

Parents and Caregivers Have Feelings, Too!



OVERVIEW

- Emotional Triggers
- How to disable triggers for good
- Use Your feelings to role model for your kids

EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS

When something happens that one doesn't have the skills, support or time to work through, the energy gets stored within the body. The stored energy could be anger, sadness, disappointment, fear or any emotion. Traumatic events may have many feelings associated with them.

Similar feeling events in the present can trigger old stored energies and release BIG feelings.

Guiding Questions: Does this feel bigger than the present situation warrants? How do I know?

Reflection: What situations trigger big feelings for you? Or what reactions tell you that something has been triggered?

| Situation | Reaction |
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HOW TO DISABLE TRIGGERS FOR GOOD

Old emotions come up in order to be healed and everything can be healed! You can also do this with emotions arising from current situations.

Step 1: Separate the present from the past

Recognizing that something is a trigger can go a long way. Then you can identify what is appropriate in the present and what is from the past. Ask what the feeling or situation reminds you of.

Step 2: Be present with the emotions/energy

Take some time to be present with the emotion/energy and have empathy for yourself. Get support if needed. Just keep moving through it.

Step 3: Determine what needs to happen for closure

Decide when you are ready to move on. Is there an action or ritual that would be helpful? Set boundaries or state your needs as appropriate.

There may be many layers or iterations of this process.

Guided Exercise: Choose a small-ish trigger to work with.

Reflection:

USE YOUR FEELINGS TO ROLE MODEL FOR YOUR KIDS

Just like kids, parents need empathy and healthy ways to express their emotions. The way we handle our own feelings teaches our kids.

State your feelings authentically, depending on the kids' ages and situation. Tell the truth about your feelings with as much or as little information as appropriate.

"I feel sad today and it's ok to feel sad. I miss Grandpa."

"I feel frustrated right now. Everyone gets frustrated sometimes."

Separating the feelings of each person

People who are empathic may pick up the feelings of another or take responsibility for the feelings of another.

"I feel mad right now and it's about adult stuff. You don't need to worry about it."

"You feel mad about going to bed and I feel frustrated when you yell."

Reflection: What are your personal parenting values around parents and kids expressing emotion?

REFLECTION

What's your biggest take-away from tonight?

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

Radical Collaboration: Five Essential Skills to Overcome Defensiveness and Build Successful Relationships, by James Tamm and Ronald Luyet