

# Becoming Your Own Loving Parent

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# Overview

- Why is reparenting important?
- Putting the Loving Parent in charge
- Becoming your own Loving Parent in daily life
- Identify reparenting resources

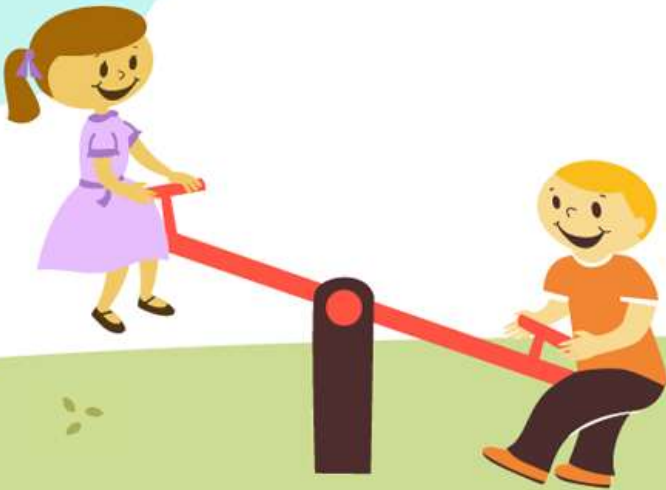


# Opening Survey

- Have you made contact with an Inner Child?
- Do you feel confident you can be a parent to that Inner Child?
- Do the terms 'Inner Child' and 'Reparenting' confuse you?



# Why Is Reparenting Important?



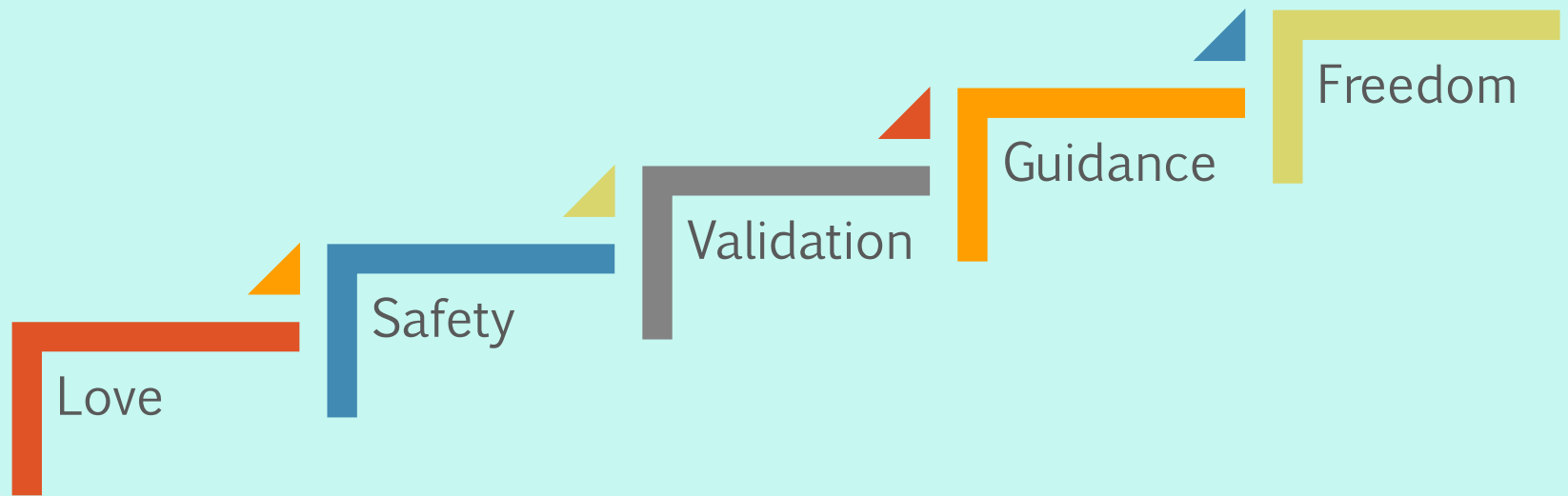
# Our Childhood Lives Within Us—Today



# Our Parenting Lives Within Us—Today



# The Needs of Healthy Childhood







# A Loving Parent ...

- Focuses on child's needs
- Accepts a child's limitations
- Provides the essentials: Love, Safety, Validation, Guidance and Encouragement
- Models healthy adult behavior
- Solves adult problems for the child: "I've Got this."
- Avoids abandonment/shame





