

9 psychological tips for positive parenting



Knowing and **living your values**, being **realistically optimistic**, and leading a **healthy lifestyle** are factors that help you provide your children with a **positive upbringing**, said [Timothy Sharp](#), founder of **The Happiness Institute**, in his talk at TecMilenio's [Wellbeing 360](#).

*“When it comes to positive parenting, what we want to focus on is **fostering, developing, and maintaining positive relationships** with our children,”* Sharp said.

The expert in positive psychology pointed out that parenting can be very challenging but said that it is also important to **enjoy and experience each of the stages in a child's growth**.

Dr. Happy, as the specialist is also known, presented the lecture **Positive Parenting - Practical Tips from the Science of Positive Psychology** as part of **Wellbeing 360's** last day of activities.



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Factors that are part of a good upbringing

Sharp presented studies on several **factors that can help people flourish and live happy lives**, which in turn are also part of positive parenting: love, empathy for others, and trust.

He noted a [Harvard](#) study on adult development that found factors which contribute to living a long and positive life.

“One key factor is love: to love and be loved. When we look at people with long and positive lives, we see that they grew up in a loving, supportive, and a psychologically safe environment,” he said.

Sharp also said that one of the founders of **Positive Psychology**, Professor **Chris Peterson**, points out that if people want to thrive and flourish, they must be aware that **other people matter** and that life’s about relationships.

Another study he shared is the **Gallup** report on happiness and job satisfaction. He said that while it may sound a bit removed from positive parenting, it’s about having **connection and belonging** to people you can trust, he added.

“When it comes to positive parenting, we want to focus on fostering, developing, and maintaining positive relationships with our children.”

1. Don't strive for perfection in parenting.

For Dr. Happy, the idea of **perfect parenting** is an unrealistic goal and sets people up for failure if they're always trying to achieve perfection.

*"The idea of **good enough parenting** is that what we need to do is do our best, and if we do it well most of the time, it will be good enough for our children,"* the specialist said.

*"It's simply about **giving our best** as often as we can and that will lead to good outcomes and increase the chances of raising healthy, happy, and successful children,"* he added.

2. Choose your battles wisely

Dr. Happy believes that it's easy to get distracted by things that aren't important. It's very easy as parents to **get upset about the little things**, such as messy bedrooms or getting stressed out because children don't hand their homework in on time.

"These things aren't unimportant but are they really the most important things to worry about?" he said.

*"There's the saying, '**Pick your battles.**' We don't want to fight or argue with our children about everything. We must be very clear about the things that are important, and that also means **being clear about what our values are**,"* he said.

3. Be an example by living your values

Although children and adolescents sometimes don't want to admit it, because they don't recognize it or they don't realize it, their parents are the most important and significant **role models** in their lives, Sharp says.

*"They look to us and **learn from what they see us do**. Therefore, if we want our children to live happy, healthy, and successful lives, we need to actively **model the behaviors that we want them to exhibit** and that we want them to learn and follow.*

"It's no use me telling my kids to exercise and eat right if I'm sitting on the couch eating junk food. However, if my children see me exercise every morning, they are more likely to aspire to having a healthy lifestyle," he said.

According to Dr. Happy, this applies not only to everyday behaviors but also to **values such as honesty and perseverance**. That is why he recommends being clear about what our values are and representing them as well and as often as possible.



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4. Lead a healthy lifestyle

Dr. Happy points out that having a **healthy lifestyle** is also an important part of what it means to be happy.

*“It’s vitally important in all areas of our lives. If we want **our children to grow up healthy**, we need to model these behaviors by exercising, eating healthy foods, and prioritizing sleep and rest.*

*“It’s hard to be happy if we’re sick and tired all the time. **Physical health is related to our mental health and psychological wellbeing**. Exercise, for example, is a stress reliever. It’s an antidepressant,” he added.*

5. Encourage with true optimism

Sharp stressed the importance of encouraging, reinforcing, and rewarding children when they do the right things but also **recognizing and accepting when something is not right**.

