

Self-Care and Clarity of Mind...a weekly column by Princess Lakshman (Sister Iqra)



Welcome to my weekly column on **Self-Care and Clarity of Mind**. If you're taking time out to read this, pat yourself on the back because you have shown commitment to taking care of your mind and body.

Today, In Shaa ALLAH, we will explore the topic: **Raising Daughters**

She is unique
She has unlimited potential
She can change the world
She is your daughter.

Raising daughters can be quite a challenge. I have a teenage daughter and I write this column today with the utmost respect for all parents raising daughters.

It is vital that we respect and understand them first before we expect them to respect and understand us. As parents, we may have the benefit of age, experience and sometimes vocabulary, however, we too are children at our core of being and we have the ability to relate to most or all of the emotional ups and downs that our daughters experience daily.

We expect our daughters to respect us. The real question is: Do we respect our daughters? Are we constantly expecting them to toughen up, or soften down, or do as we say?

What strategies do you use to cope with your daughter's mood swings, tantrums, demands and emotional meltdowns?

Our daughters are future leaders of this world. We need to put our ego aside and raise them with sensitivity, compassion, empathy, respect and understanding.

There is no doubt that you love your daughter unconditionally. However, the following strategies, when implemented appropriately, may strengthen your relationship with her. Do try them.

Strategies to Strengthen Your Relationship With Your Daughter

1. Talk to her. Put away your gadgets, look her in the eye and connect with her verbally. A great way to start is to ask an open-ended question which invites an elaborate answer. For example, "What were some of the things that you did or that happened today that made it a wonderful day for you?"

2. Listen when she replies. LISTEN. Do not formulate a response while she is speaking. Do not cut her off while she is speaking. Become fully engaged. Observe her body language. A lot is communicated through body language.
3. Always compliment good behaviour. If the behaviour has been negative, look for moments when she is silent and compliment on her efforts to refrain from the negative behaviour. For example, "I am very pleased with you that you are trying your best to respect our agreement on Internet use."
4. Speak well about those she loves. For example, you may not be close to your in-laws but that does not mean your daughter has to inherit your opinions about them. Respect her love for them. Speak well about those she loves.
5. Respect her fears and sentiments. Fear is very real to the person experiencing it. You do not have to encourage it but you need to show sensitivity that it is real to your daughter. For example, "I know it makes you fearful when you think about your exams. I used to be the same. I know how you feel. I understand. I am so pleased that you are trying your very best. That is all that matters. Allah rewards efforts, not results. Keep doing your best."
6. Do not bring up past behavioural issues when addressing a new issue. Telling her you can no longer trust her because she lied to you last year about a fake Facebook account is NOT going to resolve anything. Instead, have a respectful discussion about having boundaries around internet usage.
7. Show good manners so that she emulates good manners. Saying "Please", "Thank you", "I'm sorry" to your daughter does not mean you are weak. In fact, it displays good manners and your daughter will learn to treat you and others with the same good manners.
8. NEVER laugh at her mistakes, NEVER belittle her and NEVER insult her. Doing these will hurt her and scar her for life. You only have to access your own unhealed childhood pain to realise that somewhere deep inside you is a memory of an adult who may have laughed at your mistake or insulted or belittled you.
9. "I am big, you're small therefore I'm right, you're wrong" - NEVER imply or say this. Your daughter is a human being created by ALLAH and deserves the same respect and joy as you or any other human being does.
10. Explain yourself clearly when you set boundaries. If you need to prohibit something, get her to sit and discuss the best strategies that will benefit the entire family. Show her you treat her with fairness and that it is a home with love and understanding, not a house with a dictator.

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Princess Lakshman

Writer, Clarity Coach, Founder and Facilitator of **Healing Words Therapy - Writing for Wellbeing & Muslimah Mind Matters**

E: info@healingwordstherapy.com / info@muslimahmindmatters.com Ph: 0451977786
Website: www.healingwordstherapy.com / www.muslimahmindmatters.com