

Why children hide their true feelings from their parents

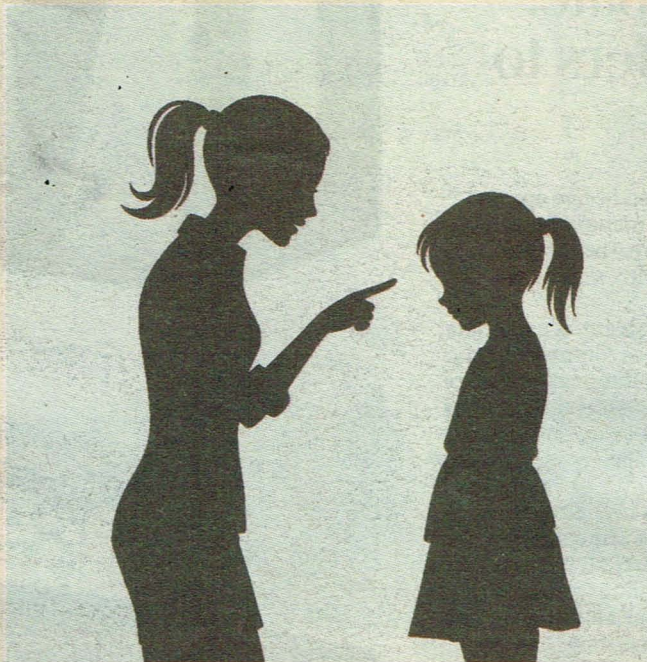
As they grow, children are far more sensitive than we often realise. They think deeply, feel deeply, and observe quietly. Yet many of them rarely speak openly about what is hurting them. They smile, laugh, play, and they may portray a picture as if everything is moving on well even when their hearts are troubled.

The truth is that many children hide their real feelings, not because they want to deceive their parents, but because they do not know how to communicate their inner world. The silent world of children may not be easily detected until they share their story or you take interest in making observation or keen on any changes.

I share with you some of the reasons why our children, regardless of their age and time, may hide their feelings.

When parents are always busy, stressed, or distracted, children may feel there is no safe moment to talk. Emotional openness grows in warm, unhurried spaces, not rushed evenings or distracted conversations. Without connection, communication slowly fades, there is a gap created and you may never get time to observe their feelings.

One of the biggest reasons children hide their feelings is fear of letting their parents down. When a child senses that their parents have high expectations either academically, spiritually, socially or psychologically, they may feel pressure to appear strong even when they are struggling. Some fear being judged or misunderstood. Others worry that their parents will be angry or disappointed if they reveal



the truth. Some have no option but to keep quiet and move on. Even at our level, we also get feelings we hide from our own parents.

Children quickly learn what is welcome and unwelcome in a home. If a child grows up in an environment where emotions are dismissed, mocked, or punished, they learn to stay quiet. When parents constantly say, "Stop crying," "Be strong," "You are too emotional," or "You don't have problems," children conclude that expressing feelings is unsafe. Over time, silence becomes their survival strategy.

Some children hide their true feelings because they carry unhealed wounds like bullying at school, harsh words from a parent, family conflict, loss of a loved one, or painful experiences they don't fully understand. Trauma makes a child withdraw. They fear that talking will

reopen the wound, so they protect themselves by staying silent. As a parent, you will never know certain things until you are close to your child.

A child who has been shouted at, beaten, or blamed for being honest will not feel free to speak again. Harsh reactions teach children that honesty or talking is dangerous. Instead of opening up, they choose the safer route — hiding their emotions and pretending everything is okay. There are some parents who make reckless statements, not mindful of how they hurt their children. Others are quick to punish a child without understanding the problem at hand. But we can change the narrative and be considerate before reacting negatively.

Children often lack the vocabulary to explain complex feelings like anxiety, shame, confusion, or sadness. So, they express emotions through behav-

iour, not words. A child who cannot say, "I'm overwhelmed," may instead withdraw. A child who cannot say, "I feel unimportant," may become defiant. Behaviour becomes their emotional dictionary.

Some children remain silent because they feel responsible for their parents' happiness. If they see a parent stressed, hurting, or overwhelmed, they hold back their own struggles to avoid adding pressure. They hide pain behind smiles because they fear causing more trouble at home.

Parents must become intentional about creating emotionally safe homes. That means slowing down, listening without judgment, and reassuring children that their feelings matter. It means observing non-verbal cues, spending quality time together, asking gentle questions, and responding with patience rather than anger. When a child feels seen, understood, and valued, they begin to open up. When you build relationships and trust together, security is guaranteed and they feel safer and thrive.

Children are not hiding because they want distance; they hide because they long for safety. They long for parents who can read their behaviour, not just their words. As this holiday continues, let us be more attentive to their emotional world. A child's heart is fragile and it will only open where love, patience, and understanding are present. Take time to reflect on how you are doing with each individual child whether young or an adult.

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