



AWAKE PARENTING

Raising Connected, Confident Kids

by Judith Fertig

One of the greatest challenges parents face is connecting with their children in deep and meaningful ways. The aim of awakened

families is to raise strong and emotionally resilient children.

Parenting expert and clinical psychologist Shefali Tsabary, Ph.D., author

of *The Conscious Parent: Transforming Ourselves, Empowering Our Children* and *The Awakened Family: A Revolution in Parenting*, offers mindful approaches to benefit the family—and the community. Via her practice in New York City, appearances on *Oprah* and online courses, Tsabary provides awareness, skills and strategies to revolutionize families. She posts videos and blogs at DrShefali.com.

How do parents know if they're on the right track?

To be awakened or conscious means to realize that we carry emotional baggage and conditioning from childhood that affects our relationship with our children. Our old ways of thinking and being from our own childhood shape the manner in which we react and interact today.

Awakened parents are constantly evolving into their truest and most authentic selves. When parents undertake a daily practice of mindfulness and awareness, they begin to extricate themselves from blind reactivity to see how every problem with their children is a call to their own awakening. Parents will know they are on the right track because they will connect more with their children, empowering them to think and live autonomously—separate from a

parent's fantasies and expectations.

How can each family member connect with their true self?

Parents need to understand that the path to creating a connected relationship with their children is to first create one with themselves. Realizing this, they consider their own inner growth a high priority.

Children need to learn who they are and what they really enjoy. Parents can help by allowing children to just sit by themselves. If inundated with activities and subjected to numerous lessons, how can young people hope to recognize their authentic voice amid the din of all this "doing"?

How do children benefit from conscious or awakened parenting?

Conscious parenting mandates that we place the task of connecting with our children front and center, especially before correcting them. Admonishing and punishing them becomes secondary to the main imperative of conscious

connection. It's crucial we realize we aren't raising a "mini-me", but a spirit throbbing with its own signature. Thus, it's vital to separate in our mind who we are from who each child is. Children aren't ours to possess or own in any way. When we know this in the depths of our soul, we tailor their raising to their needs, rather than molding them to fit our needs.

Children raised in this way grow up to be fearless and infinitely resilient, knowing that their purpose in life is to live in their most authentic and true way. Conflicts decrease and conscious, connected communication increases.

What can parents do when they fall back into old patterns, shaming children or doing other things that create distance?

When this happens, parents need to sit with themselves and look deeply within, asking: "What is it about me that feels the need to deride, scorn and shame my children?" In such introspection, they might discover

triggers from old wounds that have nothing to do with a child's behavior. When they can see the internal link, they can begin to make the transformations they need.

As a parent, I have learned that my role is to step aside, stay in infinite possibility, heal my own wounds, fill my own bucket and let my child fly.

How can closer, awakened families co-create a better world via the ripple effect?

When children grow up feeling connected with their parents and deeply seen by them, they march into the outer world feeling self-confident and aware of who they truly are, secure in their own inherent inner-connectivity. Children raised in this manner naturally help advocate for peace and harmony in all of their relationships; incidents of bullying, anxiety and discrediting one's self and others decrease exponentially.

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