



What do your Children Need From You?

What Do Your Children REALLY Need From You?

By Dr. Margaret Paul

Are you confused regarding being a good parent? This article will help you to understand some of what your children really need from you.

Most parents want to be good parents. Yet parenting is one of those things that does not have hard and fast rules. So how do we know what to do? How do we know what will support our children in being all they can be?

Trust Your Intuition

One of the most important things for parents to do is to learn to trust their own intuition. Your feelings tell you when you are on course or off course in your behavior with your children. When things feel right inside, then you know that you are being a truly loving parent, and when they feel wrong inside, you know you are out of alignment with what is in your highest good and your children's highest good.

I remember my mother telling me that she used to put her fist in her mouth to stop herself from crying, and from picking me up, when I was an infant and cried. She had read in Dr. Spock that babies should not be picked up when they cry, that it is good for their lungs to cry, and that she would spoil me if she picked me up. But her insides were telling her the opposite - that babies cry when they need food, changing or love. It is so sad that she followed Dr. Spock instead of her own inner knowing.

Now research has proven that babies who are not picked up when they cry become more dependent and insecure than babies who are kept with their mothers. In many countries, babies sleep with their parents until they no longer want to, feeling safe all night. In the U.S., most babies are alone at night, some crying themselves to sleep. This is not only sad, it is very unhealthy for the baby.

So the first thing your child needs from you is for you to trust your inner knowing, rather than any book you read.

Your Loving Presence

Your child needs your loving presence - not your busy preoccupied presence. For your children to feel important to you, they need to feel

© 2011 All Rights Reserved

Margaret Paul, Ph.D., Inner Bonding® Educational Technologies, Inc.

you fully present with them - reading to them daily, playing with them, holding and comforting them and listening to them.

Healthy Environment

Your children need for you to create a healthy environment for them by feeding them healthy food, restricting screen time - TV, computer, video games - and making sure they play outdoors and get enough exercise. They need your encouragement to develop their hobbies and interests. They need you to try natural remedies before resorting to drugs for illness, so that you don't set them up for more illness with the side effects of drugs.

Be a Role Model of Self-Care and Care for the Environment

They need for you to be a good role model of self-care. Children need to see you taking full responsibility for your feelings, instead of being a victim and blaming others. With this role modeling, they will learn to take full responsibility for their feelings. Learning and practicing the Inner Bonding process will support you in becoming this loving role model for your children.

Children also need you to be a role model for care of the environment. My daughter told me that my 3-1/2 year-old grandson got very upset with the checker at the market for using a plastic bag. "No, no plastic bags! It's bad for the environment!" he told the checker. By role-modeling caring for our planet, we can raise children who are much more conscious of taking care of our environment.

Your Spiritual Connection

Your children need to see you being connected with a spiritual Source of love, peace and wisdom, in order to naturally connect with their own higher power. By you developing your spiritual connection, they can learn to connect with theirs.

What do your children really need from you? They need you to learn to be all you can be so they have the role modeling and permission to be all they can be.

What Your Children Need

By Dr. Margaret Paul

No matter how much time or how many material things you give to your children, if your presence with them is tense instead of joyful and peaceful, they will not be getting what they need from you.

Can you think of anything more important to your children than you being a happy and fulfilled parent?

Think back to your own childhood. Were your parents happy, peaceful and fulfilled? Were they filled with joy and laughter? Were they loving and supportive of you, themselves and each other?

Mine weren't. My mother was constantly anxious and worried about everything. She was often angry at me, no matter how good I was. She and my father often fought. My father was usually withdrawn, and often angry as well. There was almost constant tension in the home. They generally seemed to be unhappy.

I would have given anything for my parents to be relaxed and peaceful. I would have given anything for them to be loving with each other and with me. I wanted them to be happy, to be fulfilled, and to be filled with joy and laughter. I wanted them to show me how to have high self-esteem, how to feel safe and secure, how to give and receive love, and how to lovingly resolve conflict. They couldn't do this for me, though, because they didn't know how to do these things for themselves.