# Supports a Healthy Child ...



- Feels secure
- Is capable of trust
- Forms attachments
- Is emotionally open, authentic, and caring
- Ready to explore a bigger world
- Responsible for choices



# Who Becomes a Healthy Adult ...



- Honors 'real identity'
- Able to share intimacy
- Sets healthy boundaries
- Not terrified of abandonment
- Chooses healthy friends and partners
- Accepts adult responsibility

Source: The ACA Promises and Solution



# ‘Normal’ Losses



- Loving parents help us cope with disappointment, frustration, etc.
- Life as a learning experience
- ‘Natural’ 12 Steps

**Key: Even in moments of loss, we feel supported. This builds trust & hope.**



# Did You Know a 'Loving Parent'?



- Grandparent?
- Teacher or coach?
- A friend's parent?

How did you feel in their presence?



# When our family functions well...



We trust the world enough to face new challenges, form human connections, and take responsibility



# What Went Wrong?

## From the Big Red Book: “Adult Child”

- ‘When confronted, we regress to a stage in our childhood.’
- ‘Responds to adult situations with self-doubt, self-blame, or *a sense of being wrong or inferior*—all learned from stages of childhood.’





# The Lasting Harm of a Critical Parent





# A Critical (or Unavailable) Parent ...



- Focuses on own needs
- Rejects a child's limitations
- Projects anger, fear, and shame onto others
- Avoids adult responsibility
- Practices shame, blame & abandonment



# Creates a Wounded Child ...



- Feels unsafe
- Is afraid to trust
- Isolated/alone ('Don't Talk')
- Emotionally numb ('Don't Feel')
- Fearful of larger world
- Shame-based; fears blame and judgment



# Who Becomes a Wounded Adult Child



- Feels unsafe
- Is afraid to trust
- Isolated/alone (“Don’t talk”)
- Emotionally numb (“Don’t Feel”)
- Fearful of larger world
- Shame-based; fears blame and judgment



The Adult Child may seem outwardly controlling, confident, etc., but they retain a Wounded Inner Child’s perspective.



# When Our Family Fails Us...



We distrust the world, avoid human connections, struggle to grow, stay stuck in our wounded childhood



# When our family fails us...



We repeat patterns of our childhood history





# When our family fails us ...



We repeat patterns of our childhood history



# A Tragic Inner Dialogue



Our life is defined by an internalized frightened child, and an internalized critical parent. Every life situation can re-create this shaming interaction.



## ▪ Signs of a Wounded Inner Child

- 'We judge ourselves harshly,' feel inferior
- 'We fear people and authority figures'
- 'We lose our identity, try to people-please'
- We hide behind a 'false self'
- 'We stuff our feelings'
- We revert to a 'frightened child' state (emotional flashbacks)



Sources: ACA Laundry List and BRB 'Adult Child'

# Our Childhood Lives Within Us—Today



We couldn't process feelings and events when they happened. So we carry old hurts and fears inside us—ready to be activated every day.

# Our Parenting Lives Within Us—Today



We remain vulnerable to 'Critical Parent' communications—whether they come from inside us, or from someone else.

# The Tragedy of Self-Abandonment

As we grow up,  
we forget and  
ultimately abandon  
our Inner Child.

We become numb  
to our own  
inspiration, feelings,  
and dreams.



