



TO BE OR NOT TO BE....

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Lest those of you reading this are misled that this is going to be a dissertation on Shakespeare's play Hamlet, it is not. Enough has been written about this great man's written pieces, so this writer finds it a great insult to his great genius to even attempt to analyze one of his works.

This is about the great lengths to which we sometimes go to become what we think we should. As early as childhood, we are taken up with particular figures that are highly influential in our lives. It could be a parent, highly successful in his career, who has inspired us to follow in his footsteps. It could be a relative, popular and talented, who has driven us to follow the same path. It could be a teacher, who we looked up to and whom we have decided to emulate. There is absolutely nothing wrong with such scenarios, in fact the world is all the better for those.

Impressionable as they come, children do not as easily discern good from bad as well as thinking adults do. This is why the impressions that they take with them in their growth need to be morally upright and commendable beyond measure.

But as parents, we must not totally shield them from the world; that would be tantamount to putting them in a cage where they dare not come out. We must let them experience what is good, just, and true. But we must also let them have their own share of disappointments and trials, for these are the real factors that teach them the sweetness of victories and successes. How can they know joy if they've never experienced sorrow? How can they savor their victories if they have never known defeat?

Do not choose the battles that your children fight-let them do that. What is essential is to guide them in choosing those battles, and equipping them with the values at home, weapons that they need to face life's challenges. Teach them that the holes they bury themselves in are holes they themselves must learn to get out of. Teach them that life is beautiful, but do not hide life's ugly side from them. If you do this, they will find reason to blame you in the future.

It's difficult for a parent to find the balance necessary to teach our children about life in general. However, it is part of our preordained responsibility to encourage our children to face life squarely. Inspire them to live life as they should, so that they have nothing to regret so many years down the road. Inspire them with the way we live, so that they will become what we dream for them to.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How have your parents inspired you?
2. Why is it difficult to be a parent?
3. Why is it necessary to allow children to experience defeat?
4. What can inspire a child more greatly—success or disappointment? Why?
5. Has there ever been a time when you experienced defeat? How did you deal with the situation?