

THE 10 GIFTS I GIVE MY CHILDREN

PARENTING FROM THE HEART

Feeling Fully Feeling fully, to me, means life itself. Knowing and experiencing their emotions is a gift I want with all my heart for my children.

Feelings are like a river. If we stuff them up, our emotional stream becomes stagnant, dirty, and disease-ridden. When we allow our feelings to flow freely, we're cleaning our system. Our minds are clear and our lives are a joy to live.

Self-Esteem No matter how many of our children's teachers or friends – or eventually, therapists – acknowledge their value, our children's real sense of self-worth initially comes from us, their parents.

When you know your children have strong self-esteem, you don't have to worry about how to control their contact with others. You can't really control it anyway. But you can remind your children of how wonderful they are and how lucky those other kids will be when *your* child's values rub on them.

Compassion Being compassionate means coming from a special place in your heart and mind, appreciating and valuing everything and everyone's place in the grand scheme of life. I know that's difficult some days so be compassionate with yourself, too and acknowledge yourself for doing as well as you are.

Balance In my career, when I have discipline to stay balanced, my work is refreshing, energetic, creative, focused and passionate. When I don't stay balanced, no matter how hard I work, I can't even appreciate the results. It's a long, hard journey with no apparent destination.

Humor Without a sense of Humor, life can be colorless, a terrible burden. With it, we enjoy the process of living. We have more joy to share with others. And we might even live longer with less stress and health problems

Another health benefit of living a life of fun and joy is learning the importance of hugging and touching, of nurturing one another just by being together.

Communication Good communication opens up so many doors: good communicators get job interviews, they develop great friendships and relationships because they can both speak and listen from the heart.

Abundance When I remember there is abundance in this world, I can leave what looks like a losing situation and ask myself, "What can I learn from this?" and "What kind of value can we all receive from this?"

In my family it means we have endless opportunities for fun, humor, nurturing better qualities and values, a deeper level of enjoyment of all of our current and past activities, and always, always another chance.

It's so empowering to listen to all their ideas while constantly giving love messages to reinforce that there is always another time, another way, another day.

Integrity Integrity, to me, is how you act when no one is watching, when no one knows what you are doing. It's always telling the truth, clearing up misconceptions or partial truths. It's never knowingly hurting anybody or anything.

Integrity creates trust, and trust is vital component of relationships.

Responsibility "Old" parenting to me means we are taught what to think, not how to think. What's the cost of that kind of parenting? Can our children ever learn to be responsible that way?

The ability to make smart little choices inevitably leads children to trust themselves to make more important choices about the big issues in life, too.

We all want to trust our kids, but they have to trust us first.

Conscious Choice To me, the gift of conscious choice means not operating “on automatic,” not always reacting out of the back side of the energy circle instead of acting proactively from the forward side.

Once you know that you have the gift of choice in your life, there is no more powerful tool. It allows you to figure out how to make things happen and how not to be a victim, no matter what the circumstances.