

“When I was not able to follow through on a promise to my inner child, I made amends and let them know I was still learning. That started to build trust.”

“A simple reparenting thing I do is look in the mirror and say “I love you” to my reflection at least once a day.”

-Anonymous shares from the Loving Parent Guidebook

REPARENTING CHECK-IN

Present-day situations can trigger childhood trauma. The intense emotional or physical reactions that follow relate more to the past than the present. We cannot avoid getting triggered - but we can check-in to avoid abandoning our triggered parts.

Checking-in with yourself when triggered helps strengthen the loving parent. It also develops your capacity to identify and feel your feelings, grounds you in your body, and helps you identify the parts of your inner family and their needs. We increase our ability to nurture, protect, and guide our inner children each time we do a reparenting check-in.

First: What one-word emotion(s) are you feeling at this moment?

What is your breathing like - short, rough, fast, constricted? Deep, smooth, slow, or open? What emotions do you feel? What physical sensations do you notice? Burning, hollow, twisting, sinking, contracted, expansive, shaky, open, tingling. Let yourself feel all of this without judging. Ground your attention in the body. This awareness about how your inner kids are feeling can help you tend to them.

Second: Who (what part of you) needs your loving parent’s attention?

Triggered inner children tend to feel more vulnerable emotions like fear, shame, sadness, or embarrassment. An inner teenager tends to feel anger, resentment, and frustration. They react to perceived unfairness and boundary violations. Still, all parts can feel all emotions. Asking yourself, "How old is this part of me?" can help you determine who needs attention. If you don't know which part is activated, that's okay. Just being curious helps diffuse the trigger and builds internal trust.

Third: What activated this part of you ?

External causes can trigger us—such as a person, place, or thing. We can also get triggered internally, by a critical parent or by other distorted thinking from our family of origin. Once triggered, we unconsciously think and feel like we did as a frightened child or angry teenager. The critical parent may get activated and intensify the situation. We can set a boundary with the critical parent to protect the triggered part. Identifying the trigger helps us tend to our inner children’s feelings and needs in a caring way.

Fourth: How can you tend to this part? What does this part need?



How do you feel toward the part that needs your loving parent's attention? Connected? Curious? Compassionate? If not, how can you access these qualities to reparent? Once you sense some connection to the qualities of the loving parent, proceed.

If the teenager is triggered, then empathize, validate, and reassure them. "I hear you. I get that you're feeling angry." If you didn't set a boundary with someone in your life or the critical parent, acknowledge the boundary mishap. Set a new boundary, if possible. Help your inner teenager relax. "I will handle this for you. You don't need to."

If the inner child is triggered, then validate, nurture, and reassure them. "I see how hurt you feel. Your body is so tense. You did nothing wrong; it's okay. I love you. You're enough." Physical soothing helps - a hand on the arm or heart, rocking. Short, simple phrases seem to be what the inner child needs to hear most.

If more than one part needs the loving parent's attention, you can work with them both, one after the other. Start with the part who has the strongest feelings. Let the other part know that you will tend to them next.

In time, we learn to do reparenting check-ins not only when triggered but also regularly throughout our day and when we want to celebrate. Checking in with ourselves in this way becomes a self-reinforcing habit: "What emotions am I feeling, what physical sensations are present . . . what part of me is activated and 'speaking' to me . . . what does that part need?" Reparenting ourselves becomes a spiritual practice - "constant contact" in our everyday lives.

EXAMPLES OF LOVING PARENT MESSAGES

I'm listening.

It's okay to feel this.

I'm here. I'll keep you safe.

I love you. You are enough.

This is different, this is not that past situation (person).

What can I do for you, what do you need?

That must have been frustrating for you.

Just because someone had a negative reaction doesn't mean you did anything wrong.

I care about how you feel.

I've got your back.

What a disappointment for you.

I get that you're angry. I'm on it.

I will handle this for you. You don't need to.

You're not alone, I'm with you.

