

COMPASSIONPOWER

Compassionate Parenting

For Angry, Resentful, Anxious, or Overwhelmed Parents

Steven Stosny, Ph.D.

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Preface

Do's and Don'ts of Compassionate Parenting

Parental Duties

- Provide unconditional love, compassion, and acceptance
- **Model** (children learn from *watching* you) the Five R's of parenting:
 - Resourcefulness
 - Responsibility
 - Respect
 - Relationship investment
 - Regulation of impulses and emotions
- Instill optimism
- Teach skills in negotiation/cooperation.

MODEL Solution finding

- *Do* stay focused on solutions
Don't blame
- *Do* ask questions that elicit solutions from the child
Don't solve the problem or offer unsolicited advice
- *Do* encourage the child to consider alternative solutions
Don't imply that there is only one right way to solve problems
- *Do* encourage brainstorming of possible solutions
Don't dismiss the child's ideas out of hand

MODEL Responsibility

- *Do* keep your commitments
Don't break promises
- *Do* consider the feelings of others
Don't act like the "Lord and Master"
- *Do* pick up after yourself
Don't make others wait on you
- *Do* hold morals above convenience
Don't justify your incorrect behavior

- *Do* be authoritative
Don't be authoritarian
- *Do* admit to being unsure
Don't pretend to know it all
- *Do* be truthful and honest
Don't be phony, lie, or cheat
- *Do* show that power includes responsibility
Don't exert power arbitrarily

MODEL Respect

- *Do* treat everyone with respect
Don't ridicule anyone
- *Do* let the child speak for himself
Don't speak for the child
- *Do* listen
Don't interrupt
- *Do* reflect
Don't react
- *Do* focus on uniqueness of each child
Don't compare the child to other children, including siblings
- *Do* talk
Don't yell, scream, or lecture
- *Do* let the child have his own childhood
Don't use your childhood as a standard
- *Do* validate the child's feelings (affirm the child's right to have them)
Don't invalidate the child's feelings (tell him what he really feels or what she doesn't have the right to feel)

MODEL Regulation of impulses, emotions

- *Do* ask the child to list the consequences of acting on impulse
Don't lecture or moralize about consequences
- *Do* show compassion for self and others
Don't blame or put down self and others

- *Do* take the child's perspective and compare it with your own
Don't get locked in your own perspective
- *Do* express deeper feelings
Don't express symptoms/defenses, e.g., shaming anger, anxiety, obsessions
- *Do* be flexible
Don't be rigid

Guidance/Discipline

- *Do* empower (help the child find the solution)
Don't engage in power struggles
- *Do* praise specific effort or accomplishment
Don't praise the child
- *Do* express problems accurately
Don't exaggerate or minimize
- *Do* teach the child how to *do* better
Don't shame or humiliate the child
- *Do* set limits
Don't hit or spank
- *Do* criticize specific behavior at specific times
Don't criticize or label the child (lazy, dumb, liar, etc.)
- *Do* discipline specific behavior
Don't discipline a "bad boy/girl"
- *Do* respectfully ask how the child can prevent the mistake in the future
Don't threaten or punish
- *Do* withhold rewards or privileges
Don't withdraw affection or threaten abandonment
- *Do* let the child learn
Don't intervene too soon
- *Do* enhance the child's strengths
Don't focus on the child's weaknesses
- *Do* respectfully confront
Don't avoid

- *Do* attend to positive behavior
Don't reinforce negative behavior with attention
- *Do* allow your child to make choices within parameters acceptable to you
Don't sweat the small stuff or try to control everything

Instill Optimism

- *Do* enjoy the child
Don't imply that the child is a burden
- *Do* learn from the child
Don't assume you know it all
- *Do* play
Don't tease (at the child's expense)
- *Do* teach the inherent Core Value of self and others
Don't imply that the child is inferior or superior to others
- *Do* teach that mistakes are temporary, due to situation or particular effort, and usually correctable
Don't imply that mistakes are permanent, irrevocable, or due to personality or lack of skills and talent
- *Do* teach that some tasks are negotiable and that cooperation is fun and productive
Don't imply that all tasks and instructions are carved in stone and that cooperation is work, punishment, submission, or weakness
- *Do* kiss goodnight
Don't send a child to bed in anger
- *Do* laugh with the child
Don't take everything seriously
- *Do* sit with the child at meals
Don't ignore the child while eating
- *Do* take walks together
Don't always say, "go out and play"
- *Do* show pleasure to see the child after school
Don't ignore child's homecoming or immediately discipline or make assignments
- *Do* hug the child a minimum of six times per day
Don't be afraid to touch or "spoil" the child

- *Do* smile at the child frequently
Don't scowl or frown
- *Do* make eye contact
Don't glare
- *Do* be friendly and warm
Don't seem aloof, closed, or distant
- *Do* speak softly
Don't sound loud, hostile, or sarcastic
- *Do* relax
Don't be tense, compulsive, or a perfectionist

SESSION 2: Modeling *Core Value*

Core Value is the drive to create value. Present in all humans at birth, it is the instinctual self-worth that makes newborns value and attach to caregivers, with the expectation that their emotional needs will be met by their caregivers.

Throughout life, Core Value tells us how important, valuable, loving, and lovable we are, as it forms the foundation of personal security, well being, self-esteem, competence, creativity, and power.

Core Value is the deepest experience of the self. It is awareness of your **humanity**. **When in touch with Core Value, you cannot do wrong.**

Core Value is an emotional awareness that no problem, behavior, or event can reduce your value as a person. It is a deep feeling that you are valuable enough to change any behavior that is harmful to you or to someone you love.

Core Value is *invincible* to damage from the outside world. The world can cause you expense and inconvenience, it can hurt your feelings and body, but it can *never* hurt your Core Value.

While you can never lose Core Value, you can lose touch with it. **The impulse to control or harm tells you that your current state of Core Value is too low.** The impulse to control or harm does *not* tell you that you need more power; it tells you that you need more Core Value. It's like a gas gauge showing that your Core Value is on empty and that you need to fill it up!

Statement of Core Value

(Read aloud)

I am worthy of respect, value, and compassion, whether or not I get them from others. If I don't get them from others, it is necessary to feel more worthy, not less. It is necessary to affirm my own deep value as a unique person (a child of God). I respect and value myself. I have compassion for my hurt. I have compassion for the hurt of others. I trust myself to act in my best interests and in the best interests of loved ones.

Improve, Appreciate, Connect, Protect

Although sometimes experienced as a sense of humanity, intimacy, community, or spirituality, people experience Core Value most frequently as motivation to **improve, appreciate, protect, or connect**.

How you feel from moment to moment is determined by the current state of your Core Value. To feel good, you must improve, appreciate, protect, or connect. If you do one, you feel better. If you do two, you feel much better, and if you do all, you feel joy. If you do none, you feel numb. If you violate one, you feel bad. If you violate two, you feel worse, and if you violate all, you feel resentful, depressed, angry, or anxious.

Core Value Exercise

Here's an exercise to invoke Core Value and keep it in reserve for whenever you need it.

Imagine that you're driving by yourself, and just ahead you see a car lose control and crash into a tree. Two people are in the car, a mother and a four year-old child. The mother is unhurt, but she's trapped in the front seat and cannot help her child, who climbs out the back window. Though unhurt, she feels helpless and panicky. You are the only car close to the victims. What will you do?

Of course, most people would call 911, reassure the mother that help is on the way, and comfort the child.

Imagine that you've done the first two, and now you're comforting the child. You tell her it will be okay, her mother is fine. You very much want to make her feel better. It's become so important to you to comfort her that you don't notice right away how it's working.

- The child is calming down and starting to feel okay
- She holds tightly onto you, arms around you neck, her head on your chest
- She now feels peaceful and good, because of you.

As you imagine helping the mother and comforting the child, you experience your Core Value. This image will overcome any impatience, resentment, or anger you experience. It will help you to act always in your best interest.

Core Value is a light within you. You will learn to activate it *anytime* you feel impatient, resentful, or angry.

From Your Core Value You Protect the Safety of Everyone You Love

Power Statement

Read the following aloud, and feel the *power* in your words as you reclaim control of your emotions and your deepest values:

I WILL WORK HARD TO HEAL MY HURT. THIS MEANS UNDERSTANDING MY OWN DEEPEST EMOTIONS AND THOSE OF ALL MY LOVED ONES. I WILL NOT HURT THEIR FEELINGS OR TRY TO CONTROL THEM, EVEN IF THEY HURT MINE OR TRY TO CONTROL ME.

Core Value Bank

The *Core Value Bank* is designed as a repository of your core value, a kind of bank account of important things. You can think of each of the eight segments as a safety deposit box containing images or icons of some of the most important things to and about you. The Core Value Bank is itself an image of your *internal* value. The images it contains, while they might correspond to things in the world, reside *within* you. They are *always* there, ready to give you strength whenever you need it. Each time you see, hear, smell, touch, or taste something in the world similar to the contents of your Core Value Bank, it will remind you of your core value and thereby activate it. In other words, you will be motivated to improve, appreciate, connect, or protect. The next time you see a sunset, for example, it will not only seem beautiful, it will remind you of your core value.

The best thing about the Core Value Bank is that you make deposits at the same time you make withdrawals. You will *never* run out of core value.

After you fill in the boxes, we'll put your Bank to use as a tool of emotional reconditioning. Get ready for magic.

Your **basic humanity** safe deposit box is already filled in. This is the emotion you felt when you imagined helping and comforting the desperate child.

Meaning and purpose statements:

1. The *most* important thing about you as a person.
2. The *most* important thing about your life in general.

Love: Fill in the names of your loved ones. You're writing their names, but the emotional content of this box will be the actual love you feel for them.

Spiritual: Fill in a symbol (a drawing, mark, or word will do) of something that has spiritual importance to you. It can be religious, natural, cosmic, or social – anything will do, as long as it connects you to something larger than the self, which, while you are connected to it, seems more important than your everyday, mundane, or selfish concerns.

Nature: Name, draw, or describe a nature scene that makes you value, i.e., something that you feel is beautiful.

Creativity: Identify a piece of art, music, or other human creation that makes you feel value.

Community: Identify a sense of community connection, for example, a church, school, work, or neighborhood.

Compassion: List three compassionate things you have done. Don't think of Mother Theresa kind of compassion. These can be relatively small gestures, when you helped or comforted someone else, with no material gain to you.

My Core Value Bank

Basic Humanity	Meaning & Purpose	Love	Spiritual
The emotions I felt as I imagined rescuing and comforting the desperate child:	<div>The most important thing about me as a person:</div> <div>The most important thing about my life in general:</div>	The people I love:	My spiritual connection:
Nature	Creativity	Community	Compassion
Something beautiful in nature:	Something beautiful human made (art, music, architecture, furniture, etc.):	My community connection:	Compassionate things I have done: <div>1.</div> <div>2.</div> <div>3.</div>

Emotional Conditioning

A simple way to practice emotional conditioning is to connect your Core Value to any devaluing experience, either at the moment it happens or after the fact. When irritating things happen, experience the light of your Core Value and invoke the emotions of your Core Value Bank. **Practice with *each* of the following situations.**

1. You're running late, the car ahead of you won't get out of your way. **Experience your Core Value – the emotional content of your Core Value Bank. Feel the light of Core Value.**
2. Someone cuts you off. **Experience your Core Value – the emotional content of your Core Value Bank. Feel the light of Core Value.**
3. The traffic totally jams up. **Experience your Core Value – the emotional content of your Core Value Bank. Feel the light of Core Value.**
4. A guy in another car gestures and yells at you. **Experience your Core Value – the emotional content of your Core Value Bank. Feel the light of Core Value.**
5. Somebody is tailgating you. **Experience your Core Value – the emotional content of your Core Value Bank. Feel the light of Core Value.**
6. A jerk leans on the horn. **Experience your Core Value – the emotional content of your Core Value Bank. Feel the light of Core Value.**
7. A van speeds by too close to you. **Experience your Core Value – the emotional content of your Core Value Bank. Feel the light of Core Value.**

Reconnect to Core Value at Least 12 Times per Day

The ultimate goal is to stay connected to Core Value all the time. In the beginning, you will need to remember to invoke Core Value. Have certain places that automatically remind you. The bedroom and car are good places to start. Whenever you go into your bedroom, whenever you get into your car, connect to your Core Value.

It is important to connect to Core Value when you do not really need to, so that it will become easier to connect to it under stress.

Wear your **Core Value** like a medal of honor.



Aggressive Behavior

Core hurts are not usually active. But when they are, they cause an abrupt drop in self-value. Many people learned early in life to protect against the drop in self-value with some form of anger, resentment, or aggression. The motivation to avoid or numb core hurts causes all harmful behavior.

