

# Presence practice

It's when our values are challenged by our children, and conversely our children feel unseen and unheard, that parenting can feel like a difficult battle of wills. The more parents resort to power-over, blame, and shame, the more children disconnect to the parent, and often, themselves. Bringing presence to our own 'red flags' can help us avoid regularly ending up here.

Developing our own practice to bring presence to ourselves, our responses, and the stories we are telling ourselves about our child, and ourselves, gives us the opportunity to 'pattern interrupt' our habitual responses and forge new neural pathways.

1. Slow down – Recognise if your rushing is to avoid a feeling in you or them that is uncomfortable. Breathe into it and bring presence to your discomfort, simply observing it.
2. Add movement – Do a family 'Spotify song request' session to change the vibe
3. Notice them – Really look at your child, observing their features lovingly; ie. the dusting of freckles on their nose, the length of their eyelashes,
4. Self-audit – What are your biggest 'hurdles' where you are most likely to 'flip your lid'? Is it getting out the door on time? Or maybe it's siblings fighting? Journal to discover what the 'problem behind the problem' is for you (what do you make it mean? How does it reflect on you?) then create a plan to scaffold around it.
5. Break the label – Whatever you're saying your child 'is always', where do they display the opposite behaviour or trait? Labels are limiting, and name-calling and labelling is a way to not take responsibility and deal with our own feelings.

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