# **The Gran View: Raise yourself to become a high EQ parent**

**Source: Shyama Chona, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri awardee, an Educationist, & Social activist**

There are three general parenting styles: authoritarian, permissive and affirmative. Authoritarian parents set out strict rules and expect them to be obeyed. They believe that children should be kept in their place and discourage them from voicing their opinions. Authoritarian parents try to run a household on structure and traditions although in many cases their emphasis on order and control becomes a burden on the child. Many studies suggest that children from authoritarian and rigid controlling families don’t fare so well. They tend to be unhappy, withdrawn, and have difficulty trusting others. They also have the lowest levels of self-esteem (as compared to children raised by parents who are less controlling).

The permissive parent, on the other hand, seeks to be as accepting and nurturing as possible, but tends to be very passive when it comes to setting limits or responding to disobedience. Permissive parents do not make strong demands, nor do they have clear goals for their children, believing that kids should be allowed to develop according to their natural inclinations.

Affirmative parents, by contrast to both authoritarian and permissive parents, manage to balance clear limits with a nurturing home environment. They give guidance, but are not controlling. They give explanations for what they do while allowing children to have input on important decisions. They are just and equitable. They value their children’s opinions and independence, but hold them to high standards of responsibility to family peers, and the community. Dependency and babyish behaviour is discouraged, competence is encouraged and praised. They have a style which is more likely to produce children who are self-confident, independent, imaginative, and well-liked, with a high degree of emotional intelligence.

In reality, it is not uncommon to find families in which one parent is authoritarian and the other is permissive. These parents may actually balance each other in how they raise their children. In other families, we see parents who are authoritative in some respects and permissive in other areas. They may be called over-indulgent.

Caring for children and indulging their every whim and fancy are two very different things. Affirmative caring means giving children emotional nurturance and support in a way that is clearly recognised by the child. This type of caring is more than praise for a good result on a test or a hug and a goodnight kiss. It involves an active participation in the emotional life of the child.

This involves playing with the younger children or participating in activities with the older children in a way which gives them confidence.

As a parent, you could do the following:

* Praise your child for appropriate behaviour (no flattery).
* Demonstrate your interest in what your child is doing by participating in the activity without passing good or bad comments on the competence of your child or you will break him forever. Don’t be a critic.
* Don’t ask questions or give commands. Your job is to observe and reflect and not to control or guide.
* Spend non-judgmental time with your children in age appropriate activities and outings.