*“**True optimism** is about finding the good, about focusing on, highlighting, and celebrating all the good in our lives, but also about facing cold, hard realities.*

“It’s about dealing with those situations that are sometimes not so good and doing so in a constructive manner,” he said.

He also said that it's important as parents to **model and encourage the value of gratitude**; focus on and give thanks for the good things in life. Scientific evidence from Positive Psychology supports the idea that gratitude provides psychological benefits.

6. Encourage problem solving

For Dr. Happy, it's important for parents to face the fact that things won't always be good, that there will be problems in life, but that they focus above all on what psychologists call **solution-oriented thinking**.

*"If we or our children are going through a **difficult time**, we should talk about it and acknowledge it but also ask ourselves what we can do about it. What's the solution? How can we get around an outcome and overcome it?"*

*"As a parent, I often let my children know that things don't always go well and that there are challenges in life. I don't want my children to think my life is perfect when it isn't. However, they also need to see that **I'm looking for solutions so I can move forward**," he said.*



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7. Recognize the value of unity

Connection and belonging are central elements of positive parenting, Dr. Happy says. It's about recognizing that everyone, parents and children, are **together in the pursuit of happiness and**

real prosperity.

*“When things go well, we want to celebrate together. That’s obvious. However, when things don’t go so well, we have to get through them together as well. Having your children come to you at difficult times represents a **strength in your relationship**.*

*“It’s one of the most meaningful things we can do as parents. Knowing that if my kids get into trouble, and they will, and have difficulty dealing with challenges, they will have the **confidence to reach out and have a conversation** to look for solutions,” he added.*

True prosperity and real flourishing is about having a connection and a **healthy relationship between parents and children**, the psychologist said.

8. Focus on their strengths

The speaker recommended parents focus on their children’s **strengths** and help promote them since they’re among the most significant contributors to health, wellbeing, and success in life.

*“Many of us **focus too often on what we’re not good at**, on our flaws or weaknesses. No one is perfect. We have flaws, but we also have strengths, psychological attributes and things we’re really good at.*

*“As parents, focus on what your children are good at so you can **help them overcome their weaknesses** and help them **improve in areas where they might be faltering** in their life,” he added.*

9. Put your children first and enjoy life.

It’s common nowadays for people to get busy with the things in their lives, such as work, relationships, and other stressors. However, Dr. Happy points out that it’s vitally important to **put your children first** as often as you can.

*“There’ll be things that we’re working on, with pressures and all sorts of stuff, but for people who parent in a positive way, **parenting is and will always be the number one priority** in their lives,” the specialist said.*

And while he considers parenting, work, and studies to be serious endeavors, people **shouldn’t forget to celebrate the good things in their lives**, the joyful things that sometimes get overlooked in the hustle and bustle and stress of our everyday lives.

*“Parents shouldn’t forget to savor, enjoy, and **celebrate each and every moment in their lives** and each **stage of their children’s lives** since it’ll be over before you know it,” he concluded.*



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Wellbeing 360

The **Wellbeing 360 event**, organized by **Tecmilenio**, brings together leaders in **Wellbeing Science** who share their ideas on organizations, families, education, life with a purpose, and wellbeing in cities.

This event was held from October 17 to 20, 2022.

*“TecMilenio created this forum with the goal of bringing thousands of people together with **experts from around the world**, exploring ways to raise awareness, create purpose, live in wellbeing, and aim for **self-realization**,”* said Bruno Zepeda, rector at the university.

*“**We’re celebrating 10 years** of holding this event, which has had different names such as the *International Forum of Happiness Sciences* and is today *Wellbeing 360* for the third year,”* said Rosalinda Ballesteros, director of the Institute of Wellbeing and Happiness Sciences.

*“We’re very proud that TecMilenio has created this event, which is probably **the most important event on global wellness issues**,”* she added.

Wellbeing 360 will feature international experts such as Raj Raghunathan, Kelly McGonigal, Robert Quinn, and Karen Reivich.

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