

Why I Don't Want My Kids to be Happy

Written by Mia Von Scha.

It seems obvious that we would want our kids to be happy... always. We go out of our way to protect them from negativity, disappointment, sadness and anger. We try to create peaceful home and school environments. We think up creative ways to cheer our kids up when they've been hurt. It seems to be the basis of good parenting. I disagree.

I don't want my kids to be happy. *I want my kids to be real.*

And real people have a variety of emotions every single day.

What I want is for my children to feel so comfortable with me that they can scream and shout, cry and lament, moan and complain, and genuinely express whatever it is that they are going through at the moment. I know it will pass. Emotions that are expressed don't stick around for very long.

Emotions that are repressed can stay for a lifetime.

I want my children to be free to be whoever or whatever they are in the moment and to know that they are loved in all states. I want them to feel safe coming to me with their pain so that we can connect and share stories and feelings and our very humanness.

When we assume that the best thing for our kids is to be happy—and we encourage and work on happiness above all else—we give the unspoken message that if you are not happy then that is going to affect MY happiness and well-being as a parent. We can then put our own guilt, fear and sense of failure onto our children. They cannot be real without worrying about us, and how they are letting us down.

What we're doing is setting our kids up to focus on a fantasy life where everything is easy and everyone is happy all the time, and if you're not happy you're somehow not OK. This is the very basis of depression. It is also the basis of a multi billion dollar industry in anti-depressants.

The message we need to get across is that everyone feels everything at some point, and we all feel a variety of emotions every day. Some of these are really strong and long lasting, some are mild and fleeting, but all of them are part of our human experience. Every emotion has a place and a purpose. Every emotion will pass once you have listened to it and allowed it some breathing space. Every emotion is beautiful; not just happiness.

When we can allow ourselves and our children to experience all emotions, then we open up the possibility of learning and growing from the things that we feel. We are also free to share these with other people without feeling bad about feeling bad. And so we get to explore the depths of what it means to be alive. We don't need to fear our own experiences. We don't need to hide from our pain.

This is a beautiful and connected place to be with your children. You will find your relationship with them becomes richer, and you get to see your children for who they are, not who you hoped they would be. Real, raw, beautiful, expressive, amazing beings just waiting for you to love them in all of their complexity.