



Welcome to The Parent Program Week 1 (15 weeks)





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 **The core belief this course is based on:**
Every child born in this world wants to love and be loved.

Please read every sentence in this picture carefully and really think & feel & think how this is for you.

My child


Wants to be loved by me
Wants to love me

-  ***Always has a positive intention***
-  ***Wants to***
 - ***Be cared for***
 - ***Be healthy and happy***
 - ***Know and understand***
 - ***Be heard***
 - ***Learn***
-  ***Wants to live their own dreams***
-  ***Develop to their full potential***

My child wants to be loved by me and wants to love me. I believe that every child on this planet is born wanting to be loved by their parents and wants to love them.

Not one child is born thinking: "Now how can I make life miserable for my parents and for others?". That includes you and me. It includes our parents, too. We all have come to love and be loved.

My child always has a positive intention: What changes is not their intention, but how we look at them.

 *I love my newborn baby daughter a lot. I am tired, but able to deal with life ok. It's all new, this parenting thing, but I am enjoying myself. One day my daughter starts to cry. She cries for hours. I get more tired. My daughter cries for long periods every day for weeks. I am exhausted. I hear her first cry just as I slip into a light sleep. And I get angry, frustrated and see and hear only her crying. Somehow I change my outlook on her. She is my source of exhaustion. Before she was born I could sleep. I could do things I can't anymore because she is here, crying, crying, crying.*



"I enjoyed my little boy for his cute behavior as he challenged everyone, including me. Now he is 14 it is not so cute anymore and I get angry with him on a regular basis.

My child always has a positive intention: research has shown that children always start communication in a positive way. It is the parents who, for many reasons, don't hear or notice that. They react from their own interpretation, which may have nothing to do with what their child just did. If we teach our children that we don't see their positive intention, over time they may learn to fulfill their needs for attention, love and care by turning to more negative attention or fulfillment seeking methods.

*"I am sitting talking with my neighbor as my child is interrupting the conversation. I don't hear him as I am listening to my neighbor. "Dad, can I have...?". "Dad?" "Dad?" "Dad?" **DAAAAAAD!!!??**" "O, what is it now, can't you ask something normally instead of this yelling?" "But I did!" No you didn't, you yelled!" So now I have not heard his positive start, his positive intention, and I also told him he lied. If I do that as many times as it can happen in any day, I will certainly not reinforce a positive impression on both sides. Maybe I was feeling embarrassed as I tried to listen to my neighbor, trying to get some adult conversation in for once. Whatever the reason was, I didn't hear or want to hear my son. That has nothing to do with my child. If I go with the positive intention my child always has, I will realize that he didn't feel heard. I can stop and tell him, "Sorry I didn't hear you as I was listening to our neighbor. Next time please wait until we stop talking and then try to get my attention, so I can listen to our neighbor, ok? What is it you would like?"*

My child wants to be cared for; be healthy and happy; know and understand; be heard; learn. Each child (including us) was born with these basic desires.

"To be cared for": from the physical to the mental and spiritual, we want to feel the care of our parents, over time becoming more independent, but still wanting to feel that they care.

"To be healthy and happy": to receive food, shelter and medical care when needed and to achieve happiness wherever we can, preferably with our parents!

"To know and understand": we all want to know about what is important in our lives; get the information; be involved in our world and understand what is happening.

"To Be Heard": Every child wants to be listened to, their voice included in decisions that affect their lives. Children have wisdom that can be easily overlooked if we don't listen well.

"To Learn": each child is born wanting to learn so much, seeking this learning all waking hours of the day, and their primary source is their parents.

"Parents are needed to help their children. From a baby's needs for food, sleep, attention, laughter and new diapers, to a teenager's need for a solid home with clear values, all children need a parent's help. We can fall back on those, challenge those, experiment with those and how they fit or don't fit, all of us needed and need parents to be there, give their fullest attention, share the information, teach us how and why. So I can go my own way knowing that you will be there. To love me, cheer me on, give me the not always nice feedback when needed. So I can safely experiment and become the full me I want to be, learning without fear of not knowing; falling knowing you will care for me when it hurts and feeding me when I cry because I have no other way of telling you yet.

My child wants to live their own dreams. Each child is born with its own dreams. They don't come to fulfill their parents' dreams, to do as they hope, to give them glory. Sure, all children




hope that their parents will enjoy their successes, feel pride and love for whatever dreams they will fulfill. Because that is what they would love to see in their parents.

