

## Parenting - Discovering Our Best Selves

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A few years ago, a friend sent me a link to a 21-day meditation with Oprah and Deepak Chopra entitled Hope in Uncertain Times. During one of the sessions, Deepak speaks of the secret of finding hope - it happens when we shift our focus from the problem to the solution. In parenting and in life, most of us focus our attention on the challenge that lies in front of us.

Deepak shares an analogy: Imagine your problem is to find a book in a dark, cluttered basement. You cannot see clearly, and you keep banging your head. If you focus on the problem, you may try to protect your head and squint harder as you keep searching through every box. If you focus on the solution, you pause, find the light switch and turn on the light so that you can see everything clearly. And then you find the book.

As a parent, we need to begin by shining the light for ourselves. We often disengage from our story to protect ourselves from the many conflicts, disappointments, and failures we have experienced. But becoming a parent is an opportunity to be awakened to the areas that need our attention. We work on growth and healing so that we can learn to fully enjoy life and be present to our child.

In a pivotal scene in *The Empire Strikes Back*, Yoda is training Luke to be a Jedi warrior. Pointing to a dark cave, Yoda explains that the cave is dangerous and strong with the dark side, but he tells Luke, "In, you must go." Luke asks what is in the cave, and Yoda replies, "Only what you take with you."

When we begin to address the failures and wounds of our past, it may feel like we are walking into that cave in the swamp. With clammy hands and trembling knees, we must stop hiding the fears we have buried deep and venture into new territory.

Confronting our fears means we need to look at the messages we have assigned to our failures - defining who we are, how others perceive us, and what we tell ourselves about our own self-worth and value. Bit by bit, we need to acknowledge painful feelings and hard emotions - fear, anger, aggression, blame, and shame. While this can be incredibly difficult, the alternative of living in denial and disengaged from our emotions stunts our life and our relationship with others, especially our child. To harness the Force, in we must go!

Becoming the best parent we can be takes courage, honesty, and belief in our own goodness. Often, we spend our days trying to handle what lands in our lap, flies in our face, or loudly demands our attention. We find ourselves reacting to our child, partner, boss, and others.

What if becoming your best self begins by taking a step back and illuminating your view of yourself and your child with compassion, forgiveness, understanding, and hope?

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For information about my book, "7 Gifts to Give Your Child--Parenting That Will Touch Their Future" please visit: [www.coachmyrna.org/7-gifts-to-give-your-child.html](http://www.coachmyrna.org/7-gifts-to-give-your-child.html)

If you would like to know more about what I offer as a coach, please visit my website: [www.coachmyrna.org/](http://www.coachmyrna.org/) Find out more about Safe Conversations [www.coachmyrna.org/safe-conversations.html](http://www.coachmyrna.org/safe-conversations.html).