Core Hurts

Disregarded

Unimportant

Accused

Guilty

Devalued

Rejected

Powerless

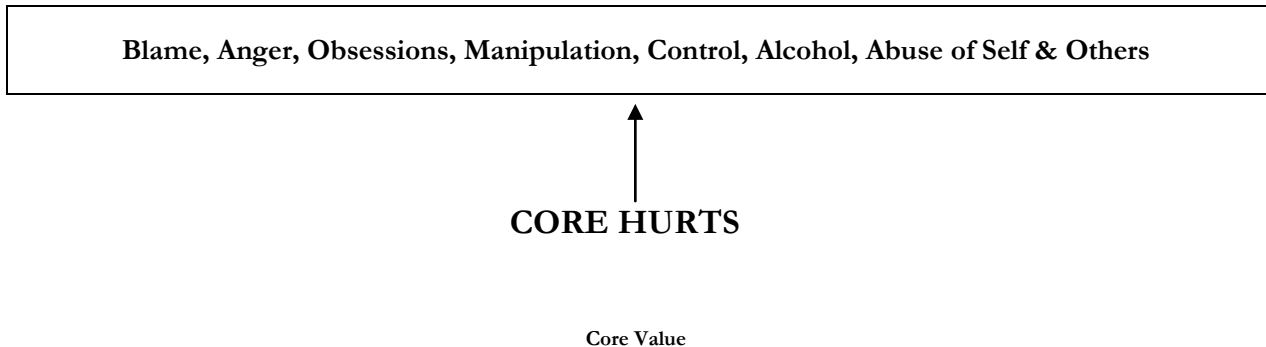
Inadequate/Unlovable

The Three Levels of the Emotional Self

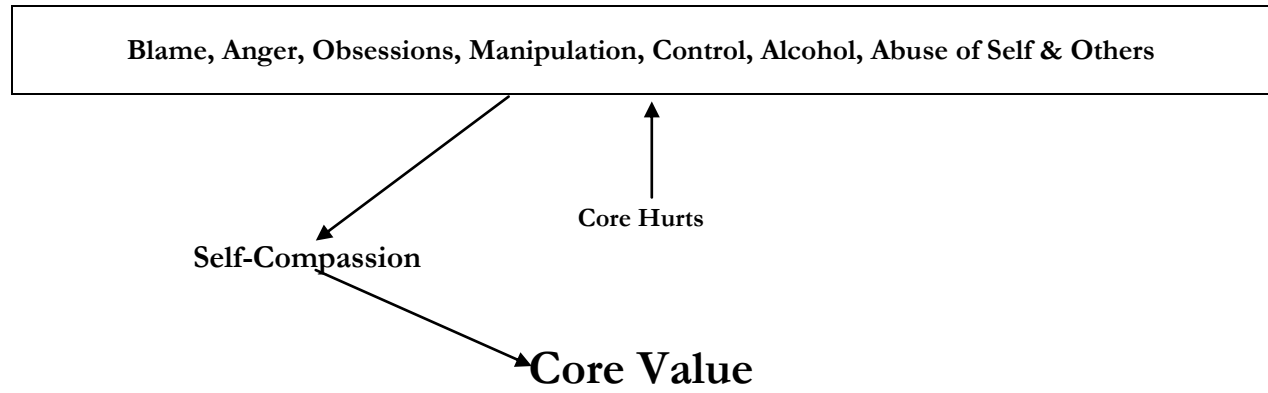
There are three levels of the emotional self. The top layer is what the world sees. On the good side this layer includes interest, enjoyment, compassion, love, etc. On the bad side it includes blame, anger, anxiety, obsessions, depression, manipulations, control, alcohol and drug use, etc.

Always deeper than these negative states are core hurts. If core hurts do not activate Core Value, they activate the top layer of negative states.

Of course no one was born with core hurts, although we've all learned them. Always deeper than core hurts is your birthright of Core Value. If you go deeply enough into yourself, you must come to Core Value.



Self-compassion activates your Core Value and ensures your best interest.



SESSION 3: “*Basic Training*” of HEALS™

HEALS™ is a *Core Value* exercise. It builds emotional power, strength, and flexibility by changing core hurts to Core Value. It reduces the power of negative emotions by enhancing Core Value.

The Goal of Practicing HEALS™: is to build a *skill* the brain can use *automatically*, in a *fraction* of a second, to reach **Core Value** when aroused with anger, resentment, anxiety, or obsessions.

Just like basic training in the military, it takes lots of practice to develop a skill that will work *automatically under stress*. The key is making the skill part of your automatic response to stress.

It takes an average of **six weeks** of **12 repetitions per day**, *associated* with *imagined* or *recalled* **anger** or **anxiety** arousal, for the skill to become *automatic*.

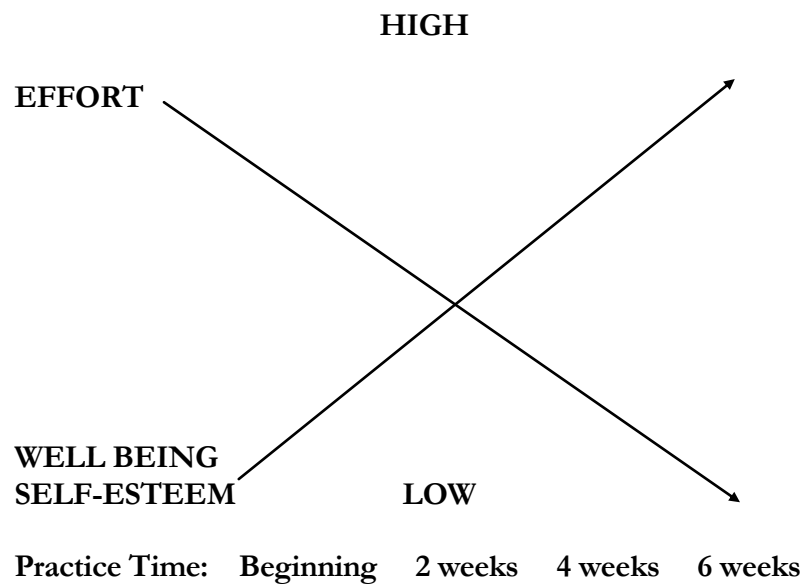
How the Technology Works

HEALS™ lowers baseline resentment in the stream of unconscious everyday emotions. With your level of resentment lowered, any waves of negative emotion will be less intense, less likely to do harm, and more likely to motivate behavior that heals, corrects, and improves. With your overall resentment levels lowered, you will once again experience interest and enjoyment.

HEALS™ does not make you "suppress" or "keep the lid on" or "put up with it" or "ignore it" or "hold it in." Far from making you tolerate discomfort, HEALS™ *changes* the painful emotion automatically, just like a thermostat automatically changes the room temperature from uncomfortable to comfortable. HEALS™ moves you from a devaluing state to a valuing one, from core hurts to Core Value.

Like all skill acquisition, mastering HEALS™ is hard at first but gets much easier with practice. It took you a long time to learn how to drive, but now you do it without thinking. The same was true of learning to ride a bike. As you master HEALS™ you will reap the reward of rising self-esteem and well being, with diminishing effort, as the figure below indicates.

The Effort and Reward of Learning HEALS™



Practicing HEALS™

Remember, you are practicing HEALS™ to build a *future* skill that will automatically regulate anger, resentment, and anxiety. In the interest of discipline, it is best to establish a practice-routine of regular repetitions for the next six weeks. Something like:

- Once before you get out of bed – this is the most important repetition, as it will start your stream of unconscious everyday emotions *positively*.
- Once before you leave the house,
- Once before you go to work,
- Once at morning break time,
- Once at lunch time,
- Once at afternoon break time,
- Once before you leave work,
- Once before you go into the house,
- Once before dinner,
- Once after dinner,
- Once while preparing for bed,
- Once in bed.

There are *no bad times or places* to practice HEALS™. However, for maximum positive effect on you stream of unconscious emotions, do not practice it twice in a row.

The Steps of HEALS™

HEALS, HEALS, HEALS flashes in your imagination

Experience the **deepest core hurt** (inadequate/unlovable)

Access **Core Value Bank**

Basic Humanity	Meaning & Purpose	Love	Spiritual
The emotions I felt as I imagined rescuing and comforting the desperate child:	<p>The most important thing about me as a person:</p> <p>The most important thing about my life in general:</p>	The people I love:	My spiritual connection:
Nature	Creativity	Community	Compassion
Something beautiful in nature:	Something beautiful human made (art, music, architecture, furniture, etc.):	My community connection:	<p>Compassionate things I have done:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>

Love yourself by feeling compassion for other person's core hurt (inadequate/unlovable)
Solve the problem

Start each practice repetition by recalling a time when you felt disregarded, ignored, accused, devalued, or disrespected. (For the first two weeks, start with relatively mild provocation. As with any skill, you should start small – you learn to swim in shallow water, not in the ocean during a storm. For the first three weeks stay away from the more complex forms of anger like jealousy and disputes about raising your children. HEALS™ works on this kind of layered anger, but it requires about three-four weeks of practice time.

- Imagine the incident in as much detail as you can.
- Pretend it's happening *now*.
- Feel the tightness in your neck, eyes, jaw, shoulders, chest, stomach, and hands.
- Do anger self-talk:
 - “It's not fair, they shouldn't be doing this, it isn't right! I'll show them!”
 - “**Here we go again!**”
 - “**It'll never stop!**”
 - “**They always do this!**”

As soon as you feel the anger: “**HEALS**” suddenly flashes in your imagination. (See the word flashing and hear the sound of it.)

HEALS...HEALS...HEALS...

Feel yourself move downward to your Core Value.

Experience the *deepest* core hurt *causing* the resentment or anger. Say,

“I am powerless, I am unlovable.”

Have the courage to deeply feel, for just *one second*, what it’s like to *be* that core hurt. Feel what it’s like to be completely powerless and unworthy, something like, “I’m a puppet on a string. They control everything I think, feel, and do.” Or, “No one could ever pay attention to my opinions or feelings. I don’t count. No one could love the *real* me.”

Access the glow of *Core Value*, the most important part of you, the part of you that would rescue a child in desert. Invoke the emotions of your Core Value Bank. You have the *power* to act in your best interest, regardless of what anyone else does. Feel your Core Value grow.

Love yourself by feeling compassion. Prove, beyond a doubt, how powerful and worthy you are; recognize the Core Value of the person who offended you. That person has a Core Value Bank like yours and would rescue the child in the desert like you would. Feel compassion for the core hurt that has disconnected that person from Core Value. It’s almost always the same one you felt. Recognize that person’s Core Value, and yours will soar.

Solve the problem in your best interest.

After each repetition, ask yourself:

“Will I solve this better (in my long-term best interests) from my Core Value or with anger?

Which do I prefer?

Which is more authentically me?

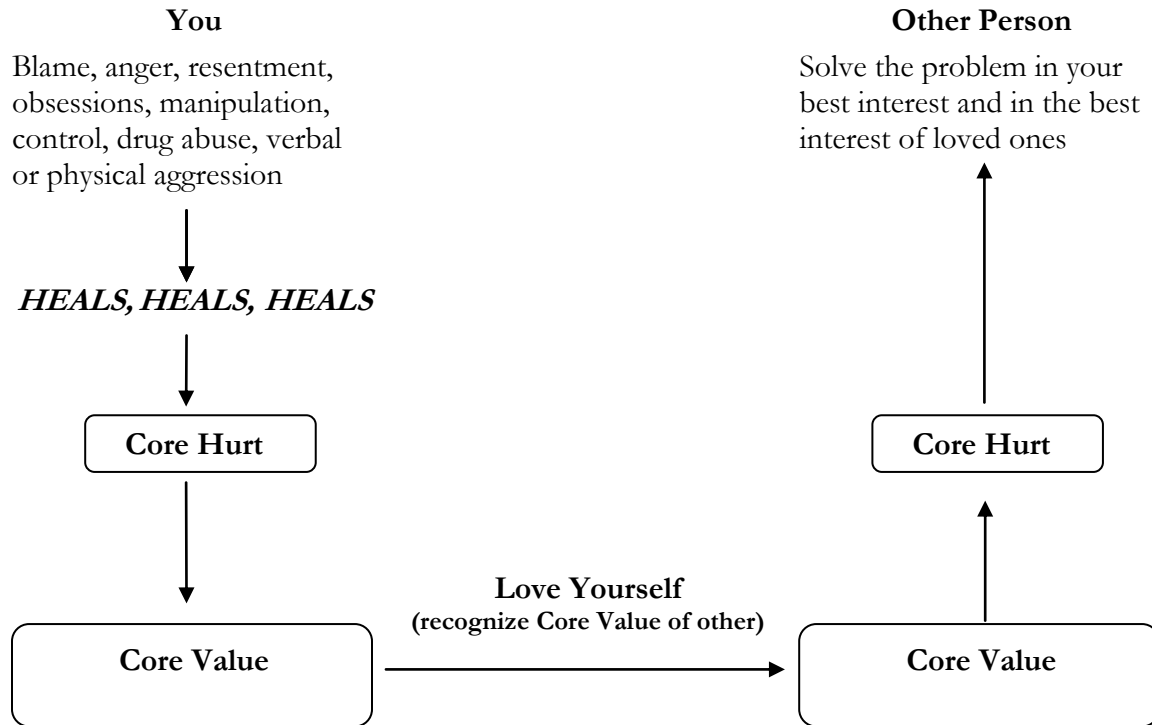
Each repetition of HEALS™ makes your emotional system stronger and more flexible, just as each push-up makes your skeletal-muscular system stronger and more flexible. But just as with push-ups, it takes a lot of repetitions for it go get really strong and flexible.

Each time you practice HEALS™, you gain a little more of your inner self. You become wiser, more powerful, and better able to understand yourself and others.

The Vaccination Effect of HEALS™

When you receive vaccination against a virus or bacterium such as diphtheria, measles, or TB, you are injected with a small, non-toxic dose of the disease. This stimulates your immune system to build immunity against the illness. In the same way, your brief experience of the deepest core hurt with each practice repetition of HEALS™ works like a vaccination. It will build immunity to core hurts so that no one will be able to push your buttons or make you act against your best interests.

Path of HEALS™



The Emotional Wave

The major problem most people encounter when they first start practicing HEALS™ is trying to experience the emotion while “remembering” the steps *and* the incident. There are audio tapes and a CD-ROM available to help you learn the steps (compassionpower.com). After about three weeks of practice, awareness of the steps should fall away completely. You will experience a purely emotional wave, going from resentment, anger, anxiety, or obsessions, quickly through core hurts to **Core Value**, to solving the problem with self value and value for others. The emotional wave will be *without thought*, but it might be labeled:

HEALS flashing
Core hurt
Core Value
Love (compassion)
Solve the problem

By the end of your work with HEALS™, you will be so focused on making the situation better that you won't notice the automatic transition from resentment/anger to Core Value.

Directions for the "Experience" Step of HEALS™

Always go to the *deepest* core hurt. HEALS™ will not work if you do not go deeply enough. If the core hurt is “rejection” and you identify “unimportant,” you have not validated your true emotional experience. That unregulated core hurt will cause more resentment and anger.

