

## Chapter 7

# The Emotional Well-Being of Children

*The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.*

—A. Einstein

The *being* side of a human being involves the inner part of the person—the inner, hidden area that is not obvious at first glance. It is the quiet part that is truly who we really are deep inside. Some of us never think about this. Why?

*Emotional intelligence*, a relatively new theory in intelligence, is considered an area where many people excel. I believe we can all excel in emotional intelligence. We just need to understand what it is and to receive a few lessons in it, just as we do with intellectual, musical, or physical ability. Your child can have this intelligence developed extensively with your assistance.

*Emotional intelligence* is the degree of intensity some people experience and feel about the world around them. This does not mean the children we label *emotional* because they tend to cry every time they fail to get what they want. This is not the definition used here. *Emotional intelligence* is awareness or a sense of who we are. It is having an understanding of our emotions and how we handle those feelings. It is an awareness of the emotions in others around us.

These inner feelings can be positive or negative, but in children who have this intelligence already highly developed, the feelings are extreme and complex. Often, children who feel this intensely are aware of how different they are from others around them. They often feel other children's pain

and feelings as well. I took these feelings very seriously in the children in my care, and I would sit and talk with young children about their intense feelings on an issue and the dilemma it often caused. A great example of this was a young girl who didn't want to go outside and play at recess. One day when I saw her hiding by the side of the school, I asked her if there was a problem, assuming it had to do with another child. She said, yes, there was a problem... she didn't want to run on the grass because she would step on bugs and kill them! I stopped talking immediately, sat with her and listened.

Yes, she had a valid concern, so we talked. We talked about life, injustices that we saw in life, and how that every time we walk on grass or drive a car, we kill many insects. This young child was much attuned to the big picture that included other sentient (living) beings. I spoke to her about intent. Was I really trying to kill them? This was a small, but important distinction for her to understand at age eight. Would we even be able to get to school if we couldn't drive or walk here? We were killing bugs every day, but there was no intent to do so. She readily saw the difference between stepping on a bug unintentionally and intentionally killing something. It made sense to her and she was happy to go outside and play. For years, I would see her picking up bugs and putting them by the fence. She would tell other young children what she was doing and they all started moving bugs!

What was important here was that her emotional intelligence was already highly developed and she was taking it seriously. Her deep and intense feelings weren't "pooh-poohed" and dismissed. She was listened to, and her feelings on the subject were respected. These children often get into trouble at school because they speak out when injustice is being meted out, by either another student or a teacher. A young person who says something is not fair threatens some adults. An intelligent and caring adult will attempt to explain the situation and listen to the child's reasons as well. Many adults will not listen to a child, and this is where young emotionally intelligent children start to withdraw from "what is" and start to look for "what should be." This is where a quality circle of like-minded

individuals is crucial for your children. You can encourage and validate them as sensitive human beings by being part of their quality circle.

Napoleon Hill's third lesson on self-confidence is really all about emotional development. It is about a "knowing" inside you and being the most important person in your own quality circle. He describes how one of the most successful men in American business had a creed that he signed and kept over his desk. He read this creed every day. I have copied it here for you:

I believe in myself. I believe in those who work with me. I believe in my employer. I believe in my friends. I believe in my family. I believe that God will lend me everything that I need with which to succeed if I do my best to earn it through faithful and honest service. I believe in prayer and I will never close my eyes in sleep without praying for divine guidance to the end that I will be patient with other people and tolerant with those who do not believe as I do. I believe that success is the result of intelligent effort and does not depend upon luck or sharp practices or double-crossing friends, fellowmen or my employer. I believe I will get out of life exactly what I put into it; therefore, I will be careful to conduct myself towards others as I would want them to act towards me. I will not slander those whom I do not like. I will not slight my work no matter what I may see others doing. I will render the best service of which I am capable because I have pledged myself to succeed in life, and I know that success is always the result of conscientious and efficient effort. Finally, I will forgive those who offend me because I realize that I shall sometimes offend others and I will need their forgiveness.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Doesn't this sound like a creed we could all live by? If we adhered to this creed in school, no child would ever be mocked or made fun of. Every child would feel safe and have the strong inner belief that they are successful.

Napoleon Hill also speaks in detail about another important emotional development aspect called *initiative*. He believes that initiative is a habit that we can train ourselves to employ and practice. He states that the enemy to initiative is procrastination, and procrastination prevents us from being the success we could be. He believed that everyone could be rated on a scale of the initiative:

**Highest level**—Doing the right thing without being told.

**Lower level**—Doing the right thing after being told once what to do.

**Lower yet**—Doing the right thing when necessary.

**Lowest level**—Not doing the right thing even when someone tells you what to do.

He said that people often were paid or held a job based on their level of initiative. Where do you rate? Where do you want your children to rate?

Many years ago, in the 1940s and '50s, a Polish psychologist and psychiatrist named Kasimierz Dabrowski developed a theory he called *emotional overexcitability*. What a great word and descriptor, *overexcitability*! He recognized that with the creative individuals he studied, some of them lived more intensely. That is a great description of emotional intelligence—living life intensely. He felt that these individuals had an inner-force at work that caused them to be over stimulated. He also believed that the pain, or conflict, or joy that accompanied this emotional awareness could lead to possible inner transformation and inner growth. He felt that, over time, people with this inner-force could change themselves into better people, if given the chance to believe in themselves and this ability.

The five overexcitabilities are psychomotor, sensual, intellectual, imaginal and emotional overexcitabilities. In the psychomotor realm, a person is very active and energetic. They may have a "driven-ness" about them or be seen as a workaholic. The sensual individual has enhanced senses which may be expressed by overeating, buying sprees and strong reactions to odors. An individual with intellectual overexcitability has an incredible hunger for knowledge and the search for truth. These people love ideas and probing questions, intellectual effort and have a passionate curiosity. They can't stop thinking about thinking and expanding their