

# PLAYING BY MY RULES Words: Tanya Curtis

**FROM THE ONSET OF A BABY BEING BORN WE MUST BE AWARE THAT CHILDREN ARE EASILY INFLUENCED. CHILDREN OF ALL AGES INCLUDING OUR BABIES AND TODDLERS BECOME AWARE OF ALL THAT IS AROUND THEM AND BEGIN TO SENSE THE EXPECTATIONS OF HOW THEY SHOULD BE IN LIFE.**

As adults it is our responsibility to be aware of how we are influencing our children and contributing to their future psychological wellbeing - are we harming or supporting our child's development?

As adults, we have all grown up subscribing unconsciously to a set of rules - rules could be 'societal rules', 'family rules', 'friendship rules' or even 'self rules' etcetera. These rules can be so insidious we don't even know that we have subscribed to them, but the question we need to ask is: "Are these rules harming or supporting"?

The rules we have subscribed to contribute to the pictures we create about how life should be. Pictures are simply the images we create of our future - our 'shoulds, wants, needs and expectations'. We create pictures of:

- What we want for dinner
- How we would want the weather to be
- What grades we should get at school
- What people should and should not be wearing, doing, saying, thinking and/or behaving

In fact we are creating pictures (expectations) all day everyday about ourselves, other people and all of life.

What is important to explore is the pictures we create of 'how our children should be'.

From the moment of planning to have children there are pictures being created about how we want life to be once our baby comes along:

- My partner will be the perfect mum/dad
- My extended family should know what our needs are
- My friends should know when I want them to visit (or not)

- I expect I should know how to be the perfect parent and all that's needed to raise our baby, toddler, child, teenager
- I want my baby to be a certain gender
- If my baby is girl, I want her to be a particular type of girl (girly, tough, ballet dancer, musical, academic)
- If my baby is a boy, I want him to be this type of boy (gentle, rough, sporty, calm, outdoorsy)

These pictures become an imposition felt by ourselves and other people as we feel stunted in needing to meet the controlled picture created, rather than being free to develop for who we are without the imposition of another's ideals, beliefs and expectations.

What if we allowed our children to just 'be them'? What if we examined our own rules and pictures we are creating by asking, "I wonder why I have these rules?" or "do I really want my child to grow up with these same rules?" or "are my rules stunting my child from meeting their potential?" What if we allowed a child to grow up with no expectations of what they will 'do' and allowed them to simply 'be' them for the beautiful being they were born and will continue to be?

We know at the core of every single child, teenager and adult is an awesome amazing loveable being who is "Beautiful Just For Being Them". As our book *I Am Beautiful Just For Being Me* shares, we allow children from an early age to know that at their core they are beautiful not for what their clothes look like or how their hair is or what they do.

Rather, children come to learn that there is absolutely nothing they can do that makes them beautiful - they are beautiful just for being them.



### As adults we must remember:

Children hear, see and feel everything. They are absorbing all our conversations and interaction with them and with other people. Children are developing their own set of rules about how they 'should be in life' each time they spend time with you. Children are sponges and absorb everything from a very early age!

The level that we impose our rules, and beliefs onto children will influence their potential and can impact on their future esteem and psychological wellbeing, negatively or positively.

### Is what our child absorbing:

Stunting their potential as they begin to live by rules they think we want them to live by (e.g. I will be loved when I 'do' things well)

Supporting them to meet their full potential in the knowing they are supported to simply 'be' them as they are already perfect.

Children of all ages 0 to 100+ are beautiful just for being them. Hearing this language from the day they are born throughout their entire life will support them to meet their full potential!

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