

**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: **“Respect and Understand Your Children”**.

Children often do as we do, not as we say. It is vital that first we respect and understand them 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 the core of our being and we have the ability to relate to most or all of the emotional ups and downs that our children experience daily.

We expect our children to respect us. The real question is: Do we respect our children? And what do we say or do in order to display that respect?

Respecting anyone means to have regard for their feelings, rights and wishes.

When you respect, you are one step closer to understanding. When you understand someone, there is no room for assumptions or accusations.

Take a moment and ask yourself when was the last time you displayed regard for your child's feelings, rights and wishes? How did you display it?

Having an attitude of respect and understanding is not the same as practising them. As parents, it is vital that children actually see us practising respectful words and respectful actions towards them and others.

**10 ways to display respect and understanding**

1. Talk to them. Put away your gadgets, look them in the eye and verbally connect with them. 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 today or that happened today that made it a wonderful day for you?"
2. Listen when they reply. LISTEN. Do not formulate a response while they are speaking. Do not cut them off while they are speaking. Become fully engaged. Observe their body language. A lot is communicated through body language.
3. Always compliment a good behaviour. If the behaviour has been negative, look for moments when they are silent and compliment on their 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 they love. For example, you may not be close to your in-laws but that does not mean your child has to inherit your opinions about them. Respect their love for them. Speak well about those they love.
5. Respect their 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 child. 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 them you can no longer trust them because they 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 they can emulate good manners. Saying "Please", "Thank you", "I'm sorry" to your child does not mean you are weak. In fact it displays good manners and your child will learn to treat you and others with the same respectful manners.
8. NEVER laugh at their mistakes, NEVER belittle them and NEVER insult them. Doing these will hurt them and scar them 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...I'm right, you're wrong" - NEVER imply or say this. Your children are human beings created by ALLAH and deserve the same respect and joy as you or any other human being on earth does. They are neither beneath you nor above you. They deserve equality the same way you do.
10. Explain yourself clearly when you set boundaries. If you need to prohibit something, get them to sit and discuss the best strategies that will benefit the entire family. Show them you

treat them with fairness and that it is a home with love and understanding, not a house with a “dictator”.

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