“ There is a big difference between the boy who strives to be part of the sports team because he wants it and the boy who needs to get on the team because his dad wants it. Does the parent want to succeed through the child or does the parent want their child to succeed in what they want? Many are the children who become what their parents want them to be. Is that because they feel accepted in their unique being, with their own talents? Or because they still seek the love and approval that is not a given just by being born as their child? This child can be 4, 10, 25 or 50, even 75 years old. Do they do this because it is the right thing to do? For themselves or for their parents? ”

My child wants to develop to his or her full potential. Each child wants to reach for the stars in what they can do. No child is born thinking in limits, thinking “I can’t”. If we as parents stimulate them, support them, help them to live to their full potential, they will seek to learn, expand in every corner of their being and find that part that they are gifted in.

“ From the artist to the computer programmer, from the road builder to the priest. From the fabulous mother to the writer, from the dad to the sports hero. They all were born without knowing limits. If we show them the way to develop their skills, train them to believe in the impossible and achieve it step by step, they will find their way to their own inner specialty, their hearts desire and mission. If we don’t get in the way with our own trained minds, minds which often have learned from not so nice experiences, minds which have taken on a self limitation. “Someone told me I could not do that and I believed them. Now I can’t.” “My mother always told me I can achieve anything I want to. And I have.” ”

“My Child.” I would like you to see this child. Every day. In yourself and in your children. In your parents, neighbors and friends. In the guy who drives like a maniac, in the politician who is seeking your vote. In the little girl that laughs so wonderfully. In the little boy by the water. In the teenager challenging your curfew. In the young adult who is choosing a totally different career than you’d hoped for. And see what they hope for.

 **Attitudes.** This course offers you different perspectives or attitudes to handle every situation you can encounter in a positive, constructive way as a parent.

Your best parenting will come out when you act from your love for your child.

- “ To bring this more to the forefront than the challenges and problems you may feel right now, I want you to think about 3 things you like about your child and write them down before you proceed with reading. ”*
- “ When you have finished, reflect on how you like and love your child. Then go on with reading the text. ”*

In the next weeks you will learn new attitudes and how to put on “new glasses” to see what helps you. Not everyone will use all of these tools. Most people will find a few specific ones



more helpful than others. Take the time to experience them and see what helps you, with your child. We are not one fit, not one mold, so we need different tools to help us step back and look through new lenses at a situation in which we could react from old patterns.

Reaction is driven by what we think we know already. It is usually based in fear. I wish you the ability to act freshly in each new situation. Life will surprise you, if you haven't categorized it all under "I know" already. These attitudes are tools, not anything more. Helpful ways to allow yourself to act differently, as you take that split second before, in the middle of, or after you react.

If you have children who are a bit older or teenagers, realize that in this program you are receiving new tools or tools you have known about but didn't use before. Be kind to yourself if you have moments in which you think things like, "If I would have known this earlier". You are taking action now, today and that is the only moment you can actually do anything. Yesterday is gone, whether we like it or not. Today is now, so embrace it with all you have now and what you can do now. Your child will benefit today as you make a shift and use new tools to build a better relationship. Whatever happened before today impacts the relationship, no doubt. But your child lives today, just like you. And they would rather have a parent who is willing to pick up new tools with new energy, than keep on doing what happened before if that created experiences that didn't always help in building a positive relationship.

The Learning Parent

Life is learning

I want to and can learn from every situation, from every issue, and from everyone

 ***My child is my teacher***


 ***You are my teacher***

The Learning Parent sees everything, every situation and every person as something or someone they can learn from. When you see life and everything and everyone you encounter in this way, life is never threatening but always inviting.

Everyone who has a child or has cared for children in any way knows that they are great teachers. Not always in things we want to learn, not always at times we are open to learning. But the lessons they offer are often the most powerful we come across in our lives.

If we see how a child comes to life and wants to learn - and we want them to learn, what better way to show them how than by seeing life as one big learning experience ourselves?

Learning doesn't stop after school, when we "know" the job. We learn every day, all the time. If we embrace life like that we teach children to learn. Learn their whole life long.

 *My daughter loves climbing on a stage and to be in front of people. I would rather run to the back of the room and get out the moment participation is requested. I see her love for being on stage, without fear for what people may think. And I reflect on my own thoughts, on how I have judged it all from my own experiences, being laughed at as a*



kid. And slowly I shed most of my immediate fear, as I look at her and her experiences. I learn from her. My daughter is my greatest teacher.