# Culture Is Irrelevant



Injuries start before logic, and even language





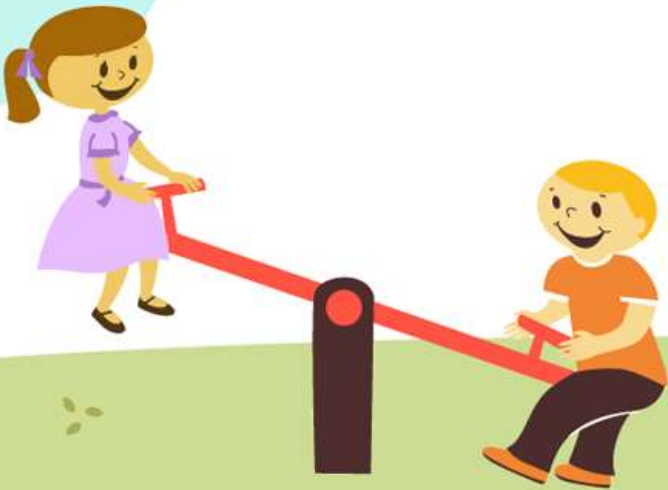
# Critical Parent Alert: Is This Being Weird?



The notion of internalized personalities is long accepted. And it fits our experience.



# Putting the Loving Parent in Charge





# What Is Reparenting?

- We recognize that we still carry the emotions, and needs, of a small child within us.
- We accept that this child has all the scars and hurts received from our upbringing.
- We help this beautiful but wounded child grieve old losses and meet unfilled needs.
- We assist our Inner Child's healthy growth.
- We put the Loving Parent in charge.



# A Loving Parent ...



- Focuses on child's needs
- Accepts a child's limitations
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- Models healthy adult behavior
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Above all, avoids shame and abandonment



# Ways to Access Your Loving Parent



- Letter to a Loving Parent
- Affirmations
- Speak kindly to a childhood photo (or image)
- Ask for guidance (others in recovery, meditation, prayer)
- ‘What would a Loving Parent do?’



A Loving Parent doesn't have to be perfect, just 'good enough.' Think of Loving Parents you've known



# Ending the Tragic Inner Dialogue



Our Inner Child hears, and absorbs, every negative comment made to us—by our Critical Parent and others who resemble our Critical Parent

# Facing the Critical Parent

- Must end language of shaming and abandonment
- Our child hears and absorbs everything
- Ending self-shaming language opens space for loving language that will heal our Inner Child



# Putting the Loving Parent in Charge

- Be a loving parent to the Critical Parent. Compassion & respect
- Thank the Critical Parent for caring.
- “Why don’t you sit and rest?”
- Think of the Critical Parent as a well-intended grandparent or parent-in-law. It has ideas, but you are in charge.
- “I appreciate everything you’ve done to protect us.”





# Setting Boundaries

- 'I've got this.'
- 'I need you to speak kindly.'
- Turn attention to (and reassure) the Inner Child
- Scrutinize the Inner Parent's 'truth' and authority. Ask others for a reality check.
- Patience and persistence





# Facing Your Inner Child: First Thoughts



- They are scared
- They are alone
- They feel abandoned
- Building trust is slow
- They need love but may push it away
- Like a war orphan; like us, only with a child's resources



# Facing Your Inner Child: First Thoughts



- You may feel scared
- You may feel alone, like you don't know what you're doing
- Patience and persistence. Be consistent, keep promises
- Your Inner Child needs you; and you need your Inner Child

