



#UKPastoralChat **Periodical for Parents**

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Are you a good-enough parent?

Neil Hawkes

Have you ever, like me, felt that you are the world's worst parent? Your child is having a meltdown in the local supermarket and everyone seems to be silently judging you? Or you've just called up to your adolescent's bedroom for the umpteenth time asking him/her to get up and get ready for school only to be met with a sullen response? Let me reassure you that yours is not an isolated incident but can be seen a part of the normal development of children.

Take heart, in my view being a parent in the complexity of today's society is increasingly challenging, as each of us has to navigate the stresses of modern living and come to terms with what it means to be a good enough parents. There are now many types of families and roles we may play within them: the step-parent, single parent, reconstituted families with children from more than one original family to name but some.

Because of the years I have devoted to understanding child development and enjoying exploring ways of effectively educating young people, I am now increasingly approached by parents who want some helpful tips to help them be a good enough parent. I often hesitate to answer, as I ask whether I have been a good enough parent of my six children and now to my eleven grandchildren? Perhaps you should check with them?

However, what I will now share you may find relevant and I hope will help you at whatever stage of the parenting journey you're on. I am sometimes called the values

man as I have spent what seems a lifetime looking at the potential power of values to make a positive difference in our lives.

What are values? They are our strongest held principles that guide the way we think and behave in the world. They become the building blocks on which our attitudes and beliefs are formed, which mould our character and personality, creating the lens through which we see the world. There are two main types of values: positive human values such as respect, humility, trust, friendship and compassion and limiting values such as greed, envy intolerance and jealousy.

We tend to have the best relationships with people who share our values. A significant predictor as to whether a relationship will survive the passage of time is the degree to which the two people share a similar set of values.

How can knowledge about values help our parenting in the context of a family?

Here are some ideas and activities that may help you in your quest to be a good-enough parent:

Begin by thinking about how you want to be together as a family and finding out what the most important values are for you all? How you do this is to have a family meeting and ask each person to say what each of these value words mean to them (you can add to the list):

Respect
Happiness
Trust
Love

Give simple definitions to help young children to understand what they mean.

Next ask what your life in your home would be like if we all looked for ways of living these values? Give some very practical examples. For instance, respect means we give each other time to speak without interrupting. Suggest you'll have another family meeting in a month's time to review if the family is finding it easy to live these values and what effect they're having on the family's relationships.

A great idea is to put your family's values on the fridge door so that everyone is reminded about them.

The challenge for you as a parent is to model the values so that your children see that you are authentic in your desire to promote a range of positive values. In my experience it is more difficult to do this with people who are close to us emotionally. However the result can be profound as the general level of harmony increases. Please remember though that it is natural for each of us at times to be overwhelmed by our emotions and lose control. That is where the next point may help.

Another idea that can have a very positive impact on family life is to have a space in your home - it can be a section of a room - which can become, when needed, a place to reflect calm down and think. This could be described by many names, such as the breathing space, the thinking zone, or whatever name feels right for your family. This is the space family members can go when they feel their emotions getting the upper

hand. It is a space to pause and calm down. May I emphasise that this space is for all family members! Whilst in the space breathe deeply and allow clarity to emerge.

My wife Jane often reminds me that to say, "You're a naughty child," often leads children to identify themselves as being the naughty child. However if instead we say, "A part of you is being naughty right now," this gives an opening to talk about why the part was behaving in that way. For older children instead of labelling the child by saying, "You are behaving badly", instead say, "A part of you is expressing itself inappropriately". This change in language will work wonders as the family learns about the way parts of their internal world behave under different circumstances.

May I invite you to work with these ideas? I have found that by creating a safe space that gives permission to be really heard is vital if our children are going to grow in terms of wellbeing, resilience and general happiness. Jane and I are writing our next book called Values-based Living, which will expand on the ideas in this short article.

I hope you will enjoy your parenting - it's a phase that passes so quickly but at the time seems all consuming.

Neil Hawkes, BA, M.Ed., D.Phil (Oxford), FRSA



Neil is the founder of the International Values Education Trust (IVET) and Values-based Education (VbE). See www.valuesbasededucation.com

Neil is loved and respected throughout the world as an educational leader and thinker. Neil's enriching and successful career in the UK started with teaching, followed by three headships, and senior educational leadership in county education authorities. Whilst he was a county

chief adviser for education, he decided to return to a school headship to implement his transformational ideas, which promote self-leadership based on positive human values.

