

Please Take Good Care of Your Inner Child

Are you aware that deep within you lies your inner child who has strong feelings, real needs and powerful longings? Now of course, you do not have a physical child sitting in your chest or nestling into your solar plexus. But you do have a bundle of energy within your overall system that represents the stored energy of all your childhood experiences, desires, fears and traumas.

You are clearly not the same personality-self that you were when you were 2, 5 or 10. However, these younger versions of yourself have not totally disappeared. They are still a really influential part of you, albeit in a way that is sometimes rather hard to pin down.

A big problem for many adults is that when they are over reacting to some minor incident in the present, or finding themselves engaging in some kind of addictive behaviour that they know is really bad for them, they have no idea that it is actually their inner child who is acting up rather than their more mature, present-day self.

Another big problem many adults have is that they are so busy making a living or dutifully looking after others that they never allow their inner child to come out to play. I have even been on holiday with grown men who kept dealing with work emails throughout their annual 2 week leave! I also know some incredibly kind and loving adult women who devote all their time and energy to looking after others, leaving no time whatsoever for nurturing their own neglected, depressed inner child or for having any kind of childlike fun in their lives.

Last week whilst I was on retreat in Assisi, I read a book by Bruce Davis called *The Magical Child Within You* that was first published way back in 1977. Reading it nudged me to share some reflections with you this month how we can begin to honour and nurture our inner child who is often still suffering from the emotional damage caused by a childhood trauma of some kind. And by the way, little children can be traumatised by something as minor as a parent screaming angrily at them for just a minute or two.

The first step in beginning to honour and nurture our inner child is to realise that we all have one. If this whole concept is pretty new to you, you might like to

read an enlightening book about the Inner Child such as John Bradshaw's highly praised *Homecoming: Reclaiming and Championing Your Inner Child*.

Next, we need to find a way to communicate with the part of us that is basically still frozen in the past. We need to keep reassuring our inner child that we have got their back and that we love them unconditionally. These days, if I notice that I am getting anxious or a little down, I tend to pause, breathe slowly, connect to my infinitely compassionate and wise heart and then lovingly reassure my inner child that I am now a responsible adult who will always do my best to protect her from harm. I even occasionally talk out loud to my inner child, whispering to her something like, 'I am so sorry you are anxious right now, but I am here with you, protecting you from harm to the absolute best of my ability because I love you so much'.

If something happens in my current life that seems to trigger my fearful inner child, I find that it is really soothing and healing to apologise to her for not protecting her from harm. For example, a few weeks ago, I went to have my teeth cleaned by a dental hygienist, and it was so unbearably painful that I kept begging the hygienist to stop. Unfortunately, the young hygienist thought that 'Please stop!' just meant that I needed a short break and it wasn't until about 30 minutes had passed and my whole body started to shake that she finally realised it was all too much for me. I then ran home and cried hysterically for quite some time.

It wasn't until some days later, that I realised that the pain I had experienced whilst my teeth were being cleaned had probably triggered stored trauma from some extremely painful dental treatment I had when I was about 11 years old. When I finally apologised to my inner child for not protecting her effectively from further painful dental treatment, I experienced a big wave of calm after so much tension and anxiety.

The other way I connect to my inner child these days is to ask her what she would like to do for fun from time to time, especially after she has sat through something I wanted to do as an adult - such as sitting still in meditation for a whole hour! Now you may well ask how I know what my inner child wants to do for fun. Well, sometimes I imagine an inner, childlike voice saying to me something like, 'Let's watch Mary Poppins again!' But usually, I just put my hands

over my heart and trust that my intuitive-self knows what my inner child needs or wants at any given time.

Now please do not misunderstand me here. Honouring my inner child's desires definitely does not mean that I am going to eat four bars of chocolate in one go or take my top off in a park on a really hot day!! Honouring the needs and desires of our inner child should simply be part of our commitment as a kind and compassionate adult to re-parent our wounded child with great love, but also great responsibility.

I have been healing my wounded inner child for over 40 years now, and although that healing process has been incredibly challenging at times, it has definitely changed my life for the better exponentially.

Whereas in my 20s I was chronically depressed, and, to be brutally honest, at times an hysterical drama queen, I am now an exceptionally healthy and happy older woman who enjoys an almost miraculous life filled with so many moments of deep joy and wonder. Now some of this radical transformation may well be down to the powerful spiritual awakening I experienced in my late 40s. However, without following a parallel path of deep emotional and energetic healing, I am convinced that I would not be nearly as 'together' as I now feel – at least most of the time.

So, the crux of this message is as follows:

You have an incredibly loveable and totally innocent inner child who is desperate to experience your love and protection.

Your inner child is probably still holding some deep wounds from traumatic experiences that they were never able to process effectively in the past. It is now your responsibility to get help for your distressed inner child – either by seeking some kind of professional counselling or therapy or simply by learning how to communicate your unconditional love and support to him/her.

So if at any time in the coming month of June you notice that you are feeling anxious or low, maybe you would like to consider the possibility that your inner child is upset? Then just try smiling warmly to that sweet child and do or say something to reassure him or her that this moment now all is well.

The Beatles hit the nail on the head. *All you need is love!* There is no need to make healing your wounded inner child too complicated or painful. Just recognise that your adorable inner child sometimes feels incredibly anxious, lonely and lost. Then, simply take a little time out to send wave after wave of unconditional love and support to her/him until you notice a sense of deep calm and safety washing over you. Simple!

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