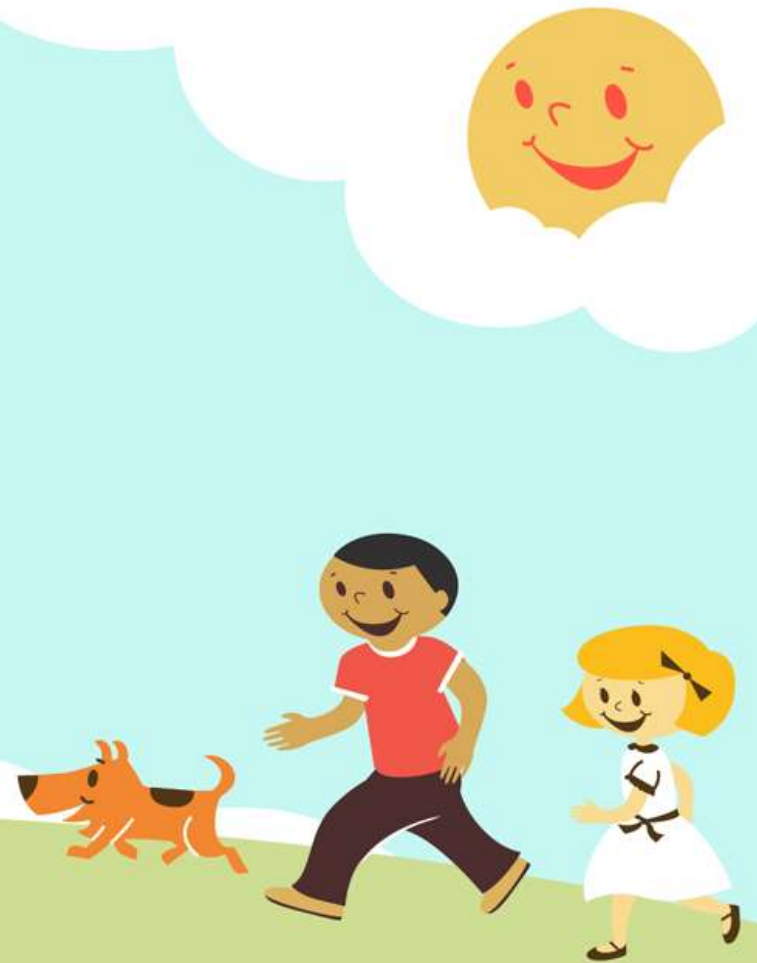


# Ways to Access the Inner Child

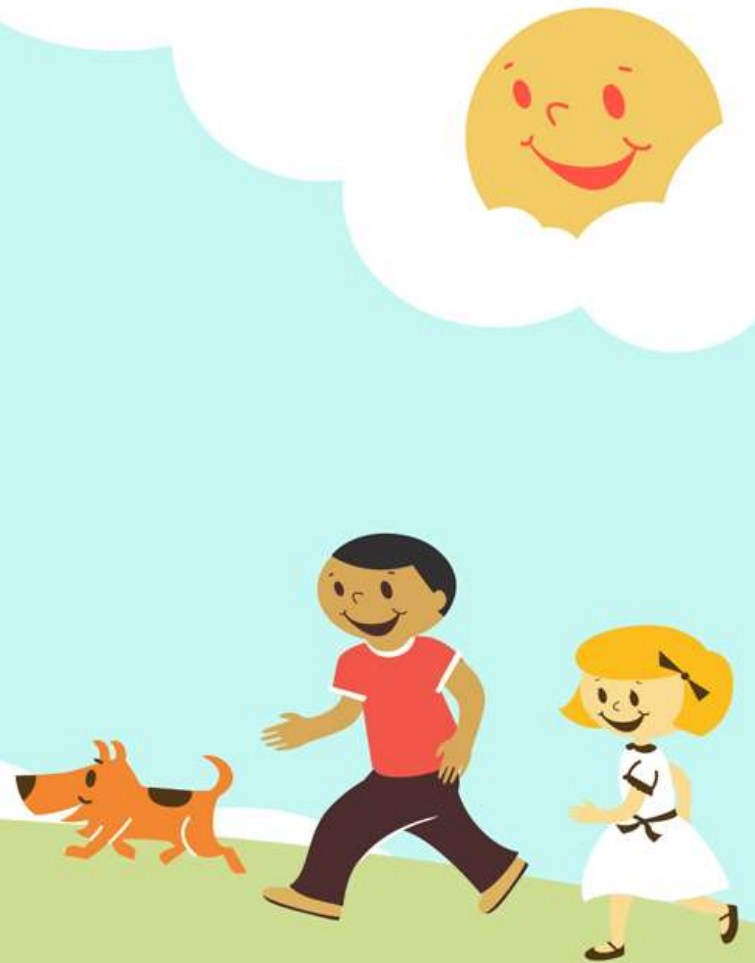
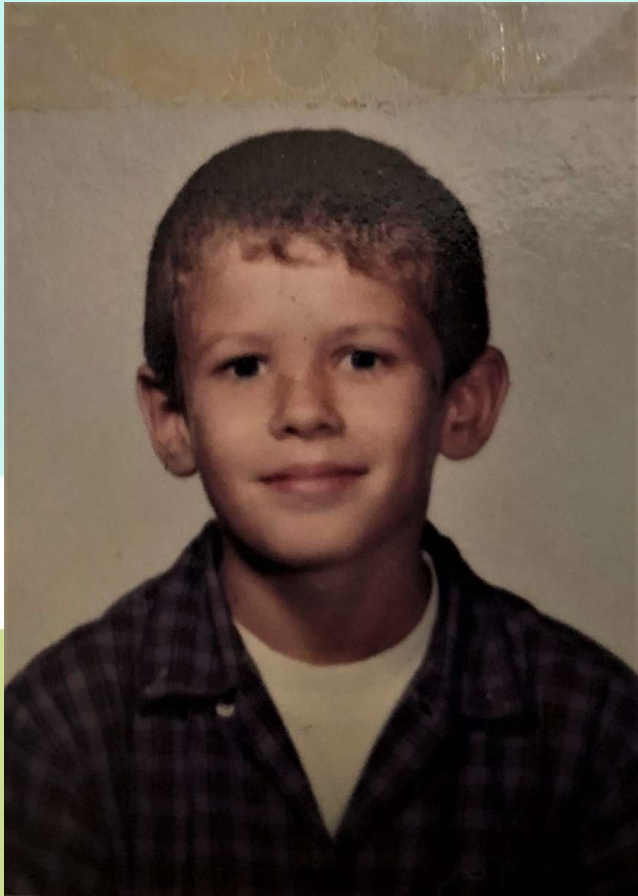
- Lead with your heart
  - Look at photos of you as a child
  - Post affirmations in your home and read them.
  - Do things you enjoyed as a child—or wanted to do as a child
  - Non-dominant handwriting
  - Guided meditations
  - Imagine you have a real physical child at your side
  - Take regular time each at least 2-3 days a week
- 
- **Be consistent, fulfill promises, and accept their feelings!**