However, HEALS™ *will* work if you go “too deep.” If the core hurt is “unimportant,” and you identify “unlovable,” regulation will still occur.

Disregarded: Feel what it's like to feel unworthy of regard, not to count enough for anyone to pay attention to your opinions, desires, and emotions.

Unimportant: Feel what it's like to be totally unimportant, not to matter at all, to be so unimportant that no one should consider having a passing positive thought about you.

Accused/Guilty: Feel what it is like to have done something wrong, to have hurt someone, to have done terrible damage, to have betrayed someone, to have been immoral.

Devalued: Feel what it's like to be totally without value as a person. You are *worthless*.

Rejected: Feel what it's like to be completely unacceptable, banished, put down, thrown out, or abandoned.

Powerless: Feel what it's like to be completely without power over your internal experience, to be out of control of your thoughts and emotions. You're like a puppet on a string or a robot whose buttons anyone can push. Anybody can make you think, feel, and do anything they want.

Unlovable: Feel what it's like to be unworthy of love. No one could love you. No one could love the real you. No one ever will.

Trouble with HEALS™

If you have trouble with HEALS™, try the following:

1. Go deeper on the core hurt list. Don't be afraid to feel "inadequate or unlovable," even if it seems worse than the core hurt you actually felt. Try to get as close as you can to feeling the *deepest* core hurt for one second.
2. If you have trouble making the transition to **Core Value**, try rapid eye movement. Focus your eyes on your finger and move it rapidly back and forth a few seconds.
3. In the "Access **Core Value**" step, deeply appreciate that, no matter what the trigger incident, you do not deserve to continue feeling core hurts. Continuing to feel core hurts *impedes* your ability to make things better.
4. In the "Love yourself" step, recognize the **Core Value** of the person who offended you. He/she is far more complicated, complex, and humane than whatever he or she did to you. Appreciating the complexity of other people reinforces your own.
5. In the "Love yourself" step, identify the other person's core hurt that caused the behavior you don't like. (It will almost always be the same one you felt.) Feel compassion, not for the behavior, but for the hurt.

SESSION 4: *Temperament & Discipline*

Children are born with certain emotional tendencies called **temperament**, which form the biological underpinnings of personality. Subtle temperamental differences make newborns individual and unique even within their limited behavioral repertoire.

Temperamental differences persist throughout life but are most noticeable and most developmentally crucial in the first year. The three broad temperamental categories, which include descriptions of how the person experiences and regulates emotion, are **fearful-inhibited**, **easy**, and **slow to warm up**.

Easy babies are about 60% of the population. They cry to express specific needs and when those needs are met, they reorganize themselves quickly. They bond easily, favor eye contact and touch, and are generally pleasant to care for. As toddlers they are curious, adventuresome, and given to fewer temper tantrums.

Slow to warm-up babies make up some 25% of the population. They have trouble with initial stimulation and need a few moments to “warm-up” to new stimulation levels. When you first touch them, they tense or recoil. But if the caregiver hangs in there, they come to like touch and affection about as much as the easy baby. As toddlers they are shy and inhibited in any new situation. But once it is familiar, they explore and socialize as much as “easy” children.

Problems occur with slow to warm up children when caregivers interpret the initial recoil from attachment behavior as rejection. Sometimes this perception is quite subtle and results in a withdrawal of compassion and attachment behavior that interferes with the child’s development of self.

Fearful-inhibited infants, about 15% of the population, feel uncomfortable a lot of the time. They cry for no specific reasons. They often recoil from touch and don’t easily make eye contact. They like playing and amusing interactions with parents only some of the time. But their periods of receptivity are not easily recognizable or predictable. As toddlers, they are shy, inhibited, and fearful in unfamiliar situations. Without compassion, they can develop continual feelings of self-consciousness and awkwardness.

In short, fearful-inhibited children require a lot of attention with little reward of pleasant cheerfulness. As a result, parents often feel like failures, as their infants resist the most heartfelt attempts to cheer, amuse, and give affection. Feeling rejected, powerless, and unlovable, they withdraw emotionally from the child. This withdrawal of affection is where the problem lies. The child’s sense of value is diminished by less positive attention. As they mature, many try to get attention in the only way that works, through negative behavior.

The following table, drawn from the work of Stella Chess and Alexander Thomas, pioneers in the clinical study of temperament, can help you assess and *appreciate* your child's temperament. The descriptions are only averages. All children vary in how they respond and all experience a range of emotions. But the same emotion, for example interest, looks quite different in a highly sociable child from its appearance in a shy, inhibited child.

Domain	Easy (sociable)	Slow to warm up	Fearful-inhibited
Activity level	Active, energetic	Takes a while to get going, but then active	Quiet
Distractibility	High interest, focus	Surface interest	Continual scanning
Persistence	Keeps trying, though in different ways if initial attempts are unsuccessful	Half-hearted initial efforts	Half-hearted subsequent efforts, quickly gives up
New situations	Curious-enthusiastic	Cautious	Anxious
Intensity	Low arousal	Moderate	High arousal
Adaptability	Easy transitions (e.g., morning to nap time)	Transitions troublesome at first	Most transitions troublesome most of the time
Regularity	Predictable in habits, e.g., sleep, emotional reactions	Somewhat predictable	Unpredictable
Sensory threshold	Likes stimulation	Highly sensitive to initial stimulation, but gradually adapts	Hypersensitive, easily over-stimulated
Mood	Mostly positive	Mixed	Mostly negative

If children receive sufficient acceptance and help to build self-regulation skill, even the most extreme temperamental conditions do not limit personal growth and development. For example, an infant born shy and inhibited will never grow up to be the life of the party. But that person can enjoy the party, contribute to other peoples' enjoyment, and feel as important and valuable as the life of the party.

Acceptance of the child's God-given temperament is absolutely crucial to maximizing the positive effects and minimizing the negative effects of emotions. First of all, personal characteristics are neither positive nor negative. Only the meanings we give to them warrant value judgments, and they are usually more negative than positive. Problem behavior almost always derives from negative meaning.

"Highly-strung" is no more a negative characteristic than "high curiosity" is a positive one. The person's skill to regulate response and do advantageous behavior is the key element in his or her life.

The more a child or adult's temperament is **accepted**, the easier it is for that person to make behavior advantageous. When we say to children or adults, "Don't be shy," or, "Don't be adventuresome," or "Don't be emotionally demanding," we shame them for what they are and diminish their capacity to change behavior. Rather, asking a shy child, "What do you think the other kids in the room were thinking and feeling?" takes the focus off the child and reduces self-consciousness. The child does not see his shyness as a flaw and is free to experience interest and enjoyment in the company of other children.

Arousal

The energy that powers emotion and gives it the force to produce behavior is called arousal. Arousal ebbs and flows in 90-minute cycles throughout the day, even while we sleep. These arousal cycles feature a kind of reflex sexual excitation, as parents of boy infants well know.¹ At peak arousal times we are more susceptible to intense emotional response.

Excitability and abundant energy mark periods of high arousal. Abnormally high levels produce over-stimulation, obsessions, compulsions, insomnia, or mania. Periods of low arousal permit relaxation, letting go, or numbing out. Abnormally low levels create depression, muted emotions, and hypersomnia or escape into sleep.

As children mature, specific emotions sometimes attach to arousal levels. For some, high arousal produces increased anxiety (bad things will happen) or confidence (I can do it!). For others, low arousal produces shame (focus on failure, inadequacy, or unworthiness), pride (I know how to relax and smell the roses), anxiety (I don't have the energy to cope), or withdrawal of interest (boredom). Part II of this work offers advice on how to help children manage the arousal component of their emotions.

Feelings

Though merely one small aspect of emotions, their subjective experience—what they **feel** like—dominates our thinking about them and creates enormous misunderstanding about emotions. Trying to understand or change emotions through focus on how they feel is like seeking to understand and change intestinal gas through focus on its discomfort.

Attempts to alter the feeling component of emotion directly cause many disorders and problems of living. Foremost among these are addictions, compulsions, controlling behavior, and abuse of others. Focus on feelings makes emotional regulation virtually impossible. Children need to know about feelings merely as one way of identifying the more important components of arousal and motivation.

Transitions

The curse of modern parenting is **too little time**. The average family spends no more than 13 minutes together. Parents spend far more time with their children in the car than in direct interaction. That's the bad news.

The good news is that quality **transitions**, while no substitute for quality time together, can make up for some of the emotional losses due to modern, busy schedules.

¹ Girls have a similar cycle of sexual excitation every 90-minutes, but it is, of course, much more difficult to see.

A transition is movement from one activity state to another, such as sleeping to waking. Brief expressions of affection and support at these times can carry positive energy into the next series of behaviors. Attention to the following transitions will have a significant effect on your relationship with your children. Hug and kiss them:

Awake in the morning

- When they leave for school (when they get in and out of the car if you drive them)
- When they get home from school (when they get in and out of the car if you drive them)
- After dinner
- At bed time.

Making Discipline Work

Like all human beings, children need discipline to help them function at their best. Believe it or not, they actually *want* us to discipline them. Children who live in homes with little discipline tend to feel unloved, isolated, and unprotected. Many adolescents from undisciplined homes lie to their peers and make up curfews that they attribute to neglectful parents.

Children view it as the job of parents to set the limits and as their job to test them. Compassionate parents set firm limits about important issues of safety, health, learning, education, and morality and encourage cooperation with the rest of life's rules and limitations.

Many discipline problems rise from some physical discomfort, such as hunger or sleep deprivation. Take care to meet the child's physical needs as well as your own before attempting discipline. *Emotional* discomfort caused by nervous energy, anxiety, and disappointment accounts for most other discipline problems. Of course, discipline that increases anxiety, such as yelling or shaming, makes emotional discomfort worse and produces more undesired behavior in the long run.

Prevention Rules

- Teach your children about their Core Value.
- Help them invoke their Core Value when distressed, pained, or challenged.
- Listen.
- As much as possible, let solutions to problems come from the children. As they mature, your job is less and less to give answers and more and more to ask the questions that lead them to solutions.
- Understand that change stimulates emotion. You and your children will have emotional response to change, regardless of the content.

- Take care to respond to *positive* emotions as well as negative, lest you set up the habit of using trouble to get attention. Compassionate attention to expressions of interest and enjoyment are opportunities to develop positive emotional response in children and adults.
- Express affection to your children and to other adults in the family.
- **Present a united front to your children. This means parents must *negotiate their disagreements about parenting in private*.**

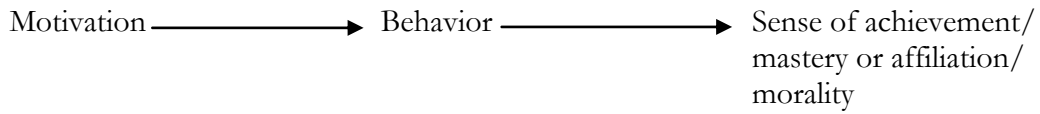
General Rules of Effective Discipline

- Discipline is a long-term project. It is never just for a single behavior. The purpose of discipline is to give general direction for a stream of behaviors over time.
- Discipline **must** be implemented with **positive parental motivation** to **protect, nurture, encourage, influence, guide, set limits, or cooperate**.
- Stress safety, health, learning, education, and morality as *pride* and *empowerment*.
- Help children think through how their long-term best interests are served by cooperation.
- Focus on what you want, not what you don't want. "Put your feet on the floor," works better than "Don't put your feet on the sofa." Behavior tends to follow attention, as we should have learned from the forbidden fruit saga of Genesis.
- Keep the focus on the behavior, not your emotional state. Never discipline in anger.
- Ask questions whenever possible to help children come up with their own motivation to cooperate. The regulation for behavior must be established in the child, not in you as policeman.
- Help children understand that their behavior is a choice. They always have the *power* to choose better behavior.
- Ask questions that help children think through the consequences of their behavior choices, especially the response that their behavior invokes in other people.
- Fit the discipline to the temperament of the child. Discipline that works well for an outgoing, high-energy child can be damaging to a sensitive, inward child.

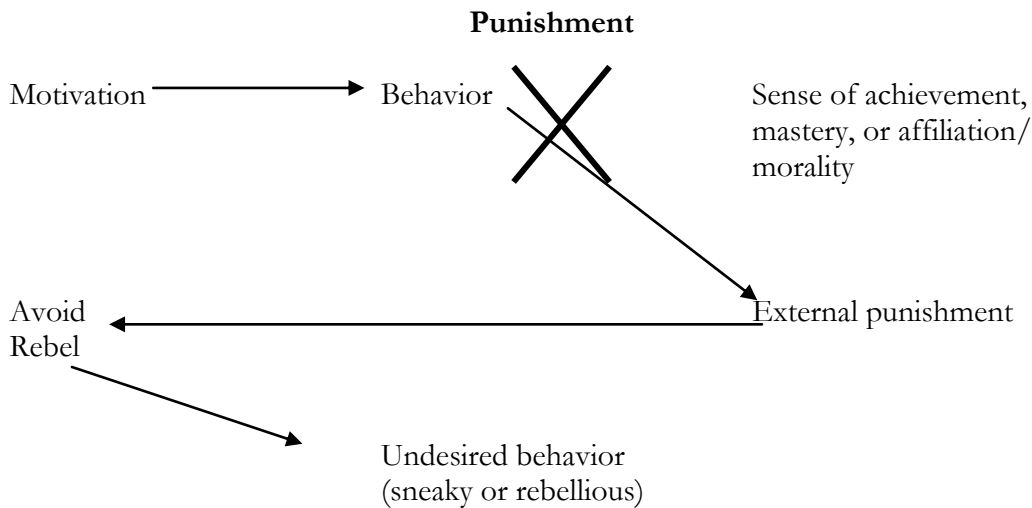
Reward/Punishment vs. Natural Self-Enhancement

Most people apply a terribly superficial form of discipline to themselves and their children, based on conditioned responses of reward and punishment. For example, "If you do this you'll get a reward, like praise, a cookie, a toy, or a hug. If you don't do it you'll get punished with something like a dirty look, shouting, a time out, a spanking, etc. Unfortunately, this common form of discipline undermines the natural enhancement of the sense of self that comes from achievement or mastery and through affiliation with others.

