

## Building a Stronger Parent-Child Relationship: A 90 Minute Workbook for Reflection and Growth

Parenting is a challenging journey, and it's not uncommon to experience moments of **doubt** or **uncertainty** along the way. This workbook is designed to help you **reflect** on your parenting journey and identify areas where you can improve to be the parent you want to be. Taking a dedicated time to reflect on your parenting practice, can help you gain clarity and insight into your parenting style and goals.

This workbook is designed to take approximately 30 minutes to complete, perfect for a calming activity after lunch or a Sunday afternoon.

- I encourage you to print out the workbook pages, or use pen and paper to complete the reflective exercises.
- Remember, creating a positive and healthy dynamic between children and parents is a process that requires **ongoing effort**.

While this workbook is not a comprehensive solution, it is an **excellent first step** that I recommend to all parents looking to strengthen their relationship with their child.

First Stage: The Foundation (40 minutes)

Allocate a few minutes for each of the questions below, and **write continuously until the timer goes off**. Allow yourself to keep writing without any interruption until the end of the five-minute period.

Question #1: What are all the words or phrases that you **absolutely do not** want to be associated with your parenting style or parenting? Which words or phrases would be the most devastating to you? (Examples could be neglectful, overbearing, dismissive, absent, harmful, etc.) 5 mins

Question #3: Think back to moments when you may have acted in ways that **do not align** with the parent you wish to be. Take 10 minutes to reflect on these moments and make a list of them. Even if it was a small incident or something you only thought about, write it down without judgment. This exercise is not meant to make you feel guilty or ashamed, but to **bring awareness** to areas where you can improve your parenting. ( 10mins)

Question #4: Take some time to reflect on occasions when you may have **fallen short** of being the parent you envisioned for yourself. Allow yourself to feel the discomfort of those moments without criticizing or blaming yourself. Simply observe the emotions that arise. This step is crucial in acknowledging the significance of being the parent you want to be. Note down the sensations and feelings that arise during this reflection. Engaging in this reflection process can be compared to a cleansing process that assists you in making progress towards your parenting goals.. The more deeply you engage in this introspection, the more potent the next step will be. Take as much time as you need for this exercise. (10 minutes)

Question #5: Is there anywhere you need to make **amends** for your past parenting behaviour? Perhaps you need to have a heart-to-heart conversation with your child and apologize for any hurtful words or actions. Perhaps you need to make amends by spending quality time with your child to make up for any hurtful behaviours or actions in the past. It might not be necessary, but taking the initiative to make amends can help repair any damaged relationships and bring about a sense of connection and positive shift. ( 10 minutes)

Question #6: What are the contrasting words or phrases to the top ten words that you would **want to hear** in relation to your parenting? For instance, instead of hearing "impatient" you would want to hear "patient," and instead of "unapproachable" you would want to hear "approachable." ( 5 minutes)

### **Reflective Exercise (15 minutes)**

Take out your top ten list of parenting qualities and find a quiet and comfortable place to reflect on those words. With a relaxed and curious mind, ask yourself, “How can I incorporate these qualities more into my parenting? What actions can I take or behaviors can I stop to ensure that my parenting style reflects these qualities?” Also, pay attention to areas where your parenting may be out of alignment with these ideals. Write down any insights or reflections that come to mind below.

### **Action Plan (15 minutes)**

NOTE: Make sure you schedule these following tasks into your calendar or planner for the coming year. What will you do in the next 24 hours to incorporate these qualities into your parenting? Think about specific actions you can take to align with these values and set a positive example for your children. Write down these actions and commit to following through with them. Remember, small steps can lead to big changes over time.

*“What we don't need in the midst of struggle is shame for being human.” - Brené Brown.*

As a parent myself, I have completed this exercise every year and always like reminding myself with Brene Brown's quote that it's okay to make mistakes and struggle in our parenting journey. We are all human, and it's important to show ourselves **compassion** and kindness as we navigate the ups and downs of raising children.

By taking the time to reflect on our past behaviors and making a plan to incorporate positive qualities into our parenting style, we are showing up for ourselves and our families in a powerful way. Let us **embrace our imperfections** and strive towards growth and connection with our children.

*I congratulate you for creating the time and showing up to engage in this reflective practice. Well done!*

*I encourage you to Try :) Writing your own definition of parenting, what works for you and your child, what do you want to model to them? What feels good to you? Take as much time as you want and be true to yourself .*