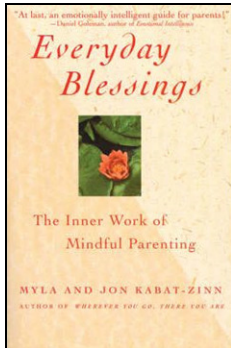


## Twelve Exercises for Mindful Parenting

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**This piece is excerpted from *Twelve Exercises for Mindful Parenting* by Jon and Myla Kabat-Zinn, authors of *Everyday Blessings: The Inner Work of Mindful Parenting*. This book can be found on Amazon.com [here](#).**

1. Try to imagine the world from your child's point of view, purposefully letting go of your own. Do this every day for at least a few moments to remind you of who this child is and what he or she faces in the world.
2. Imagine how you appear and sound from your child's point of view; imagine having you as a parent today, in this moment. How might this modify how you carry yourself in your body and in space, how you speak, what you say? How do you want to relate to your child in this moment?
3. Practice seeing your children as perfect just the way they are. Work at accepting them as they are when it is hardest for you to do so.
4. Be mindful of your expectations of your children, and consider whether they are truly in your children's best interests. Also, be aware of how you communicate those expectations and how they affect your children.
5. Practice altruism, putting the needs of your children above your own whenever possible. Then see if there isn't some common ground where your needs can also be met. You may be surprised at how much overlap is possible, especially if you are patient and strive for balance.
6. When you feel lost, or at a loss, remember to stand still. Meditate on the whole by bringing your full attention to the situation, to your child, to yourself, to the family. In doing so, you may go beyond thinking and perceive intuitively, with the whole of your being, what really needs to be done.
7. Try embodying silent presence. Listen carefully.
8. Learn to live with tension without losing your own balance. Practice moving into any moment,

however difficult, without trying to change anything and without having to have a particular outcome occur. See what is "workable" if you are willing to trust your intuition and best instincts.

9. Apologize to your child when you have betrayed a trust in even a little way. Apologies are healing, and they demonstrate that you see a situation more clearly, or more from your child's point of view. But "I'm sorry" loses its meaning if we are always saying it, or if we make regret a habit.

10. Every child is special, and every child has special needs. Each sees in an entirely unique way. Hold an image of each child in your heart. Drink in their being, wishing them well.

11. There are very important times when we need to practice being clear and strong and unequivocal with our children. Let this come as much as possible out of awareness and generosity and discernment, rather than out of fear, self-righteousness, or the desire to control. Mindful parenting does not mean being overindulgent, neglectful, or weak; nor does it mean being rigid and controlling.

12. The greatest gift you can give your child is your self. This means that part of your work as a parent is to keep growing in self-knowledge and in awareness. We have to be grounded in the present moment to share what is deepest and best in ourselves.