Neil spent seven years as Headteacher of West Kidlington School in Oxford where he gained a reputation for his outstanding leadership and transformational curriculum. It was here that the school community worked together to devise and implement a system of Values-based Education that has been recognised internationally as the foundation of outstanding school practice. Neil is well known as an inspirational speaker, broadcaster and writer. He is a TEDx speaker. His book, *From My Heart, transforming lives through values*, is a celebration of the success of VbE worldwide. Neil's latest book co-authored with Jane Hawkes, is called *The Inner Curriculum, how to nurture wellbeing, resilience and self-leadership*. Neil hopes that this book will herald a new era in education, as its aim is to transform consciousness, so that we can live in peace and harmony on our beautiful planet.





When is it okay to start talking about mental health?

Hope Virgo

As a teacher, parent or guardian we may not always know how to talk to a young person about their mental health. We might be scared of triggering them or upsetting them. And when should we start having these conversations? When are young people ready to talk about mental health and what do we do when we are worried about someone?

I lived with anorexia from the age of 12, becoming the master of deception. I hid it from my family and friends for four years before I got any help. Anorexia made me do things I never thought I would do. It made me angry at anyone who made me eat, it made me hate life, and it made me shut everyone off from around me. I stopped trusting people and made everyone my enemy.

No one really knows the exact reason I developed anorexia but there was a number of things that contributed to it. One of which was I was sexually abused when I was 13 years old. When this happened I didn't know what to do. I felt ashamed, embarrassed and like I had let down everyone around me. The guilt consumed me and I didn't feel able to talk openly about how I was feeling.

Imagine if another young person had experienced this? Imagine if they too felt trapped and unable to share?

Through the work I do in schools I have met hundreds of young people who are struggling with their mental health. Young people who feel completely alone and unable to talk about how they feel. Young people who think they are the only ones who are hearing voices in their heads. That is exactly how I felt. In those months before I went in to hospital. Those evenings when I didn't have the energy to argue about a meal time I would eat the meal, go upstairs to the bathroom, lock the door and make myself vomit. I would sit there on the bathroom floor, cold, naked and alone wanting everything to be over. And I didn't know who to talk to. I didn't think anyone would understand what I was going through. I thought people would think I was strange and wouldn't want to be my friend. I was terrified. I hated my anorexia and what she had done to me but at the same time loved her. And wanted her forever.

I had a teacher at school, Ms Lavery, who took the time to talk to me. She was there, listened and helped when life seemed too tough. It was these conversations that helped me realise I wasn't completely unusual and that I wasn't alone.

What can you do in your position?

1. **Educate yourself** - we aren't asking you to know everything about our mental illness or to think you know best trying to understand bits of it will 100% help and it will help us feel you are taking me seriously
2. **Build trust** - this is key! Yes, it can be hard as a teacher but you are in a fantastic place to do just this. Away from our family and friends a teacher could offer that safe space we are desperate for.
3. **Picnics on school trips:** Please think about the person with an eating disorder, ask them what they might want. Check they are okay with it – sandwiches can be hard for some people in recovery.
4. **Avoid talking about diets and weight** - this may seem completely harmless to you but could have a hugely negative impact on our recoveries. What needs to happen is positive conversations around healthy eating and healthy exercise trying to remove any sort of obsession.
5. **Know where there are services to refer individuals on to** - and be persistent if they don't take you seriously
6. **Keep conversations about mental health going** – whether in assemblies or as lessons it is so important we keep normalising these conversations
7. **Build up a child's resilience** – so that they know how to deal with what life throws at them
8. **Listening is just as important as knowing the answers**
9. **Prepare everyone for University** – through education, creating checklists and preparing them so they can cope with the pressure
10. **Don't lecture**

Looking after a child with an eating disorder or another mental health problem can be a complete and utter minefield but it is possible.

We have a duty of care to one another and to young people to equip them, make sure they don't feel alone and to help them talk about how they truly feel. And throughout this please show empathy to those young people in a non-judgemental way. Listen, care and check back in with people.

And remember to keep looking after yourself too.

Hope Virgo



Hope Virgo is the Author of Stand Tall Little Girl and a leading advocate for people with eating disorders described by Richard Mitchell, CEO of Sherwood Forest Hospital as "sharing a very powerful story with a huge impact". Hope helps employers including schools, hospitals and businesses deal with the rising tide of mental health issues which affects one in four people and costs employers between £33 and £42 billion annually. Hope is a recognised media spokesperson having

appeared on various shows including BBC Newsnight, Good Morning Britain, Sky News and BBC News.

For more info please do take a look at my website: www.hopevirgo.com





Digital Parenting.

