

Intuitive Parenting by Debra J. Snyder, PhD

Chapter Eight: Self-Healing for Parents

“I love people. I love my family, my children . . . but inside myself is a place where I live all alone and that's where you renew your springs that never dry up.”

~Pearl S. Buck

Discovering the bliss of intuitive parenting comes more easily to those who have balance in their lives. Maintaining a dedicated perspective on well-being enables a parent to fully nurture their children: mind, body, and spirit. To foster peace and wellness for your family, you must demonstrate and emanate your own best intentions. Be the healthy model. Your loving advice to not smoke, for example, is ludicrous if you have a two pack a day habit. Actions do speak louder than words and should be in alignment with your intent. Energy speaks even louder, making any contradiction between intention and behavior obvious. Living a conscious life, mindful and focused, allows your Divine light to brilliantly shine and be the best example for your child.

The Mosaic of Me

I would like to say my balance with the Universe came early in this journey, as if I was bestowed with grand cosmic wisdom a week or so after Raegan's birth. Nothing could be further from the truth. Although I feel I now have a decent perspective on my existence and how things have evolved in my world, those first few years of motherhood posed challenges with depression, low self-esteem, and my physical health.

My depression was tricky and unpredictable to manage. It was not day after day of heart wrenching despair, as there were many good days peppered in with the difficult ones. Times when I felt hopeful and optimistic, believing my child will be the exception to every rule and would defy all negative expectations assigned by the medical community. I ignored the chronic stress I was under and suppressed the emotional pain, which lurked deep within. Most people would never have guessed I was enormously depressed, as I had a positive word or hopeful smile when they would ask how we were doing. In those first few years, I became an expert at hiding my true state of being, even from my husband, mother, and close friends. No one knew angry trees were growing up around me, blocking the warmth and light of the sun.

Mark and I were starting to drive each other crazy. Our moods often collided and we spent much of our time together avoiding intimate conversation. Talking at length about medical issues, bills, and day-to-day occurrences, but we rarely connected with one another. Our roles of “Mom” and “Dad” were consuming every part of us, leaving nothing for our relationship or our own personal pursuits. Not

putting positive energy into our connection, we actually fed the negativity by sniping at each other about superficial and ridiculous things.

Like me, Mark was overwhelmed, fearful, and frustrated. He began complaining about crumbs on the countertop, piles of laundry in the bedroom, and his hard day at work. Truthfully, at the time, I didn't care. Not even noticing what the house looked like, I would roll my eyes after he left the room and resent his comments. Household concerns seemed minor to me now. I was trying to survive motherhood and comprehend the deep mysteries of the universe. Somehow dusting and window washing had lost its allure.

AngelBaby was growing fast. Her big blue eyes and joyful smile gave me encouragement as we went about our day. If she could face her challenges with such a courageous spirit, I could certainly try. Raegan kept me focused on living in the moment, each one bringing new lessons on inner strength and my heart's capacity to love. At times I felt strong enough to carry the world on my shoulders, yet at others I felt weak, wanting to curl up in a ball and cry.

A few of my friends also had young children and would come over to visit while our spouses were at work. The scene was not far from the ideal days of "playing house" as young girls in the backyard. Except my daughter was disabled. Something you never considered when you were eight, dangling your plastic baby doll by the arm, while eating an orange Popsicle. It was nice to share my home and my daughter with friends, Popsicles or not.

My friend's son, Gavin, was born just a week after Raegan. Carrie and I enjoyed our mutual pregnancies by taking silly belly pictures together and indulging our food cravings. It was so fun to go through it as a team, beaming with happiness and planning the next eighteen years with our children as playmates. Now...our reality was different. We struggled with the issues of sadness, guilt, and joy all being jumbled up together. Having our children in the same room was a constant reminder of what wouldn't be for Raegan, the milestones she would never come near.

I had tried to tune out traditional milestones right after Raegan's birth and didn't look to compare her with any other child. It was hard with Gavin, as they were so close in age. Carrie and I weren't comfortable talking freely about their accomplishments, as we didn't want to upset each other. Besides, how could I expect anyone to understand the small victories we celebrated? It would be like comparing apples to artichokes.

During one of their visits, Gavin said "Mamma...mamma," showing her a toy car in his hand. It was the first time I heard him speak. Tears welling in my eyes, I didn't know if I was proud of him or sad for me. Carrie and I started crying with our small children eyeing us cautiously. Raegan let out a squeal and a laugh, as Gavin zoomed by her with his car. "Boy, do we have to get past this," I said.

“They are fine with it, so we should be too.” We hugged each other tight, vowing to talk through our feelings whenever we needed to. Both of our children, beautiful beings of light, were exactly as God intended.

