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The first thing to do when bringing up a child is not to touch your children, not to influence their minds with your distorted minds. That is the first step you need to take. Yes, the child can get exposed to many other rotten minds, the possibility is very much there, because they are everywhere in the world. You cannot isolate him totally from that.

Now you are asking: "What should I do? What should my child’s education be? How should I bring him up? How should I guide him?" You just encourage him to be intelligent, to be aware. Every being has been given the necessary intelligence to fulfill his life. An ant is born, you study it and see. It has all the intelligence to live an ant’s life fully. It may not be able to do what you are doing, but as an ant, the necessary intelligence for being an ant is there for it. The same goes for every creature. You too have the necessary intelligence to live your life to the fullest.

Now, the problem is that you want your child to be intelligent your way, not his. Your idea of intelligence is that your child should become a doctor. Maybe he would have made a wonderful carpenter, but you want him to become a doctor. Not because doctors are needed in the world, not because you care so much to relieve the suffering that you want your child to dedicate himself as a doctor, but simply because you have a stupid idea in your head that in the social structure, a doctor or an engineer means some kind of prestige or some nonsense for you: "My child is a doctor!" You want to live your life through your children. This is a sure way to destroy children. This is a definite way to destroy children.

Your child need not do what you did in life. Your child should do something that you did not even dare to think of in your life. You did not have the courage to even nurture a thought like that - your child should do that - only then this world will progress and something will happen, isn’t it?

Every child does have the necessary intelligence to live his life fully. You just create an atmosphere for him to grow into his intelligence, rather than imposing your nonsense upon him. When it comes to influencing him, the teachers will have a role, his friends, other sections of the society will have some influence on him. You can’t help it; you cannot build a sanatorium for your child, but still, as a parent, you can play a very important role in allowing the child’s intelligence to bloom.

First of all, if you have come to the idea that when a child is born, it is time to teach, then you will ruin the child. When a child comes into your life, it is a time to learn, because you have missed much in your life and so much of you has become distorted. Now, a child is just looking at life. You sit with him and look at life afresh. The only thing that you can do to your child is to give him love and support; his intelligence will grow. That is all. Create a loving atmosphere for him where intelligence will naturally flower.

People understand that to bring up a child lovingly means to get him everything that he asks for. If you look at your child with intelligence, do you see that getting him everything that he asks for is sheer stupidity? To this, you have given the name “love”. So how should you bring up a child? In whichever situation he is put, he should be able to live joyously, isn’t it? That is the way he should be brought up.

If you want to bring up your child well, the first thing is that you should be happy. Right now, you, by yourself, do not know how to be happy. Everyday in your house, there is a demonstration of tension, anger, fear, anxiety and jealousy. Only these things are being demonstrated to your child. What will happen to him? He will learn only this. If you really have the intention of bringing up your child well, you must first change your way of being. If you are incapable of transforming yourself, where is the question of you bringing up your child?

Sadhguru J. Vasudev is a contemporary mystic rooted as strongly in worldly and pragmatic matters as he is in inner experience and wisdom. Named one of India’s 50 most influential people, he has addressed prominent global forums on issues as diverse as socio-economic development, leadership and spirituality. He has served as delegate to the United Nations Millennium Peace Summit and the World Peace Congress and has been a special invitee to the World Economic Forum (2006-2009), the Australian Leadership Retreat (2006) and TED (2009).

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Founded by Sadhguru, Isha Foundation is a non-religious, non-profit organization with over 200 centers worldwide and over one million volunteers. Isha Foundation offers Inner Engineering Online - a practical approach for inner transformation in a fast paced world. The course designed by Sadhguru presents simple, yet powerful tools for an individual to experience life on a deeper level with more awareness, energy, and productivity. This program is an ideal opportunity for those with time and travel constraints to experience the same profound effects of the traditional Inner Engineering program, which has impacted millions of people over the past 25 years. To learn more, view the free Introductory Talk, or to register visit www.InnerEngineering.com

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