What your children need from you is for you to learn how to be this role model for them. No matter how much time or how many material things you give to your children, if your presence with them is tense instead of joyful and peaceful, they will not be getting what they need from you. You can give them wonderful toys, send them to the best schools, take incredible vacations, provide enriching activities - all this is the icing in the cake. But it's not the cake. The cake - the foundation -, is you being a wonderful role model of self-care and caring about others.

This means that you need to practice Inner Bonding and learn to take full, 100% responsibility for your own feelings of joy and pain, of peace and of tension. It means that the very best thing you can do for your children is to be on your own Inner Bonding growth path.

© 2011 All Rights Reserved

Margaret Paul, Ph.D., Inner Bonding® Educational Technologies, Inc.

When Katie had her first child, she was determined to be a wonderful mother. She read everything she could about loving parenting and was devoted to being there 100% for her little daughter. Yet within the first years of Amanda's little life, she was showing signs of stress - not sleeping well, being cranky a lot, not being easily soothed.

While visiting Katie and her husband Rob one day, I noticed that Katie was often very critical of Rob, and Rob would just take it without saying anything. In Katie's eyes, Rob was incompetent and couldn't do anything right for Amanda. Katie had read all the books, and she believed she knew the right way to parent. What she didn't realize was that the constant tension that existed between her and Rob was being absorbed by Amanda. Amanda was manifesting the stress that Katie was dumping onto Rob, and that Rob was swallowing.

The dynamic of Katie thinking that she was right and trying to control Rob, and Rob not taking care of himself in the face of the criticism, was not only very poor role-modeling for Amanda, but was causing her much stress. Neither Katie nor Rob were taking responsibility for their own feelings. Katie was dealing with her stress by trying to control Rob with criticism, and Rob was dealing with his stress by trying to control Katie with his compliance and silence. The resulting energy was too much for Amanda. It was difficult for me as well!

I decided to speak up with my friends in the hope they would be open to my perceptions. Fortunately, they were grateful for the information and began to make some changes in their relationship system. As their stress gradually diminished, so did Amanda's.

Why not resolve now to begin to learn how to be a joyful and peaceful parent? It's one of the very best gifts you can give to your children.

Are You Present With Your Children?

By Dr. Margaret Paul

One of the greatest gifts we can give to our children is to be fully present with them.

How often are you fully and completely present when you are with your children? This can often be a big challenge.

© 2011 All Rights Reserved

Margaret Paul, Ph.D., Inner Bonding® Educational Technologies, Inc.

When my three children were growing up, I worked full time as a counselor, wrote books, traveled on book tours, and pursued my passion as an artist - in addition to spending time with my husband. The only way I could be fully present when I was with my children was to set aside "time alone" with them. "Time alone" was daily quality time I spent with each of my children, doing whatever they wanted to do. During this time I did not answer the phone or deal with the many issues of running a household. It was time set aside to be fully present with them, not even thinking about other things.

The message you give to your children when you don't spend quality time being fully present is that they are not important. When answering the phone, or getting things done, or thinking about what you have to do tomorrow, is more important than being present with your children, they get the message that being with them and really knowing them is not very important to you.

When I was growing up, my mother was always busy. She never had the time to just be with me. She never wanted to know about my thoughts and feelings, or about how things were going at school. She never had the time to play with me or just hang out with me. While she said that she loved me and that I was important to her, I never felt it. Words don't cut it when the actions don't follow.

If it is not important to you to just be with your children - talking with them, playing with them, taking a walk, holding them, listening to them, sharing love with them, gazing at them with love - then they will likely not feel loved by you. No matter how many things you buy them, or how often you tell them you love them, if they are not important enough to you to REALLY be with them, then it is likely they will not feel loved and cherished by you.

