

What kind of parent are you?

Written by Decca Knight



Parent-In-Training

In my many years working with parents and children, I have encountered a variety of parenting styles. No doubt you have observed them as well, in the aisles of Target, at the playground, at your child's softball game. There is the drill sergeant parent who barks orders like a commander. If their "soldiers" don't comply,

they are punished. They provide little love or nurture. There is the permissive parent, whose child is crawling on the tables at the restaurant while they are surfing Facebook on their iPhone. There is the helicopter parent, who constantly hovers over their child, solving the minor spat between siblings and who approaches their child's high school teacher to complain that they are not being "nice enough" to their child. There is the "best friend" parent who worries about upsetting their child and therefore avoids setting limits.

There is also the hybrid parent, who shifts between various parenting styles depending on their mood.

So, how do we develop our parenting style? Often our approach has its foundations in how we were parented. For many of us, this is

the only model we have. Even if we say to ourselves,

"I will be different from my parents," we often fall into the same patterns. Then we regret and feel guilty about our missteps. We therefore need

to educate ourselves about different parenting philosophies.

There is no one "right" approach. Different styles work for different families. Based on their personalities, some kids need more structure, while others flourish when allowed more freedom. A good place to begin is to read a few of the hundreds of parenting books out there. I have many favorites, but most often I find myself recommending the following: *Parenting with Love and Logic* (Foster and Cline), *The Whole Brain Child* (Seigel and Bryson), *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen* (Faber and Mazlish), and *The Conscious Parent* (Tsabary).

Read, take notes, and develop your own parenting journal. Write down the underlying principles, strategies, and techniques that resonate with you. Keep it in your kitchen, so that when you are feeling overwhelmed, you can reference it and re-center yourself. Your kids will thank you... thank you for being consistent and clear in your approach, whatever it may be.



Decca Knight is a wife, mother, counselor, and parenting educator. In an effort to further help kids and parents, Decca began studying a variety of parenting philosophies. She teaches classes, consults with other "Parents-in-training," and runs Blue Ridge Parenting and Consulting LLC. For more information about parenting classes and consultation visit Decca's website www.blueridgeparenting.com

