

CONSCIOUS PARENTING



METHODS TO ASSIST SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

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CHAPTER 1— PARENTING HANDBOOK

Have you heard or said some variation of the phrase “Parenting doesn’t come with a handbook.” It is true parenting does not come with a handbook. Although wouldn’t it be nice if we could google, watch a YouTube video, and have Mary Poppins or Jo Frost show up to our front door and solve our parenting dilemmas. Unfortunately for many of us, there is not a woman with a magical umbrella coming. Like our physical health, emotional health & wellness information is constantly changing based on research and new developments. Prior information we were aware of or identified as helpful often evolves. Parenting has also changed over the past decades. What was considered being a “Supportive Parent” has evolved to emphasize the importance of supporting our child's self-expression. With each generation our approach to parenting has evolved. Some parents struggle navigating changes in children's needs. Most parents want to be “Supportive Parents.” However, they do not always know how or where to begin when their current approach does not work. Most people do the best they can with what they have been given and use the information they received to guide their life. Many often use their own familial experiences to navigate their own relationships with their children. However, adapting prior approaches to modern children does not always work, and we find ourselves stuck, confused, and needing additional guidance to support our children. One of the areas I notice parents struggling with is support. Being a supportive parent in previous generations often reflected your ability to meet the physical needs of your child. As time has progressed, we recognize a child needs more than physical support but also psychological and emotional. Now more than ever with technological advances, increased social stressors, busy lives and decrease in intimate interactions, we are less connected. It is important to be connected to our children and know what is going on with them. But how do I support my child in today’s busy world? I am

going to share with you my suggested methods to support your children to curate a space for connection.

CHAPTER 2—METHOD 1

Self-Care

The first method to support your children I will highlight is self-care. As a parent we are often told our needs are secondary to our children. Put your children's needs 1st. However, in order to be attentive and prioritize your child's needs, your own self-care and needs are important. A healthy self is important in order to continuously be able to support your child. We model and communicate messages to our children through our actions. An individual experiencing stress and emotional dysregulation is more likely to struggle being present and attentive to their child than an individual with adequate self-care. It also communicates, self-care is not a priority or it's ok to neglect your self-care. Of course, life isn't perfect, and we are all bound to experience some form of stress. We all will have moments we may struggle being present in life. The bigger issue is when we continuously neglect our needs. Let's put it this way, how can you pour into a cup when yours is empty? How can you add fuel when you yourself need gas? Prioritizing your health and wellness is essential.

Exercise

If you are thinking, how do I even know if I am neglecting my self-care or how do I even assess something like that? This is a great question. Because of the world we live in today, we are constantly in motion and can miss or overlook self-care cues. I would encourage you to take a self-care assessment. You can google search self-care assessment online such as the following, [Brown Self Care Assessment](#). You want to look for a self-care assessment which divides self-care into four categories: Psychological, Emotional, Physical & Spiritual. The assessment is a self-rating tool to identify your self-care habits. I would encourage you to write down your

results and highlight areas you want to improve in or concern you. After you have identified this information, I would encourage you to come up with a strategy to improve your selfcare. I'm not requesting perfection. I want you to focus on small changes. For example, if you notice you have scored low for exercise, I encourage you to set a goal to introduce some form of physical activity into your routine. It can be as small as taking a walk during breaks or for 10mins a day.

CHAPTER 3 — METHOD 2

Quality Time

The second method to support your children is spending quality time. I know as children develop, spending time with their parents isn't always #1 on the list of things to do. However, we shall prevail. We don't want to miss opportunities to spend quality time with our children and connecting. You're probably wondering how I can spend time with children, and they don't want to spend time with me? Or we don't have time for that. As we know, any relationship takes work to maintain. The relationship with your child isn't any different. We want to maintain trust and your child's desire to share with you. We also want to curate a space for sharing. Schedule a time at least once a month to spend quality time with your child. It doesn't have to be anything elaborate but something where you are bonding, it could even be playing a game together or doing a Tik Tok challenge. More frequently, I would encourage you to check in with your children at least once a day, to show interest or curiosity in their world and their experiences. Identify a time that works for you and the child to check in. For example, during dinner. Some families discuss highs and lows for the day.

Exercise

Look at your calendar and set at least a reminder for a once-a-month activity to schedule a family bonding exercise. It doesn't have to be the same day and time each month but getting into the practice of scheduling family time. I would also encourage you to collaborate with your child to come up with a list of activities they would like to do together as a family.

Chapter 4 — Method 3

Active Listening

The final method to support your child is active listening. What is active listening? It is careful listening, requiring an active role as opposed to passive. Active listening involves listening to understand. How does one actively listen? 1. No Distractions, shows the person you are interested in what they are saying and are a priority. 2. Pay attention to language including verbal and body language in order to show interest and empathize with your verbal and nonverbal responses. 3. Ask questions that allow the speaker to expand on their thoughts such as how was your experience? Staying away from closed ended questions requiring a simple yes/no response. Remember the goal is to build trust and encourage expression. 4. Reflect what the speaker is saying, including what you observed from listening and reflect emotions as well. Also, if the speaker disagrees with your observation, here is an opportunity for an open-ended question to seek more understanding and clarity. 5. No interruptions while the speaker is talking.

Exercise

I want you to practice active listening. Next time your child attempts to speak to you about something, I want you to actively listen. You can respond but only to mirror the speaker's thoughts and encourage your child's self-expression. You can also respond if a direct question is asked. Of course, as stated in the previous exercise, start small. Even if it's 1 minute of active listening. Also, when your child attempts to share and if it's not an appropriate time to share, I want to challenge you to schedule a time to hear the story. For example, if you are out eating and it's extremely noisy and you can't hear. Remind your child what they have to say is important to you and you would like to be able to hear it all, let's talk on our way home when there is less noise. I don't want to miss any moment. You could also ask your child; can we continue this discussion later due to the surroundings and ask when you would like to talk more?

Resources

[Self Care Assessment](#)

[Active Listening Worksheet](#)