

## The 10 commandments of parenthood

In our western culture, there are no longer any ceremonies which help mothers let go of their children. Many mothers believe that it is an expression of their love to have and maintain a close bond with their children. In reality, children undergo a process of gradual emancipation, which is necessary for them to become fully-rounded independent individuals. What can mothers and fathers do to assist in this process?

1. Mothers should not try and make allies out of their children. When parents experience problems, they should try and resolve these by speaking to other adults and avoid drawing their children into their own problems. Children need the strength to master their own lives; likewise children should not have to take sides, especially in the case of conflicts between the parents.
2. Mothers should free themselves from the desire to know everything about their children. The private space of children should be respected in order to establish an equal relationship where the child can entrust the mother with what he or she wishes. Trust must be earned not ensured forcibly.
3. The role of the mother as a protector and leader should gradually recede into the background, making space for a climate of equality, respect and trust between mother and child.
4. The sexuality and erotic life of the child should be acknowledged. The private sphere of the child must be respected and the mother should not transgress this without invitation and should leave it again after the reason for the invitation. The child should be able to grow on their own terms.
5. The son should be respected as a man and future father and the daughter as a woman and future mother, and as adults who are able to support themselves. Mothers should always respect this future path of their children.
6. The mother should show that she is able to continue her life without the child, and that the child can go out into the world. The individuality of the children should be respected and supported.
7. Should a mother not personally like the friends or partners of the child, she only has a right to criticise when these obviously affect the well-being of herself or of the child. A mother should allow the child to make its own experience and to advise only when the child asks for advice. This, too, is a sign of respect.
8. Mothers are advised to treat their children's friends with respect, ideally as if they were her own, in order to provide the best possible security and feeling of well-being for all. For instance fairness when providing meals, drinks or invitations to the cinema etc., when undertaken together. Mothers should also acknowledge her child's friends and give them equal attention.
9. The mother should also respect the private sphere of her child by not talking about her child's problems, friends or personal development with others unless when seeking advice to clarify her own problems with these. In such case confidentiality is also important. She does not have the right to discuss intimate aspects of her child's life with others without the child's consent.
10. The mother should prepare herself, for instance through meditation, for the independence of her child and a possible partner, so that this thought becomes a subject of joy.

### **The duties of the father in raising his children**

1. Fathers must always be fair and just with the children. They should not favour one child over the other and should fulfil the children's basic needs regardless of their gender.
2. Fathers should be aware that they set an example and they should endeavour to provide a positive example for their children in all that they do.
3. Fathers should actively support their child's development as far as is possible and provide them with all the resources they have at their disposal.
4. Fathers should actively and continuously support the growth and development of their child.
5. Fathers should treat their children's friends fairly and with restraint. They should always give a fair and positive opinion of their children's friends and only when asked or when necessary.
6. For their own self-respect and self-esteem, and in order to develop love and respect towards others, children must be able to rely on the love and respect of their father. This should not be called into question, even in times of crisis.
7. The father should regularly accompany and actively support his children in their undertakings, praising them for their successes and developmental achievements and helping them or organising appropriate help where there are deficits.
8. The father is responsible for making it possible for his child to complete his or her education.
9. The father should support the mother in the execution of her duties, where necessary critically, even when the parents no longer live together.
10. The father, together with the mother, should fulfil their roles and responsibilities as parents in public, where necessary also together.