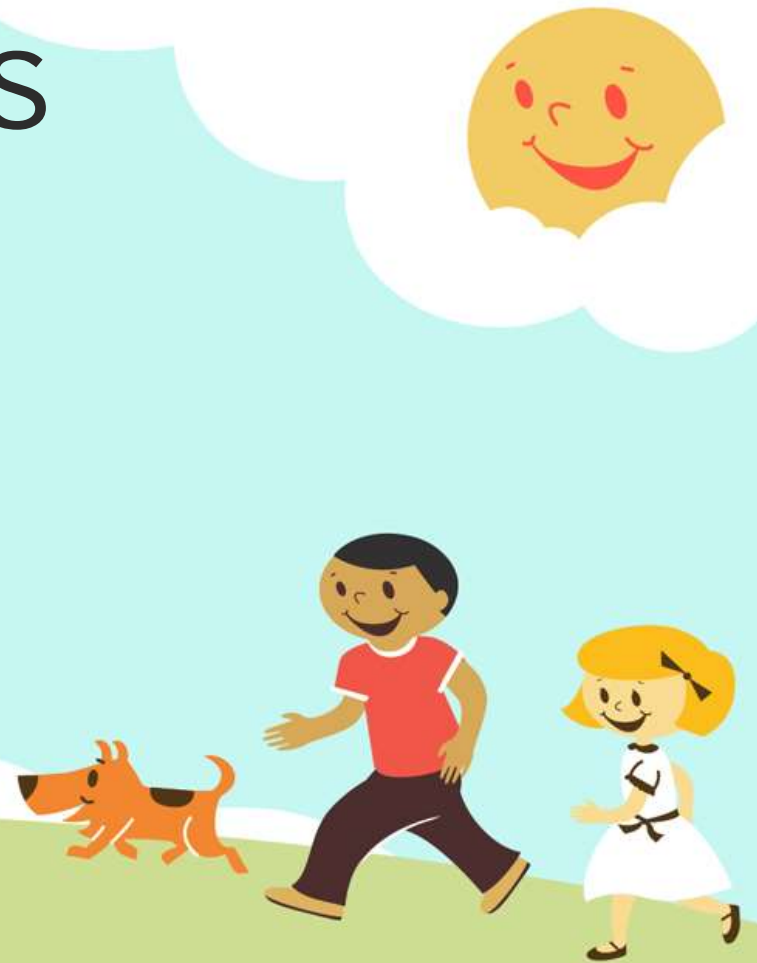
# Childhood Photos



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Photos help us connect emotionally to our real early selves; and understand we were not to blame for our family. We were children.

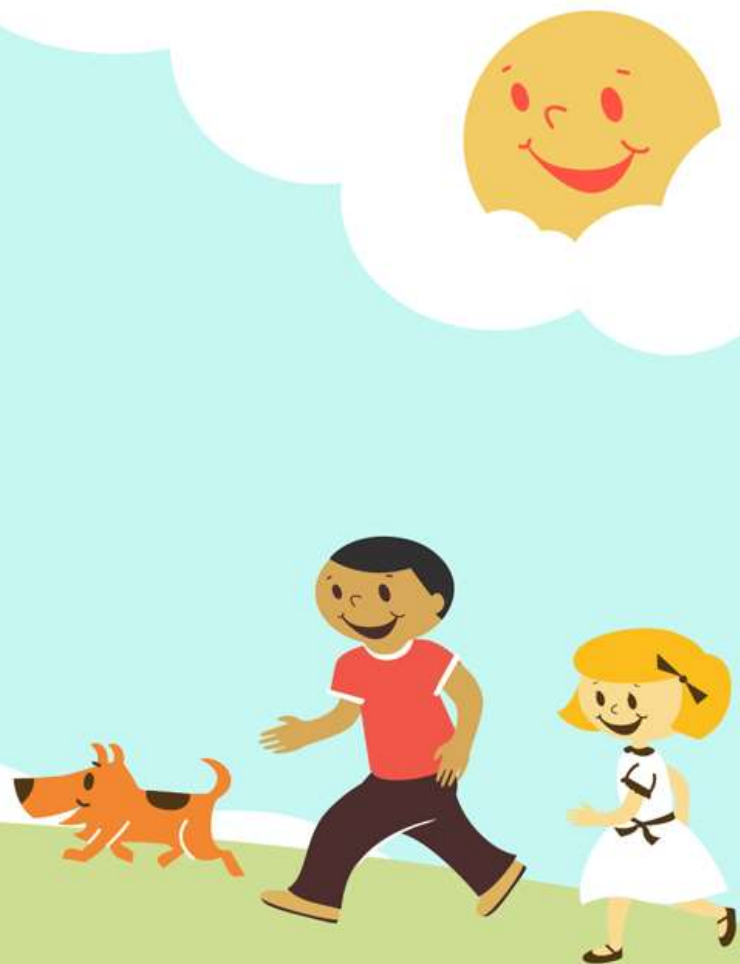


# Revisiting Childhood



Do activities you found some joy or safety in as a child. Imagine your child is right beside you as play, walk, whatever.

