

Parenting



Bhagavad-gītā
teachings for
happy and
successful
children

Individual Nature

Kṛṣṇa: “Even a person of knowledge acts according to his or her own nature, for everyone follows the nature acquired from the three modes. What can repression accomplish?” (Bhagavad-gītā 3.33)

Kṛṣṇa: “By following one’s qualities of work, every person can become perfect. Now please hear from Me how this can be done. By worship of the Lord, who is the source of all beings and who is all-pervading, a person can attain perfection through performing one’s own work. It is better to engage in one’s own occupation, even though one may perform it imperfectly, than to accept another’s occupation and perform it perfectly. Duties prescribed according to one’s nature are never affected by sinful reactions.” (Bhagavad-gītā 18.45-47)

Śrīla Prabhupāda: “Kṛṣṇa has given everyone something extraordinary and to serve Kṛṣṇa with one’s extraordinary talent means successful life.” (Letter to: Sukadeva, 4 March, 1973)

Parenting Application Ideas:

- Finding, training, and celebrating the child’s talents and nature (categories of talents: verbal, mathematical, logical, visual/spatial, athletic/grace, interpersonal, intrapersonal)
(some aspects of nature: outgoing/reserved, overall/details, cautious/risk-taking, people-oriented/task-oriented)

Things to remember:

- ☞ Our child’s talents and nature may be very different from our own and therefore hard to see or appreciate
- ☞ The other side of all weaknesses is a strength in the right situation, used properly.

Each talent and nature can be used in four general ways:

- transcendence (love of God)
- goodness (purification, detachment)
- passion (pious materialism)
- ignorance (sinful materialism)

Notes:

ātmā—Body, Mind, Soul

Kṛṣṇa: “The working senses are superior to dull matter; mind is higher than the senses; intelligence is still higher than the mind; and the soul is even higher than the intelligence.” (Bhagavad-gītā 3.42)

Kṛṣṇa: “The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal fragmental parts. Due to conditioned life, they are struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind.” (Bhagavad-gītā 15.7)

Kṛṣṇa: “Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be.” (Bhagavad-gītā 2.12)

Kṛṣṇa: “For the soul there is neither birth nor death at any time. He has not come into being, does not come into being, and will not come into being. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain.” (Bhagavad-gītā 2.20)

Parenting Application Ideas:

- Children need activities, development, and nourishment on the physical, mental, and spiritual levels
- The spiritual is the real and eternal and therefore most important
- Spiritual activities are joyful and natural and should be done in a pleasing atmosphere without force. Some spiritual activities include: hearing scripture, talking about spiritual topics, singing or chanting spiritual topics or holy names, thinking about God and scriptures, prayers and obeisances, serving saintly persons and visiting holy places, worship, service for spiritual causes, thinking of Kṛṣṇa as one’s friend, giving Kṛṣṇa one’s body, mind, and self.

Notes:

Sources of Happiness

Sacrifice

Kṛṣṇa: “In the beginning of creation, the Lord of all creatures sent forth generations of men and demigods, along with sacrifices for Viṣṇu, and blessed them by saying, ‘Be thou happy by this yajña [sacrifice] because its performance will bestow upon you everything desirable for living happily and achieving liberation.’” (Bhagavad-gītā 3.10)

Kṛṣṇa: “The all-pervading Transcendence is eternally situated in acts of sacrifice.” (Bhagavad-gītā 3.15)

Inner Satisfaction and Self-Control

Kṛṣṇa: “The embodied soul may be restricted from sense enjoyment, though the taste for sense objects remains. But, ceasing such engagements by experiencing a higher taste, he is fixed in consciousness.” (Bhagavad-gītā 2.59)

Love of God

Kṛṣṇa: “Thus the self-controlled yogī, constantly engaged in yoga practice, becomes free from all material contamination and achieves the highest stage of perfect happiness in transcendental loving service to the Lord.” (Bhagavad-gītā 6.28)

Parenting Application Ideas:

- Engaging children from a young age in loving giving activities for God, sādhu, and spiritual causes will help the children get experiences of higher, inner satisfaction that comes from transcendent sacrifice.
- The mood of loving affection should pervade activities of spiritual sacrifice and giving.
- The children’s spiritual service should be meaningful both to the child and to adults and should be appreciated and valued.

Notes: