



Lifehacksforkids

Parent by Design

Become a better parent by understanding your values.



Hello and welcome to [lifehacksforkids](http://lifehacksforkids.co.uk).

Our mission is to help you to teach your children the vital 'Life Skills' they are going to need to be successful in the modern world.

when was the last time you really analysed how you parent?

Most of us wouldn't really think about doing it, we parent by instinct instead. But if you take a look at any other serious undertaking in your life and compare it to how you approach parenting.

Would you just 'wing it' at work? Would you start, or run a business and just 'play it by ear'?

Well you could and some days you no doubt probably do, but to achieve excellence, to be really successful, a more considered approach is likely to produce better results. We believe that being a parent is definitely more art than science, but that doesn't mean that a bit of scientific rigour won't improve what we do and how we do it.

We owe it to ourselves and our kids to do the best parenting job that we can, after all we only get one chance to do it right.

why do we rely so heavily on our instincts?

As modern parents we have all become professional plate spinners. Our weeks are filled with work, school, homework and activities. Weekends more often than not are now spent chauffeuring the kids to classes and parties, catching up on the housework and doing the food shop. We don't really have the time to look for an alternative.

Also, we aren't really used to thinking about parenting in a more rigorous way. Working out what sort of parent you want to be, planning how you want to bring up your kids is almost an alien concept.

so how is this a problem?

Firstly, not having a structured approach to parenting means that we feel uncertain whether we are doing the right thing or not. When the media tells we should be doing X, or when we inevitably compare ourselves to other parents, we start to question ourselves.

Secondly, parenting is busy and chaotic. We do our best but some days we most definitely fall short of the mark, meaning that often our kids don't know where they stand half the time. We don't even know where we stand half the time.



Which version will the kids get today? The stressed-out shouty parent, the calm and patient one, or the not really there pre-occupied with work one?

Finally, as a consequence of parenting by instinct and time being so scarce, we have no game-plan as such, for how to bring up our kids, other than making sure that they get a good education, and having some interesting hobbies for their CV.

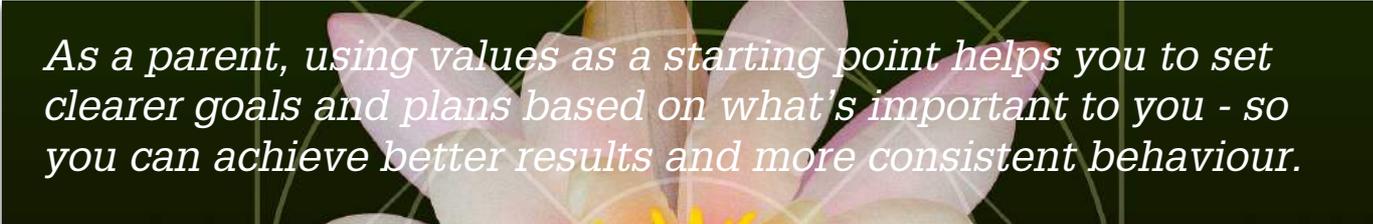
But does it have to be like that? Does 'survival mode' have to be the norm? Do we have to parent by instinct alone? Is our behaviour just dependent on mood, or how tired, busy or stressed we are? Or will we benefit from a more structured approach?

putting two and two together

Whilst in principle we would all agree that a structured approach is the way to go, the challenge is putting together the right plan and then sticking with it. Something that most of us are inherently bad at- as Dominic, our co-founder, realised during 17 years as a financial planner. This is for three main reasons:

1. people are often unsure of what their real goals actually are
2. people set goals but then behave in a way that is inconsistent with achieving them
3. life often gets in the way, people become distracted and forget about the bigger picture

After much research, trial and error, it became apparent to Dominic - our co-founder- that instead of starting from an external goal as most planners did, the best results were achieved when he started from within, when he looked at client's values first.



As a parent, using values as a starting point helps you to set clearer goals and plans based on what's important to you - so you can achieve better results and more consistent behaviour.

why start with values?

Values are the essence of who you are, what makes you tick as a person. They are the big themes that drive your thoughts, decisions, judgement and behaviour.

