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Mindful Parenting Discussion Guide

Ch 1--Generation Stress

How is your life as a parent different today from your parents' lives when you were a kid?

Do you know any teens who have attempted/committed suicide? What kinds of stress do you think affected their life?

How is your kid's life different today from when you were a kid?

Dr. Race mentions the activity that keeps her fully engaged is playing soccer. What activity helps you to feel fully engaged?

When would it be helpful to practice mindfulness with your child, and to shift your own or your child's mood?

Can you think of a time when your child was mirroring your own emotions through the use of mirror neurons?



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Ch 2--Stress Response in the Brain

Share an experience of a flight, fight, or freeze response in your brain that felt like a real life threatening situation.

Now share an experience of a stress response in your brain that was not life-or-death.

Reflect on what kinds of neural pathways are being created in your own brain from regular use in your life.



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Ch 3--(Over) Stimulated

Do you think your family would benefit from reducing TV time? If so, how will you take action steps to do so?

What is one thing your kids do instead of watching TV?

Take a look at your own media usage. Are you, as a parent, setting a good example for your kids?

Is there a time you could set aside to commit to not using electronics and instead hang out with your family?

Have you tried to regulate your kids' media usage? What happened when you did?



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Ch 4--(Over) Scheduled

Make a schedule that shows your child's schedule, with stimulating activities in red, calming downtime in blue. What is your reaction to this activity?

Take a moment to consider the current behavior of your child. Is your child showing any signs of stress (whining, arguing, picky eater, difficult to get to bed, restless sleeping)?

What does your morning routine look like?

How can you make a more peaceful routine, at all times of the day, for yourself and your kids?

How much homework does your child have in a typical night? Do you think this amount is appropriate? Why or why not?

What does your family dinnertime look like?

How could you better interact with your kids during this time?



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Ch 5--Lost Art of Hanging Out

How much time does your child have to just hang out?

Do you think this “hang out” time is enough for your child?

What change could you make to schedule in more free play for your child?

What do you think would be lost if you eliminated one scheduled activity each week for your child? What would be gained?



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Ch 6--The Simple Power of Sleep

Studies say lack of sleep is linked to obesity, depression and behavioral problems, among other things. Do you see any negative repercussions in your child due to the amount of sleep your child gets?

Studies suggest the proper number of hours of sleep for:

Toddlers = 12-14

Preschool = 11-13

Kids aged 5-12 = 10-11

Teens = 9.5

Adults = 7.5-8

How old is your child? Is he getting enough hours of sleep?

How can you better establish a routine for your kids using the R.E.S.T. method that Dr. Race suggests?

How many hours of sleep do you average a night?

Do you think you would benefit from a change in your nightly routine?



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Ch 7--Finding Your Own Meditation

Can you remember a time your own parents fought? What was the situation and how did it make you feel?

In your relationships, how do you typically solve your arguments and conflicts? Is there a better way it could be handled?

Exercise is part of taking care of yourself and is responsible for emitting serotonin, a feel good hormone. Do you have a regular exercise routine? If so, what is the activity that works best for you and your schedule?

Can you describe the emotional benefit from this exercise routine you mentioned above?

What is an exercise routine you can add to your day that you think will provide an emotional benefit for you?



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Ch 8--Gift of Mindfulness

Dr. Rick Hanson describes first darts as events that are uncomfortable or painful, but can and do happen to everyone. Second darts are the follow up negative reaction to first darts. What is a first dart that has happened to you recently? Were there any second darts that followed? What kind of thoughts were associated with these darts?

Do you practice formal mindfulness? In what way(s)?

In what ways do you practice informal mindfulness?

Have you ever tried sitting meditation? What was/is your experience with it?

Have you tried walking meditation? What did you think of it?

Please take 1-10 minutes to try each type of meditation, if you've never tried either before.



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Ch 9--Guide to Creating a Mindful Family

Choose one favorite activity that would be appropriate to practice with your family from each section:

Creating Space

Increasing Awareness

Growing Seeds of Peace and Happiness

Cultivating Empathy and Compassion

Developing Patience and Persistence in the Face of Adversity

Which section do you think your family will relate to the most? Which section will your family benefit from the most?

What activity can you practice right now?



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Ch 10--What a Little Face Time Can Do

Do you have any rituals or traditions in your family?

Is there a new one you could create, or let your kids create?

Is there one that you practice or could create with extended family, such as grandparents, aunts or uncles, or a close family friend?



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Ch 11--Cultivating Good Stress

Would you say that at this point, your brain has a growth mindset, or is outcome oriented? What about your child's?

What is your child's "window of comfort" when taking risks? Would you say it's narrow or wide?

What are a couple of ways you can or do encourage your child to take healthy risks?

What is a healthy risk you can take as a family in the next few months?