

Mindful Parenting: Need of an Hour

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Mindfulness is the ability of a person to live in the present moment, aware and accept what is happening in his/her life without changing his/her mind. Mindfulness requires a non-judgemental approach, which in turn leads to acceptance [1].

Moving towards mindfulness

Myla and Jon Kabat-Zin explained the difference between reacting and responding:

- Reacting is mindless activity.
- Responding is mindful activity and the person aware of his/her reaction, and why it has happened which help him/her to form an appropriate response.

In the first step of mindfulness, the person is more aware of his/her reactions before responding to a situation or an event. Before responding, the person must say STOP:

- S-Stop: The person has to keep quiet for some time in order to understand his/her internal changes and reactions towards it.
- T: Take a deep breath
- O-Observe: The person has to concentrate on his/her breathing and observe what is going on in the environment
- P-Proceed: Now the person is aware of himself/herself which help them to show an appropriate response to that particular situation [2].

Mindful parenting

Mindful parenting is defined as the way of living in the present moment with our children. Parental attention is the best gift we can give it to our children which will be attained through mindful parenting [3].

AIMS:

- Improving the moments we spend with our child and focuses completely on the interaction between us and our child.
- Involves healthy self-regulation, listening to our child with full attention and non judgemental acceptance.

- Emotional awareness and compassion of self
- Social and emotional learning enables us to address the issues with our children in a calm and appropriate manner [1].

Dimensions of mindful parenting:

- Listening with full attention
- Non-judgemental acceptance of self and child
- Emotional awareness of self and child
- Self-regulation in the parenting relationship
- Compassion for self and child [4].

Tenets of mindful parenting:

- **Spend time for yourself:** Parents have to spare some time for themselves and away from job pressures, demands, distractions etc. Our presence is the best gift we can give to our children.
- **Manage your stress mindfully:** As parents, we are often living our lives running on empty, over-scheduled, in a constant state of low-grade stress. Mindfulness practice helps to strengthen the mind/body connection which in turn notice stress or imbalance in the body/mind in their day to today activities.
- **Embrace the model of the “good enough’ parent:** Parents are often holding too high standard in order to be the “perfect” parent. Mindful parenting helps the parent to embrace the reality and wisdom of the “good enough” parent, acknowledging that regardless of our best intentions, moments of imperfection and failure are unavoidable.
- **Honor your children’s sovereignty:** Honoring our children’s sovereignty is not about giving them more freedom or giving too many choices in their life. Parent/child conflicts mostly arise when there is no clear boundaries and emotional separation on the parent’s part. Parents have to learn to acknowledge and address all these needs of their children.
- **Cultivate kindness and compassion:** Our children are in need of our unconditional love. As a parent, we cannot give what we do not possess. Therefore, parents have to experience more and more kindness, compassion and self-acceptance which in turn flow to our children, more and more [5].

Mindful parenting helps to improve the quality of parent-child relationships. Through mindful parenting, parents can be freed from the egoistic, habitual, and hedonic motivations that improve their parenting practices and develop enduring nature of the relationship with their children.

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