It started to occur to me, if Raegan was exactly as God had intended, maybe I was also as the Universe intended too. Are we all priceless works of art and just don’t know it? Sitting in meditation on the floor of my bedroom, colorful pictures of my lifetime flashed before me. From my celestial perch I was able to see for the first time how every experience, each moment I lived, had brought me to where I now sat. Understanding how certain events provided knowledge I now needed. Each relationship, job, trip, every psychic experience...all had a miraculous connection to the present moment. Nothing was out of place or by accident. It all fit perfectly with no rights, wrongs, or regrets. The life images curiously floated before my eyes, unveiling the intricate mosaic of me.

Although my spiritual world was beginning to blossom during this time, my physical health suffered significantly during Raegan’s early years due to lack of nurturing. I wasn’t making *me* a priority, so gained weight from eating junk food, relaxing at night with a bottle of wine, and not getting enough exercise. I was in and out of the doctor’s office for headaches, allergies, stress, viruses, and a myriad of other ailments. My physical body was dramatically out of balance, neglected, and beginning to wear the scars of my emotional and mental wounds. Cupcakes and Merlot may be comforting in the moment, yet didn’t satisfy what I was truly hungry for...a succulent slice of inner peace.

Pain and frustration would be there for me to cling to, as long as I wanted that life. It was a choice for me to make. Did I want a life of victimization or empowerment? The trek in the dark forest was my chosen path, until I was ready to change direction and emerge into the clearing on my own. Reaching a point where I was tired of being sick and depressed, I knew change was needed. It was time to take the theories I was studying out of the books and put them into practice. Time to walk the walk of well-being, love myself, and live an energetic life.

The decision to make conscious changes in the way I lived led to powerful transformations. Beginning to love myself, I could finally see the value in caring for my whole being and the fact this greatly benefited my family. What was good for me was also good for them. Physically, I began to eat better, take long walks, and stretch my fatigued muscles. I opened up to discover who I was as an emotional being, working through issues, which greatly affected my marriage: abandonment, anger, and self worth. I stretched my mental abilities by taking courses, writing, and teaching. My spiritual interests grew as I pursued ancient philosophies, meditation, and gatherings of like-minded people.

These changes allowed me to see the light of God shining vibrantly in everyone and everything, perceiving each being as more than any role we played. Although we were parents, wives, husbands,

daughters, and sons, we were also fragments of the Divine on our own individual sojourn on Earth. I now understood we are free to make choices on how we live, love, and evolve. Our choices create our reality. No one need remain a victim of circumstance, puppet to anyone's projections, or the controller of another's will. We have the freedom to exist in whatever manner we desire according to our personal values, beliefs, and goals. I realized I could create a life of love and happiness, a life of sheer bliss, by merely choosing to do so.

“To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right.”

~Confucius

Letting Go

Self-healing begins with the firm belief that you are the creator of your own life and have the ability to manifest lasting change in your world. Knowing the responsibility lies only with you is liberating, and also intimidating. It is so much easier to blame circumstances, situations, and people outside of us for our present state of being. However, truth be told, your life is up to you. The mysteries of the universe are unfolding right before our eyes in amazing, magical ways. We need to wake up from the daze of a mindless existence to take an active role in creating a beautiful life for our families and ourselves.

Moving forward with a healthy, balanced perspective requires you to release your attachments to the past and the future. You cannot live in the now by clinging tightly to experiences gone by or dictating every moment to come. Allow yourself to let go of the baggage of unrealized expectations, toxic relationships, labels, and societal projections. If this is difficult to even consider, you need to recognize *you are more than the story you tell*. You are more than a parent, more than an underpaid worker, more than a victim of a crime, betrayal, or injustice.

Everyone faces challenges along the way. The daily responsibilities and burdens, which confront all families can be considerable and are often magnified when also living with a chronic illness or disability. Although we have all felt alone, misunderstood, and overwhelmed by life's journey, we must remember we are one with the All, brilliantly interconnected by the intuitive energy of our hearts. Every experience contributes color and texture to our life mosaic and need not dictate all of who we are.

Being mindful and proactive in all aspects of life is the clear path to wellness. Knowing our state of health physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually allows us to take the responsibility in our own hands and create a life of peace, balance, and clarity. This greater sense of self opens the door to an amazing world of energetic possibilities. Experiencing less pain, increased vitality, and reduced stress

enables us to be the best intuitive parents we can be. By opening your heart to wellness, you foster in an entirely new way of being.

