the authoritative attitude and teens will eventually use self-control strategies as soon as they are mature enough.

Think harm reduction not zero tolerance:

When disciplining your teen, thoroughly discuss the issue to avoid harm. Discuss choices of new-found opportunities and convey that you want him/her to be safe. In the end, teens must take personal responsibility for their actions, use their own judgment, and make their own choices.

For more information, see also:

<http://www.empoweringparents.com/Its-Never-Too-Late-7-Ways-to-Start-Parenting-More-Effectively.php>

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/pages/Effective-Parenting.aspx?nfstatus=401&nftoken=00000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000000&nfstatusdescription=ERROR%3a+No+local+token>

<http://www.theyouthcentre.ca/parenting/ps/ps04.htm>