

Dear Team

A mother of a young child told us on Monday that her husband kept telling her that she seemed different over the weekend. He had observed that she seemed happy and the atmosphere at home was really relaxed. She smiled as she related this to us and added that she had advised her husband to attend the next workshop.

Last Saturday, 35 parents attended the Joy-Care Parenting Workshop which was a gift from Ha-P.com. Avi-Liran, its co-founder had conducted a Joy-Care Leadership Trainers' Programme for our volunteers and staff last year and last Saturday, he guided us as we attempted to bring out joy and care among our members.

A couple showed up at the workshop visibly listless. The husband had outstanding matters with the police and they had difficulty settling their household bills. When the day was over, they came to us hand-in-hand sharing that the workshop helped them realise how much they appreciated each other and were confident that together they would overcome their current difficulties.

For us, we were filled with a sense of gratitude and humility after a long and exhausting day. The parents had not only trusted us with the care of their children (55 altogether) but they had trusted us with their anxieties, fears and other vulnerabilities as they learned new skills to improve their well-being and that of those around them. They learned to activate positive emotions within themselves not as a means to escape from their issues but as a way to strengthen themselves to authentically deal with them. To quote Ha-P.com, "It is not enough to wish, think, visualize and pray. Positive thinking without the real work becomes negative sinking."

Working on an issue definitely requires effort but perhaps it is "easier done than said." During a home visit, mother and her children greeted us with the cheer that was used to mark the end of one exercise and the start of another during the workshop. "Ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, yeah!" was as warm and welcoming a greeting as any other that brought big smiles all around. This mother told us that she remembers happy times when her family used to have sing-a-longs and she is now determined to get that going again and has begun teaching her children to cheer. She reasoned that it is a simple and affordable way to increase joy and care at home.

In sum, we are grateful to have spent a day with parents who openly received and gave joy and care to each other. It was a privilege to be in the same room with them experiencing and sharing a range of emotions that danced between laughter and tears, embarrassment and confidence, tension and relief. Joy-Care Parenting has been designed to reach participants with messages from the heart. Perhaps, messages from the heart get heart-landers responding with all their heart.