

**Assessing Parenting Styles****(Style of Parent)**

This inventory asks questions about your feelings regarding sadness, fear, and anger - both in yourself and in your children. For each item, please circle the choice that best fits how you feel. If you're not sure, go with the answer that seems the closest. While this test requires you to answer lots of questions, try to stick with it. The lengthy design ensures that we cover most aspects of each parenting style.

**T = True      F = False**

1.	Children really have very little to be sad about.	T	F
2.	I think that anger is okay as long as it's under control.	T	F
3.	Children acting sad are usually just trying to get adults to feel sorry for them.	T	F
4.	A child's anger deserves a time-out.	T	F
5.	When my child is acting sad, he/she turns into a real brat.	T	F
6.	When my child is sad, I am expected to fix the world and make it perfect.	T	F
7.	I really have no time for sadness in my own life.	T	F
8.	Anger is a dangerous state.	T	F
9.	If you ignore a child's sadness it tends to go away and take care of itself.	T	F
10.	Anger usually means aggression.	T	F
11.	Children often act sad to get their way.	T	F
12.	I think sadness is okay as long as it's under control.	T	F
13.	Sadness is something one has to get over, to ride out, not to dwell on.	T	F
14.	I don't mind dealing with a child's sadness, so long as it doesn't last too long.	T	F
15.	I prefer a happy child to a child who is overly emotional.	T	F
16.	When my child is sad, it's time to problem-solve.	T	F
17.	I help my children get over sadness quickly so they can move on to better things.	T	F
18.	I don't see a child's being sad as any kind of opportunity to teach the child much.	T	F
19.	I think when kids are sad they are overemphasized the negative in life.	T	F
20.	When my child is acting angry, she turns into a real brat.	T	F
21.	I set limits on my child's anger.	T	F
22.	When my child acts sad, it's to get attention.	T	F
23.	Anger is an emotion worth exploring.	T	F
24.	A lot of a child's anger comes from the child's lack of understanding and immaturity.	T	F
25.	I try to change my child's angry moods into cheerful ones.	T	F

26.	You should express the anger you feel.	T	F
27.	When my child is sad, it's a chance to get close.	T	F
28.	Children really have very little to be angry about.	T	F
29.	When my child is sad, I try to help the child explore what is making him sad.	T	F
30.	When my child is sad, I show my child that I understand.	T	F
31.	I want my child to experience sadness.	T	F
32.	The important thing is to find out why a child is feeling sad.	T	F
33.	Childhood is a happy-go-lucky time, not a time for feeling sad or angry.	T	F
34.	When my child is sad, we sit down to talk over the sadness.	T	F
35.	When my child is sad, I try to help him figure out why the feeling is there.	T	F
36.	When my child is angry, it's an opportunity for getting close.	T	F
37.	When my child is angry, I take some time to try to experience this feeling with my child.	T	F
38.	I want my child to experience anger.	T	F
39.	I think it's good for kids to feel angry sometimes.	T	F
40.	The important thing is to find out why the child is feeling angry.	T	F
41.	When she gets sad, I warn her about not developing a bad character.	T	F
42.	When my child is sad, I'm worried he will develop a negative personality.	T	F
43.	I'm not really trying to teach my child anything in particular about sadness.	T	F
44.	If there's a lesson I have about sadness it's that it's okay to express it.	T	F
45.	I'm not sure there's anything that can be done to change sadness.	T	F
46.	There's not much you can do for a sad child beyond offering her comfort.	T	F
47.	When my child is sad, I try to let him know that I love him no matter what.	T	F
48.	When my child is sad, I'm not quite sure what she wants me to do.	T	F
49.	I'm not really trying to teach my child anything in particular about anger.	T	F
50.	If there's a lesson I have about anger it's that it's okay to express it.	T	F
51.	When my child is angry, I try to be understanding of his mood.	T	F
52.	When my child is angry, I try to let her know that I love her no matter what.	T	F
53.	When my child is angry, I'm not sure what he wants me to do..	T	F
54.	My child has a bad temper and I worry about it.	T	F
55.	I don't think it is right for a child to show anger.	T	F
56.	Angry people are out of control.	T	F

57.	A child's expressing anger amounts to a temper tantrum.	T	F
58.	Kids get angry to get their own way.	T	F
59.	When my child gets angry, I worry about his destructive tendencies.	T	F
60.	If you let kids get angry, they will think they can get their way all the time.	T	F
61.	Angry children are being disrespectful.	T	F
62.	Kids are pretty funny when they're angry.	T	F
63.	Anger tends to cloud my judgment and I do things I regret.	T	F
64.	When my child is angry, it's time to solve a problem.	T	F
65.	When my child gets angry, I think it's time for a spanking.	T	F
66.	When my child gets angry, my goal is to get him to stop.	T	F
67.	I don't make a big deal of a child's anger.	T	F
68.	When my child is angry, I usually don't take it all that seriously.	T	F
69.	When I'm angry, I feel like I'm going to explode.	T	F
70.	Anger accomplishes nothing.	T	F
71.	Anger is exciting for a child to express.	T	F
72.	A child's anger is important.	T	F
73.	Children have a right to feel angry.	T	F
74.	When my child is mad, I just find out what is making her mad.	T	F
75.	It's important to help the child find out what caused the child's anger.	T	F
76.	When my child gets angry with me, I think, "I don't want to hear this."	T	F
77.	When my child is angry I think, "If only he could just learn to roll with the punches."	T	F
78.	When my child is angry I think, "Why can't she accept things as they are?"	T	F
79.	I want my child to get angry, to stand up for himself.	T	F
80.	I don't make a big deal out of mt child's sadness.	T	F
81.	When my child is angry I want to know what she is thinking.	T	F
<b>Dismissing Parent</b> <b>Disapproving Parent</b> <b>Laissez-Faire Parent</b> <b>Emotion-Coaching Parent</b> _____                      _____                      _____                      _____			