Physical Wellness

Physical health begins with having a great respect for our body and its complicated systems and functions. Many of us have allowed the care of our bodies to wane by eating unconsciously, ignoring its signals, and not being appropriately active. Physical wellness requires us to be mindful of how we eat, drink, sleep, and exercise. If you are looking for an opportunity to increase your intuitive abilities, begin with the vehicle, which holds your soul...your amazingly beautiful body. Take the time to visit your physician to develop a healthy protocol, which would best suit you. Here are activities and behaviors I recommend for getting you started on a path to physical wellness:

- Eat whole, natural foods, such as fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, and lean proteins. Avoid foods laden with chemical additives, artificial sweeteners, and preservatives. If you choose to indulge on desserts, alcohol, and simple carbohydrates keep your intake to a minimum. A balanced diet is best for the body.
- Maintain a healthy form by being active every day. Take a walk, dance to ecstatic music, or paddle a kayak. Keep your fitness schedule fun by being diverse and creative. You need not be a professional athlete to appreciate the benefits of strong body. Regardless of your age, ability, or size, you can develop a program appropriate for you.
- Getting proper rest is a challenge for any parent, especially when our children are young or require special attention. It is essential we find down time for our entire being to rejuvenate. Reduce caffeine intake, avoid stressful activities, and add a brief meditation prior to bed to ease into a more relaxed, centered state.

Mental Wellness

After long days at work or with the kids, it is easy to zone out in front of the TV and collapse. We often feel over worked, yet under utilized. Life can become frustrating when we sense we are merely going through the motions and not being intellectually stimulated. It is important to be involved in thought-provoking activities. We need to make the choice to stay sharp. "Use it or lose it," as they say. Challenging ourselves mentally keeps us young, vibrant, and smart. The increased confidence you garner carries over effortlessly into your intuitive pursuits. Try a few of these techniques to keep your mental gears turning:

- Sign up for a class at your local college, technical school, or community center. Dedicated time alone to pursue your intellectual interests can revitalize your sense of self and give needed respite from family obligations. You will learn new skills, meet interesting people, and rediscover parts of yourself long ago abandoned.
- Organize a book club, poetry circle, or hobby group for your friends. Getting together with those we care about can be a positive, uplifting experience. Add stimulating conversation to the mix for a truly rewarding time. Discovering the intellectual aspects of your friends and yourself can be illuminating.
- Expand your comfort zone by learning a new language, instrument, or art form. Basket weaving, jewelry making, or writing short stories in your journal. Creative pursuits not only stimulate the mind but also enhance intuitive abilities.

Emotional Wellness

Emotional well-being and a positive sense of self are crucial components to living a happy life and fundamental to successful intuitive parenting. When emotions are in balance we are able to perceive the world with heightened awareness and feel confident following our energetic insights. If we are out of balance, our insecurities stand in the way of accurate communication and can negatively shape our families. We owe it to ourselves and our loved ones to work through our issues, detach from ego's stranglehold, and live a positive life. Keep these suggestions in mind while on the path to emotional peace:

- Get the support you need by seeking out a counselor, therapist, or close friend to talk to. There are now numerous professionals who incorporate energy techniques with traditional therapy. It is essential to deal with your emotions and not bury them deep inside only to surface later as illness, resentment, or fear.
- Learn to forgive yourself and others. Do not allow a deep sense of guilt or anger from the past to rob you of the present moment and negatively color your future. Releasing ourselves from the projections of others and allowing others to be free from our projections is liberating and life-altering. Simply choose to let go.

- Take time alone to release pent up emotions. Whether you scream at the ocean, punch pillows, have a good cry, or work out at the gym, find a safe outlet to discharge the energy of negative emotion. You'll be surprised at how wonderful it feels to get it all out.

Spiritual Wellness

Spiritual well-being provides us a sense of belonging and connectedness in the face of life's varied experiences. Knowing we are a part of something greater than our own individual personality and physical being allows us to appreciate the magnificence of the Universe. Regardless of the path or belief system we choose for ourselves, we are blessed souls, free to worship as we please. Feeling the inner glow of Divine love is the comfort in any storm, the light that leads the way in dark places. Open your heart to spiritual expression by exploring these activities:

- Find your place of fellowship. Join a church, synagogue, mosque, bible study group, or other place of community worship. Surrounding ourselves with others living a life of faith allows us to feel supported in our decision to make Spirit a priority. There is no wrong path to tread. You need only determine which path resonates with you.
- Take a Yoga class to discover the inner peace that stems from the meditation, poses, and beliefs associated with this form. It is more than stretching for fitness! Yoga is beneficial to our mind, body, emotions, and spirit. Allow its inner calm to wash over you as a wave glides over the sand.
- Contemplate your being. Determine for yourself who you are and what you believe yourself to be in this vast expanse of Universe. Find your inner philosopher by asking the big questions of yourself and patiently awaiting the answers. Be with nature. Read. Meditate. Pray. Take the time to explore your spiritual self.

