

## JOURNAL PROMPTS

What were your biggest take-aways as you listened to this week's audio?

1.

2.

3.

How do you think the transition to Peaceful Parenting is going for your family?

What one action could you take to make this transition easier?

## GOING DEEPER

### Writing a letter to your child

Do you wish you could do some days over again?

Me, too!

Unfortunately, no one can rewrite the past.

But every one of us can start today and write a new future.

And you can use your past as your motivation to create a new future.

To do that, we have to accept what's happened, acknowledge where we didn't live up to our own aspirations to be the person and the parent we wish we could have been.

We have to grieve that past so that we can move on.

So today, right now, I invite you to acknowledge any sadness you're carrying about the past. Feel that grief fully. Say what you wish had been the case.

*"I wish I had been less distracted....I wish I had not hurt my child...I wish I had known then what I know now...."*

Cry if you need to. You might find yourself yawning, which lets out those feelings. Just breathe into them and let them go.

Then, write a letter to your child.

Acknowledge what your child deserved, and what you wish had been the case.

Be honest. Your child will never see this letter.

But on some deep soul level, he or she will feel it.

Promise to do better.

Then write down the specific support you need, and will give yourself, so that you can indeed do better. You don't have to do everything today. Just map out the next steps.

Commit to one thing you will begin doing differently to give yourself the support you need. Put the letter away in a safe place so that you can re-visit it when you need inspiration to keep trying.

Later, when you're with your child, you'll find that you're showing up differently.

You won't be sharing your grief about the past, which might make your child feel unsafe.

But you will be acknowledging that sometimes in the past, your child may have felt like you didn't understand. You will acknowledge that you love your child, no matter what, and you could never love anyone more.

Your emotional generosity now will signal to your child that you're able to be his or her safe place in a whole new way. Notice how your child looks at you with new hope.

Notice how open your heart feels.

Commit to giving yourself the support you need to keep choosing love.

## PRACTICE WITH YOUR CHILD

### Print out and post on your refrigerator

#### Alternatives to Punishment

When you're upset at your child, what could you do besides punishing? Below, list as many things as you can think of. I've listed some we've talked about to get you started.

1. Stop, drop (your agenda – just temporarily!) and breathe!
2. Empathize as you set the limit.
3. Redirect.
4. Tell the child what she CAN do instead of what she CAN'T do.
5. Give choices.
6. Use "When, then..." ("When we've cleaned up your room, we can go to the playground.")
7. Use "When you're ready..." ("When you're ready, I know you will think of the perfect way to make things better with your brother.")
8. Express your feelings and ask for your child's help. ("I'm worried that we need to go now or we'll be late....I need you to put on your shoes now.")
9. Meet your child's need to feel valued. ("I love it when you help me like this...I couldn't have done it without you!")
10. Meet the need that is driving the behavior.
11. Find a win-win solution.
12. Make it fun.
13. Grab your child up in a big hug and say "Are you out of hugs again? Let's see what we can do about that!"
14. Say "I wonder each of us could do to make things better now."

## Week 7: Transition to Peaceful Parenting

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23. \_\_\_\_\_

## REFLECTION AFTER PRACTICE

Many parents worry that they're letting their child "get away with something" when they don't punish misbehavior. But punishing doesn't stop misbehavior. In fact, because it makes kids feel bad about themselves, doesn't help them with emotions, and erodes the parent-child connection, punishment creates more misbehavior. When kids are acting out, they're dysregulated and the brain can't learn. If we can help kids to feel safe and connected, they can start regulating their emotions, which helps them choose better behavior.

1. What are the positive things you're noticing about your child now that you're finding ways to stop yelling, start connecting, and coach your child for emotional intelligence and better behavior?
2. Have you been able to move beyond discipline, to find other alternatives when your child is acting out? What have you tried?
3. How are you calming yourself enough to try these alternatives?
4. How did your child react when you used an alternative to discipline?