Dr Neelam Parmar

Raising kids is tough. Raising kids with smart phones and tablets is even tougher. As new and more advanced technologies are filtering into everyday lifestyles, it is becoming even harder to make decisions about software, hardware, apps and whether using social sites is indeed the new way for social networking. There have been so many changes and inventions with some of the newer forms of technologies that the digital immigrants (people born before the advent of digital technology) are finding it hard to keep with the digital natives (the generation of people born during or after the rise of digital technologies).

More recently, young babies are introduced to digital devices at an early age. Amazon and other big manufacturing companies have created tablets for pre-school children and parents are buying their children individual tablets of their own before they have even get into pre-school. All this before parents are even faced with the popularity of Minecraft, Moshi Monsters, You Tube and Club Penguin in the primary years. Then comes the new craze of sending texts, images and videos to each other which brings about a whole new dimension of being safe online. And just when you think you have mastered that, the teen years come along with the onslaught of social media sites such as, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat with other contenders in the market such as Yik Yak and ooVoo. As a parent, you are advised of all kinds of problematic issues

ranging from sexting to cyberbullying to identifying theft and simply spending too much time online. As though this is not enough, you are then left on your own, after having been advised what to do, back to the naivety of what you know and what you have yet to learn. There is so much information to remember, that you cannot distinguish that which is important and what is not. This is just so baffling to some parents, that they choose to stay oblivious of the online world and hope for the best.

Digital parenting is just plain hard and best to be up front about it then pretend it is all OK. Some days will be great and then when a new technical temptation hits the market, it becomes difficult again. Often being overwhelmed with so much information can get you into quite a defensive mode and make you wish that you could take it all back and return to the days you grew up in where digital devices just didn't exist. Unfortunately, that is not the reality and while there is no such thing as perfection, the information available out there by CEOP, Childnet, NSPCC, Vodafone and the parental guide to Digital Parenting (author), can give you good enough information to get you started in the right direction.

In a 2017-person survey by online security software maker McAfee (2010), findings show that two out of three parents are ignorant of their children's internet activities. In part, this is because children are very good at hiding what they are doing. For example, more than 50 percent of all children routinely erase their Internet search histories. So when bad things happen to good parents, it is difficult to comprehend it. Despite the ubiquity of social media in our daily lives, it is important to remember that mere 15 years ago, there was no Facebook, Google, Snapchat etc. The reality is that while technology has advanced quickly, the digital parenting skills have not kept pace. It may not be our fault, but it is definitely a problem. While it is easy to blame it on the technology, these are actually parenting problems, that although are not more traditional in nature, are just as important for our generation and the next.

It sounds simple but the number one indicator of good digital parenting is to keep an open dialogue with your child. Talk to your child often. Get them to learn to trust you. This conversation is not about the birds and the bees although it would be wise to think about introducing this one early too given that there are numerous images/videos of this on social media sites portraying a very negative mental image. But back to the digital parenting discussion, it should be more of an on-going narrative that will move and shift as your child works their way through their own developmental stages. Stay calm even if something upsets you, be honest with one another, keep it open and direct and just keep the talking going.

In all your conversations, it is important to remember that your child is not your enemy. The paradox is that it is the digital immigrants (people born before the advent of digital technology) who have invented the complex technologies and system which the digital natives (people born during or after the rise of digital technologies) use fluently – the internet, social media, mobile technology and cloud based tech. It is therefore important that both participants will have to understand each other's viewpoints and learn from one another. As a parent, it is necessary to understand that you may not have all the answers but you do have some wisdom and experience in

living life. Your children on the other hand, will be technically skilled in using the newer forms of digital technology, but will still require a guiding hand in using the tech to the best of its effect. It is the combination of the two world views and the sharing of information between each other than can help create a healthy balance of communication.

As technology is integrated into our everyday lifestyles, we need to find a way to combine digital parenting with parenting. Digital life requires the same kind of parenting as life in general where as their guardians, we have to know what they are doing, listen to their worries, take pride in their online lives, set boundaries and agree on rules. Digital parenting is still very much in its infancy and not a smooth sailing journey but as our children are more open to new technologies, trends and alternative ways of collaborating with their friends, it becomes our responsibility to keep up with them and simply be their parents.

With this in mind, the Digital Parenting book has been written as a beginner's guide to digital parenting which will introduce the common themes and trends that young children face today. It will offer a flavour of the sort of concerns and issues that parents may face in the early stages from when their children being to surf online and consider what is the right amount of screen time. You will be introduced to you your child's life on YouTube and what it means to be gaming intoxicated. It will explore various social media platforms and end with how to keep your children safe online.

