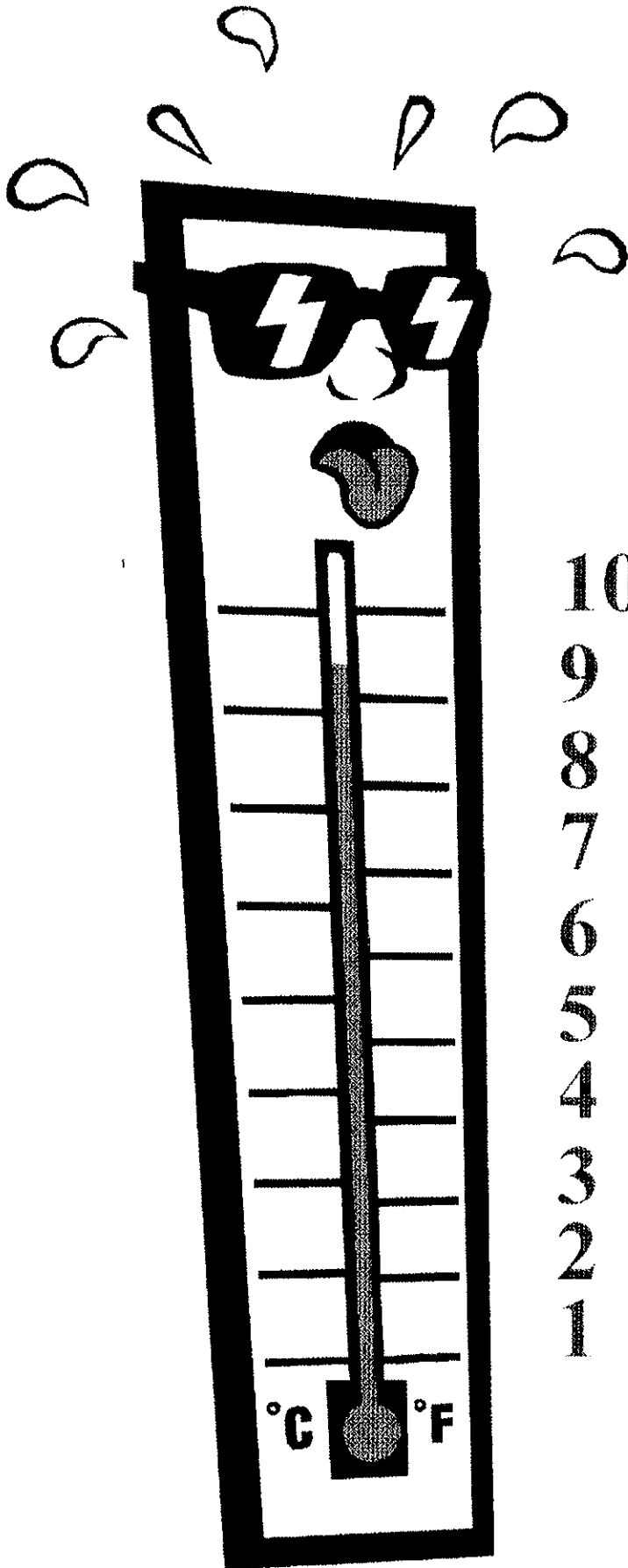


# The Emotional Thermometer

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- 10 Exceptionally Strong
- 9
- 8 Pretty Strong
- 7
- 6
- 5 Medium
- 4
- 3 Pretty Weak
- 2
- 1 Nothing Happening

# Are Your Emotions and Behaviours Helping You and Your Child?

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1. Write down something that happened recently where you became extremely upset with your child.

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2. Indicate how you felt – and how strongly you felt about it – by putting a check next to the feeling, and rating its intensity Moderate or High (M or H).

\_\_\_\_\_ angry                      \_\_\_\_\_ anxious                      \_\_\_\_\_ down

3. Write down what you did (how did you behave?).

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4. Was your behaviour helpful? Did it help solve the problem in the short term?                       yes                       no

Did your behaviour help solve the problem in the long term?                       yes                       no

Did your extreme feelings help you to think clearly and solve the problem or deal with the upsetting event?                       yes                       no

Did your behaviour help to keep your communication open with your child?                       yes                       no

# Thoughts to Decrease Emotional Stress

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1. Emotional responsibility (e.g., "I choose to upset myself about my child's problems or behaviour.").
2. Keeping things in perspective (e.g., "While my child's behaviour or problem is bad, it certainly isn't the worst thing that could happen.").
3. Focusing on the behaviour, not the child (e.g., "While I really don't like my child's behaviour, it is only one part of my child. My child is still okay.").
4. High frustration tolerance (e.g., "While I don't like my child's behaviour, I can stand it. I am not going to faint.").
5. Accepting myself (e.g., "It is impossible to rate my total self-worth on the basis of my child's behaviour.").

Describe a recent situation in which you became emotionally stressed during an interchange with your child.

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What thoughts did you have about yourself, or your child's behaviour, that increased your emotional stress level at the time?

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What specific thoughts could you repeat to yourself to decrease your stress level in a similar situation in the future?

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# The Catastrophe Scale

**Directions:** Think of a time when you found yourself totally stressed out about what your child was doing or saying – or not doing or saying. Your child’s behaviour should be one that led you to being furious, down, or very anxious. At the time when you were really emotionally stressed, how “bad” was your child’s behaviour – in your own mind – on a scale of 1 to 100? On the scale below, rate the degree of badness of the behaviour at the time you were very stressed (where at 100 you were thinking “worst thing that could be happening”, at 50 you were thinking “medium bad”, and at 0 you were thinking “not bad at all”).

