

Foreword

It's been quite some time since my child-rearing years, and yet nearly every day parents in my workshops all around the world come to me expressing their pain and challenges in raising their children. The challenges are definitely familiar to me, yet the demands of today's overbooked schedules and the influences from the outside world are far more disquieting than ever before. Every day thousands of messages of violence and mistrust reach our children. In addition, there is the overwhelming pressure to define ourselves by what we have rather than what we value, and confused parents are crying out for help and support. It is time that we answered their call.

Respectful Parents, Respectful Kids comes as a compelling answer to this call at a vitally important time—when perhaps never before has the foundation of the family been more important to the future of our society and the well being of our planet. The tools in this book empower parents to serve as effective, active forces for change in families, communities, and the larger world. I agree with the authors when they say, “The way you parent will affect not only your child, but the lives of hundreds and perhaps thousands of people in your child's future. You don't have a choice about whether or not to affect this net of interdependence; however, you do have a choice about *how* you affect it.”

Authors Sura Hart and Victoria Kindle Hodson go beyond quick-fix parenting and disciplinary techniques and provide a foundation of communication and relationship skills that dramatically improve the quality of parent-child relationships. With the help of this book, parents become skilled at transforming habitual communication patterns that are out of harmony with their desire to contribute to their child's development. And by practicing these essential skills, parents can establish an emotionally safe and supportive environment where children can reach their fullest potential.

We are all born into this world with an inherent sense of our interconnectedness and a need for community and support. We are also born with a natural sense of compassion. However, it is our experiences—those moments when our needs are not respected in homes, schools, and organizations—that tarnish these natural states and turn us instead to meeting our needs through “power-over” tactics such as demands, coercion, and other violent behaviors. Or worse yet, we forget that our needs matter at all.

Respectful Parents, Respectful Kids provides a new way of understanding children’s behavior, and a new way of responding to it. When you use the tools provided in this book, you will build a foundation of trust with your children. Children who have the support of a home environment where trust thrives—where their needs are respected—are much more likely to lead healthy, productive lives. This foundation of trust is the beginning of strong self-esteem, and the basis of the mutual respect and loving connection parents everywhere want with their children.

In this very practical and deeply important book you can learn the tools and skills you need to truly prepare your children for the world. Regardless of where they are destined to go, you can send them off emotionally literate and conscious of their interconnectedness with others. By creating a home where trust thrives and where all needs are respected, you will empower your children to discover their potential, and to become lifelong contributors to the future of their families, their communities, and our planet.

Do more than read this book. Live these principles. Share them with your spouse, your friends, and your children. One parent and one household at a time, we will create a world where all needs are met peacefully.

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