Dr. Neelam Parmar



Dr. Neelam Parmar currently works as the Director of E-Learning at Ashford School. It is intended that Ashford School will offer the book to every parent within the School as a means to narrow the digital gap. If you wish to purchase this book as a school wide policy or individually as a parent, please visit <http://unitedlearning.org.uk/DigitalParenting>





The Prevent strategy: An update for parents on extremism and radicalisation.

Professor Lynn Davies and Zubeda Limbada (co-director, ConnectFutures)

The government has just published its new **Contest** strategy on counter-terror. While this strengthens the powers of police and security services, it does not alter the duties already placed on schools under the **Prevent** strategy. This duty continues to require schools to safeguard students against extremism and terrorism and to report concerns about individuals seen as at risk. There is however a new climate of concern about home grown terrorism and far right extremism, not just people being radicalised overseas.

How does it impact on you? As a parent you may be worried, concerned or just want an insight into an area you may not be familiar with. Some of you might have taken part in some training sessions at your child's school or maybe even attended an event in your community. Either way, We try to answer some questions – starting with definitions -although it is important to note there is not universal agreement on these.

Here's a quick summary which we've drawn up for you.

What's extremism?

An extremist is someone who supports an idea, cause, or set of values so adamantly and without compromise that this person will use their views to justify anything they do.

What's radicalization?

Radicalization is a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals, especially with regard to support for or use of violence.

What's terrorism?

Terrorism is the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear in order to advance a political, racial, religious or ideological cause; it uses terror and open violence against civilians to attempt to force people, authorities or governments to change their behaviour.

What's the current Government strategy which affects schools? The Government **Prevent** strategy is still in force, with the aim to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, and addressing all forms of extremism. It places duties on institutions and authorities to safeguard against terrorism and to report concerns.

Is Channel still there? Yes. It remains as a voluntary scheme to support those individuals considered at risk to make positive life choices, steering them away from violent extremism and terrorism by interventions in education, health, housing or employment. It's worth remembering that local authorities as well as police can refer a person to a Channel panel.

Can a young person be referred to Channel without telling parents? Yes. This is because there have been cases where families have been part of the radicalisation process. However, this is unusual, and professionals such as teachers are to take proportionate steps, starting with conversations with colleagues, safeguarding leads and with experts for advice, and involving families wherever possible.

What are the warning signs of extremism? Do these vary according to different sorts of extremism?

It must be stressed that there is **no one set of signals** that would be a cause for alarm. Behaviours – such as increased arguing, dressing in a particular way, being active on social media or becoming more religious or political – might be typical of any teenager. When it becomes worrisome is if there is a **combination** of signs such as a student cutting off ties with family and friends, starting to support violence, losing interest in school or normal activities, expressing hateful views or continually researching extremist groups on the internet. Obviously, if a person is known to commit or plan violent acts, tries to acquire weapons or plans a trip to a conflict zone, then there is a **legal obligation to report concerns to the police**.

What do schools do?

Every school has to have a safeguarding policy and this is communicated to parents, and posted on the website. They have a duty to keep your child safe. If a teacher is concerned about a child, there are series of steps they should take, talking with their Designated Safeguarding Lead and senior staff as well as communicating with parents. More broadly, the school has to build resilience to extremism in their students, through encouraging debate and critical thinking so that they do not accept black and white views, through a curriculum that tackles racism and hatred, and

through digital literacy so that a child is able to critically assess what is seen on the internet and social media.

How might my child be at risk?

Radicalisers have three main ways they work: face-to-face, on-line and through printed or other material. In face-to-face interactions, your child may be approached directly by someone who seems trustworthy – perhaps in a club or religious setting. They would not straight away express a violent ideology, but initially just show interest, praise them and make them feel important. Later they might stress your child's significance to the movement, or the duty to take part. They might tell of the rewards of belonging, or the excitement: skilled radicalisers will find a point of vulnerability, even in children who are successful in school and who have a secure home life. Indirect radicalisation can occur through peers, or on-line, again convincing someone they have a mission and should take action.

What do I do if I am worried?

There is a scale of action, from informal conversation through to referral to authorities. First, it is best to try to open up dialogue, not being judgmental, but trying to find out what is behind the worrying behaviour. Former extremists often tell us that parents should try to keep the lines of talking open, try to listen, perhaps try to get information on the group that their child is involved in. It is important not to be accusatory or angry as this may push them further into radicalisation.

If conversation and dialogue is not possible or not having an effect, you could enlist the help of a teacher and/or a community member – perhaps a religious leader or youth/sports club organiser - to see if they have noticed anything. Talking with your child's friends may provide clues too.

Who should I contact?

