

Patience and intention

“I CAN never teach my kids anything. I get very upset when he doesn't get it. Sometimes, I lose my patience and he will get a piece from me!”

I hear such things all the time from parents. from all walks of life.

Many wonder why such a situation is happening to them, nice, loving and concerned parents. They struggle to understand why their patience runs thin when it comes to dealing with their kids. They start to raise their voices — or worse, their hands —



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The learning and loving process

The relationship between learning and loving is much closer than you would think. It all depends on our intention. Teaching with the objective to help your child score an “A” in a subject may sound noble. However, we will quickly become frustrated. We are

when teaching our children because we just want them to maximise their potential and be the best they can be.

If they turn out to be the best student, that's great. But if they only manage an average grade after giving their best, then we should also rejoice because they have not given up and continue to strive. Then, even if they fail to understand after three explanations, instead of feeling angry, we will feel compassionate, realising that our child is having trouble in that particular subject. Instead of scolding, we will be even



When their children fail to understand a simple instruction.

Why is it so hard for them to put on a smiling face for the family when they easily do so with complete strangers?

Analyse our intention.

It all has to do with one's intention. A successful venture begins with the right purpose. A fascinating journey begins with the right objective. A satisfying life must have the right meaning. Similarly, great parenting must begin with the right intention.

Let's take a step back and analyse why are we teaching and guiding our kids. Are we doing it out of love, and wanting to see them be the best they can be, or because we want to be proud of their achievements? Are we forcing them to do something because that is what "we" want, and not what they want?

The old adage says that parents know best. I am not disputing that but we cross the line when we load our dreams, plans and goals on our children without consulting and engaging them first. This is why many people end up doing things that they don't like, simply because their parents want them to.

patient when they don't understand explanation the first time. After the second, our blood pressures begin to rise. Later we may lose control and unleash all kind of negative behaviour because of mounting frustration.

This is because we begin to realise that our intent of securing an "A" for them is under serious threat. Questions like "how can you get an A if you can't even answer this simple question?" will begin to pop out. The more severe the situation, the bigger the hurdle and the more frustrated we become. We are measuring our children's success or failure purely on an external benchmark alone. These external benchmarks are usually things that we want to be proud of such as acing the exams, being on top of the class, most well-behaved kid or the most popular.

Patience, compassion and passion

Sure, these benchmarks are important but they can also lead to destruction if parents become obsessed. We begin to lose the patience, compassion and passion when we feel that these external objectives are slipping away. Now let's take a step back and apply a new intent and objective

more determined to help him or her.

We will put ourselves in their shoes and appreciate the difficulty they are in. Our tone and reactions will change for the better because our objective is to help "them", not ourselves.

Fulfilling their dreams

Parents can be the best teachers to their own children because only parents have that magical bond with their own flesh and blood. However, the magic has to be worked out through correcting our intentions first. It's all about maximising their potential and fulfilling their dreams. It should never be about achieving our own personal objectives and satisfactions. Only then can we ensure that our children will live a happy and contented life.

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Texting your way to an accident

WHEN we speak of physically or mentally challenged people, we often assume that they were born that way. What we often forget is that there is a fine line that divide “normal” from “handicapped”.

That fine line is an event, or a series of events, that determines your fate. For those born with a condition, the event occurred in utero (during pregnancy). But for others, the “event” can be a fever, fall or accident.

When I meet other caregivers, we inevitably chat and get a bigger picture. What strikes me most in some of the people I’ve met, is how their lives have changed when their child, spouse, sibling or relative go from “normal” to “handicap”.

Not too long ago, while



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waiting for physiotherapy at the hospital, a mother of a teenage boy told me that her son had been a bright boy until the accident. One leg had to be amputated because it was crushed beyond repair. He is now mentally challenged because of a head injury. He was riding a motorbike when a car knocked him from behind. It wasn't a drunk driver but someone who had been distracted by the handphone.

We often forget how frail our body is. That is why we sometimes do foolish things which tempt us to ignore



the possible consequences. One is using the handphone while driving, especially to text. In this day and age when the handphone is a must-have, we should use it wisely. Sadly, many of us don't.

"Distracted driving" is becoming an epidemic in countries where handphone use has become the norm. Talking on a handphone while driving is dangerous. Then the SMS was introduced. We like to believe that we can multi-task very well, such as having a conversation with someone while texting to another.

A study by the American Automobile Association discovered that 46 per cent of teens involved in accidents admitted to being distracted because of texting.

Such distracted driving, as it is called, is even more dangerous than drunk driving. Celebrities like Oprah Winfrey are campaigning against such road behaviour but reports show that the message is not getting through.

We do not realise that taking our eyes off the road, even for a few seconds, can cost someone harm or death. Driving requires full concentration. Composing, reading and sending text messages compromise the driver's

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concentration. According to the National Traffic Safety Administration, 16 per cent of all fatal crashes in 2008 were caused by driver distraction.

There are many studies that examine the effects of texting while driving. They all conclude that texting impairs a driver's abilities.

When a driver is texting, he usually takes his eyes off the road for about five seconds. This is enough time for a person to run in front of your vehicle or a vehicle in front of you to make a sudden stop or for you to miss a traffic light change.

Talking on the phone, even with a hands-free set, can be dangerous as the driver can become so immersed in the conversation that he shifts

his focus from the road. Reading a map or the GPS also falls under distracted driving. It also includes putting on make-up, eating or listening to loud music when driving. Some people turn up the volume on the car audio system really high when they like the music. But this drowns out important sounds from outside, such as the sound of honking and the engines of other cars. These are important cues that alert a driver to his surroundings.

We have to change our ways and lead by example. Children learn from their parents' behaviour. No one should text and drive. If you need to text or talk on the phone, pull over to a safe place. Set rules for yourself and your family. Tell family, friends and organisations to which you belong about the importance of driving without distractions. Just remember: "On the road, off the phone".

You don't want your last words to be the likes of "where u?" or "lol".

The writer volunteers at the Special Children Society of Ampang. After more than two decades of grappling with the system, she finds that the whole experience is just one big learning curve. You can reach her at juneitajohari@yahoo.com.