Energetic Wellness

We are vibrant beings of energy, continually sending and receiving signals with our intuitive hearts. Learning throughout this book how crucial our subtle energy system is to our daily lives we need to be proactive in maintaining balance and clarity. We can champion energetic wellness to our families by demonstrating a healthy respect for this complex system and living with a glowing heart. You can only assist your family energetically if you are harmonious, clear, and open to the Divine flow. Be mindful of these techniques as you integrate energy into your life:

- Start and end each day with a clearing exercise. Quickly visualize your aura and clean up any debris in your biofield. Blast away any toxic energy with the wash of vibrant colors and the intention of love and peace. You are the caretaker of your own energy field, so are responsible for what you are carrying around.
- Dedicate a minimum of ten minutes each day for energetic communication with your highest self. This is the time to ask your questions about day to day events and await the answers. How should you move forward with this or that? Just ask. Journal your explorations to track your progress.
- Stretch your intuitive muscles by playing psychic games. This builds confidence and helps determine how *your* subtle energy system communicates. You can start with who may be on the phone or the color of the tie your boss will wear tomorrow, then make up tasks of your own. This is not a competition and should be done with a playful spirit. Your accuracy just may surprise you!

Exercise 15: A Meditative Mosaic

This exercise is an opportunity for you to relax and connect with yourself at higher levels in contemplation of your life and soul's journey. A time to put worries and family concerns aside to ponder the beautiful mosaic of you. We are all works of art created by the Universe as a unique expression of itself, a fragment of the Divine source. Appreciating your own significance in this world enables you to live a life of peace and love. You cannot truly care and nurture the spirit of another, until you first cherish the self.

To prepare for this exercise, dress in comfortable clothing and find a space in your home where you can meditate in privacy. You may play instrumental music or nature sounds in the background if you feel it will help you to relax. If you wish to follow these instructions word for word, read them into a recorder to be played at the time of your meditation. I recommend you sit upright on the floor, in a chair, or using a meditation cushion. It is a risk to doze off if you lay down, so please try to remain in a seated position with your back straight. Begin with the HeartGlow primer to get yourself in a balanced and relaxed state.

Slowly take a long, deep breath through your nose and then gently exhale out your mouth. Repeat this three times, permitting your body to ease into the exercise by relaxing all tense muscles. Close your eyes slightly and bring your attention inward. Allow the random thoughts that come to you to float away without drawing your focus. In your mind, begin to countdown from ten to one; knowing you

will be at peace when you have reached the final number. Keep your breath slow and steady, letting the calm wash over you. This is your time...an opportunity to connect with Source.

Now that you are comfortable and relaxed, ask Spirit to show you the miraculous images of your life's journey. Remaining detached from emotion, merely perceive the images as they come to you. What do you see? Who has crossed your path and left imprints on your heart? See the places, events, and people that have contributed to your experiences. Take yourself far back, looking for pictures from your infancy and early childhood. Feel the resonance of those you encounter, even if they have long ago departed from Earth.

Utilizing all of your intuitive senses, is there anything you hear, smell, or feel? Explore the years of your life through images, sounds, aromas, and sensations. See the beauty you are in the mosaic before you. Perceive the vibrant smile of your child, which mirrors your own. Appreciate the flirtatious wink of an old love, stirring energy from your heart center. The tiles of memory and experience dance before you coming together in a striking masterpiece.

While in this state of connectedness, ask any questions you may have of Spirit or your highest self. Allow the answers to flow to you, as a breeze would glide across the water. Spend time with your mosaic, expressing gratitude for every experience you have witnessed. These pieces of your past are vital to honor, yet not cling to forever.

Now visualize all you will do in the future. Climb mountains? Travel to distant lands? Run a marathon? Picture yourself in jubilant celebration of living an active, joyful life. Imagine the people and events of the times yet to come. There is no limit to the possibilities of your life. You are the author of the novel and the composer of the song. It is time to see all you are capable of in a Universe of infinite potential.

Take a long, deep breath and begin to come back to the present moment. You feel beautiful and revitalized. Thank Spirit and yourself for this intricate mosaic meditation. Slowly open your eyes and take another breath, stretching your muscles and soaking in the radiance of the energy you've ignited. Your intuitive heart is glowing brightly, as you resume the rest of your day. Take time to write your experiences and reflections in your HeartGlow journal. Be sure to make note of any messages or symbols you need to be mindful of. Meditation is a gift we can give ourselves every day. Whether you have five minutes or an hour to sit in contemplation, take the opportunity to connect in this sacred space.

