

# The flip-side of **LOVE**

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## Love and Hate

As love is experienced as passionate positive feeling, hate is experienced as passionate negative feeling. Love and hate are the two sides of all passionate involvement with another, and cannot exist without each other, any more than 'left' can exist without 'right' or 'up' without 'down'.

*Because* they love each other, children also sometimes hate their parents, and parents sometimes hate their children. Brothers and sisters also love and hate each other.

## LOVE reigns supreme

Love and hate exist in the human heart like good and evil exist in people and the world, and just as it is vitally important for a child to be convinced that good will always triumph over evil, so he needs to be convinced that love (in himself and others) will always triumph over hate.

## A parent's love is most important

A child's parents' constant love for him is *the* most tangible evidence that love is paramount in the universe, so it is not to be recommended that parents give voice to their fleeting feelings of hate for their child.

## Right now, I hate you, too!

However, I believe there are far worse things than, in response to a child's exasperating recalcitrance and 'I hate you', a parent responding 'And I hate you, too.'

## Stand strong

Far, far worse than saying 'I hate you, too' is a verbal or non-verbal response from the parent that says, 'What a terrible thing to feel', 'After all I've done for you ...', or - perhaps worst of all - 'That really *hurts* me.'

## Don't plant seeds of guilt

A reaction of being hurt implies that the child has power, through his behaviour or the expression of his authentic feelings, to harm the well-being or self-esteem of his parents. This also induces in him a feeling of guilt towards his parents, which is at the core of just about all our neurotic disorders throughout our lives.

## Accept the flip side

When children express hate for each other – just let them. When a child expresses hate for you, his parent, although it is imperative that you do not express 'hurt', it is cruelly discounting of the child's intensely experienced feelings of the moment to imply that his feelings have no effect on you whatsoever. So the response to aim for is something along the lines of, 'I'm sorry you feel like that, but perhaps you'll like me better tomorrow.'



*This advice has been sourced from "Understanding your Child" (1991) written by the highly respected psychotherapist, Mavis Klein. You can order the book on ISBN 0-7499-1917-5*

