

Eight Questions to Consider Today to Help Your Child Be Prepared for Tomorrow

Perhaps you, like me, are of the generation which has begun to weather the storms of the breakdown of industrial society. Increasing urbanization, rural brain drain, loss of manufacturing and other jobs, and unstable capital in a global world leads more and more of us into dependency on challenging economic and political positions. How can we prepare our children now for a future which is uncertain?

This is something I asked myself repeatedly as our eldest has grown. She's a force of nature, and some of this may have been supported by our parenting. Below are some of the questions, insights, and principles from which we've worked. We hope this is helpful in your journey as an adult in the life of younger generations. Whether you are a teacher or a parent, these questions can help to guide stronger connections between yourself and those who inherit the world after us. Grab a journal and a cup of tea and dig in!

1. Perhaps one of the principles that is clearest for us, and which may have saved our daughter's life has been our commitment to open communication and conversation. We've been committed to sitting down and talking through whatever needs to be talked about—reserving judgment and asking discerning questions to help our child clarify their own position and understanding.

How do you cultivate conversation and connection with others? Can you withhold judgment and listen carefully to what is being said and the deeper needs and questions beneath the surface?

2. What family and/or classroom values and culture (language and habits or routines that support connection) do you hold? How can those be shaped to nurture our children?

3. Given the changing nature of our world, what skills are ap-

propriate for our children to cultivate? Problem solving? Awareness and observation? Imagination? Ingenuity? Understanding of food systems and gardens? Capacity to build and create? Knowledge of healing and health? Practice articulating their opinions and perspectives?

4. Understanding that no child is motivated to pursue an educational path that doesn't serve their interests, how can we create more flexible, cost effective educational pathways for our next generations?

5. Children need boundaries as much as flexibility in their life. In what areas are you too flexible? How could you define a healthier boundary drawing on the need for a healthier home or classroom culture? (We have problems with tech, too.)

6. What are the specific gifts and dreams of a child you are supporting? What choices do you see them make over and over again that are positive? How can you create situations where their talents shine? And other children? How can you set them up to succeed?

7. What challenges do these children face? How can you give them small challenges now or help them navigate existing challenges to build their problem-solving skills, confidence, and persistence?

8. Who do you need to be in order to more completely support the children in your life? The world needs competent elders. How can you continue developing your experience and wisdom in order to be a support to these generations in the future?

We hope this helps you in your endeavors.

— Rhonda and Corbin Baird

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