Although your values are the motivation behind everything that you do, for the most part they remain hidden in our unconscious mind. We only tend to notice them when something happens that triggers an emotional response. Even then, it's often not clear to us why, or what value has been triggered.

So in order to gain a greater understanding of who you are as a person, it pays to know what you value. This is equally true of parenting as it is with financial planning, or anything else for that matter.

the benefits of being clear on your values and using them to plan

Knowing your values provides you with four very significant benefits.

First of all, a clear understanding of what sort of parent you are trying to be, provides you with a behavioural framework for when the going gets tough. Having your values as a guide in the moment, is preferable to knee-jerk reactions based on how you feel at the time.

Secondly, you will be able to plan your life more effectively. Putting your key values at the heart of what you do day to day means that you will focus on the things that matter and not get drawn into doing the things that don't.

Thirdly, having done this work upfront, means you have more time and gain more confidence. Now you are sure that you are doing the right thing for you and your family.

Finally, as your behaviour becomes more consistent, not only do you feel better but your kids start to behave more consistently too. Their needs are being met, they know where they stand and through leading by example you are showing them how to live their lives.



Being clear about your values provides a framework, allows you focus on the things that matter, helps you behave consistently and gives you confidence when the going gets tough.

so... what are your values around parenting?

You knew this was coming didn't you?

Have you ever taken the time out to think about this before?

Have you written them down, used them to plan, or made sure they were appropriate or relevant?

Have you used them to understand and improve your own behaviour and outcomes?

If not, now it's time to start...

On the following page is an excerpt from our course, 'Parent by Design.' It is just one of the exercises we use to determine what your true values about parenting are.

There are just two rules:

1. write down what pops into your head- do not filter your thoughts in any way, if it sounds daft, crazy or weird, it doesn't matter, just write it down, your mind is telling you it for a reason
2. you need to make your brain sweat, so set a timer and spend 10 minutes on each question- do this and you will be rewarded with the results that you get

OK, go!

my parental values

Q. What is important to me about being a parent?

Remember the two rules. When you are done, move on to the next section. how to turn my values into a plan. After 10 minutes of writing you will have a list of values to do with your parenting that are important to you.

turning your values into a plan..

- 1. choose a value to work with*
Choose one of the values you have written down. The one you wrote about most, the one you want to work on, or the one that needs the most work- it's your choice.
- 2. what do I mean by this?*
For example, the value you want to work with is 'quality time with the kids' write down what this actually means. What specifically is quality time with the kids?
- 3. why is this important?*
The answer here will give you the meaning to the value and behaviour you have just stated that you want.
- 4. at my best, what does my chosen value look like?*
Be as descriptive as possible here, the more vividly you can describe your best outcome the better.
- 5. what am I going to do to introduce this value?*
I am going to spend some quality time on my own with the kids. They'll get my full attention and we are going to do something that interests *them*.
- 6. how, specifically, am I going to do this?*
I am going to spend two hours after dinner every Friday doing art or two hours on a Saturday morning playing football at the park.
- 7. what could get in the way of me achieving this?*
Think about the things in your life that could stop you from achieving the desired behaviour.
- 8. what measures will I take to overcome these obstacles?*
What specific actions are you going to take to make sure that you don't fall back into bad habits?

Hopefully this has given you a flavour for some of the processes we use in our parental values course 'Parent by Design.' As you can see, it's about you and what you value as important and our process will help you to get that down on paper and into a format you can work with.

In the course we also:

- ✓ ask questions that help you get to the essence what sort of parent you want to be.
- ✓ help you to turn this into a 'to be list.'
- ✓ help prioritise your values, so you work on the most important first.
- ✓ show you how to review your progress & continue improving how you parent.
- ✓ show you how to work out the most important values that you want to teach your children.
- ✓ show you how you can incorporate teaching these values to your children in your day to day life.
- ✓ provide you with resources, support and ideas to implement your values into your life.

To find out more about our parenting course click here:

<http://lifehacksforkids.co.uk/parent-by-design-course-description/>

Thanks for reading,

The Life**hacksforkids** Team.