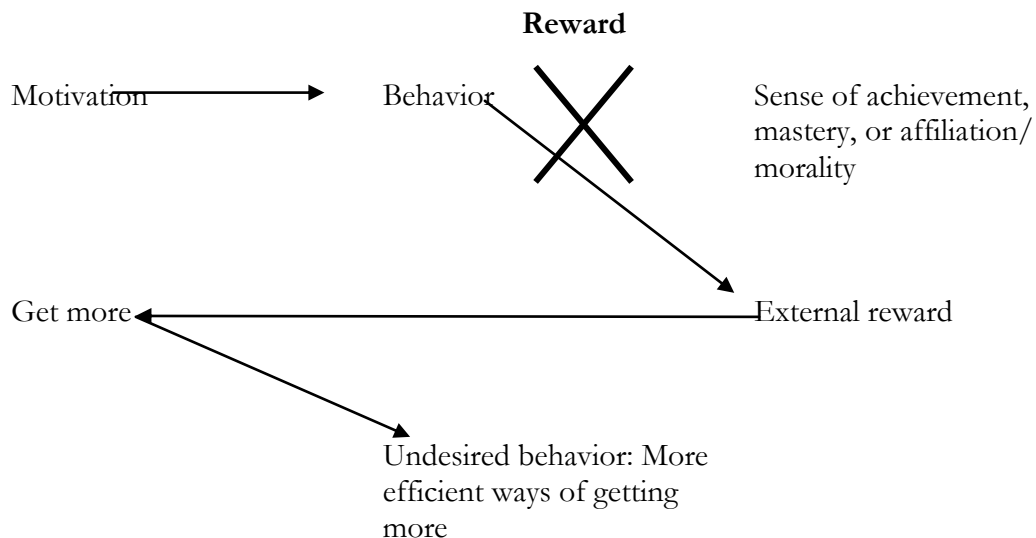
Natural Self-Enhancement



Ineffective discipline replaces natural self-enhancement with an artificial schedule of rewards and punishments.



Punishment motivates passive-aggressiveness, sneakiness, low self-esteem or depression on the one hand or defiance and rebellion on the other. Punishment focuses the child's attention on what you don't want them to do.



Without the natural self-enhancement of achievement, mastery, or affiliation, rewards are momentary and never satisfying. Children become conditioned to seek constant streams of external rewards with necessarily diminishing returns. Perhaps worse, they do things to get rewards that have

little or nothing to do with the behavior that earns them. With exclusively extrinsic reward, it is difficult to generate interest in the behavior, which greatly lowers performance efficiency. With no value given to the behavior itself, most of it becomes tiresome and boring. Since the reward is all they really want anyway, children, like many adults, come to resent having to do tasks to get it. They concoct sneaky methods of cutting corners or getting what they want in other ways. To prevent completely shabby behavior, parents must serve as full-time policemen enforcing the laws of punishment and reward.

The effects of discipline that disrupt natural self-enhancement are easily exploited by undesirable means. Most of the chagrined attention that TV and computer games inspire centers on the modeling of violent and immoral behavior. But the evidence is inconclusive as to whether electronic saturation motivates some children to anti-social behavior. Far more insidious may be the effect of distorting motivation, which, at best, suppresses achievement and renders real life boring. At worst it creates a "feel good" culture in which feelings are separated from achievement and accomplishment, making us susceptible to drugs and other quick fixes.

Discipline and Identity

Methods of discipline contribute greatly to the emerging identity of children, which, in turn, greatly influences how they see themselves in relation to the world. When their identity forms around reward, what matters is not who they are, but what they have and what they can get from others. When their identity forms around punishment, the most important thing about them becomes what others have done to them and how they might get even. Compassionate Parenting directs identity toward achievement, mastery, and affiliation.

Behavior and Its Consequences

It is necessary, of course, to teach children that their behavior has consequences that must be considered whenever they choose that behavior in the future. Life cannot succeed on any level when individuals consistently fail to think through the consequences of their behavior.

There are three types of behavior consequences: natural, logical, and artificial. Natural consequences are things like, if you don't water your plant it dies. If you forget to take out the trash, it smells. If you don't study you'll fail. Playing too hard makes you tired. Sleeping too little makes you cranky.

The most common mistake parents make with natural consequences is lecturing or moralizing. With the exception of yelling and other boundary violations, nothing turns children off more quickly than these two blocks to effective communication. (To test this almost universal truth, stop yourself in mid-lecture and ask your child to repeat back your last sentence.) Lecturing and moralizing are fine for broadcasting but they should not be confused with communication, which entails respectful exchange of information. The best way to help children learn natural consequences of behavior is to ask, with the *motivation* to *encourage*, "What do you think will happen if...", followed by, "Do you want that to happen?"

Natural emotional responses to behavior that children *must* learn include:

- Lying, cheating, and stealing reduce trust.
- Aggression creates fear or anger and reduces emotional connection.
- Hitting produces pain.

Logical consequences derive from behavior in ways that make sense but are not naturally occurring. They usually involve infractions of rules with the consequences known in advance. For instance, failure to pay bills on time incurs a surcharge. Smoking in a theater results in eviction. Most of our complaints about injustice rise from departure from logical consequences.

Some consequences we artificially attach to behavior. These tend to be inconsistent and punishing. For instance, the child in an earlier example who leaves his toys on the floor learns one consequence if his parent had a great day at work and quite another if his parent is depressed and irritable from the day's challenges. With artificial consequences, the behavior is less important than the mood and vigilance of the enforcer. Children learn less about regulating their own impulses than manipulating the emotions of others.

The trick in teaching children about behavior is to make an association of the consequences with the motivation, *before* the act. The great task of discipline is getting in front of, instead of lagging behind, our children's behavior.

The key, of course, is regulating your own motivations in the discipline of your children.

Checklist to Identify Your Motivation in Interactions with Your Children

Positive Approach (interest or enjoyment)	Negative Avoid (interest elsewhere)	Destructive Attack (anger/aggression)
<input type="checkbox"/> Connect <input type="checkbox"/> Protect <input type="checkbox"/> Nurture <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage <input type="checkbox"/> Influence/Guide <input type="checkbox"/> Set limits <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate/Cooperate <input type="checkbox"/> Request behavior change	<input type="checkbox"/> Ignore <input type="checkbox"/> Manipulate <input type="checkbox"/> Control <input type="checkbox"/> Withdraw	<input type="checkbox"/> Criticize <input type="checkbox"/> Reject <input type="checkbox"/> Demand <input type="checkbox"/> Coerce <input type="checkbox"/> Dominate <input type="checkbox"/> Threaten <input type="checkbox"/> Abuse (verbal or physical)

Is this motivation in your long-term best interests *and* that of the child? If not, reconnect to Core Value and change the motivation.

Does the child believe that your motivation is positive? If not, reconnect to Core Value and try again.

SESSION 5: *Power Struggles*

Power struggles happen when people of any age contend with one another to avoid painful states of powerlessness. Failing to internally regulate powerless feelings, they try to take power from each other by forcing submission. “Triumph” over the other provides temporary relief of powerlessness but at the price of resentment and hidden hostility.

Empowerment is a slow and gradual learning process that helps children develop the ability to stand on their own while participating in emotional connection with others.

The Secret of Avoiding Power Struggles

A mode of self is a way or style of thinking, feeling, and behaving. When in a certain mode of self, your brain chooses from a pre-set selection of thoughts, feelings, and behavior, based on past experience.

Every adult human being has **Weak Modes** of self as well as **Power Modes** of Self.

WEAK MODES	POWER MODES
Helpless Dependent Depressive Destructive	Competent Growth/Creative Healing/Nurturing Compassionate

In trying to settle disputes with your children, which modes of self do you want to activate? Of course you want Power Modes – you’ll just make things worse in a weak mode.

Now here’s the trick, which mode of self do you want to activate in your children? Of course you want them to be in Power Modes too, because things can only get worse if they stay in weak modes. Yet power struggle tactics, including all forms of anger and resentment, are designed to put children in weak modes. That is why things always deteriorate in power struggles.

To avoid power struggles, you have to think *empowerment*, which means putting your children and yourself in Power Modes.

Empowerment gives someone the right and the confidence to offer solutions to problems that respect the best interests of all involved. In other words, it activates Core Value and motivations to improve, appreciate, connect, and protect.

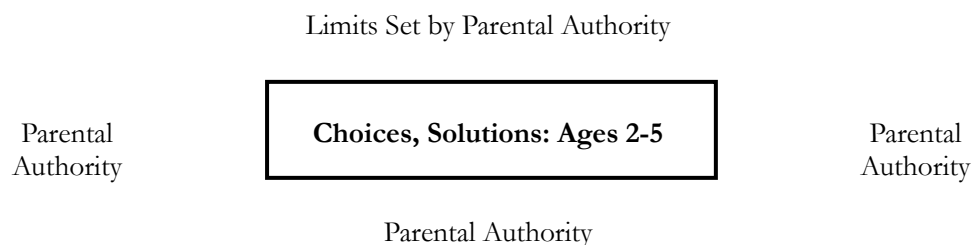
The trick in empowering children is to get them to come up with solutions that work for them *and* you. When *they* come up with the solutions, you avoid power struggles, resentment, and hostility. Most people, including children, like to *cooperate* but hate to *submit*.

The ultimate goals of empowerment are:

1. Teach the *Five R's* of Parenting (and successful living):
 - ◇ **Resourcefulness** (problem solving and creativity)
 - ◇ **Responsibility**
 - ◇ **Respect**
 - ◇ **Relationship investment** (respect for the emotions of other people)
 - ◇ **Regulation of impulses and emotions**
2. Channel the child's intelligence and creativity into solving the problem, *in consideration of other people's rights*, rather than opposing or resenting your solution
3. Teach negotiation skills
4. Model compassion
5. Teach morality (arbitrarily exerting power and control over others is wrong).
6. **Protect them from the negative influence of peers.** (Research shows that negative influence of peers is the biggest single factor leading to the failure and harm of children. When parents have good relationships with their children, peers have less negative influence.)

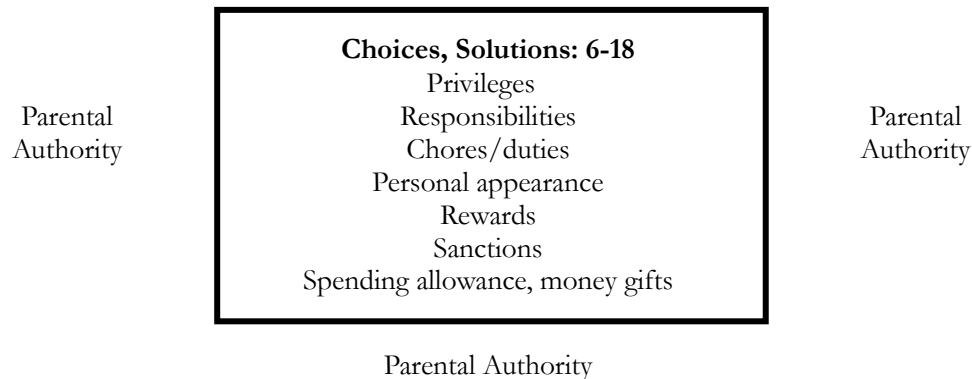
Making Choices *within* Natural, Legal & Social Limitations

Children develop self-esteem, problem-solving skills, and compassion when they make choices within clearly defined limits set by parents. Think of parental limits as a box that contains choices and solutions for children to make. With young children, the box is narrow. As they grow in problem-solving skill and respect for the rights of others, the box of choices and solutions grows larger.



The box below shows areas in which older children can make limited choices. Once again, the limits set by parents *widen* as the children mature and develop responsibility and respect for the rights of others. If they behave *responsibly*, the box *grows*. If they behave *irresponsibly*, the box *shrinks*. Thus children learn a most valuable lesson in life: responsibility goes hand-in-hand with power and privilege. Within this framework, they understand that *their* behavior – not your moods or “power trips” – entirely controls the amount of power and responsibility they enjoy.

Limits Set by Parental Authority



Negotiation/Cooperation

The most crucial skill for success in work, school, and relationships is the ability to negotiate and cooperate.

Cooperation (Teamwork):

- Willing (not necessarily *preferred*) participation in work, problem solving, or task-accomplishment
- Gives everyone equal respect, regardless of unequal gifts, talents, resources, etc.
- Acknowledges the equal rights of everyone
- Gives **freedom of choice**, *so long as the choice violates no agreements and encroaches on no one's boundaries.*

Negotiation:

- Is the attempt to bring about cooperative behavior
- Requires far more intelligence, skill, and responsibility than dominance or submission
- Can never be threatening, punishing, or shaming.

Setting up the Empowerment Model of Parenting

At first children may not trust the empowerment model. Older children may see it as another form of power struggle. To gain their trust, it is best to set up the model at the same time that you establish a **formal family meeting**. The meeting should be once week, at regular times, limited to 20 minutes.

Even if the children resist at first, keep the model in place for at least three weeks. By that time they should see that it works much better for them and for you.

Begin the meeting by reading the following. Each family member should read a bullet. Keep passing the agreement around until you are finished.

Empowerment Agreement

We hereby agree that our connection as a family is important and valuable to us. We care about each other and want the best for one another. We acknowledge that each individual in the family:

- Is a separate person, important, valuable, and lovable in his/her own right;
- Has the right to grow and develop fully and to realize his/her fullest potential;
- Has needs, desires, and preferences that will sometimes conflict with those of other members of the family;
- Has the right to come up with solutions to problems that consider the rights, needs, desires, and preferences of other family members and that fall within safety, health, and growth guidelines set by parents and the law;
- Agrees to negotiate respectfully with other members of the family, without resorting to the use of power, control, and violence.

