

Embrace the Child Within

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In her book, "The Conscious Parent -- Transforming Ourselves, Empowering Our Children," Dr. Shefali Tsabary says that to be more effective in relating to our children, we need to be willing to face and resolve issues in ourselves that come from the way we were parented. She states that, "In fact, it's my experience that the relationship between parent and child exists for the primary purpose of the parent's transformation and only secondarily for the raising of the child."

Think for a moment about a recent time that you were triggered by something that your child did or said. If you are not familiar with the term, getting triggered is an intense physical or emotional reaction to an event or interaction. Maybe that trigger comes from your two-year-old refusing to get in her car seat after a particularly stressful outing to the grocery store. Perhaps it comes when your preteen screams, "I hate you, you never understand me" or your young adult child returns your car on empty or forgets your birthday.

Regardless of the cause, the reality is that the things that trigger us almost always connect back to wounds and unmet needs of our inner child. Instead of blaming our children for our emotional reactions, we can use this opportunity to recognize that we are uncovering or awakening something in ourselves that needs our attention as I wrote about in my blog a few weeks ago. www.coachmyrna.org/coachmyrna-blog/triggers-and-awakenings.

Earlier this year, I had the privilege of helping my son and daughter-in-law while they became first-time parents. It was amazing to be able to support them as they discovered all the joys and challenges of caring for a newborn. However, at one point, I found myself becoming angry and at first, I couldn't figure out why. As I examined my emotions, I realized that it had to do with not feeling valued or appreciated. Could it be that I was jealous of all the attention that this beautiful child was getting? If so, where is that coming from?

As I explored more deeply, I realized that this was an opportunity to revisit a book that I had been reading, "Recovering Your Inner Child." Author Dr. Lucia Capacchione says, "Without awareness, we automatically repeat the kind of parenting we received as children... However, if we do not like the way we were parented, we do have a choice. We can change. We can re-parent ourselves... Recovery of your Inner Child is the way to begin anew and heal your life."

If you are intrigued to explore this topic more, I encourage you to:

Check out Dr. Capacchione's book www.amazon.com/Recovery-Your-Inner-Child

Watch a short video about Dr. Tsabary's book www.youtube.com/watch?v=rX1j-h2nzjU

Watch/rewatch the movie "Big" starring Tom Hanks

Go for a walk with your child/grandchild or by yourself and pay attention to the amazing colors, shapes and textures right in your own neighborhood

Channel your inner artist by getting out crayons, colored pencils, markers, etc. and draw whatever comes to mind. Try keeping these art supplies available and find ways to revisit them regularly

Pay attention when you get "triggered" and use these opportunities to see what is being awakened or uncovered

"Healing happens when we open the door and invite the Inner Child to come out and be a part of our lives." Dr. Capacchione