- ☞ *I meet that co-worker again, the one who annoys me so. He brings out anger and fear in me, because I can't stand how he talks about and judges people; and at the same time I don't want his attention on me.. I build up my courage and address his attitude with him. It doesn't matter how he reacts: he has helped me learn to stand up for what I believe in, in spite of my inner turmoil. Sometimes the person who is the most difficult for you is your biggest teacher.*

The Learning Parent looks for what can be learned. Because when you look at any situation or person that way, you have a positive, growth-focused approach to life. And wouldn't you want your child to be able to learn like that?

The challenge is to turn learning into a fun adventure as much as possible. And when we have trained ourselves as parents to try to do that, we can teach our kids too.

We can do that every day with the simplest of tasks, or the most complex issues. It just takes perspective and the will to do it.

A key point is to break learning down into small steps, so things are not overwhelming.

For them and for us. Because we want to create small successes, not big failures. Successes that drive us forward.

- ☞ *I have picked up a violin. I don't know how to read a note; I have no musical ear, nor the ambition to perform. I just want to enjoy the violin. If I expect myself to play well and fast in a few weeks, I will drop that violin pretty quick. If I look forward to making a nice tone, trying to hold my fingers right for a few minutes, chances are that I will feel successful at least part of the time. And I will likely enjoy that violin a lot longer.*

I wish you the desire to learn, to practice and to grow. The exercises will at times challenge you in areas that may be sensitive or hard to go through. Always remember that you are making this investment for your child as well as for yourself.

Following are the exercises for this week and two pages with "My Child", and "The Learning Parent. You can print them out and hang them up if you'd like.



The Parent Program Week 1 Exercises

Attitude: Start the day and end the day thinking about something you like about your child. Before you do the exercises, think about how you like something today or in general about your child. Something they did, said, how they looked, a feeling you had. Anything positive will help you get into a mood that will help you embrace learning for and with your child.

Learning:

Your learning investment: Input = output.

The more you practice, the more you experience: the deeper your learning will be. When you speak/write about what you are learning and share experiences with others, you will retain more and increase your understanding. When you complete it by celebrating your successes on a daily basis, you will feed your brain the positive recognition it needs to truly change behavior.

1. The minimum: Once a week reading the email and listening to the audio file (together about 30 minutes), do the minimum daily exercises of 10-15 minutes.
2. The little extras: Take the time to reflect during the day on your thoughts and actions as related to the content and exercise you did today. Hang up the print out sheets and look at them. Answer your kids' questions about them.
3. The sauce on top: Sharing: Find a buddy, create a learning community, by sharing with others, either your partners in parenting or others who are learning or want to learn. A supportive learning community increases your learning, as we all need that little boost from time to time. Parents at the courses enjoyed sharing with others as much as the course itself.
4. The full meal deal: Creating positive memories by writing 3-5 successes everyday. Get a little notebook to enjoy, to look back at when you feel less confident and as a memory of your learning. Write down stories or successes.

Exercises:

✦ **Every day:** Think of something you like about your child at the start of the day and at the end of the day so you embrace the whole day in positive thoughts about your child. Before you start the exercise, reflect on how you like something in you child.

✦ **Day 1.** 10-15 minutes: **Every child is born wanting to love and be loved.** Think about how this is for you personally. How do you feel? Do you want to love, to be loved? How did you feel as a child, did you feel loved? Did you feel that your parents felt your love for them? Think about some situations in which you didn't feel loved and how that felt. Think about some situations in which you did feel loved and how that felt. If you had a hard time as a child, try to close this exercise with showering love over yourself; as you deserve to be loved, every day of your life. And so does your child. And you will be better able to do that when you feel showered in love.

(Extra) During the day, try to see everybody as people who want to love and to be loved. However their way of dealing with life and that desire may come across. Look at your child with those eyes and see your child wanting to love you and to be loved by you. Shower people with love and see how some of them can change in an instant.

✦ **Day 2.** 10-15 minutes. **My Child always has a positive intention.** You probably have many interactions with your child every day. Think of one where it was clear to you that your child had a positive intention. Look at how you reacted/acted. Now think of a situation in which you looked at it or reacted – for whatever reason – as if your child did not have a positive intention, i.e. was sneaky, overbearing, angry, stole, did



something very wrong, etc. Now think of that situation KNOWING that underneath that your child had a positive intention and wanted to love and be loved: how can you look at it now? Can you find ways to act/see this situation differently? How can you help your child bring out that positive intention?

(Extra) Throughout the day look at any situation, at your children, at anybody, from the perspective that they have a positive intention in what they do or say. And then act with that in mind. Act/see your thoughts, knowing that you always have a positive intention, too. Sometimes survival, self protection is the upper layer of positive intention, underneath is always a layer of wanting to love and be loved. Watch to see whether you can discover that in your child, in others.