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
not bad			medium bad				the worst			

Now look at the Catastrophe Scale below.

real catastrophes	100	e.g., nuclear war, death of a family member
	90	
	80	
bad, but not catastrophic	70	e.g., house fire, no one hurt
	60	
	50	
somewhat bad	40	e.g., minor car accident
	30	
	20	
a little bad	10	e.g., flat tyre
	0	

See if you can come up with other examples of events that could happen in the world – or to you – that you can add to the list of real catastrophes (90-100), things that would be bad or somewhat bad but not catastrophic (10-90), and things that are not really too bad (0-10). Now, using this scale of catastrophes, would you still give the same “badness” rating to your child’s behaviour as you had previously? Place a “Y” on the Catastrophe Scale where you would now rate your child’s behaviour. Place an “X” on the scale by the number where you rated it earlier. Is there any difference between your first and second set of ratings?

# Parental Accepting Myself Exercise

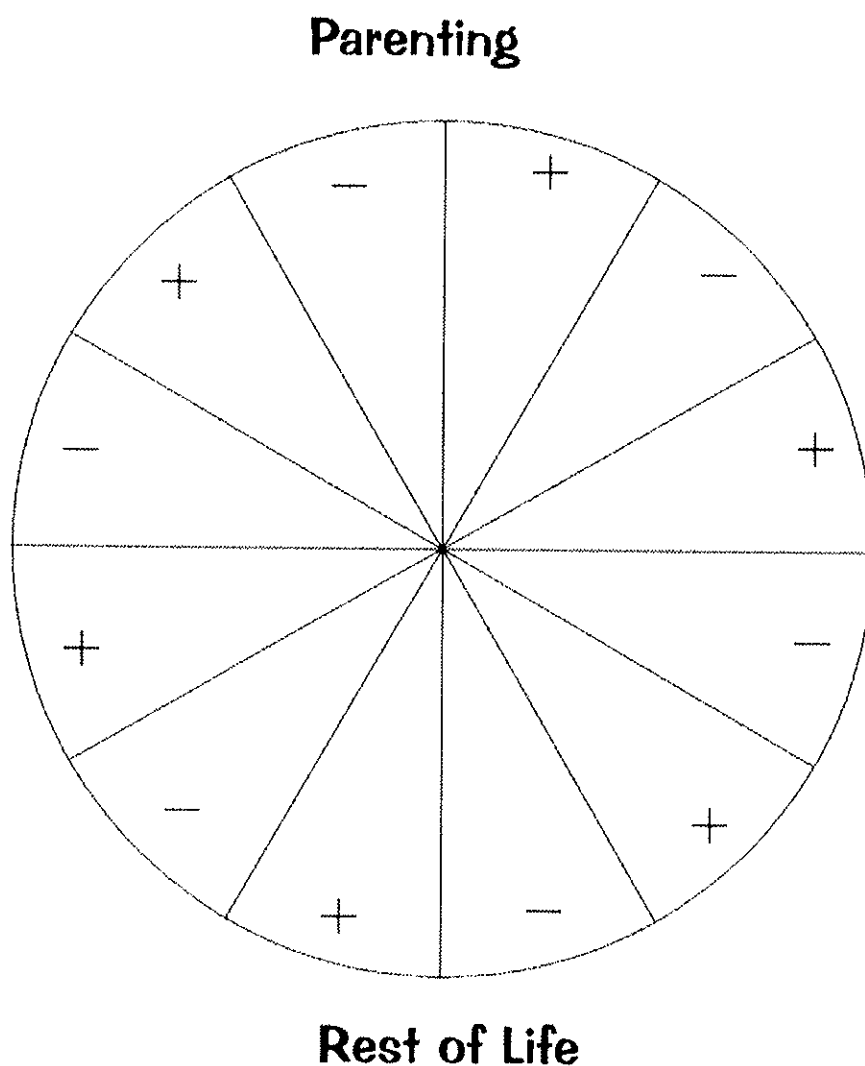
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**Instructions:** This exercise is designed to help you challenge the belief that, if you have not been successful in an aspect of your parenting, or if someone criticises your parenting, you are a totally hopeless failure as a parent.

To overcome your negative thinking (which leads to low self-esteem), complete the top half of the circle by writing things you do well as a parent in the spaces with pluses (+’s), and writing things you don’t do so well as a parent in the spaces with minuses (-’s). Then complete the bottom half of the circle by writing in things you do well and things you like about yourself, as well as things you don’t do well or don’t like about yourself in other areas of your life.

To counter the tendency to put yourself down when things aren’t going so well with your parenting, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does this bad situation (mistake, failure, rejection, criticism) detract from my good qualities?
- Does it make sense to conclude that “I am totally hopeless” because of one or more negative things that have happened?



# 10 Things To Do To Be Emotionally Resilient

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1. Be aware of how upset you are (using your Emotional Thermometer).
2. Remind yourself that it is OK to be upset, and that being medium upset means you are still in control of yourself.
3. Remind yourself of the negative consequences of losing control of your emotions and allowing them to rule you.
4. Take a few slow, deep breaths to relax.
5. Remove yourself from the situation until you are calmer.
6. Do not blow the event out of proportion.
7. Remind yourself that while you may not like your child's behaviour, you can definitely tolerate it.
8. Remind yourself that your child is still a child, and that it is only natural for children to make mistakes.
9. Discuss the problem with a sympathetic listener.
10. Distract yourself by listening to music, taking a bath, or going for a walk.