Exercise 16: Gratitude Inventory

Reflecting on what we are thankful for in our lives is a powerful way to shift our perspective from the isolated self to a broader view of Universal connectedness. Expressing gratitude for the great number of

blessings in our world reminds us of the gifts we are being given by Spirit on a daily basis. Whether it is the air we breathe, clothes on our back, or a person to love, we all have things to be grateful for.

Recent research indicates people who are grateful have a higher sense of well-being, security, health, and happiness. Theorists are only beginning to investigate the positive benefits of this essential emotion, which have been intuitively known in spiritual circles for centuries. By freely expressing our gratitude, we welcome the miraculous energy of love and abundance into our lives, giving us even more blessings to count. We create our own reality through the devoted expression of thankfulness.

In your HeartGlow journal, I would like you to record your blessings. Take an inventory of what you are grateful for in your life. This is not meant to be a casual list of a few names and events. Please examine your life in detail and write down all things that come to mind for which you are thankful. Remember our burdens are often a piece of good fortune, as they provide opportunities for learning and growth. Your list should be comprehensive and may include hundreds of items or more. It may be easier for you to divide your list according to categories, such as: home, family, friends, work, nature, etc.

I am not going to restrict you in any way, as your creative process is uniquely you and a true expression of your soul. Some folks list items simply, such as: “my child.” While others prefer to describe their blessing in greater detail by writing: “the sweet smile of my daughter when she is sleeping.” Either way is fine, although do not hesitate to let your artistry flow. A number of HeartGlow clients have taken this exercise to the next level by writing songs, poetry, and even creating an art piece from the inspiration of their gratitude inventory.

If you have difficulty doing this exercise at all, then try again another day. We all have days when we feel burdened by life and not especially blessed. Do not let a difficult day cloud you from experiencing this exercise. I find completing a gratitude inventory is best done over a period of time, so give yourself a week to work on it. Simply assign dedicated pages in your journal and add to the list whenever you choose. I would like you to revisit your list once a week, taking in the energy of your blessings. Please reflect on your life’s recent events, and then add a new item of gratitude to the inventory for each week thereafter.

The gratitude inventory is a pleasant and simple exercise to share with your children in a creative way. If you choose to do so, I suggest using colored paper and crayons to have your child draw what they are thankful for and have them post it in their own rooms. We can raise our children with recognizing and developing a deep sense of gratitude. Its expression need not be relegated to one Thursday in November, where it shares the stage with roast turkey and football. Each day we are blessed with the opportunity to live a vibrant life; it is our choice whether we decide to do so. Keep a gratitude

inventory throughout your life and look back over it as a powerful reflection of your own spiritual development.

Summary of Key Points

Discovering the bliss of intuitive parenting comes more easily to those who have balance in their lives. Maintaining a dedicated perspective on well-being enables a parent to fully nurture their children: mind, body, and spirit. To expect peace and wellness for your family, you must demonstrate and exude your own intentions. Actions do speak louder than words and should be in alignment with your intentions. Energy speaks even louder, making any contradiction extremely obvious. Living a conscious life, mindful and focused, allows your Divine light to brilliantly shine and be the best example for your child.

Self-healing begins with the firm belief that you are the creator of your own life and have the ability to manifest lasting change in your world. Knowing the blessing and responsibility lies only with you is liberating, and also intimidating. Moving forward with a healthy, balanced perspective first requires you to release your attachments to the past and the future. Allow yourself to let go of the baggage of unrealized expectations, toxic relationships, labels, and societal projections. If this is difficult to even consider, you need to recognize *you are more than the story you tell*.

The daily responsibilities and burdens, which confront all families, can be considerable and are often magnified when also living with a chronic illness or disability. Although we have all felt alone, misunderstood, and overwhelmed by life's journey at times, we must remember we are one with the All, brilliantly interconnected by the intuitive energy of our hearts. Being mindful and proactive on all levels of causation is the clear path to wellness. Knowing our state of health physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually allows us to take the responsibility in our own hands and create a life of peace, balance, and clarity. Experiencing less pain, increased vitality, and reduced stress enables us to be the best intuitive parents we can be.

HeartGlow Hints for Intuitive Parenting

- Establish healthy routines for eating, sleeping, and exercise. It all begins with self-care.
- Schedule time each week to be alone. Take a walk, ponder nature...simply be.
- Know when to call in the support network. There are times we all need encouragement and reinforcement in our lives.
- Empower yourself by releasing the need to be everything to everyone.
- Exude the love, peace, and clarity you intend for your family.