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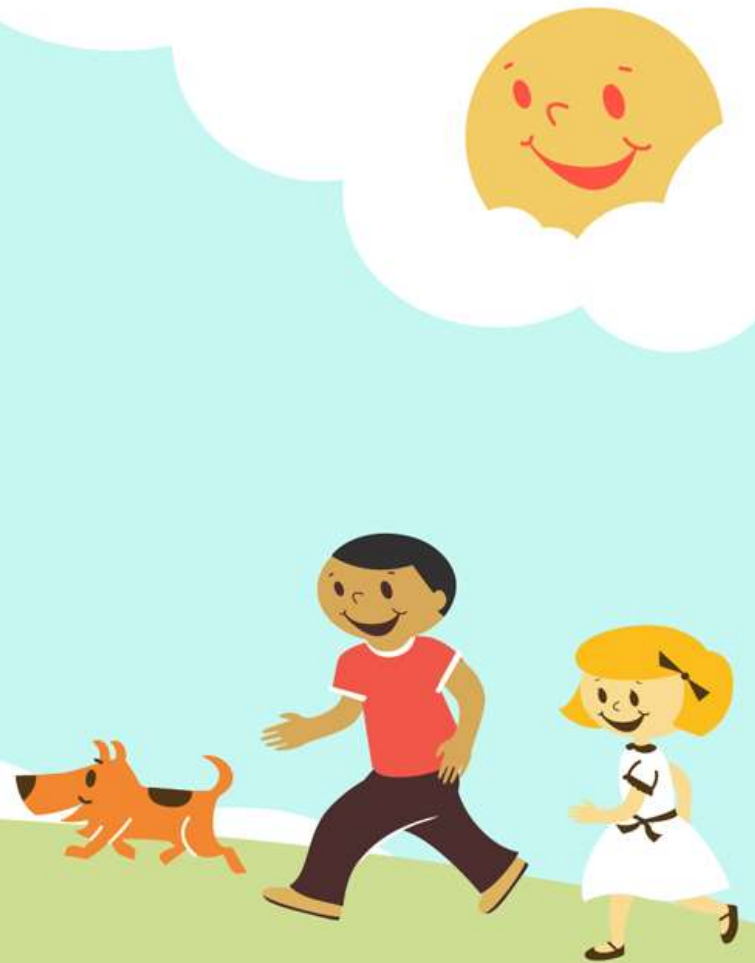


Favorite foods and smells from childhood can help your Inner Child emerge.

# Guided Meditation



Please close your eyes and slow your breathing.



# What Our Loving Parent Can Give



- Provides the essentials: Love, Safety, Validation, Guidance and Encouragement
- Focuses on child's needs
- Accepts limitations; remembers, 'This is a precious child in me'
- (Gently) reins in Critical Parent
- Avoids Abandonment/Shame
- 'I love you. You're okay!'





# Words of Love for Your Inner Child



- 'I love you.'
- 'You're beautiful'
- 'I'm here for you'
- 'What do you need?'
- 'It's okay to be a child'
- 'It's okay to be  
(happy/sad/angry/hurt)'
- 'I'm so glad you're alive'



# Loving Touch





# When Reparenting Is Working ...



Our inner world begins to heal. We gain trust in ourselves, a Guiding Power, and in the safe people we invite into our lives. Our child grows in trust.



# Challenges



- Not sure I believe in an Inner Child
- I never saw good parenting
- It's too much work
- I'm not sure my Inner Child will like me



Why take the risk? Because it's our only path to full healing.



# Creating Space for Your Inner Child's Feelings



- Support their grieving
- Validate their emotions
- Accept and release your own sorrow



Grieving is a painful but essential gateway to a full healing.

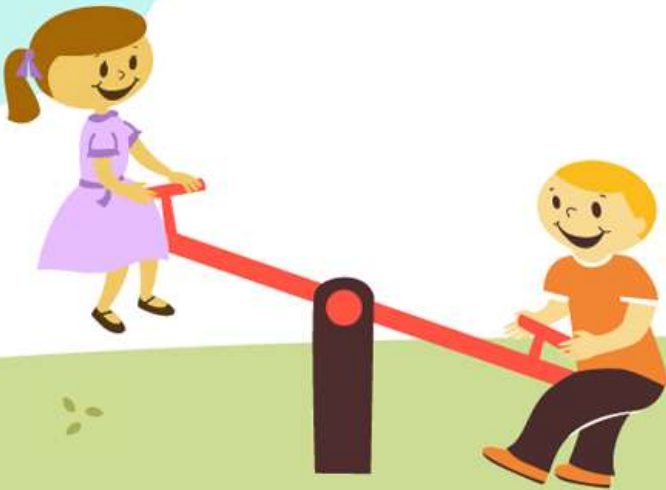


# When Your Inner Child Feels Safe

- Feelings get unfrozen.
- We start growing again.
- We feel love in our hearts.
- The Inner Child gains trust.
- Laundry List trades fade.
- We become whole & happier.



