

## Gifts We Can Give Our Children: Connection

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Dr. Brene Brown--professor, author, and speaker said after sixteen years of research, "I am sure of one thing: Connection is why we're here; it is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives...Connection is the energy that is created between people when they feel seen, heard and valued: when they can give and receive without judgement."

Intuitively, we already sense what we need in order to feel emotionally fulfilled and happy. We see evidences of it in the unifying theme of most literature, movies, magazines, and even our commercial advertisements. More than anything else, what we all need is love, relationship and connection.

Scientific studies have demonstrated that from early childhood our brains are molded by love and connection. Without it, infants literally die, even though their basic needs are met. Later in life, those lacking connection experience higher rates of heart disease, diabetes, dementia, depression, accidents, addictions and suicide.

As parents, our connection and relationship with our children are the building blocks for their future relationships. Connection is key! Children learn how to interact with others by watching and relating with us. Plus, strong family connection supports more cooperation and harmony in the home.

This can be a lot of pressure for parents juggling work, school, family, and competing with extra-curricular activities and all media devices. The best approach is being intentional about making opportunities for connection. Experts recommend scheduling family time: conversations over device-free dinners, one-on-one time with each child even if it is running errands or walking the dog, family meetings once a week, establishing family traditions and weekend outings.