Your children need your focused attention, and when they don't get it, they may pull for it in various ways. They may chatter on and on, trying to keep your attention. They may act out by fighting with each other, or by not listening to you or going into resistance regarding chores, homework, hygiene, bedtime and so on. For many children, even negative attention feels better than no attention. This may create a very negative vicious circle, in that the more they act out, the less you feel like being with them, but the less you are with them in a loving and attentive way, the more they may act out.

Think about how you feel when someone gives you his or her full attention. Doesn't it feel wonderful? How often does someone look you in the eyes and give you his or her full attention? How often do you feel really listened to and heard by someone? Unfortunately, many people are so intent on being listened to and heard that they don't listen and hear.

The simple act of being fully present with your children will do more for them than you can imagine. I have many clients who were deeply impacted by a friend or relative who really listened to them - even if it only occurred occasionally.

You have an opportunity to give your children a great gift - being fully present with them with your love, compassion, empathy, interest, sense of humor, playfulness and affection. You have the opportunity each day, even if it is just for half an hour, to fully cherish them.

They grow up so fast. Don't miss this opportunity each day. Practicing Inner Bonding and learning to be present with yourself can greatly help you in being present with your children.

Seeing and Valuing Your Children

By Dr. Margaret Paul

Do you really see your children? Are you able to see who they are in their souls? If you operate from core shame and cannot see the beauty of your own essence, your children will not feel seen by you. Yet they need to be seen by you in order to truly value themselves.

One of the things I loved doing as a child was making very fancy and creative valentines for my parents. I would spend hours designing and building wonderful cards with little poems in them. The only problem was that, while my mother would receive her card graciously, she never received it with her heart. She would smile and tell me how lovely it was, but I never felt her love coming back to me. My mother did not know how to open her heart, how to smile at me with love and cherishing in her eyes. My father would never even notice his card.

I wanted to connect with my parents, to share love with them, to know their hearts, but their hearts were hidden. Sadly, my mother died at the age of 86 without ever being able to truly share her heart with me. My father died at 92 with his heart completely closed.

Your children need to feel your heart and soul. They need you to take the time to stop what you are doing and just be with them. They need you to really see them - to see who they are beneath their outward ways of being.

One of the greatest gifts we can give to our children is to see their essence, their true Self, the individual expression of Spirit within them. When children are deeply seen and valued by their parents, they learn to see and value themselves. All children need this profound mirroring from their parents to feel intrinsically lovable and worthy.

The problem is that we cannot see the souls of our children, and embrace their intrinsic worth, unless we see our own intrinsic worth. If you suffer from core shame - if you feel intrinsically unworthy, unlovable, not good enough, unimportant or inadequate - then you cannot energetically communicate to your children their inherent worth. Your own feelings of unworthiness will be projected upon them, no matter how loving you try to be with them. You can let them know in many ways how wonderful they are, but when they energetically pick up your core shame, they will either integrate that shame into their own beings, or move into the opposite direction, believing that they are superior to you, which can cause entitlement issues.

In order to love and cherish your children in the way they need to be loved and cherished, you need to love and cherish yourself. One of the greatest gifts you can give your children is to embrace a daily process of healing your own core shame through your Inner Bonding practice.

Core shame comes from two different sources:

- If you were shamed as a child for who you are, you may have absorbed false beliefs about yourself and you may be continuing to act as if they are true.
- If you were not loved in the way you needed to be, you might have decided at a young age that it was your fault that you were not being loved - that you were flawed, inadequate, unworthy and so on. Core shame is often connected with a need to have control over getting love, so a child may decide, "If it's my fault

that I'm not being loved, because there is something wrong with me, then there is something I can do about it. I can try to be the "right" way, and then people will love me." Sometimes we stay attached to the belief in our core shame, to maintain the illusion that we can actually control how others feel about us and treat us.