Accordingly, we agree to:

- State our problems clearly and specifically, *without blame*;
- Try to think of more than one solution for each problem, considering the point of view of everyone involved;
- Discuss the possible effects of solutions;
- Find solutions that make everyone feel as good about themselves as possible;
- Implement agreements with sincere effort to make them work;
- Stay cool if agreements don't work at first;
- Give ourselves and each other permission to make mistakes with occasional feedback, but without shame-inducing criticism;
- Regularly reevaluate solutions to see how they're working;
- Criticize only behavior, never the person or personality;
- Make "I-statements," not "you-statements" about how we feel. Example: "I'm disappointed to hear this," not: "You make me furious;"
- Listen to each other *respectfully*, especially when we disagree;

- Never insult, call names, or make sarcastic remarks;
- Stick to the topic;
- Stay in the present and future – don't dredge up the past;
- Hold dialogues, not lectures;
- Try to answer each other, not withdraw or say, "I don't know," or "Do whatever you want;"
- Think realistically
 - don't think the worst right away, consider evidence
 - avoid "all or nothing" or "black and white," "never," and "always" thinking.

Signatures:

Everyone in the family should sign the agreement. Even two year-olds can make a crayon mark.

Solution-Finding Guide

Chores

Parents should come to the first regular weekly meeting with a list of all necessary chores. *Everyone* chooses equally from the chore list, allowing for differences in available time and special talents. (The two year-old can't change the oil or balance the checkbook; parents of teenagers can't wash the dishes if they have to go out to another job.) Family members must **negotiate** disagreements about choices.

With each item, the chooser must also indicate a sanction for failing to accomplish the chore.

In subsequent meetings, behavior problems that anyone in the family has should be aired.

Behavior problems (including problems that children might have with parents' behavior)

- Brain-storm solutions
 - Come up with as many as possible
 - Don't evaluate them during the brainstorming session and certainly don't dismiss them
 - Be creative, don't be afraid to suggest outlandish ideas, they sometimes work
- Decide the solution that is best for everybody, remembering that everybody's feelings are important
- Plan to implement the selected solution
 - Decide who will do what when where and how
 - Plan the consequence for compliance or non-compliance
 - Plan a time for evaluation of the implemented solution
- Implement the solution
- Evaluate the solution at the planned time.

SESSION 6: *Infants & Toddlers*

Your baby's experience of the world is almost entirely emotional. Virtually every sensation triggers small outbursts of positive and negative emotion.² Most of these emotional displays are transient and without significance. The exception is the distress cry, distinguished by intensity, contortion of muscles, down-turned mouth (like the Mask of Tragedy) reddened face, and closed or squinted eyes.

Remember that change stimulates emotion. If your baby reacts to abrupt changes negatively, make gradual changes whenever possible. For instance, some children feel exhilarated when parents fling open the drapes and allow the morning sun to drench the room. Others can tolerate only a gradual raising of the shade to slowly dissipate the shadows.

You cannot spoil an infant by answering distress cries. Research clearly shows that high parental responsiveness to distress cries in the first year of life leads to security and greater independence in subsequent years. Infants are learning two crucial emotional skills in their first year: to trust in their own **Core Value** and trust that loved ones will nurture them. Caring response to their distress is a great learning reinforcement, along with compassionate attention to expressions of interest and enjoyment.

While spontaneous expressions of affection are generally a good thing, these should not interfere with the child's interest focused somewhere else. Affection must never be intrusive. If the presence of parents consistently distracts infants from their own interest and enjoyment, they associate distraction or diminishment of interest/enjoyment with a need for parental comfort. This, in combination with the child's temperament, produces the fussy and demanding children our parents described as "spoiled." In contrast, responding to the distress cries of infants tells them that they don't have to worry about support for their acute needs. This secure knowledge frees them to explore their own interest and enjoyment, which gives parents opportunities to reinforce positive emotional investment.

Use the following table to circle the best description of your infant.

Activity level	Active, energetic	Takes a while to get going, but then active	Quiet
Distractibility	High interest, focus	Surface interest	Continual scanning
Persistence	Keeps trying, though in different ways if initial attempts are	Half-hearted initial efforts	Half-hearted subsequent efforts, quickly gives up

² The play of sensation can originate within the body (gas, nerve twitches, brief muscle spasms, tiny experiences of pleasure and discomfort) or outside it -- abrupt sounds, changes in light, temperature, or odor.

	unsuccessful		
New situations	Curious-enthusiastic	Cautious	Anxious
Intensity	Low arousal	Moderate	High arousal
Adaptability	Easy transitions (e.g., morning to nap time)	Transitions troublesome at first	Most transitions troublesome most of the time
Regularity	Predictable in habits, e.g., sleep, emotional reactions	Somewhat predictable	Unpredictable
Sensory threshold	Likes stimulation	Highly sensitive to initial stimulation, but gradually adapts	Hypersensitive, easily over-stimulated
Mood	Mostly positive	Mixed	Mostly negative

Physical needs, such as hunger, thirst, and diaper discomfort, trigger crying. However, infants **never cry *just to have the physical need met***. They also cry for attachment behavior that helps them regulate the emotions triggered by the physical need. In most cases, the largest part of their crying is for the emotional regulation provided by parental attachment behavior. Some brief expression of caring is necessary in meeting any emotional expression of the infant, positive and negative.

Problems with infants center almost exclusively on giving false meaning to temperamental characteristics, which parents tend to see as negative and as the result of poor parenting. **The true measure of parents is not the characteristics of the infant but parental acceptance of the characteristics.**

- Express appreciation and interest, through eye contact, cuddling, cooing, soothing, and hugging.

Attachment behavior is also the primary form of communication with infants. In addition to baby talk or "motherese," parents should talk in words to infants.

Eye contact is important to the emotional development of children but should not seem intrusive. The child should learn that pleasant eye contact is available during interactions with parents whenever he or she wants it. In general, boy newborns can tolerate less eye contact than girls. But boys *need* eye contact. Let your child's natural inclination to want to make eye contact guide you.

- Encourage exploration

At around nine months, infants enter an exploration stage that enables them to develop basic sensory-motor skills. They start crawling up a storm and getting into everything in sight. Less obvious but more important, exploration accelerates mental skills of cognitive discrimination – how to tell one thing from another by its properties, such as hard or soft, warm or cold, big or small. This facilitates the development of basic reasoning skills such as inference – if I pull this it will fall – and, eventually, deduction – all things fall if their balance and support are disturbed. In addition, they

learn basic skills of building – putting things on top of things – and even the rudiments of competitiveness when they crawl as if in a race.

It is not only normal but also desirable for children of nine months to four years old to explore their environments. Parents must "toddler proof" their houses for safety, with things like cabinet locks and outlet blocks. The best test for toddler proofing is to take a crawl through the house yourself and be sure that everything "pullable" and "grabable" is not dangerous or breakable.

Compassionate Parenting for Toddlers (age 2-5)

Your toddler's experience of the world continues to be almost entirely emotional. At this point in their development, children understand that parents and other children have different emotions and different agendas from theirs. For most of the "terrible twos" children play out this new awareness in a kind of negative identity. They don't know who they are, but they know what they're not, they're not whatever you want. Accordingly, the toddler's favorite words are "no" and "mine." Although it can try the patience of the best of parents, this is a natural stage of developing boundaries as children explore differences between themselves and the outside world.

Their new mobility and coordination brings a sense of empowerment and independence but also an increased awareness of their limitations and dependency, which heightens their frustration. The more adventuresome and desirous of exploration, the more frustrated. Boys tend to be more fearless than girls so experience more frustration and more negative and destructive motivations of discipline by parents. Toddlerhood may be the most frustrating period of our lives, followed closely by adolescence and being the parent of a toddler or adolescent.

Parents must understand that in this new desire to feel powerful their children are not trying to take power from them. Toddlers are in no way trying to feel more powerful than parents; they are merely trying to feel more powerful than they previously did. Temperamental contributions can greatly magnify or minimize the effects on parents of the amazing emotional growth spurt of toddlerhood.

Use the following table to circle the best description of your toddler's temperament.

Activity level	Active, energetic	Takes a while to get going, but then active	Quiet
Distractibility	High interest, focus	Surface interest	Continual scanning
Persistence	Keeps trying, though in different ways if initial attempts are unsuccessful	Half-hearted initial efforts	Half-hearted subsequent efforts, quickly gives up
New situations	Curious-enthusiastic	Cautious	Anxious
Intensity	Low arousal	Moderate	High arousal
Adaptability	Easy transitions (e.g., morning to nap time)	Transitions troublesome at first	Most transitions troublesome most of the time
Regularity	Predictable in habits, e.g., sleep, emotional	Somewhat predictable	Unpredictable

	reactions		
Sensory threshold	Likes stimulation	Highly sensitive to initial stimulation, but gradually adapts	Hypersensitive, easily over-stimulated
Mood	Mostly positive	Mixed	Mostly negative

- Understand their emotional motivations.

The primary motivations of toddlers are approach, explore, and learn. From these motivations children develop crucial intellectual skills to classify and discriminate. The toddler is **learning to learn**.

- Understand your emotional responses to them.

The frequent negative and destructive motivations that toddlers experience can easily cause parents to react with feelings of inadequacy, hurt, and anger. Parental self-regulation is perhaps most crucial during toddlerhood.

- Understand your own emotional motivations.

It is especially important for parents of toddlers to resist matching the negative and destructive motivations of their children in kind. Young children cannot easily distinguish between themselves and their behavior, in the face of the rejection they perceive in negative and destructive motivations of their parents' frustrated attempts at discipline. Nor can they tell specific behaviors from their behavior in general while disorganized by the rejection they perceive in parental discipline. In other words, if they consistently feel rejected by the harsh tone of a frustrated parent whenever they get into something they shouldn't, they associate the bad feelings about themselves not with the specific behavior but with exploration in general. Toddlers who feel inhibited in exploration will not learn as efficiently.

- Enjoy your toddler – they can be lots of fun to observe
- Express appreciation and interest, through eye contact, cuddling, cooing, soothing, and hugging.
- Teach emotional regulation

The amount of emotional vocabulary a toddler can learn is highly limited. Some children can begin to learn key words, such as "happy" and "hurt" at two and a half, while most develop a moderate emotional vocabulary at about three or three and a half. The Appendix of this book demonstrates how to teach emotional vocabulary to small children.

Model positive motivation. Change negative and destructive motivation.

Toddlers feel empowered when given choices. But only give two choices. “Do you want to wear the red hat or the blue hat?” works better than, “Put your hat on.” “Do you want peas or carrots for dinner?” is preferable to, “Eat your vegetables.”

Positive	Negative	Destructive
Approach (interest, enjoyment) Protect Nurture Encourage Cooperate Promote child's best interests through Influence/Guidance/ Limit-setting	Avoid Ignore Manipulate Control Withdraw	Criticize Reject Demand Dominate Coerce Threaten Attack (verbally or physically)

- Children respond primarily to the motivations of their parents, not to what we do or say.
- Negative and destructive motivations almost invariably produce negative and destructive motivations in them.
- Although positive motivation is not always successful, negative motivation always fails.
- **We must not match negative and destructive motivations in kind. Doing so guarantees defiance and escalation of negative emotions or compliance with hidden resentment and accumulating hostility.**

➤ Teach them the power of compassion.

Toddlers can begin to learn the rudiments of compassion. Begin by teaching them that other people have emotional experience different from theirs. You can introduce the concept of "My Good Heart" to toddlers to give them a sense of their Core Value.

"I like it when you hug me. How does that make your Good Heart feel?"

"I really like it when you listen to me. How does that make your Good Heart feel?"

"Do you want to hurt the dog? Think of your Good Heart."

"Do you want to make the cat afraid? What will that do for your Good Heart?"

➤ Discipline

Most of the emotional problems of toddlers come from precipitous drops from interest into disappointment. Anger or anxiety fills the internal void. *Shifting interest* from an undesired area into an okay one is the key emotional skill for them to learn. This task is easier if parents learn to anticipate times of heightened stimulation, such as transitions, shopping, and visits with adults, especially when other young children are present. Prepare the child with a choice of two things as backup interest

catchers. Before you go into a store, designate some interesting activity to which the child can look forward when you leave the store or when you get back home.

Instructions to young children should be short, clear, and in a slightly lower tone of voice than normal for you. Children of all ages lack adult proficiency at auditory processing. Much of the frustration of parents who feel their children are not listening to them comes from this disparity in processing spoken words. Yelling, of course, raises the anxiety level and makes it even harder for children to register what you mean. To learn if your children register what you say, try your usual form of giving instructions and then ask them to repeat back to you what you have just said.

It is always best to use one or two additional sensory modalities when giving them instructions. Stoop to their eye level, make respectful eye contact, gently touch their hands or arms, and say, "I need you to pick up your toys right now. Could you please repeat back to me what I asked you to do?" You will have a much higher chance of getting your instructions repeated back, and in getting cooperative behavior.

It is not only normal but also desirable for toddlers to explore their environments. Parents must "toddler proof" their houses for safety, with things like cabinet locks and outlet blocks. The best test for toddler proofing is to take a crawl through the house yourself and be sure that everything "pullable" and "grabable" is neither dangerous nor breakable.

As children approach the end of toddlerhood, compassionate parents begin giving fewer instructions. Rather, they help children come up with solutions. When children make mistakes, whine, or complain, parents compassionately ask, "What can you do to make it better for yourself?"

Temper Tantrums

The bane of parents' existence, temper tantrums are normal from about 20 months to three or three and a half years. Temper tantrums are rarely expressions of willful, spoiled, or poorly behaved children. They are more often your child's response to torrents of confusion and utter powerlessness. The developmental task children gradually learn is to re-empower themselves by reestablishing interest, enjoyment, and affiliation.

