

Dysfunctional Parenting: Styles to Avoid

Anxious

Anxious parents raise their children with an overall sense of nervousness and/or worry. They become overly protective and often do things that prevent their child from "just being a kid." They constantly worry that their child will become ill, injured, or damaged if specific precautions are not taken.

Hostile/Angry

Hostile parents are never quite satisfied or accepting of their child. Yelling, threatening, demeaning, and even physical punishment are common methods employed by these parents to gain compliance from their children. These parents use a negative voice-tone in their everyday interactions with their children and just seem to have a chip on their shoulders at all times. These parents typically need help to address deeper issues.

Emotional

Emotional parents are afraid to dish out consequences for fear that their child might get upset. These parents cannot stand to see their little ones cry and they often give in to their child's outbursts for fear of being labeled a "mean parent." Emotional parents do what they do to appease their own emotional needs, not those of their children. These parents are easily manipulated.

CEO

The "CEO" parent runs his or her household as though it were a business. Each family member is a subordinate that is expected to perform his or her duties as expected. Interactions are cold and business-like.

Absent

Absent parents can be absent in two ways: physically or emotionally. There is no connection or bond between these parents and their children.

Siamese Twin

Unlike absent parents, "Siamese twin" parents are overly connected to their children. These parents maintain poor boundaries and are way too involved in their children's lives, influencing every decision and intruding at every level.

Casual Observer

"Casual observer" parents are those that basically "sit back and watch" their children grow up, with little or no involvement or connection. They are quite permissive and set few limits or boundaries with their children. "Casual observer" parents basically feel that they are doing their job if they keep their children safe, fed, sheltered, and clothed. These parents take on more of a "roommate" type of relationship.

If you are like most parents, you can probably think of instances in which you have fit into most or all of the categories listed above. There is no need to worry if that happens to be the case. After all, you can't fix what you don't acknowledge (gosh, I'm starting to sound like Dr. Phil).

The best course of action for any parent to take is to first of all be present (both physically and emotionally) then establish a healthy balance that includes appropriate limits and boundaries, emotional stability, and a healthy attachment.

*Please note that these are my own observations and labels. They are not based on research or any other psychological theories that I am aware of.