## ***How To Interpret the Score:***

### **A:**

Add up the number of times you said “true” for the following items:

1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 28, 33, 43, 62, 66, 67, 68, 76, 77, 78, 80

**Divide the total by 25.**

### **B:**

Add up the number of times you said “true” for the following items:

3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 20, 21, 22, 41, 42, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 65, 69, 70

**Divide the total by 23.**

### **C:**

Add up the number of times you said “true” for the following items:

26, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 52, 53

**Divide the total by 10.**

### **D:**

Add up the number of times you said “true” for the following items:

16, 23, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 51, 64, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 79, 81

**Divide the total by 23.**

**Now compare your four scores. The higher you scored in any one area, the more you tend toward that style of parenting.**

Adapted from:

Gottman, J. (1997). *Raising an emotionally intelligent child*. New York, NY: Fireside: Simon and Schuster, Inc. pp. 43-48.

To use this test yourself, please contact:

Simon & Schuster  
Attn: Subsidiary Rights, 14th floor  
1230 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10020  
or fax your request on official letterhead to: (212)632 8099

## ***Four Styles of Parenting***

### ***The Dismissing Parent (A)***

- \* treats child's feelings as unimportant, trivial
- \* disengages from or ignores the child's feelings
- \* wants the child's negative emotions to disappear quickly
- \* characteristically uses distraction to shut down child's emotions
- \* may ridicule or make light of a child's emotions
- \* shows little interest in what the child is trying to communicate
- \* may lack awareness of emotions in self and others
- \* feels uncomfortable, fearful, anxious, annoyed, hurt, or overwhelmed by the child's emotions
- \* fears being out-of-control emotionally
- \* focuses more on how to get over emotions than on the meaning of the emotion itself
- \* believes negative emotions are harmful or toxic
- \* believes focusing on negative emotions will "just make matters worse"
- \* feels uncertain about what to do with the child's emotions
- \* sees the child's emotions as a demand to fix things
- \* believes negative emotions mean the child is not well adjusted
- \* believes the child's negative emotions reflect badly on their parents
- \* minimizes the child's feelings, downplaying the events that led to the emotion
- \* does not problem-solve with the child; believes that the passage of time will resolve most problems

***Effects of this style on children:*** They learn that their feelings are wrong, inappropriate, not valid. They may learn that there is something inherently wrong with them because of the way they feel. They may have difficulty regulating their own emotions.

### ***The Disapproving Parent (B)***

- \* displays many of the Dismissing Parent's behaviors, but in a more negative way
- \* judges and criticizes the child's emotional expression
- \* is over aware of the need to set limits on their children
- \* emphasizes conformity to good standards or behavior
- \* reprimands, disciplines, or punishes the child for emotional expression, whether the child is misbehaving or not
- \* believes expression of negative emotions should be timelimited
- \* believes negative emotions need to be controlled
- \* believes negative emotions reflect bad character traits
- \* believes the child uses negative emotions to manipulate; this belief results in power struggles
- \* believes emotions make people weak; children must be emotionally tough for survival
- \* believes negative emotions are unproductive a waste of time
- \* sees negative emotions (especially sadness) are a commodity that should not be squandered
- \* is unconcerned with the child's obedience to authority

*Effects of this style on children: Same as the Dismissing style.*

### ***The Laisses-Faire Parent (C)***

- \* freely accepts all emotional expression from the child
- \* offers comfort to the child experiencing negative feelings
- \* offers little guidance on behavior
- \* does not teach the child about emotions
- \* is permissive; does not set limits
- \* does not help children solve problems
- \* does not teach problem-solving methods to the child
- \* believes there is little you can do about negative emotions other than ride them out
- \* believes that managing negative emotions is a matter of hydraulics; release the emotion and the work is done

*Effects of this style on children: They don't learn to regulate their emotions; they have trouble concentrating, forming friendships, getting along with other children.*

### ***The Emotion Coach (D)***

- \* values the child's negative emotions as an opportunity for intimacy
- \* can tolerate spending time with a sad, angry, or fearful child, does not become impatient with the emotion
- \* is aware of and values his or her own emotions
- \* sees the world of negative emotions as an important arena for parenting
- \* is sensitive to the child's emotional states, even when they are subtle
- \* is not confused or anxious about the child's emotional expression; knows what needs to be done
- \* respects the child's emotions
- \* does not poke fun at or make light of the child's negative feelings
- \* does not say how the child should feel
- \* does not feel he or she has to fix every problem for the child
- \* uses emotional moments as a time to
  - \_\_\_\_\_ listen to the child
  - \_\_\_\_\_ empathize with soothing words and affection
  - \_\_\_\_\_ offer guidance on regulating emotions
  - \_\_\_\_\_ set limits and teach acceptable expression of emotions
  - \_\_\_\_\_ teach problem-solving skills

*Effects of this style on children: They learn to trust their feelings, regulate their own emotions, and solve problems. They have high self-esteem, learn well, get along well with others.*

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