Anticipation of high-risk times, e.g., high stimulation, excitability, physical discomfort, and any precipitous blocking of interest or enjoyment, helps parents to head off the worst of temper tantrums. To get an idea of what challenges grocery stores present to toddlers, try walking around the aisles that attract children, looking on the eye level of toddlers. There you will find the brightest colors, most exciting shapes, and messages that scream out to the child to "ask mom for me!" For instance, on the cereal aisle at adult eye level we find high-fiber, low-fat, non-sugared, vitamin enriched foods like Special K, Wheaties, and corn flakes. On the eye level of the toddler, we see Count Chocola, Frankenberry, and miniature chocolate chip cookies. Very smart people became rich by spending many hundreds of hours in developing ways to over-stimulate your little child.

While we can develop skill to anticipate and reduce the higher risks of temper tantrums, no parent can eliminate them altogether. Once a temper tantrum begins, safety is paramount. Be sure there is nothing to grab or throw. If children seem inclined to bang their heads, pick them up. If their emotional display is disturbing to other people in a public place, carry them to a more private space. Believe it or not, a public emotional display makes it harder for the child to re-empower, as if, on some level, they are embarrassed by their powerlessness.

In a calm time after the temper tantrum – bedtime is good – commiserate with the child for being upset. For children with verbal skills, review the word "disappointed." (See "Teaching Emotional Vocabulary to Children" in the Appendix.) Ask what the child might have done to make it better.

Language Acquisition

Talk and read to your children as often as possible. Whenever you give them an object, name it. However, most children acquire language from other children. Socializing your child with peers is the most important thing you can do to help them acquire language.

Chores

A more thorough discussion of chores follows in the next section. But it is never too early to start a child with chores. Even a two year old will benefit from a "chore" like smoothing the bed with his or her hand after you make it. This teaches the child responsibility and gives them a sense of achievement and mastery.

While there are many poor toys on the market, one line that is wonderful for toddlers includes things like pretend vacuum cleaners and household appliances. Have your child run the toy vacuum cleaner to "brighten up" after you have cleaned the rug and you will start a habit that can last through adolescence.

A New Sibling

The first trauma in the lives of many children is getting a new brother and sister. This is especially difficult during toddlerhood when children are likely to associate their newly emerging negativity toward their parents with the "punishment" of getting a new arrival. Preparing a young child for a sibling is so important that whole books are written on it. The best for parents in my view is, *Siblings without Rivalry: How to Help Your Children Live Together So You Can Live Too* by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish.

SESSION 7: Compassionate Parenting for Children 6-12

Children in this stage of development learn to test and modify their emotions and motivations with inferences about reality, their own capacities, and what others expect of them. Their perceptions of the emotional experience of others set limits on their own motivations. They are learning to reason about how they react to others and how others react to them. It is a period of hyper focus on the behavior of peers that culminates in adolescence.

Use the following table to circle the best description of your child.

Activity level	Active, energetic	Takes a while to get going, but then active	Quiet
Distractibility	High interest, focus	Surface interest	Continual scanning
Persistence	Keeps trying, though in different ways if initial attempts are unsuccessful	Half-hearted initial efforts	Half-hearted subsequent efforts, quickly gives up
New situations	Curious-enthusiastic	Cautious	Anxious
Intensity	Low arousal	Moderate	High arousal
Adaptability	Easy transitions (e.g., morning to nap time)	Transitions troublesome at first	Most transitions troublesome most of the time
Regularity	Predictable in habits, e.g., sleep, emotional reactions	Somewhat predictable	Unpredictable
Sensory threshold	Likes stimulation	Highly sensitive to initial stimulation, but gradually adapts	Hypersensitive, easily over-stimulated
Mood	Mostly positive	Mixed	Mostly negative

- Help them internalize encouragement to grow and learn.
- Help them use their awareness and intelligence for growth and development.
- Teach them emotional regulation.

By now children should have a pretty good emotional vocabulary. They are ready to begin learning HEALS. You can teach it to them and you can order a practice audio tape that will help them internalize this invaluable technique of emotional regulation.

The *My Good Heart* drawing book companion to *Compassionate Parenting* helps them develop Core Value.

When your child is distressed, angry, or hurt, gently say, "Remember your 'Good Heart.' Your Core Value is still okay."

- Help them behave in their short *and* long term best interests.
- Help them develop self-discipline.

Model positive motivation. Change negative and destructive motivation.

Positive	Negative	Destructive
Approach (interest, enjoyment) Protect Nurture Encourage Cooperate Promote child's best interests through Influence/Guidance/ Limit-setting	Avoid Ignore Manipulate Control Withdraw	Criticize Reject Demand Dominate Coerce Threaten Attack (verbally or physically)

- Children respond primarily to the motivations of their parents, not to what we do or say.
- Negative and destructive motivations almost invariably produce negative and destructive motivations in them.
- Although positive motivation is not always successful, negative motivation always fails.
- **We must not match negative and destructive motivations in kind. Doing so guarantees defiance and escalation of negative emotions or compliance with hidden resentment and accumulating hostility.**

Give your children the handouts, "My Best Interests" and "Three Questions on the Power of Emotional Intelligence" on the next page.

My Best Interests

Behaving in my "best interests" means doing what will most likely prove best for me. Behaving in my **short-term** best interests means doing what I prefer to do right now.

My long-term best interests are met by doing whatever helps me:

- Grow and stay healthy;
- Do things I'm **proud** of;
- Do whatever I do better than the last time I did it.

How do I prefer to invest my interest and enjoyment right now?

- Playing outside
- Cooperating (doing chores and other things expected of me)
- Watching TV
- Learning about myself and my emotions
- Doing homework
- Playing computer games
- Learning about other people and their emotions
- Other _____

Three Questions on Power and Emotional Intelligence

1. Is it in my long-term best interest to do my preference right now or later?
2. How much time do I need to spend on my long-term best interest right now in order to get my preference later?
3. If I do my preference right now, how much time will I need to spend on my long-term best interest later?

- Give them affection

Don't slack off giving affection because your child is getting bigger. Even if they begin to fidget in your hugs or complain about kissing you good night, they really appreciate the caring that motivates your efforts. Continue to make eye contact, cuddle, and give massages whenever they can tolerate it. And don't take it personally if their tolerance wanes.

- Allow them to explore different aspects of themselves.

Note: Children enter the developmental phase of adolescence at different rates. If your child is over 10, be sure to read the next section.

SESSION 8: *Compassionate Parenting for Ages 13-18*

The most difficult and dangerous time in most people's lives is adolescence. Monumental physical, psychological, and social changes overtake most children in this often-turbulent transition to adulthood. While their thought processes are much advanced from earlier stages of childhood, the emotional maturity of adolescents actually regresses and takes on the added delight of frequent mood swings.

Only a small part of this distortion of emotions and mood is due to the flood of hormones adding intensity to emotional experience. The real culprit is massive uncertainty that produces an accelerated level of self-consciousness. Adolescents continually question their own competencies in the world and their relationships to peers. Consider the effects of having to continually wonder, "Who am I? What will I do with my life? Where will I go to school? Where will I live? Who will I love? How successful will I be? What kind of adult will I be?"

Their heightened self-consciousness forces a re-angling of the self to fit in with peers. Focusing exclusively on that which peers see of them, they suffer a "looking glass self" and external regulation of self-esteem. All they are is what they see in the mirror and what they hear about themselves from peers. The unrelenting focus on the superficial only creates more anxiety, guilt, shame, and self-doubt, which they try to remedy with superficial changes. This makes them susceptible to radical alterations in their appearance. If they look different, they might like themselves more.

The mood swings of adolescents reflect vacillations in their estimates of themselves, as they veer from pride to shame about their appearance, size, strength, sexuality, desire to be seen or to escape notice, sociability, competition (winner/loser) abilities, and skills.

The heavy emphasis on the superficial separates teens from their Core Value. Whenever anyone remains separated from Core Value, the sense of self seems inauthentic. This inconsistent, "false-self" syndrome compels them toward a negative identity that expresses itself as opposition to parents ("I don't know who I am but I know who I'm not, I'm not whatever you want,") and as a distorted identity with peers: "I'll be whatever you want."

Teenagers become far more aware of their emotional and physical dependency even as their need for greater independence intensifies. It is common to hear adolescents say (or at least mumble) to their parents, "I want you out of my life, I don't even want to talk to you or see your face. But take me to the dance." Pulling away from parents invokes guilt for failing to sustain interest, compassion, trust, and love. They tend to blame the guilt on their parents. Blame produces anger and resentment, resulting in obnoxious behavior. In response to the obnoxious behavior, parents often push them further away, stimulating the shame of rejection, which produces still more obnoxious behavior.

Emotions and the Depth of Self

To understand how adolescents get stuck in the anxiety-guilt-shame-obnoxious behavior trap, consider how humans acquire depth to the sense of self. Infants come into the world with temperaments that produce highly varying levels of:

- Anxiety
- Interest/Enjoyment (Shame occurs with an abrupt cut off of interest/enjoyment)
- Fear
- Core Value (converts negative experience into positive, producing comfort, soothing, euphoria, and motivation to value).

Accumulating life experience, centered on maintaining attachment bonds and on environmental mastery/competence, gouges out an emotional depth of self. Anxiety forms the top level of the Emotional Depth Chart. A combination of fear plus guilt or shame, anxiety serves as a generalized alarm system tripped by change or possible change. Anxiety is necessary for survival in helping us recognize possible danger. But in many people, the anxiety alarm is switched to the "on" position most of the time. This continual arousal leaves little room before raging fear takes over whenever actual danger or failure looms over the horizon.

The fear component of anxiety comes from the perception, often very vague, that something bad will happen. The guilt component rises from the perception of personal responsibility for the bad thing, especially if it causes or may cause hurt or disappointment in others. The shame component of anxiety comes from a perceived inability to cope with the bad that may happen. The corrective motivation of anxiety tells us to learn more, go beneath the surface for deeper understanding, and to widen coping capacities. If we follow that motivation, the anxiety gets better, if we do not, it worsens.

Guilt, the second layer of the Emotional Depth Chart, is a bad feeling about the self for doing something that violates trust or that hurts others. It occurs automatically with reductions of interest, trust, compassion, and love for attachment figures. Its corrective motivation is to reinstate interest, trust, compassion, and love. If we follow that motivation, the guilt goes away; if we do not, it gets worse.

Shame occupies the third level of the Emotional Depth Chart, coming from perceived failure or rejection, which causes loss of value for the self due to perceived loss of value or esteem from others. The corrective motivation of shame is to increase value of the self and others, which can only occur by going deeper within the self to access Core Value. If we follow that motivation, the shame ameliorates; if we do not, it gets worse.

On the fourth level of the Emotional Depth Chart lies the primal human fear of involuntary isolation, deprivation, and annihilation. This fear is so intense that it drives us naturally to learn and understand more, to sharpen skills, and build affiliations. If these prove insufficient, the corrective motivation pulls us to the deepest level of self for the ultimate value that links us to a wider universe, if not divinity, and to the perception of ultimate immortality.

At the deepest level of self, we find our Core Value. Here the pain and distress of the top levels changes to positive experience. The only motivation of Core Value is to heal, correct, improve, and value.

Dynamics

When any level of the Emotional Depth Chart worsens, the brain subverts the natural corrective motivation of the experience in favor of immediate reduction of discomfort or pain through various avoidance or defensive strategies, such as blame, anger, resentment, drinking, affairs, workaholism, and other compulsive behaviors.

Avoidance and defensive strategies inevitably worsen guilt by further reducing investments of interest, trust, compassion, and love. They worsen shame by increasing the possibility of failure and rejection. They worsen fear by reinforcing the perceived *inability* to heal, correct, improve, or value, which seems to require the defensive and avoidance adjustments.

The depth of the respective levels of anxiety, guilt, shame, and fear determines how in touch or out of touch with Core Value we remain over the course of our lives.

Emotional Depth Chart

Emotion	Interpretation Explanation	Negative Motivation: reduce the pain	Numbing and Side-tracking	Corrective Motivation: heal, correct, improve, value
Anxiety	Possible loss, rejection, failure, exposure, inability to cope, self-doubt	Scan, avoid, distract, outrun the threats, seek external validation (these only reinforce fear of loss, rejection, failure, exposure, inability to cope and self-doubt, creating an inauthentic sense of self incapable of internal validation)	Blame, anger, denial, shut down, drinking, drugging, workaholism, infatuation	Learn more, understand more, go beneath the surface
Guilt	Failure to emotionally connect, protect, nurture, provide, value	Self-punishment, punishment of those who stimulate the guilt or who do not relieve it with absolution	Blame, anger, denial, shut down, drinking, drugging, workaholism, infatuation	Reconnect emotionally, protect, nurture, provide, value and/or go deeper
Shame	Inadequate, unworthy, unfit	Withdraw, sever bonds, give up, despair, loss of will	Blame, anger, denial, shut down, drinking, drugging, workaholism, infatuation	Reinforce value apart from possession, go deeper
Fear of isolation,	Disaster, tragedy, catastrophe	Embrace (increase tolerance of) isolation, deprivation, pain	Blame, anger, denial, shut down, drinking,	Learn more, Understand, go deeper

deprivation, annihilation			drugging, workaholism, infatuation	
Core Value	A state of grace; awareness of personal value, with motivation to value, love, invest positive emotions	None	None	Value Heal Correct Improve

Anxiety, guilt and shame block Core Value and make it virtually impossible to choose behavior in one's long-term advantage. Getting stuck on any level above Core Value impairs the ability to convert negative experience into positive, to self-soothe, and to value, adding a measure of compulsion to most behaviors. Young children can get stuck on the top two levels of anxiety and guilt. Adolescents can include the third level of shame. Adults can get stuck on any level, although males are more likely to confront the fear level by seeking isolation, deprivation, or high-risk behaviors.

Use the following table to circle the best description of your adolescent.

