

*A Book Review presented by Greene Towne Parent  
and Parent Association Co-Chair Parissa Ferra  
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# RAISING GOOD HUMANS

A Mindful Guide to Breaking the Cycle of  
Reactive Parenting and Raising Kind, Confident Kids

*by Hunter Clarke-Fields, MSAE*





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Hunter Clarke-Fields, MSAE

## Hunter Clarke-Fields

- Mindfulness mentor, coach, and popular podcaster with over 20 years of experience in meditation and yoga practices
- Host of the Mindful Mama Podcast, ranked in the top 0.5% of all podcasts globally
- Number one bestselling author of both Raising Good Humans and Raising Good Humans Every Day
- Creator of the Mindful Parenting Course and Teacher Training, having taught mindfulness to thousands worldwide
- Over 750,000 copies sold — an essential guide endorsed by Tara Brach, Dr. Gabor Maté, and Dr. Shefali

*“ To raise the children we hope to raise, we have to learn to become the person we hoped to be. ”*

# The Core Problem

## Reactive Parenting & Generational Cycles



### The Reactivity Cycle

- Stress triggers the amygdala, hijacking rational thought in the prefrontal cortex
- Parents react with frustration, or fear — on autopilot
- Children learn these reactive patterns through observation
- The cycle perpetuates across generations



### Clarke-Fields' Insight

- Most parenting advice fails because it ignores the biological stress response
- Inner work through mindfulness is essential — not optional
- Children learn from what parents model, not what parents say
- Change in families comes from the inside out

# Understanding Your Brain

Why We React Instead of Respond



## The Amygdala

Your brain's threat-detection center triggers fight, flight, or freeze reactions automatically. Under stress, it hijacks your ability to think clearly and respond with intention.

VS



## The Prefrontal Cortex

Responsible for rational thinking, empathy, and self-awareness. Mindfulness practice strengthens this area, enabling thoughtful responses instead of knee-jerk reactions.

*Mindfulness meditation shrinks amygdala reactivity and strengthens prefrontal cortex function*

PART I

# The Inner Work

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Breaking the cycle of reactivity through  
mindfulness, self-compassion, and awareness



Mindfulness



Self-Compassion



Awareness

# Mindfulness Techniques

Practical Tools for Staying Calm Under Pressure



## Meditation Practice

Daily mindfulness meditation — even just 5 minutes — rewires the brain to reduce reactivity and build emotional resilience over time.



## RAIN Technique

Recognize the feeling, Allow it to exist, Investigate with curiosity, and Nurture yourself with self-compassion in difficult moments.



## Self-Compassion

Treat yourself with the same kindness you'd offer a good friend. Replace self-criticism with understanding — imperfect parenting is human.



## Pause & Respond

When triggered, take a conscious breath before reacting. This brief pause activates the prefrontal cortex and interrupts the autopilot cycle.

# Understanding Triggers

Practical Tools for Staying Calm Under Pressure



## Adopt a Mantra

Walk mindfully to release the tension in your body. Repeat a mantra to yourself several times when you feel frustrated. Remind yourself you can make a choice to remain calm.



## Think like a teacher

Don't take misbehavior personally. Instead, look at it as a learning opportunity. Ask yourself: ***What does my child need to learn and how I can teach them that?***



## Whisper Instead

Treat yourself with the same kindness you'd offer a good friend or a friend's child. Replace self-criticism with understanding — imperfect parenting is human.



## Release muscles

Sigh it out. This promotes relaxation. When triggered, take a conscious breath before reacting. This brief pause activates the prefrontal cortex and interrupts the autopilot cycle.

PART II

# Communication Skills

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Raising kind, confident children through  
respectful dialogue and empathetic connection



Listening



Connection



Problem-Solving

# Communication Strategies

Building Cooperation Through Connection



## Reflective Listening

Listen to understand, not to fix.  
Mirror your child's feelings back to them so they feel heard, validated, and safe to express emotions.



## Respectful Dialogue

Replace commands with collaboration. Use "I" statements, describe the problem, and invite your child to help find solutions together.



## Mindful Conflict Resolution

Approach conflicts as opportunities to teach. Stay calm, acknowledge all perspectives, and work together toward mutually respectful outcomes.

# Raising Kind, Confident Kids

Practical Tools for Staying Calm Under Pressure



## Listening to Help & Heal

Our choice of words makes a huge impact on our day-to-day life as parents. We want to be conscious of what we say, not just repeating old lines that were used on as children.



## Listen to Cultivate Connection

Since parents tend to autopilot, it is often our children's relationships that we may withdraw. Listening attentively is the way we can truly understand our children, and they feel seen and heard.



## What Not to say

Avoid barriers to communication. Most of were not taught skillful ways to respond to someone who has a problem. Barriers to communication include blaming, ordering, dismissing, offering solutions instead of listening to the feeling or problem.



## Change isn't easy

The honest truth is it may take time to stop these barriers and become aware of when we are using them. Reflective listening is key to helping us put a name to what our children may be feeling that moment.

# Barriers in Action



## Listening Strengthens Relationships

- When you are grounded, clear and present, you can see who has a problem and how you can help.
- Notice how children respond to barriers
- Practice the skill of reflective listening
- If you are distracted, overstressed or in autopilot, chances are strong your response will miss the mark.



## Skillful Confrontation-I Message's

- If we refrain from blaming and shaming, looking instead at how the behavior affects ourselves, our language naturally change to an "I" perspective.
- Instead of You left a mess, you are not listening try I feel discouraged when I see this big mess.
- Kids receive an I-message as a statement of fact about what the parent is feeling so it causes less resistance.

# Conflict Resolutions



## Conflict Resolution through Balancing Needs

- Both authoritative and permissive parenting approaches treat conflict resolution like a zero-sum game: one party wins and one party loses
- Figure out level of needs between parent and child for solutions
- Discipline is not meant to create obedience through punishment but via teaching mentoring and modeling for our children.



## The Hows

- Connecting During a Small Conflict - hug, touch, eye contact
- Win Win Problem Solving- Identify Needs, Brainstorm, Evaluate, Make Decisions, Check in
- Often, once we get down to the level of needs, an obvious solution will appear.
- Connect by working together

# The Eight Essential Skills

01

## Keeping Your Cool

Manage your own stress response before reacting

03

## Practicing Self-Compassion

Replace self-judgment with kindness toward yourself

05

## Listening to Help & Heal

Use reflective listening to build deep connection

07

## Solving Problems Mindfully

Resolve conflicts through collaboration, not control

02

## Disarming Your Triggers

Identify and defuse your emotional hot buttons

04

## Handling Difficult Feelings

Process challenging emotions without suppression

06

## Saying the Right Things

Communicate with respect and clear intentions

08

## Supporting a Peaceful Home

Create an environment that nurtures the whole family

# Key Takeaways

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- You can't control your children — but you can control your response
- Mindfulness practice shrinks amygdala reactivity and strengthens intentional parenting
- Children learn from what you model, not what you say — be what you want to see
- Self-compassion is not weakness — it's the foundation for patient, effective parenting
- Connection and cooperation replace control and coercion for lasting family harmony

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*“ A kinder, more compassionate world starts with kind and compassionate kids. ”*

— Hunter Clarke-Fields