

When I grow up...

When I grow up ... A phrase parents all over the world have heard and are hearing still. But it goes beyond this statement because children act out this role when they play, becoming that which they want to be in the process. As parents, we smile indulgently. We may tell someone else that little Billy or Sally's latest notion is to be a Fire Fighter and that children have *such* imaginations. Normally a full conversation on the topic will ensue.

So where does that leave little Billy or Sally? They see the indulgent smiles, the amusement at their choices and hear the patronising response. They may even hear us joking about the latest 'silly' notion. Billy and Sally get the message. The message says that dreams are different from reality, that dreams can not and do not manifest as reality, that dreams are silly, are best not shared for fear of ridicule and that those who pursue their dreams can expect to be treated like fools.

It is frightening when regarded from this perspective and not the message intended at all. Chances are really good that each one of us have been through the same forgotten experience when we were children and that we are merely repeating the pattern with our children in turn. We, as parents of young children, can break this mold and in the process contribute to its destruction in future generations. All that is required is a different set of responses. It is indeed as simple as that.

Consider looking impressed at the choice (and keep it as sincere as possible); show interest by asking for details on the choice, support the choice by offering safe accessories and participating in the role play. Also, when sharing this wonderful childhood experience with friends and family, make sure that the child is out of earshot. The message is then a very different one. It says to the child that there is support for his or her dreams, that we believe in his or her ability to attain the dream, that dreams can manifest as reality and that he or she should fearlessly pursue his or her dream. Belief in self is reinforced.

These are the things we as parents can teach them. At the same time, the teacher is the student too. Perhaps in the process we can learn something from our children as well. Most of us have dreams that are gathering dust in the absolute recesses of our hearts and minds because we only see obstacles to their fulfilment. Silly, absurd, funny, ridiculous ... It sounds like a rerun, but actually it is the echo of the adult speak we were subjected to as children.

If you have a dream, do like the child does. If the dream is for a successful business, then in addition to applying good business practices, also believe yourself to be successful, act successful, think like a successful person does, view your business as successful, visualise the money rolling in and the customers increasing. Speak about your success and speak about growth. If you

can visualise it, if you can communicate it and if you can believe it, then you too can achieve it.

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