Activity level	Active, energetic	Takes a while to get going, but then active	Quiet
Distractibility	High interest, focus	Surface interest	Continual scanning
Persistence	Keeps trying, though in different ways if initial attempts are unsuccessful	Half-hearted initial efforts	Half-hearted subsequent efforts, quickly gives up
New situations	Curious-enthusiastic	Cautious	Anxious
Intensity	Low arousal	Moderate	High arousal
Adaptability	Easy transitions (e.g., morning to nap time)	Transitions troublesome at first	Most transitions troublesome most of the time
Regularity	Predictable in habits, e.g., sleep, emotional reactions	Somewhat predictable	Unpredictable
Sensory threshold	Likes stimulation	Highly sensitive to initial stimulation, but gradually adapts	Hypersensitive, easily over-stimulated
Mood	Mostly positive	Mixed	Mostly negative

- Understand their emotional motivations.
- Understand your emotional responses to them.

Why isn't what I do for them enough?

- Understand your own emotional motivations.

Realize your own Core Value and help them realize their own. Help them understand that their Core Value increases as they recognize that of others.

- Enjoy them
- Help them internalize encouragement to grow and learn.
- Help them use their awareness and intelligence for growth and development.
- Teach them emotional regulation.

Model positive motivation. Change negative and destructive motivation.

Positive	Negative	Destructive
Approach (interest, enjoyment) Protect Nurture Encourage Cooperate Promote child's best interests through Influence/Guidance/ Limit-setting	Avoid Ignore Manipulate Control Withdraw	Criticize Reject Demand Dominate Coerce Threaten Attack (verbally or physically)

- Children respond primarily to the motivations of their parents, not to what we do or say.
 - Negative and destructive motivations almost invariably produce negative and destructive motivations in them.
 - Although positive motivation is not always successful, negative motivation always fails.
 - **We must not match negative and destructive motivations in kind. Doing so guarantees defiance and escalation of negative emotions or compliance with hidden resentment and accumulating hostility.**
- Help them behave in their short *and* long term best interests.
 - Help them develop self-discipline.

Give your teenagers "Power and Emotional Intelligence" in the Appendix.

- Give Affection
- Express appreciation and interest, through eye contact, cuddling, cooing, soothing, and hugging.
- Model affection with other adults.
- Allow them to be themselves
 - Allow them to explore different aspects of themselves.
 - Allow them to develop their fullest potential as individual human beings.

Teenagers and the False Idol of Trust

Through no fault of their own, teens experience compelling emotions that pull them away from attachment to their parents. The developmental stage of adolescence *requires* separation from the attachment bond of childhood.

Not coincidentally, teenagers suffer extreme doubts about their suitability for attachment relationships. They particularly doubt whether they can maintain interest, compassion, trust, and love and whether they are worthy of these emotional gifts from others.

The resulting guilt, shame, and abandonment/engulfment anxiety have little chance of positive resolution when attachment only reinforces fear and loathing of the chronic powerless states of childhood. Their most accessible form of self-empowerment, then, centers on anger, resentment, avoidance, and rebellion.

An overload of guilt, shame, and abandonment/engulfment anxiety disorganizes the underdeveloped adolescent self, making it much less able to regulate impulses.

When self-respect is low, consistent respect for others seems impossible. The resulting disrespectful behavior toward parents produces still more guilt, shame, and abandonment/engulfment anxiety, made only worse when beleaguered parents react with derision and rejection.

Given this searing ambivalence about attachment, it is really unfair to hold adolescents to standards of trust that we would expect from loved ones at most other stages of development. Raising trust as an issue merely increases their shame and lessens their capacity for impulse control.

A more viable strategy is to de-emphasize issues of attachment trust. Aim instead for the positive motivation of cooperation. Attachment interactions can then be framed as proving grounds to develop skills useful in the social world, which is of far more interest to them anyway.

Any motivation to increase power seems irresistible to adolescents. *Responsibility* should be framed as the primary source of power. The more responsibility one assumes, the more power one achieves. Generally speaking, the responsible adolescent has enormous power to *control* the amount of hassle, resentment, bitterness, and sanctions they experience.

To help teenagers adapt to a more pro-social form of self-empowerment, ask them to solve problems (choose courses of action, as well as sanctions for deviation from chosen courses) *as if*

they were the parent (or teacher or school administrator). This helps instill the most important lesson they must learn: to think through the consequences of behavior in relation to the self and others.

“What would you do if you were me?”

Remember also that children of any age, but especially adolescents, will be manipulative. Manipulation is less a character trait than an adaptation to a power imbalance. When power is concentrated at the top of a system, in a family, social, or business organization, there are two apparent ways that lower-ranking members can achieve extra reward, status, and self-respect:

- lord over those below (downward comparison);
- manipulate (or subvert) those on top.

Of course, the hierarchical power system requires oppression and appeasement to maintain itself. Even when successful, the system is loaded with inherent resentment and hostility for the apparently arbitrary distribution of power and resources.

"All right," you say, "we accept that manipulation is the natural result of a hierarchical power structure, but we still don't want children to be manipulative."

The trick is to discourage manipulation *without* inhibiting resourcefulness, initiative, and creativity.

A viable rule is: Never punish children for attempts at manipulation (so long as no lies are told or physical harm done), but never let them get away with manipulating. Parental guidance can take the form of: “Nice try, but you’re going to have to solve this problem, not dance around it.”

Responsibility and Power

In successful families and organizations, power is clearly a function of responsibility. The more responsibility the parties assume, the more power they enjoy. **Power is exerted over others only to carry out responsibility.**

For instance, parents are responsible for the safety, health, growth, and education of their children. Their power is appropriately used in those circumstances primarily as a vehicle for developing more responsibility in their children, i.e., *empowering* them. The more power one enjoys, the more responsibility that person bears for empowerment of those with less power.

Responsibilities	Power
safety, health, growth, education	make decisions about preferences
consider consequences of behavior	equal input on allocation of resources
respect everyone	expect that requests will be considered respectfully
negotiate/cooperate	

When there are lapses in trust, some formula that is clear to you and to the child help to rebuild trust. The Plan for Increasing Trust on the following page can help.

Plan for Increasing Trust

Think of the level of trust you feel for your child right now. Indicate what you will need to see in your own emotions and behavior and in the emotions and behavior of your child to increase trust to the next level. That is, what will you need to feel and do and what will he/she need to do and feel to get to the next level?

Percentage of Trust	I will	He/She Will
10%	<p>Feel:</p> <p>Do:</p>	<p>Feel:</p> <p>Do:</p>
20%	<p>Feel:</p> <p>Do:</p>	<p>Feel:</p> <p>Do:</p>
30%	<p>Feel:</p> <p>Do:</p>	<p>Feel:</p> <p>Do:</p>
50%	<p>Feel:</p> <p>Do:</p>	<p>Feel:</p> <p>Do:</p>

2.	
Health/Growth: 1. 2.	
Education: 1. 2.	
Effects on others: 1. 2.	

With the power equation (power = responsibility) firmly in place, teenagers are relieved of the unfair burden of trust to sustain an attachment bond from which nature relentlessly pulls them. When finally assured that they have a sense of self that not only withstands but flourishes in an atmosphere of attachment equality, they will again become worthy of trust. Reinvestment in attachment bonds with parents typically occurs in early adulthood, provided that the separation of adolescence is not an ongoing trauma heaped with guilt and shame and ensuing anger and resentment. The real issue of trust between parents and adolescents is that they can pass through these turbulent waters with their attachment bonds intact and ready for the gradual reinstatement of trust. Most do. But we can all make it less painful, without the false idol of trust rowing against a swift stream of self-doubt and hormones.

Homework

DUE SESSION 4

NAME

HEALS™ LOG

I have rehearsed **HEALS™** _____ times this week (minimum 72 times). **HEALS™** requires *practice to make it automatic and to get its full healing benefit.*

Write out the steps of **HEALS™**:

H-

E-

A-

L-

S-

I hurt the feelings of my children this week _____ (YES/No).

If no, congratulate yourself! If yes, how many times? _____

I hurt the body of my children this week _____ (YES/No).

If no, congratulate yourself! If yes, describe what you did:

Power Log

This week I felt:

• Irritable	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Grouchy	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Annoyed	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Impatient	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Angry in traffic	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like blaming someone	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like making other people do things	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like getting revenge	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like hurting someone	A lot	Some	Hardly	None

What always **motivates** my anger, attitude, anxiety, irritability, grouchiness, impatience, restlessness, impulse to blame, hurt, or desire to get revenge?

Someone else's behavior

my core hurt

the situation

What can I do to make it *better*?

Get back at them

Do HEALS™

Hope it will pass

What always motivates other people's attitudes, anger, anxiety, irritability, grouchiness, impatience, and restlessness or impulse to blame, hurt, or get revenge?

Someone else's behavior

their core hurts

the situation

What can I do to make it better?

Get back at them

Do HEALS™

Hope it will pass

Self-Concept (write out)

"I believe in my Core Value. I want to act in my long term and short term best interests."

Self-Esteem (write out)

"I accept myself, even if my behavior needs to change."

This week I felt the power to:

• Regulate anger, anxiety, attitudes, resentment	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Choose behaviors in short <i>and</i> long term best interest	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Be flexible (true to myself while adapting to others)	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Feel self-compassion (go deeper to reconnect to Core Value)	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Feel compassion for others (go deeper to validate their Core Value)	A lot	Some	Hardly	None

When someone ignores, offends, or disrespects me, it is becoming easy for me to:

• Acknowledge my deepest core hurt and reconnect to my Core Value, regardless of what he/she says or does.	Very true	True	Not Sure	Can't do it
• Sympathize with the core hurt that motivated him/her.	Very true	True	Not Sure	Can't do it
• Attempt to solve problem in everyone's best interest.	Very true	True	Not Sure	Can't do it

DUE SESSION 4**NAME****Perspective-Taking in Disputes**

Describe, in as much detail as possible, the perspective or **point of view of your child** in a recent argument. (In describing it, do not **edit** it or **comment** on it, simply relate it *the way he/she would, if they could.*)

What was his/her solution to this problem?

Was he/she experiencing a symptom or defense (anger, anxiety, obsessions, depression, manipulation, controlling behavior, etc.)?

Which was the deepest of the **core hurt** driving the child's behavior?

Did he or she feel understood?

How would the child describe you at that moment if he or she could (what did your behavior seem like to him or her?)

Did you feel understood by him (her)?

What was your perspective in the same dispute?

What solution to this problem would you suggest now?

DUE SESSION 5

NAME

HEALS™ LOG

I have rehearsed **HEALS™** _____ times this week (minimum 72 times). **HEALS™** requires *practice* to make it automatic and to get its full healing benefit.

Write out the steps of **HEALS™**:

H-
E-
A-
L-
S-

I hurt the feelings of my significant other or children this week _____ (YES/No).
If no, congratulate yourself! If yes, how many times? _____

I hurt the body of my significant other or children this week _____ (YES/No).
If no, congratulate yourself! If yes, describe what you did:

Power Log

This week I felt:

• Irritable	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Grouchy	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Annoyed	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Impatient	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Angry in traffic	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like blaming someone	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like making other people do things	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like getting revenge	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like hurting someone	A lot	Some	Hardly	None

What always **motivates** my anger, attitude, anxiety, irritability, grouchiness, impatience, restlessness, impulse to blame, hurt, or desire to get revenge?

Someone else's behavior

my core hurt

the situation

What can I do to make it *better*?

Get back at them

Do HEALS™

Hope it will pass

What always motivates other people's attitudes, anger, anxiety, irritability, grouchiness, impatience, and restlessness or impulse to blame, hurt, or get revenge?

Someone else's behavior

their core hurts

the situation

What can I do to make it better?

Get back at them

Do HEALS™

Hope it will pass

Self-Concept (write out)

"I believe in my Core Value. I want to act in my long term and short term best interests."

Self-Esteem (write out)

"I accept myself, even if my behavior needs to change."

This week I felt the power to:

• Regulate anger, anxiety, attitudes, resentment	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Choose behaviors in short <i>and</i> long term best interest	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Be flexible (true to myself while adapting to others)	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Feel self-compassion (go deeper to reconnect to Core Value)	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Feel compassion for others (go deeper to validate their Core Value)	A lot	Some	Hardly	None

When someone ignores, offends, or disrespects me, it is becoming easy for me to:

• Acknowledge my deepest core hurt and reconnect to my Core Value, regardless of what he/she says or does.	Very true	True	Not Sure	Can't do it
• Sympathize with the core hurt that motivated him/her.	Very true	True	Not Sure	Can't do it
• Attempt to solve problem in everyone's best interest.	Very true	True	Not Sure	Can't do it

DUE SESSION 6

NAME

HEALS™ LOG

I have rehearsed **HEALS™** _____ times this week (minimum 72 times). **HEALS™** requires *practice* to make it automatic and to get its full healing benefit.

Write out the steps of **HEALS™**:

H-
E-
A-
L-
S-

I hurt the feelings of my significant other or children this week _____ (YES/No).

If no, congratulate yourself! If yes, how many times? _____

I hurt the body of my significant other or children this week _____ (YES/No).

If no, congratulate yourself! If yes, describe what you did:

Power Log

This week I felt:

• Irritable	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Grouchy	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Annoyed	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Impatient	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Angry in traffic	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like blaming someone	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like making other people do things	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like getting revenge	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like hurting someone	A lot	Some	Hardly	None

What always **motivates** my anger, attitude, anxiety, irritability, grouchiness, impatience, restlessness, impulse to blame, hurt, or desire to get revenge?

Someone else's behavior

my core hurt

the situation

What can I do to make it *better*?

Get back at them

Do HEALS™

Hope it will pass

What always motivates other people's attitudes, anger, anxiety, irritability, grouchiness, impatience, and restlessness or impulse to blame, hurt, or get revenge?

Someone else's behavior

their core hurts

the situation

What can I do to make it better?