If urgent concerns persist and you fear your child's or others' safety, you should contact the police, through the school or directly. Clearly, if there is threat to life, you should ring 999, otherwise dial 101. You can report concerns to the government Anti-Terrorist hotline on 0800 780 321 for a confidential conversation or fill a confidential form on-line [here](#).

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Zubeda Limbada



Zubeda has worked for over 15 years in the public sector as a senior member in a wide variety of local, national and pan-European policy-orientated projects on topics such as extremism, equalities and leadership innovation. She developed an operational accredited mentoring programme on behalf of statutory agencies and partners vulnerable to violent extremism during a two-year assignment with West Midlands Police Counter Terrorism Unit and worked for Birmingham City Council on delivering the Prevent strategy since 2007.

She is the author of A tale of 3 cities: Public officials and senior representation in the NHS, University, Police and Local Authority (2016) and a contributor to Formers and Families of Violent Extremists (2015). She graduated from the University of Manchester with a BA in Politics and Modern History and an MA in Middle Eastern Studies.

Zubeda is a Clore Social fellow 2014/15, an alumni of the IVLP programme (Dept of State, USA) and was invited to the White House Countering Violent Extremism summit in February 2015.

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Parent Advice On Daughters.

Andrew Hampton

I think we all know that the friendship bonds that girls form at school are very important. When things go wrong, for whatever reason, it can be traumatic for the girls, and of course, for the adults (parents and teachers) who try to support them. To make things even harder, girls find it near impossible to express precisely the problems they are experiencing and that can be for three reasons:

1. The dynamics of girl friendships are very fluid and change from moment to moment. Just as your daughter is standing in the kitchen ranting she may receive a text with a couple of emojis that changes everything. As a parent it is really important not to over-invest emotionally in your daughter's rage; remain concerned but detached from the detail.
2. Your daughter hates being told off by you and the harsh reality is that that means she will be reluctant to tell you all the truth, if that means admitting to behaviour that was less than perfect. You have to learn to accept that, from about the age of 9, your daughter is likely to be filtering the truth in her replies to, 'how was your day?'
3. The complexities of girl friendships are extreme. To explain the historic motivation behind a look she received on the playground might take several minutes, involve multiple 'players' and events that go back months or even years. Often, the harder they try to explain their conflict the more confused the listener becomes, leading to the inevitable conclusion by both child and parent that it really just isn't worth explaining.

So, we start from the point that the conflicts and upsets are hard to express and might change at any moment. What next? Well, as a parent do you think you have a tendency to over-react? Do you:

- Keep pumping your daughter for more information even though she has made it clear she doesn't want to give you anymore?
- Is your first thought to assume your daughter is being bullied? (It is possible, or course, that she might be being bullied but that is rare and a conclusion you should come to only after careful fact-gathering.)
- Is your first instinct to ring the school and complain about incidents that have happened around your daughter, be they at school, at the weekend or on online?
- Is your first instinct to phone another parent to challenge them over their daughter's behaviour?

If you can answer yes – or even maybe – to any of the above you may want to consider that you are over-reacting and that over-reactive parents are very hard for girls to be with. The more you over-react the less likely she is to tell you the truth or confide in you at all – even when there is real trouble to be shared.

Do you have a tendency to under-react? Do you find it hard to find the time to listen to your daughter properly, giving her your full attention? Are you just too busy to be the best parent you can be?

I recommend two excellent books on the topic of parenting daughters; *Queen Bees and Wannabees* by Rosalind Wiseman and *Untangled* by Lisa Damour. In both books, the authors offer this advice:

1. Be loving but tough.
2. Listen, and listen some more; then do not offer advice unless it is asked for. (OK, you can say, 'I have something to say about this which might be helpful, would you like me to share it with you?' But no more.)
3. Once the listening comes to an end and the monologue is running out of steam, distract your daughter with something to take her mind off her troubles. Best of all, find something to do or talk about which will make her feel good about herself – what is she good at, what good memories can you share of her past successes?

Parenting is hard, there is no doubt about that. One surprising but undeniable fact I have learned after delivering over a hundred Girls on Board sessions to thousands of girls over the last couple of years is this: when I ask the girls in front of me if friendship issues are made better or worse for them when the grown-ups get involved they ALWAYS say 'worse'. They need the support of adults but they don't want us or need us to fix their problems.

Andy Hampton.



Andrew Hampton has been a teacher for 30 years and a Headteacher for the last 14. He launched the approach, 'Girls on Board', in the summer of 2017 and already has 20 schools using his ideas to support girls in their friendships. Based in Essex, Andrew combines his Headship with delivering training sessions both at individual schools and at bookable venues.



