

MINDFUL MOTHERHOOD

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May is the month when we celebrate all of our mothers, but, what is the role of a mother nowadays? Women are required to fill many roles that were not expected from us in the past. Today we are expected to be good mothers and housewives; to be successful in our professions and to contribute to the household income. Additionally, we are supposed to maintain ourselves beautiful and in shape. After a day in which we've had to fill all these roles, we obviously get home exhausted, with very little energy and patience left to deal with our children. We have no time to develop attitudes and qualities that were naturally cultivated in the past, an main role of women was raising our children.

This month I 'd like to share ten Mindfulness exercises that I find useful to develop some of these qualities:

- 1) Imagine that you are a sculptor and your child is your master piece. Every moment you spend with your child you are chiseling his personality and self-esteem. Remember: you are creating your masterpiece!. Do it mindfully and with love.
- 2) Take three deep breaths at the beginning of the day and when you get home after work, and establish in your mind the intention to be present and mindful in your interactions with your children that day.
- 3) Wear something different in your dominant hand, like a special ring or nail polish, or wrap a thread around your wrist; anything that reminds you, when you look at it, to be aware of whatever you are doing with your hands at that moment (washing the dishes, preparing the meals, ironing the clothes...), and do it with love.
- 4) Practice looking at the world from your child's point of view. Reflect on how you appear before his or her eyes and what does he or she need from you in that moment.
- 5) When you talk with your children, listen to them mindfully. Watch your posture and your body language. Smile and look at their eyes.
- 6) When you fear you are about to lose control; remember to stop before you act; bring awareness to your breath and to your body sensations. Don't act until you are calmed, present and angerless.
- 7) Apologize to your child if you've betrayed his or her trust or if you've used him or her as the target of your own frustration. This will help him or her to heal any inflicted wound and will teach him or her to apologize when he makes a mistake.



8) When you have to discipline your children, say what you need to say when you are not angry. Analyze if what you are about to say is the result of your concern for his or her wellbeing and education or if it is because of your selfrighteousness and need to be in control.

9) Share with your children activities that involve being in the present moment: hiking, bird watching, story telling...

10) Practice gratitude rituals, like giving thanks before the meals, writing thank you notes or keeping a gratitude journal... Anything that helps them to be aware of their blessings.

If we live mindfully every moment we spend with our children, we'll be full of beautiful memories the day they leave our nest and we'll be proud of having raised good people who will contribute to the welfare of society.

