

## Article - Are we parenting to be loved?

An Article by Mike O'Sullivan

The title begs the question, 'so what other reason is there for parenting?' I am sure there are as many different answers as there are people to ask.

Perhaps we could start by looking at another area of our life first, for instance 'our work life or job', and consider how the following statement might apply to us:

*"Whilst you work to be 'liked', you will not achieve your purpose, unless it is your purpose"*

By the way, you can change the word 'liked' to any other word that fits your personal situation, such as, 'feel good', 'praised', 'rewarded' or 'loved'.

Whatever word we use, the statement is challenging our reason for carrying out our 'work or job'. For example, is it because we want to look good, or maybe win approval from others, or get strokes for our ego?

Perhaps, we have another purpose which is unrelated to what people think of us and getting strokes for our ego. Maybe, it is not one or the other, but a bit of both.

Whatever it is, the outcome of our 'work or job' will be highly affected by our choice of purpose. In a workshop on advanced facilitation skills, I was surprised by how many trainers, counsellors and consultants baulked at this statement. In their view 'being liked and appreciated' was an important factor in their work, which left me thinking that maybe they were not as client-centred as one might expect.

I am not proposing that we should not be liked or appreciated, I am suggesting that it should not be the primary focus or purpose of our work.

If I shift the discussion back to parenting, I would suggest that the main purpose of parenting must be about the 'future happiness and wellbeing of our children' and not whether they like us, love us or appreciate us. By changing the statement in the following way, it makes it more applicable to how we parent:

*“Whilst you parent to be loved, you will not achieve your purpose, unless it is your purpose”*

You can see that the same applies whether it is our ‘job at work’ or our ‘job as parent’, whilst we ‘parent to be loved’, we will not achieve our purpose. So, if you relate to this idea, then it is probably a good time to consider what your purpose is and how it aligns to your responsibilities as a parent?