

Navigate Strong Feelings with Presence



OVERVIEW

- The purpose of feelings
- Presence with feelings
- Ways to show empathy

THE PURPOSE OF FEELINGS

Feelings give us information about ourselves and our kids.

Parents may fear that acknowledging feelings will make them get stronger or encourage them to happen more often. The opposite is true: Denying or ignoring feelings makes them get stronger. Presence and empathy allow feelings to be expressed and dissipate.

What information does each feeling give us?

Sadness	Sadness tells us what we care about or that we have lost someone or something we care about.
Happiness	Happiness tells us what we like and love.
Anger	Anger tells us what we are passionate about and willing to stand up for. Anger is connected to our sense of justice and injustice.
Disappointment	Disappointment tells us about our expectations. It can also tell us about what we are wanting or hoping for.
Fear	Fear tells us what we perceive as safe or unsafe. This includes physical safety as well as emotional and relationship safety or vulnerability.

PRESENCE WITH FEELINGS

Presence is a state of being that is cultivated. How would you describe it?

Focus, awareness, non-judgment, active listening, being in the moment, no-mind, non-reaction, I don't have to fix anything, connection, everything is ok.

Separate what you are feeling from what your child is feeling. It takes practice to not react with our own feelings.

Guided exercise – presence with yourself to be present with others

Reflection:

WAYS TO SHOW EMPATHY

Empathy is understanding. By understanding what our kids are feeling we can help them understand themselves.

Genuinely state what you think they are feeling. Sometimes you have to be a detective!

- You seem frustrated
- You look excited!
- You don't seem quite like yourself today
- Are you sad?

Just speak from your heart. You don't even have to guess right to help them clarify their emotions. They may say, "No, actually, I'm feeling..."

I wish... is a great tool. I wish we could stay home all day and eat popcorn! Now it's time for school.

I wish...

Separate feelings from behavior

All feelings are ok. Not all behavior is ok.

- It's ok to be sad, but it's not ok to pull the cat's tail. Would you like to draw a picture or read some books?
- It's ok to be mad, but it's not ok to call me names. Would you like to punch a pillow or stomp on the floor?

State what's ok, not ok and give some better choices. Then you've helped them to clarify their feelings and hopefully next time make a better choice.

Make your own example:

It's ok to feel	It's not ok to	Would you like to

EMOTIONS ARE INFORMATION. EMOTIONS ARE FUN!

What are your values around emotions and parenting?

SOME OF MY FAVORITE PARENTING BOOKS

Unconditional Parenting by Alfie Kohn

Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child, by John Gottman

How to Talk so Kids will Listen and Listen so Kids will Talk, by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

Connection Parenting, by Pam Leo

Real Boys, by William Pollack

The Highly Sensitive Child, by Elaine N. Aron