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## Parenting Tips

### Emotional Cues

Since the heart is where decisions are formed, commitments made, and beliefs established, your child's emotions become an opportunity for parenting. Look for ways to use your children's emotions to help you understand their hearts.

Many parents are afraid of their children's emotions and try to minimize them. It's true that one parental responsibility is to help our children manage their feelings effectively. But, contrary to popular belief, emotions aren't an enemy. They reveal valuable information about what's going on in the heart.

Children may express their emotions freely, giving parents obvious cues to guide their teaching and correction in this area. Some children, however, are more reserved, processing emotions internally without outbursts, tantrums, or crying episodes. Parents of these children must be even more aware of small cues, engage their children in conversation more often, and look for ways to help their children work through life's challenges without clogging their hearts with unresolved emotional residue.

Excitement uncovers what your children get passionate about. Joy reveals what your kids like. Anxiety discloses where your children feel weak or lack control. Sadness pinpoints pain in a child's life. And anger reveals unmet desires, a hurtful experience, or a violation of what they believe is right.

Don't back away from your child's emotional intensity. Instead, figure out what else is going on in the heart. Kids long to connect with others, but many don't know how. Emotions are an essential tool for understanding and building relationships. Teach your children how to see, understand, control, and relate to emotions and you'll give them a gift they'll use for the rest of their lives.

*This parenting tip comes from the book [Parenting is Heart Work](#) by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN.*