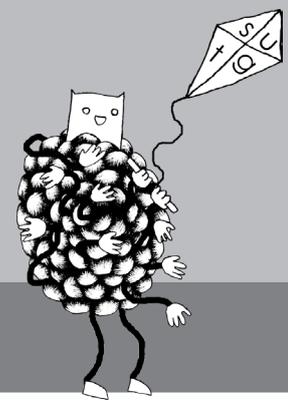




'In partnership with you'

# Developing your children to be successful students



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## DEAR FAMILIES,

### Parenting never ends, but it certainly changes.

My children are in their thirties now and parenting continues to be a very rich and satisfying journey, as well as a confusing and frustrating one at times. I guess that is how parenting is for all of us. Many of you have young adults as children now. Some of you may find that your relationship with them is one where they still need your money, time, advice, and help, more than you think is useful, for either them or yourself.

A few years ago, I began to develop more of an adult-adult relationship with my children rather than a child-adult one. I had previously believed that I must always act strong and wise with them, and always be available to give them my advice and support. That had been particularly necessary when they were younger. Now they were adults I wanted to develop a more equal relationship.

I believe that I must change myself before my children will change themselves, so I made two important changes to my own beliefs and behavior to develop an adult-adult relationship with my children.

Put very simply, I began to give my adult children more respect by showing them more of my vulnerable human side. I am now more likely to admit lack of courage, mistakes, fears confusions, tiredness, and lack of physical strength to them when appropriate. As well, I now believe that they can solve their problems without my constant input. I don't give them as much advice, and instead listen more as they talk. It has not always been a smooth ride. I did not find it easy to show my flaws and weaknesses to my children, or to listen more than to give advice. However, a more respectful and intimate closeness continues to grow between us as our adult-adult relationship develops.

Everyone parents differently. You will probably want to change other parts of your relationship with your adult children. These tips might help.



### Tips:

- Decide exactly what sort of relationship you want. What does a more 'adult-adult' relationship with your child mean to you? It is different for everyone.
- You are the one who needs to change first, not them. When you change how you are thinking and feeling so will they eventually. Carefully decide which of your beliefs, thoughts, and actions you need to change.
- Stay in control of yourself. Deliberately choose when you will act differently, rather than having a 'knee-jerk' reaction to an incident happening at that moment.
- Stay very focused and clear about what you are doing when acting differently with them so that you stay unsentimental, don't make excuses for yourself, or get too emotional.
- Don't expect they will immediately 'get' you. At first your adult children might feel worried, afraid, or disturbed and might increase their 'child' behaviours to get the old familiar adult-child relationship back.
- Change takes time. Continue your new 'adult-adult' behaviours as appropriate, even when there is a negative response.
- Only change one or two behaviours at a time. Then you can maintain the changes of thought and behaviour in yourself when it is difficult to do so.

I encourage you to remember why you are making these sometimes difficult changes in how you interact with your adult children. Believe firmly that the adult-adult relationships you want with them will only deepen your mutual respect and love for each other.

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