

## Encountering a 'mismatched' child is an opportunity for parents to grow



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When a child is born, people like to discuss his appearance, using his resemblance to his parents as a topic of conversation, and talk about which attractive features he has inherited from them. As he grows older and his temperament begins to show, they also like to explore whose personality he resembles.

It is generally easier to get along with someone who has a similar temperament because similar personalities and preferences make it easier to connect. If a child has a temperament similar to their parents, it seems to make parenting easier. However, it often seems like God enjoys playing jokes on us by giving us "mismatched" children: an outgoing and lively mother ends up with a quiet and introverted daughter; a hot-tempered father faces a sensitive and sentimental son; a mother who doesn't understand fun encounters a hedonistic son.

Parents who seek help often share the common issue of having difficulty getting along with their "mismatched" child. They cannot accept the child's nature, do not understand the child's behavior, and do not know how to properly guide their child.

The outgoing and lively mother "complained" to me: "My daughter dawdles, is hesitant, and doesn't dare to make friends outside." She couldn't understand: "What's so difficult about brushing teeth? What's so scary about attending English class? What's there to be shy about when meeting other kids?" Why is her daughter nothing like her but instead resembles her indecisive, introverted, timid, and unambitious father? As she spoke, she indirectly revealed to me that her problem was not accepting her spouse and projecting her dissatisfaction with her spouse onto their daughter. Therefore, the issue was not with her daughter but with their marital relationship.



The hot-tempered father had to come for advice because his son only got along with his mother and not with him. He deeply loved his son and did not want him to grow up being overly sensitive and tearful like a girl. The older the child got, the more anxious the father became. However, under insults and strict orders, the child did not become stronger but instead became more withdrawn, clinging to his mother and refusing to leave her side. It was only after understanding the situation that it became clear that this father had grown up amidst beatings and insults. He believed his own strength came from such an upbringing, not realizing that those painful experiences had become implicit memories affecting his relationship with his son.

The mother, who claimed she did not know how to play and did not need to play, was at a loss with her son, who was solely focused

on playing. She said her son was careless with his studies but persistently focused on play. How could she change her son's attitude towards his studies? I was curious about this mother's claim—*who wouldn't like to play?* Seeking happiness is human nature, so why did she insist she did not need entertainment? It turned out that she was also playful as a child but was strictly disciplined by her mother, who did not allow her to "waste" time. Gradually, her life lacked playmates, and when she played with her mother, her mother remained serious and uncompromising, often causing her to lose and feel sad. Over time, she grew to dislike playing games. Her mother "successfully" shaped her into someone who "did not like" to play, someone who appeared strong and focused on studies but was also rigid, insecure, and lacking in joy. No wonder she did not understand how to get along with her naturally joyful son.

It turns out that God "mismatched" children for us with a purpose. He wants us to reflect on our relationships with our spouses and parents, and our own growth experiences through the frustrations of interacting with our children, thereby sorting out these relationships and resolving these emotional knots.

Parents' lack of acceptance of their children is a reflection of their lack of acceptance of themselves. A lack of confidence in their children is a lack of confidence in themselves. By taking care of "mismatched" children, parents feel challenged and then become aware of their own pain points. With the help of a therapist, they begin a journey of self-exploration. They clarify and straighten out their family relationships, gaining rebirth and growth in the process. Children are born as they are, and there is no mismatch. Let us make good use of this opportunity for growth!