

Book review



The Mindful Parent

How to stay sane, stay calm and stay connected to your kids

Category: Book Reviews / Self-help

Author: Pastiroff, S.

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Summary: Author Shirley Pastiroff is a counsellor, mindfulness trainer and parent coach. She has trained thousands of parents in the techniques described in this book.

From the very first page I was sold on this book. The author introduces us to her world through a vivid description of her interactions with her kids - the examples are real, and the admission of her perceived flaws and the trials of parenting are affirming. Her experience in the parenting realm is vast, with five kids to wrangle, alongside her work as a counsellor. I was ready to trust her and wanted to know more, as I often feel like I am blundering through this parenting gig especially with the added stress of everyday life.

Pastiroff offers tools and strategies to become more self-aware and mindful, presenting parents with ways to pause and reflect rather than diving in to criticise and try to control their kids. It feels much like a self-care book for parents, reiterating that a parent who feels present is going to be more available to connect and support their kids.

The book delves into neuroplasticity, core beliefs, emotions, cognitive behavioural therapy and mindfulness. The first half looks at honing personal skills that allow parents to be more mindful of their emotions and adapt healthier ways of thinking. I got the most out of the sections 'the "my shit" box' and 'ways we disconnect' - they were real eye openers and I learnt a lot about my parenting style. The second half looks at skills to help parents connect with their kids in ways that are empathic and genuine.

Pastiroff aimed to develop tools that were accessible and simple to apply, I think she succeeded. For example, the exercise regarding green, orange and red brain states, providing a simple way to make sense of the multiple unconscious reactions we have daily. Like many other parents I am sure, I am often stuck in the 'orange to-do state' most my day, with the occasional 'red outburst or panic'. I can see that I need to invest time in my own self-care to ensure I make it to a 'peaceful green state' more often - so I can be more emotionally available when communicating with my son. This book provides many ah-ha moments and useful tools, I will definitely be purchasing my own copy.

Reviewed by Kim Higginson, Information Management Specialist, MHF

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