Get back at them

Do HEALS™

Hope it will pass

Self-Concept (write out)

"I believe in my Core Value. I want to act in my long term and short term best interests."

Self-Esteem (write out)

"I accept myself, even if my behavior needs to change."

This week I felt the power to:

• Regulate anger, anxiety, attitudes, resentment	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Choose behaviors in short <i>and</i> long term best interest	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Be flexible (true to myself while adapting to others)	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Feel self-compassion (go deeper to reconnect to Core Value)	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Feel compassion for others (go deeper to validate their Core Value)	A lot	Some	Hardly	None

When someone ignores, offends, or disrespects me, it is becoming easy for me to:

• Acknowledge my deepest core hurt and reconnect to my Core Value, regardless of what he/she says or does.	Very true	True	Not Sure	Can't do it
• Sympathize with the core hurt that motivated him/her.	Very true	True	Not Sure	Can't do it
• Attempt to solve problem in everyone's best interest.	Very true	True	Not Sure	Can't do it

DUE SESSION 6

NAME

Answer the following if you have or expect one day to care for an infant

List how you will include brief moments (sometimes just a second or two) of appreciation and relaxation in:

Changing:

Feeding:

Dressing:

Bathing:

Describe options for your daily time of uninterrupted enjoyment activity (one minute for each month of your child up to 10 minutes):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List the major ways your infant is important to you:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List the major ways you are important to your infant:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List how you can respect the individuality of your infant:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List what **interests** you about your infant.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List what other things *could* interest you about him or her.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

DUE SESSION 6

NAME

List how you will include brief moments (just a second or two) of appreciation and relaxation in:

Observing your toddler at play:

Meals:

Dressing:

Bathing:

Reading to him or her:

Describe options for your daily time of uninterrupted enjoyment activity (one minute for each month of your child up to 10 minutes):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List the primary ways your child is important to you:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List the primary ways you are important to your child:

- 1.
- 2.

3.

4.

5.

List how you can respect the individuality of your toddler:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

List what interests you about your child.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

9.
10.

List what other things *could* interest you about him or her.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

What keeps you from developing these interests?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

DUE SESSION 7

NAME

HEALS™ LOG

I have rehearsed **HEALS™** _____ times this week (minimum 72 times). **HEALS™** requires *practice* to make it automatic and to get its full healing benefit.

Write out the steps of **HEALS™**:

H-
E-
A-
L-
S-

I hurt the feelings of my significant other or children this week _____ (YES/No).
If no, congratulate yourself! If yes, how many times? _____

I hurt the body of my significant other or children this week _____ (YES/No).
If no, congratulate yourself! If yes, describe what you did:

Power Log

This week I felt:

• Irritable	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Grouchy	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Annoyed	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Impatient	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Angry in traffic	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like blaming someone	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like making other people do things	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like getting revenge	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like hurting someone	A lot	Some	Hardly	None

What always **motivates** my anger, attitude, anxiety, irritability, grouchiness, impatience, restlessness, impulse to blame, hurt, or desire to get revenge?

Someone else's behavior

my core hurt

the situation

What can I do to make it *better*?

Get back at them

Do HEALS™

Hope it will pass

What always motivates other people's attitudes, anger, anxiety, irritability, grouchiness, impatience, and restlessness or impulse to blame, hurt, or get revenge?

Someone else's behavior

their core hurts

the situation

What can I do to make it better?

Get back at them

Do HEALS™

Hope it will pass

Self-Concept (write out)

"I believe in my Core Value. I want to act in my long term and short term best interests."

Self-Esteem (write out)

"I accept myself, even if my behavior needs to change."

This week I felt the power to:

• Regulate anger, anxiety, attitudes, resentment	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Choose behaviors in short <i>and</i> long term best interest	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Be flexible (true to myself while adapting to others)	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Feel self-compassion (go deeper to reconnect to Core Value)	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Feel compassion for others (go deeper to validate their Core Value)	A lot	Some	Hardly	None

When someone ignores, offends, or disrespects me, it is becoming easy for me to:

• Acknowledge my deepest core hurt and reconnect to my Core Value, regardless of what he/she says or does.	Very true	True	Not Sure	Can't do it
• Sympathize with the core hurt that motivated him/her.	Very true	True	Not Sure	Can't do it
• Attempt to solve problem in everyone's best interest.	Very true	True	Not Sure	Can't do it

DUE SESSION 7**NAME****For parents of children 5-9**

Draw what you *think* your children would draw with the following instructions. Without showing your drawing to your children, ask them to do their own drawing. Turn in both drawings.

The great thing inside you makes you a unique, one of a kind person, and keeps you connected to people you love. Draw yourself as a unique, one of a kind person, connected to all the people you love.

DUE SESSION 7

List how you will include brief moments (just a second or two) of appreciation and relaxation of your 5-9 year-old:

Observing your child at play:

Meals:

Talking:

List the primary ways your child is important to you:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List the primary ways you are important to your child:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List how you can respect the individuality of your child:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List what interests you about your child.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

List what other things *could* interest you about him or her.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

What keeps you from developing these interests?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

How could your list grow by adding self-reward (I am doing a good thing by developing interest in my child)?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

DUE SESSION 8

NAME

HEALS™ LOG

I have rehearsed **HEALS™** _____ times this week (minimum 72 times). **HEALS™** requires *practice* to make it automatic and to get its full healing benefit.

Write out the steps of **HEALS™**:

H-

E-

A-

L-

S-

I hurt the feelings of my significant other or children this week _____ (YES/No).

If no, congratulate yourself! If yes, how many times? _____

I hurt the body of my significant other or children this week _____ (YES/No).

If no, congratulate yourself! If yes, describe what you did:

Power Log

This week I felt:

• Irritable	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Grouchy	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Annoyed	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Impatient	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Angry in traffic	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like blaming someone	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like making other people do things	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like getting revenge	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Like hurting someone	A lot	Some	Hardly	None

What always **motivates** my anger, attitude, anxiety, irritability, grouchiness, impatience, restlessness, impulse to blame, hurt, or desire to get revenge?

Someone else's behavior

my core hurt

the situation

What can I do to make it *better*?

Get back at them

Do HEALS™

Hope it will pass

What always motivates other people's attitudes, anger, anxiety, irritability, grouchiness, impatience, and restlessness or impulse to blame, hurt, or get revenge?

Someone else's behavior

their core hurts

the situation

What can I do to make it better?

Get back at them

Do HEALS™

Hope it will pass

Self-Concept (write out)

"I believe in my Core Value. I want to act in my long term and short term best interests."

Self-Esteem (write out)

"I accept myself, even if my behavior needs to change."

This week I felt the power to:

• Regulate anger, anxiety, attitudes, resentment	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Choose behaviors in short <i>and</i> long term best interest	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Be flexible (true to myself while adapting to others)	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Feel self-compassion (go deeper to reconnect to Core Value)	A lot	Some	Hardly	None
• Feel compassion for others (go deeper to validate their Core Value)	A lot	Some	Hardly	None

When someone ignores, offends, or disrespects me, it is becoming easy for me to:

• Acknowledge my deepest core hurt and reconnect to my Core Value, regardless of what he/she says or does.	Very true	True	Not Sure	Can't do it
• Sympathize with the core hurt that motivated him/her.	Very true	True	Not Sure	Can't do it
• Attempt to solve problem in everyone's best interest.	Very true	True	Not Sure	Can't do it

Due Session 8

NAME

List how you will include brief moments (just a second or two) of appreciation and relaxation of your 6-13 year-old:

Observing your child at play:

Meals:

Talking:

List the primary ways your child is important to you:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List the primary ways you are important to your child:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List how you can respect the individuality of your child:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

5.

List what interests you about your child.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

List what other things *could* interest you about him or her.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

What keeps you from developing these interests?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

How could your list grow by adding self-reward (I am doing a good thing by developing interest in my child)?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

DUE SESSION 8**NAME**

List how you will include brief moments (just a second or two) of appreciation and relaxation of your teenager:

Observing your child at play:

Meals:

Talking:

List the primary ways your child is important to you:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List the primary ways you are important to your child:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List how you can respect the individuality of your child:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

4.

5.

List what interests you about your child.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

List what other things *could* interest you about him or her.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

What keeps you from developing these interests?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

How could your list grow by adding self-reward (I am doing a good thing by developing interest in my child)?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

DUE SESSION 8

NAME

Sense Self as Parent

The purpose of the following scales is to help you consolidate your sense of self as parent. Don't worry if you rate yourself low right now. We repeat them at the end of the workshop. Then you will notice a substantial improvement. Rate the *depth* and *genuineness* of your **Core Self as Parent**.

5-deep, solid self-esteem 4-mild self-esteem
 3-superficial or unrealistic self-esteem 2-weakened self-esteem 1-little self-esteem

I learn from my children	
I understand their experience of the world.	
I understand their emotional motivations.	
I understand my emotional responses to them.	
I understand my own emotional motivations.	
I enjoy my children	
I value them.	
I respect them.	
I guide them.	
I help them internalize encouragement to grow and learn.	
I help them use their awareness and intelligence for growth and development.	
I empower them.	
I teach them to regulate their emotions.	
I teach them the power of compassion.	
I model emotional intelligence.	
I teach them values	

I give them the right and confidence to solve problems in <i>everyone's</i> best interest.	
I discipline them by helping them behave in their short <i>and</i> long term best interests.	
I help them develop self-discipline.	
I give them affection.	
I express appreciation and interest, through eye contact, cuddling, cooing, soothing, and hugging.	
I model affection with other adults.	
I allow them to be themselves.	
I allow them to explore different aspects of themselves.	
I allow them to develop their fullest potential as individual human beings.	
TOTAL SCORE	

Appendix: Teaching Emotional Vocabulary to Children

The ability to label emotional states is necessary to the efficient regulation of them. Research shows that children stop having temper tantrums when they develop an emotional vocabulary, when they are able to say, for example, "I feel disappointed."

The single most important emotional word for children to learn is "disappointed," since most of their negative emotions are triggered by disappointment. When they can say, "I feel disappointed," they can begin to have power over their emotions.

Formula

1. Pick a quiet time, preferably before reading a bedtime story.
2. Use an incident when the child experienced the emotion during the day.
3. Continue dialogue for no more than five minutes.
4. Repeat the process for several nights.

Sample

The best time to teach emotional vocabulary is in bed, after you have tucked the child in and before you read to him or her. (It's always good to reach at least a paragraph to your child every night.)

Parent: I want to talk about how you felt when we were in the grocery store today. Remember when you asked to get that candy, and I said, "No?"

Child: Yes.

Parent: Do you remember how you felt just *before* you got upset?

Child: No.

Parent: It looked like you felt *disappointed*. That means you wanted the candy (Parent lifts arms and eyes, as if excited), you really wanted it! Then when I said, "No," (Parent goes limp in a look of disappointment), you felt really down. You wanted the candy (Parent lifts arms and eyes, as if excited), then I said, "No," (Parent goes limp in a look of disappointment). Do you remember that?

Child: Yes.

Parent: That feeling is called *disappointment*. When we want something and can't have it, we feel *disappointed*. Can you say, "I felt *disappointed*?"

Child: "I felt disappointed."

Parent: Great! Try it again, "I felt *disappointed*."

Child: "I felt disappointed."

Repeat this process for several nights. When you notice times when the child is disappointed, point them out at the moment and ask him or her to say, "I feel disappointed."

After you are sure that the child has this down, add the following:

Parent: Remember when you felt disappointed today? Well we're going to add something to what you say. Can you say, "I feel disappointed, but I'm okay?"

Repeat the process above with, "I feel disappointed, but I'm okay."

Special Appendix for Divorce and Custody Disputes

In many ways, drawn out divorce and custody disputes are more psychologically damaging to children than **death** of a parent.

Although shocking at first, this makes perfect sense with further thought. When a parent dies, the child can idealize him or her and feel secure that the parent is “watching over me from heaven.” But in a custody or protracted divorce dispute, the child sees both parents at their worst for a long time, feeling that, as one child put it, “It’s all because of me.”

Symptoms of children in custody disputes or divorce may include one or more of the following: depression (looks like chronic boredom), anxiety, school problems, aggressiveness, hyperactivity, low self-esteem, exhibiting over-emotionality (anger, excitability, or frequent crying), or no emotions at all.

Anything you do to harm, put down, or in any way denigrate your former partner, directly and profoundly harms your children.

Children construct internal working models of both their parents, which help them stave off abandonment anxiety. They quickly come to identify with attributes of those internal images of their parents. The identity-building process is usually reinforced by people in the environment, with such statements as:

“He’s just like his father.”

“She has her mother’s eyes and her father’s disposition.”

“No doubt about it, he’s his parents’ child.”

Usually this internal parental identity is positive for the growth and development of the child. But when they hear either parent (or any loved one) attack, insult, or put down the other parent, children tend to see it as a fault within them. **The legacy of denigrating your former partner is self-loathing in your children.**

Compassionate Parenting Compact

We the parents of ____ and ____ enter into this agreement to safeguard our children's future development. We recognize the need to cooperate as co-parents for our children's welfare. We recognize that our children need to love and respect both of us and we agree to do nothing that would interfere with that need or divide the loyalties of our children.

In the best interests of our children, we will *not*:

- Talk negatively about each other
- Convey messages to one another through the children
- Discuss our disputes, past or present with the children
- Ask the children for information about each other.

We will each establish safe homes for the children and convey to them that they now have two homes.

We each take responsibility for our own emotions and for avoiding and defusing power struggles, regardless of what the other does or does not do.

We each take responsibility for discussing issues with respect, even if the other fails to do so, in recognition that power struggles are detrimental to our children.

Agreement to be Compassionate

I hereby agree to work hard to resolve disagreements with my former partner in ways that are in the best interests of our children. I understand that we will sometimes disagree about specifics of those best interests. In such disagreements, I will try to stay focused on the best solutions for the children on which we can agree.

Signature

Signature