If you commit to a daily Inner Bonding process of loving yourself and letting go of trying to get love from others, you will find that your core shame gradually resolves. Core shame resolves when we let go of believing that we cause others to feel and behave the way they do. As you heal your core shame, you can love your children from your true Self, your own individual expression of Spirit within. When your children experience your love for them from your true Self, rather than from your wounded self, which carries your core shame, they will feel your heart and know that they are truly lovable and worthy of being loved.

Is It OK to Spoil Your Kids?

By Dr. Margaret Paul

What does it mean to spoil our children? What does it mean to love our children? Can we spoil our children with love, or is spoiling really about indulging them in material things and activities? Learn about when it is OK to spoil your children and when it isn't.

None of us want "spoiled" kids - kids who are bratty, self-centered, demanding, inconsiderate. So, what spoils children and what doesn't?

When I was raising my children, I was often told that I would spoil them if I helped them a lot, rather than let them cry. Fortunately, I didn't believe this.

You can't spoil a child with love. Children need love as much as they need food and water. The problem is in defining "love."

We are not giving love to our children when we give them everything they want on the material level. Parents often think they are loving their children when they pile them up with all the toys or activities

© 2011 All Rights Reserved

Margaret Paul, Ph.D., Inner Bonding® Educational Technologies, Inc.

they desire, but what is the actual result of indulging our children in this way?

There are three big negative consequence of "spoiling" our children on the material level:

1) It fosters addictive behavior - filling up from the outside with things and activities, rather than filling up from the inside through caring and creativity. Too many adults are addicted to spending or other activities to fill up their emptiness. If they are stressed, instead of dealing with the source of their stress - which is generally some way they are not taking care of themselves - they cover their feelings with some addictive behavior such as spending, TV, food, alcohol and so on. When we offer our children too many toys, too many activities, too much comfort food, or allow too much TV, we are not loving them. We are training them to be addicted.

2) Often, parents provide things and activities for their children while denying their own needs. It's not loving to children to give in to their every demand, especially if it means putting yourself aside. When you constantly give in to your children and deny your own needs, children learn that it's okay to disregard others' needs, becoming demanding brats. Children may not learn to consider others if you do not expect them to consider you, by considering yourself. They will learn to treat you the way you treat yourself, so it is not loving to your children to disregard yourself. When you disrespect yourself, you teach your children to be disrespectful.

3) One of the big issues in our society is that children learn to identify their self-worth with others' approval for how they look, how many toys they have, how expensive their clothes are. Unless parents show their children that they value them for their inner qualities - their caring, creativity, compassion, laughter, joy, passion for life - rather than for their looks, possessions and performance, children learn to attach their self-worth to other's approval. True self-worth comes from inside, from knowing we are valuable for who we are, not for how we look or what we do. Unfortunately, our materialistic society fosters attaching self-worth and lovability to others' approval for things, such as a car or a house or clothes. When we "spoil" our children with material possessions, we foster co-dependency, which is dependency on others' approval for our sense of worth.

We can spoil our children with material things, but we can't spoil them with love. Love is the energy of acceptance for who the child really is.

Love is understanding, compassion, caring. You are loving your children when you spend time just being with them, hanging out with them, being fully present with them, really listening to them. The greatest gift you can give to your children is to value them for who they really are on the inside. This is love, and nothing material can ever replace it. However, if you do not know how to love yourself, you might find it difficult to give your children the love they need. This is why it is so important to practice Inner Bonding. Practicing Inner Bonding and providing a role model of personal responsibility is one of the greatest gifts you can give to your children.

You might want to examine the values and expectations you are imparting to your children. What are you role-modeling? Perhaps instead of all the money being spent on presents for your children at holiday times, the whole family could participate in buying clothing and food for those who are in need. Imagine the real gift you could give your children if Thanksgiving, Christmas and Chanukah were times of true service, in addition to feasting and sharing gifts with each other. Rather than "spoiling" our children by giving them too much, why not enhance their self-worth by providing them opportunities to be giving, caring human beings?