Day 3. 10-15 minutes. **My child wants to know and understand.** What do you tell your children? How much information do you give them on things that affect their life? Think about how you do this, consciously or unconsciously. Do you tell them why they need to eat vegetables, why math is important, how sick grandma really is? Children sense much more than we assume. It is real, age-adequate information they need that helps them either understand what they sense, or gives them information from which they can decide how to deal with things. 1 year-olds know when parents fight; 4 year-olds can handle death and dying. It is how we deal with information about what is going on that makes it easier or more difficult. If we deny things children instinctively know, it becomes confusing and we become less trustworthy. If we use grownup language, they won't understand. If we explain things at their level in small bits, and no more than they want to know, children can handle almost anything.

(Extra) Throughout the day look at everything that goes on from the angle of information sharing. Does my child know what they need to know?

Be age adequate: From why I peel the potatoes, to not going close to the fire.

From why I am going to vote in the election, to how the family finances are run.

Listen to your own stories in your head about why you do or do not want to tell your child something.

Day 4. 10-15 minutes **My Child wants to be heard and My Child wants to learn.** Think of moments your child wanted to be heard. Were you ready to listen? Did you include what your child said in a decision that affected them? It can be really small or big. "Mom, I don't like broccoli." "I don't like it when you yell at me, I get afraid" Think of the things your child is learning: when do they enjoy learning, what do they like to learn. How do you help them learn? Are you stimulating, limiting, supporting, pressuring? How do you learn, and how is that different from how your child learns?

(Extra) Listen to your child more closely today. Not only as he or she speaks to you, but in his or her own self-talk and when interacting with others. What are the messages you could hear when listening more closely? Take a breath and listen a bit more before you speak. Let your child finish, before you think you know what they are trying to say. Learning: Try to create moments of learning consciously, so you are prepared to help, to offer advice, to be open to your child needing you.



- ✂ **Day 5.** 10-15 minutes. **My child wants to live their own dreams and live to their full potential.** What are the dreams you had/have that you haven't fulfilled yet? What are your child's dreams? Do you know? Do you let your children free in their own dreams or do you have dreams for them? Full potential: Are you living up to your full potential? What do you do to reach your own stars? Step by little step? How can you help your child reach their full potential, in everyday little steps? What will you do today to help them find their dream, to help them take that little step? What are you going to do today for yourself?

(Extra) Today be aware as you focus on your child's dreams and their full potential: how do you feel about that? Are you sad, jealous because you may not have had that experience? Are you happy to think about, discover theirs? Happy to help them reach for their own stars, their own full potential, freely and without need to do so for you? Take little steps throughout the day for yourself: what dream, ever so small can you take a step towards fulfilling, while being so busy parenting? Doing that you will help them do it too.

- ✂ **Day 6.** 10-15 minutes. **The Learning Parent.** Think about examples of people and situations that helped you learn. Think about difficult as well as positive stimulating moments. Think about who they are, what defining moments have stuck with you. Did you take on the positive messages? Did a negative message linger with you for years and years? Think about how you want to influence your child's learning. Do you want to be a positive influence; do you want to help them? How do you do that now?

(Extra) When you speak with your child, listen to how you give messages. Do you give positive messages or negative messages? Can you change your wording to make it more inviting, focused on learning? Are you age-adequate in how you say things? Do you expect enough or too much from your child?

- ✂ **Day 7.** 10-15 minutes. **The Learning Parent.** Think of a few situations with your child that were difficult for you. What was your child trying to learn in these situations? Can you see that your child was learning? Whether through challenging boundaries, standing up for itself, figuring out whether he or she can do something by themselves. What was your child trying to learn and how can you help them with that? Think about steps you can take to try and find your child's learning while you are IN the situation.

(Extra) Take the time to step back and see what the learning in a situation is. For you and for your child and before you act. In one situation try to talk about what your child is learning, so they understand what is happening to them better. Think about how your child learns and what is easy and difficult in that for you. How you can step back and deal with what is difficult for you better, so it doesn't come out in reacting rather than helping them to learn.

End of week 1: Take a few minutes to think about what you have learned this week. Did it work, do you need to change the timing or how you do things to increase the impact of your potential learning?



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Wants to live their own dreams



Develop to their full potential



The Learning Parent

Life is learning



*I want to and can learn from
every situation, from every issue, and
from everyone*



*My child is my teacher
You are my teacher*