# Becoming Your Own Loving Parent in Daily Life



# Four Scenarios of Daily Reparenting



- In the workplace
- With a romantic partner
- With our family of origin
- By ourselves





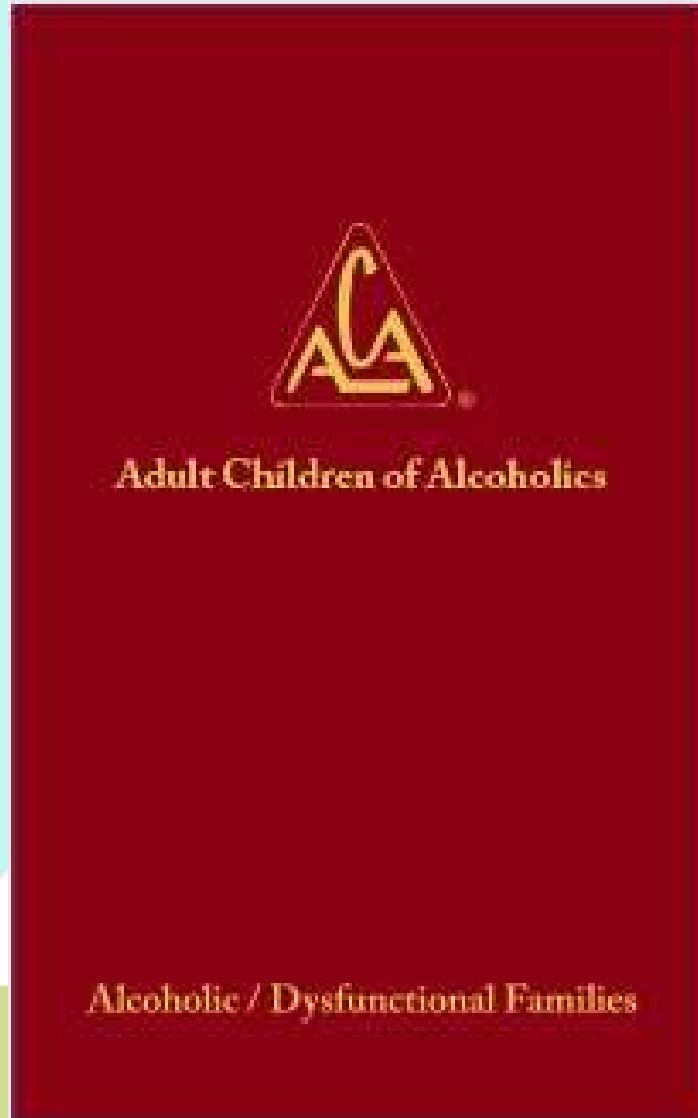
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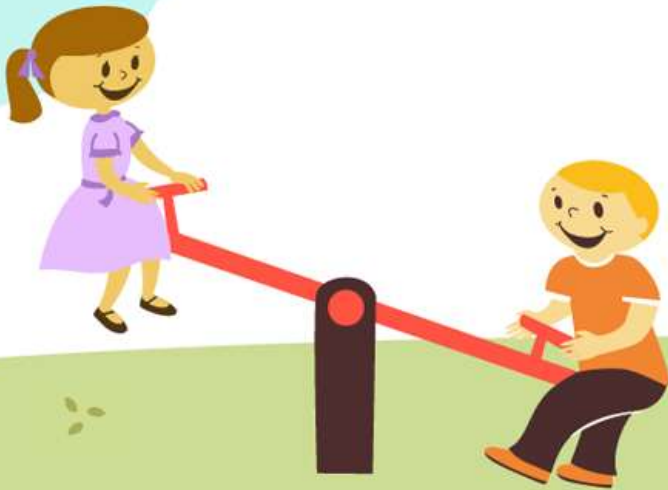


# Resources

- Big Red Book, Chapter 8
- New WSO book in 2021, 'Loving Parent Guidebook'
- Others in ACA
- Trained Therapists
- Non-ACA literature



# Summary & Questions



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