

Book Club: Work, Parent, Thrive

by Yael Schonbrun

Parenting with ABA Members CE Event

March 6, 2024

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Chapter 1: "When you're lost, let values be your guide"

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- Acceptance exercises:
- Unwanted party guest
 - Finger trap
 - Beach ball in the pool

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- 5 questions:
- What have you tried?
 - How has it worked?
 - What has it cost?
 - What's showing up?
 - Are you open to something new?

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- Values exercises:
- 80th birthday exercise
 - Values card sort
 - Valued writing
 - The flip side of pain





Chapter 2: "Change your working-parent mindset"

- How did my professional life help me parent better today?
- How did my parenting role help me do a better job at work this week?
- How did either role help me grow as a person?



Chapter 3: "Unhook from Unhelpful Labels"



Chapter 4: "Spin your Story"

Defusion strategies:

- Thank your mind
- "I notice I'm having the thought that..."
- Passengers on a bus
- Movie poster
- Name the story
- Sing it



Chapter 5: "Do the Right Hard Things (The Right Way)"





Chapter 6: "Rethink Your Rest"

Microrest can happen as we transition from one role to another.

Micro rituals:

- tiny habits to cue your brain that you are switching roles
- inside that habit, notice a break from the role you are leaving
- savor the microrest by mindfully noticing it



Chapter 7: "Turn Constraints Into Creativity"

The incubation effect:

- instead of forcing yourself through a difficult task (in work or parenting),
- stepping away and shifting attention to something completely different
- makes it easier to find creative solutions when are ready to come back to the problem at hand



Chapter 8: "Remember to Subtract"



Chapter 9: "Grow Connection Through the Good, the Bad, and the Downright Infuriating"



Chapter 10: "Finesse Our Stress"

"Social scientists draw an important distinction between interpreting a threat vs a challenge. A threat is a stressful situation that literally puts your life at risk....But our brain, with its outdated wiring, often fails to recognize this, so we err on interpreting things as more dangerous than they really are."

-Schonbrun, 2022

Hormonal and brain research show that parent-child connection:

- decreases parental stress
- increases oxytocin in the brain
- calms the threat response
- quiets activity in brain regions associated with negative thoughts and feelings
- also helps with the child's emotional regulation

Chapter 11: "Tend to Your Happiness Needs"


In psychology, the three core needs for human happiness are defined as:

1. Competence
2. Connectedness
3. Autonomy

To find experiences in each of these 3 areas, create or find:

1. "Opportunities to feel skillful, capable, or masterful"
2. "Connection to people or causes you care about"
3. "Freedom to choose your own actions"





Chapter 12: "Balance Your Pleasure and Meaning"

"Moving through our days at the breakneck speed required by working parenthood can easily cause us to overlook the many small, sweet, funny, proud, loving, interesting, awe-inspiring moments."

-Schonbrun, 2022

"What kind of working parent do I want to be in order to have an impact on the people around me and on society in general?"

"What do I want my work, my parenthood, or my working parenthood to stand for?"

-Schonbrun, 2022

Present moment awareness practice

- Where are your feet?
- Mindful breathing
- Name 5 things



Sing it

This is a method that is powerful when you're having a really sticky thought. Turn it into a sentence and try singing it – out loud if you are alone, in your head if you have company. Any tune will do. My default is “Happy Birthday.” Don't worry about trying to be clever about the wording, like coming up with a rhyming scheme. This is not going to get you on “America's Most Talented!” Just repeat the thought to the tune. See if you can find a thought that is nagging you right now and try it. Try different tunes; sing it fast or slow. The measure of “success” is not that the thought goes away, or loses all punch and becomes unbelievable. It is that you can see it as a thought, and do so just a bit more clearly.

Defusion questions

- How old is that thought?
- If that thought had a voice, how would it sound?
- If that thought were an object, how big would it be?
- What other thoughts typically accompany that one?



When I'm 80...



Suppose that at some future time there was a party held in your honor (like an 80th birthday party). At this event, people who are important to you, and to whom you are important, have come together to celebrate you and your life. When the time comes at this party for people to make speeches about you, they will spend their time talking about the kind of person they experienced you to be.

What they said about me...

Magic Wand Question

"Suppose I had a magic wand here I wave this wand and all the thoughts and feelings you've been struggling with are no longer a problem for you; they're like water off a duck's back. What would you then do differently? What sort of things would you start doing or perhaps do more of? How would you behave differently toward others? What would you do differently at work, at home, on the weekends?"

3 Wishes

1. What are 3 wishes you have for your child?
2. What are 3 wishes you have for yourself?
3. What are 3 wishes you have for your family?

If you get nothing else today....

Why are you asking a parent to do a certain behavior or action plan?

Their values? Or your assessment?



Values Card Sort

Responsibility	Risk
Safety	Self-Acceptance
Self-Control	Self-Esteem
Service	Simplicity
Spirituality	Tolerance
Tradition	Virtue

Values Card Sort

Wealth

Authenticity

Courage

Connection

Curiosity

Encouragement

Equality

Kindness

Patience

Trust

Values Card Sort

Leisure

Loved

Loving

Non-conformity

Openness

Order

Passion

Pleasure

Popularity

Power

Purpose

Rationality

Values Card Sort

Generosity

Genuineness

Growth

Health

Helpfulness

Honesty

Hope

Humility

Humor

Independence

Justice

Knowledge

Values Card Sort

Courtesy

Creativity

Dependability

Duty

Excitement

Faithfulness

Fame

Fitness

Flexibility

Forgiveness

Friendship

Fun

Values Card Sort

Acceptance

Achievement

Adventure

Authority

Caring

Challenge

Change

Comfort

Commitment

Compassion

Contribution

Cooperation

5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

GROUNDING TECHNIQUE



5

things
you can
see



4

things
you can
touch



3

things
you can
hear



2

things
you can
smell



1

thing
you can
taste

Simple Ways to Get Present

Take Ten Breaths

This is a simple exercise to center yourself and connect with your environment. Practice it throughout the day, especially any time you find yourself getting caught up in your thoughts and feelings.

1. Take ten slow, deep breaths. Focus on breathing out as slowly as possible until the lungs are completely empty—and then allow them to refill by themselves.
2. Notice the sensations of your lungs emptying. Notice them refilling. Notice your rib cage rising and falling. Notice the gentle rise and fall of your shoulders.
3. See if you can let your thoughts come and go as if they're just passing cars, driving past outside your house.
4. Expand your awareness: simultaneously notice your breathing and your body. Then look around the room and notice what you can see, hear, smell, touch, and feel.

Drop Anchor

This is another simple exercise to center yourself and connect with the world around you. Practice it throughout the day, especially any time you find yourself getting caught up in your thoughts and feelings.

1. Plant your feet into the floor.
2. Push them down—notice the floor beneath you, supporting you.
3. Notice the muscle tension in your legs as you push your feet down.
4. Notice your entire body—and the feeling of gravity flowing down through your head, spine, and legs into your feet.
5. Now look around and notice what you can see and hear around you. Notice where you are and what you're doing.

Notice Five Things

This is yet another simple exercise to center yourself and engage with your environment. Practice it throughout the day, especially any time you find yourself getting caught up in your thoughts and feelings.

1. Pause for a moment
2. Look around and notice five things that you can see.
3. Listen carefully and notice five things that you can hear.
4. Notice five things that you can feel in contact with your body (for example, your watch against your wrist, your trousers against your legs, the air on your face, your feet upon the floor, your back against the chair).
5. Finally, do all of the above simultaneously