

Accepting Space for Parent & Child

Exercise from Whittingham & Coyne, 2019

Get into a relaxed & comfortable posture.

Bring your attention to the present moment...

Noticing the sensations in your body...

And anchoring yourself in the rhythm of your breathing...

Bring your child to mind.

Bring to mind your child as they are right now at this stage in their life.

Recall all the little details: their facial expressions, their interests and passions, remember the last time you laughed together or what it feels like to hold their hand.

Your mind is probably very busy and that's okay.

Recall all of it: the stuff your mind says is good and the stuff your mind says is bad.

Let all of it come: all of the thoughts, the feelings, the memories, and the sensations. Bring it all to mind.

Recall a time when you felt disconnected.

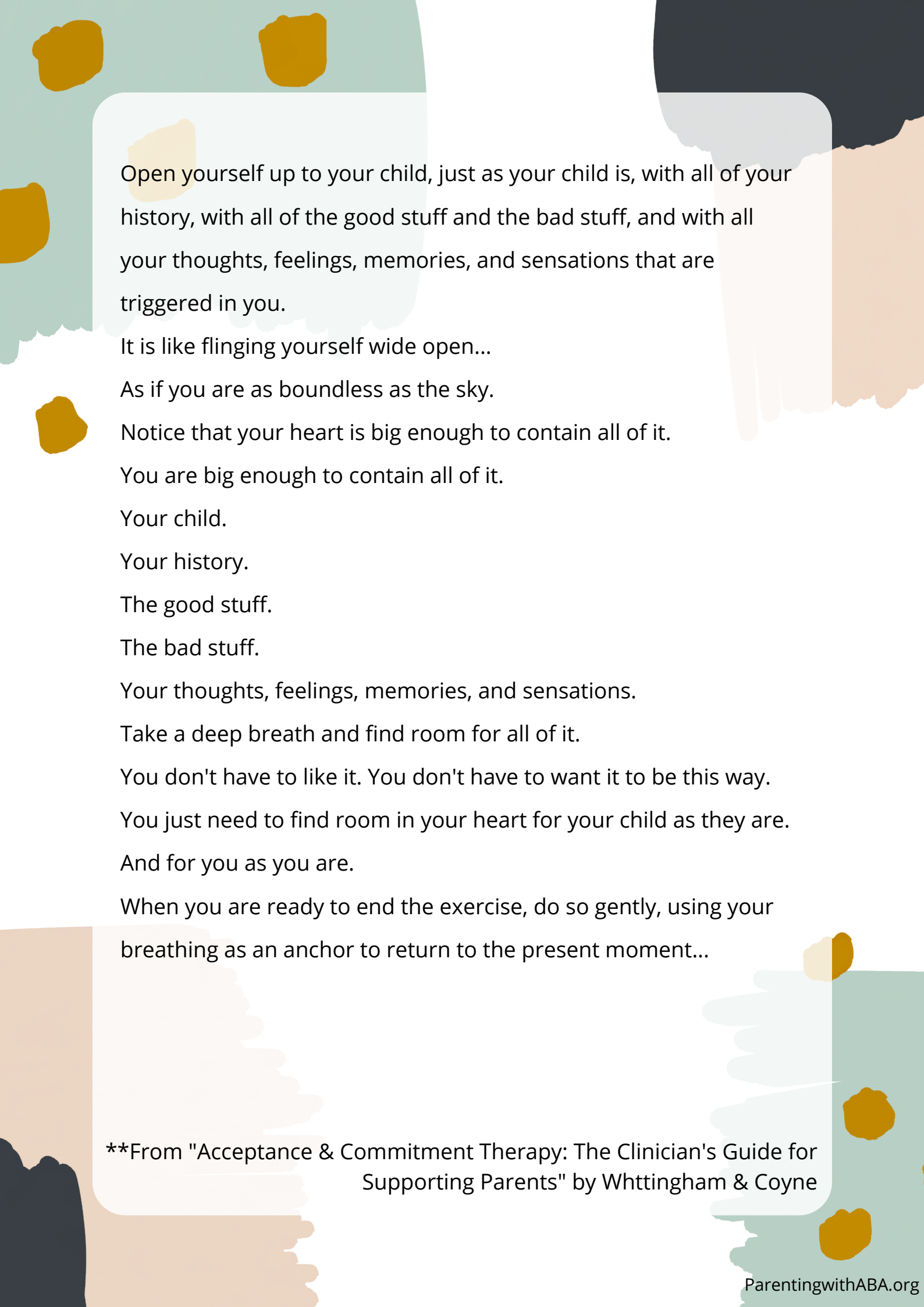
Recall a time when you felt connected.

Remember what it was like the very first time you met.

Imagine meeting your child now, as they are at this point in their life, with that same sense of curiosity.

Who is this person you know so well?

Gently, as best you can, open yourself up to your child.



Open yourself up to your child, just as your child is, with all of your history, with all of the good stuff and the bad stuff, and with all your thoughts, feelings, memories, and sensations that are triggered in you.

It is like flinging yourself wide open...

As if you are as boundless as the sky.

Notice that your heart is big enough to contain all of it.

You are big enough to contain all of it.

Your child.

Your history.

The good stuff.

The bad stuff.

Your thoughts, feelings, memories, and sensations.

Take a deep breath and find room for all of it.

You don't have to like it. You don't have to want it to be this way.

You just need to find room in your heart for your child as they are.

And for you as you are.

When you are ready to end the exercise, do so gently, using your breathing as an anchor to return to the present moment...

****From "Acceptance & Commitment Therapy: The Clinician's Guide for Supporting Parents" by Whittingham & Coyne**