



Syllabus: Mindful Parenting

January 19th/20th – March 8th/9th, 2016

Tuesdays: 10:00 am-12:00 noon

Wednesdays: 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Unitarian Universalist Church, Palo Alto

505 East Charleston Road

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Instructor

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Overview

I am teaching Mindful Parenting because I believe that there is no more challenging, inspiring, and significant task in the world than raising children. Many people have said that children are the future of our world. A significant part of the responsibility of building this future resides in us parents. How we relate with our children today will determine the qualities and values our children will take with them into their adulthood, which in turn will determine the future of our world. And yet parents are given few reliable guidelines to help us foster caring, confidence, resilience, compassion, and empathy in our children. I want to fill this gap in training for parents.

I have found that the practices of mindfulness and empathy offer an excellent platform to guide parents through the challenging task of bringing up children with compassion, safety, and good sense. These practices may seem challenging at first because most people are not familiar with them. However, once parents learn them and see how effective they are, our confidence and competence accelerates.

This is a very hands-on, interactive class. We have lots of fun and lots of learning. I'm looking forward to a rich and enlivening course with each of you! Welcome!

- Gayathri



Class Themes

Week 1: January 19th/20th, 2016

Introductions, Introduction to Mindful Parenting

Offers the opportunity for parents to clarify their personal intentions for coming to the parenting class and to begin to learn about mindful parenting. Parents start to get to know each other, the instructor, and the culture of the class.

Week 2: January 26th/27th, 2016

Presence, Empathy

Parents learn to tune into their own quality of presence in relationship and interaction. They learn to see how presence is key to every successful relationship. We will introduce the concept and practice of empathy.

Week 3: February 2nd/3rd, 2016

Observations, Brain Development

We focus on building observation skills. Most people, when they are “triggered” forget to carefully observe what is happening around them. We will learn how to practice this essential skill. We will also outline some key concepts of brain development.

Week 4: February 9th/10th, 2016

Feelings, Child Development

Feelings are a form of energy running through us. We learn to identify these feelings and how to express them without judgment. We learn to make the crucial distinction between thoughts and feelings. We will cover the importance of understanding a child's stage of development.

Week 5: February 16th/17th, 2016

Needs, Connecting Communication, Building Emotional Literacy

We connect feelings with needs. Needs are universal values or desires. We learn what they are and how to use them to connect with and understand our children and ourselves. We will explore building emotional literacy in children through the tools of connecting communication.



Week 6: February 23rd/24th, 2016

Requests, Setting Limits

We learn to distinguish between demands and requests and we learn how to make powerful requests. We will explore setting limits and see how limits can provide a supportive scaffolding within which our children can grow and learn.

Week 7: March 1st/2nd, 2016

Anger, Regulation, Repairing the Rupture

We learn how to recognize our own anger and how to manage it. We also learn how to recover from angry outbursts in ways that foster the healthy growth and development of our children.

Week 8: March 8th/9th, 2016

Gratitude and Appreciation

We will offer the opportunity for parents to celebrate the changes they have witnessed in their parenting and to mourn the ongoing difficulties in the process. We will express gratitude and appreciation to each other. Goodbyes are said and plans are made for ongoing support.

Suggested Reading

Placone, Pilar M. *Mindful Parent, Happy Child: A Guide to Raising Joyful & Resilient Children*. Palo Alto, CA: Alaya, 2011.

Aldort, Naomi. *Raising Our Children, Raising Ourselves*. Bothell, WA: Book Network, 2006.

Kohn, Alfie. *Unconditional Parenting: Moving from Rewards and Punishments to Love and Reason*. New York: Atria Books, 2005.

Rosenberg, Marshall. *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. California: PuddleDancer Press, 2001.

Siegel, Daniel J., and Mary Hartzell. *Parenting from the Inside Out: How a Deeper Self-Understanding Can Help You Raise Children Who Thrive*. New York: Penguin Press, 2004.

Gottman, John. *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child: The Heart of Parenting*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997.