

The Compassionate Response Exercise

When you are holding something at a distance, you get tired quickly.

When you hold something close to your heart, you can hold it for a long time.

This meditation helps you hold your children close at the times they need you the most: during melt-downs, stand-offs, tantrums... the times when they are calling to you to notice them and love them and help them, because they don't know how to handle the situation themselves yet.

This meditation requires practice before you can use it "in the heat of the moment." You don't have to spend hours on it, but just a few minutes, a couple of times in a week – more if you can – enough time so that when you need it, it's there.

1. Getting centred.

This is an important part of the exercise. You may need to use this in extremis, when a big melt down is going on, and it has knocked you off centre.

Breathe gently; focus your attention on your heart area.

Whatever self-talk helps you to calm down, talk it!

(Relax! Breathe! Calm down!)

2. Golden Moment

Imagine your child happy, at peace, engaged, in the flow of his or her life. Several images may come. Let them be, until one becomes clearer than the others. Keep that image in your mind. Notice how you feel, especially in your body.

Now release or breathe the picture out. This may sound unusual – just try it!

3. Soul Fever

Imagine your child upset, withdrawn, angry, down. Allow the images to surface, until one picture is clearer. Hold this image. Notice how you feel, especially in your body.

Practice drawing close or breathing in the picture of the soul fevered child. Just try it!

4. Both together.

Hold both pictures in your imagination at once. Move your attention gently from one to the other. Draw close or breathe in the soul fevered or shadow picture, then breathe out the light-filled *Golden Moment* picture.

Use it, don't lose it!

Practice this exercise in quiet moments, alone. Then the next time there is a melt down on its way, do the 4 steps of meditation before you open your mouth. Something different than usual may come out....

Sun, you cast your light above my head.

Stars, you shine over field and Earth.

Beasts, you move and stir on Mother Earth.

Plants, you live by strength of Earth and Sun.

Stones, you give firmness to Beasts and Plants,

And to me, the Human Being, in whose head and heart

Lives the power of the universe,

And who walks through the world with grace and love.

Verse for parents and children by Rudolph Steiner

Kind Hearts

Kind hearts are the gardens,

Kind thoughts are the roots,

Kind words are the blossoms,

Kind deeds are the fruits;

Love is the sweet sunshine

That warms into life,

For loving others dearly

Will always warm our hearts.