What’s Yours & Your Child’s Developmental Stage?

Recently I posted my top 10 tips for parenting success. Now, I am elaborating on each item on the list. Parenting Tip #6 is this:

Be Aware of Developmental Stage Influence

Where we are, in our life stages, affects who we are and how we act. For healthy, successful parenting we need to embrace both ours and our child’s developmental stage.

“No!” 2-year old Cloe pushed her cereal bowl away from her, sloshing the milk over the side of the bowl as she did so. She turned her head defiantly away from her mother, Jasmine.

“Now look what you’ve done,” mom exploded. “See what a mess you made?” Cloe’s eyes widened and filled with tears at her mom’s outburst.

This kind of exchange occurs way too often with young moms and their toddlers. In part, that’s because this interaction defines the inter-play of developmental stages. Cloe, at age 2, is beginning to explore her world and her wants. “The Terrible Twos” is a reference to a toddler’s defiance of authority. It’s a naturally occurring quality of Cloe’s developmental stage in her Childhood.

At age 26, Jasmine is in her own developmental stage crisis. Several years ago, developmental theorists identified a new stage that occurs between Adolescence and Adulthood. We call it Odyssey. As the term suggests, people from age 18 – 30 are on a journey with multiple changes. They contend with multiple schooling, housing, roommates, jobs, and relationships. When their newborns enter the picture, they are not mature in their own identity, and neither is their child. This is a main reason for child abuse and neglect when young parents haven’t yet fully grown up themselves.

Be aware of your own and your child’s developmental stage influence. Use your active listening skills to both calm her down and to understand her feelings. Make time for yourself at some point daily, giving you respite and ability to calm with “this too shall pass.” Where possible, use your network of family and friends, delegate, and plan ahead. You can multi-task successfully if you use the resources available to you. Who knows? A budding catastrophe could be a teachable moment.