



## Learn from the Wisdom of Toddlers

Anyone who knows a child will acknowledge that their life seems much simpler and less complicated than ours. Why is this? If you look closely you will see that they operate in a more open and honest fashion. I am privileged to be a grandma and spend time with my beautiful granddaughter. Playing with her reminds me that as adults we tend to forget our childhood and become caught up in our adult responsibilities to our detriment. We can learn so much if we only open our eyes and hearts to a more meaningful way of interacting with our environment.

**Children live absolutely in the NOW.** They aren't worried about what will happen tomorrow or next week or next year. Their lives are completely focused on the present moment. Just watch a child experiencing a new toy or piece of play equipment or new person, their attention is focused and single minded. Many of us are so intent on achieving certain goals or believing that when some event happens everything will be better, that we spend all our lives off in the future. Alternatively we might choose to dwell in the past constantly reliving an earlier time, either because we feel it was better than our present reality or because we fervently wish we could change something we did or failed to do. When this occurs we actually miss out on the life we are living. Life is composed of a stream of "Now" experiences. Be actively engaged with your own life.

**Children have not yet learnt to filter their emotions,** so everything they feel is expressed. Sometimes more vigorously than we would like! I am not advocating that we cease exercising our learnt social skills, but many of us carry painful emotions so deeply buried we forget that these negative feelings even exist and are having a harmful effect upon our well being. Everyone would be so much happier and healthier if we could openly acknowledge all our feelings without using denial or repression. If a negative feeling is buried we can't access it or hope to resolve the issue which causes it to arise in the first place. Much pain and hurt in our relationships arises from miss communication. Children will let you know exactly how they feel at any given moment - a refreshing honesty which makes it easier to understand what is happening in their lives. Be honest with yourself foremost but also with others, this will lead to more meaningful and clearer relationships. We can only resolve emotional pain if we are willing to be completely truthful with ourselves and admit that our actions and reactions are our choice and we are an integral part of any interaction with other people.



**Children have a wonderful capacity for JOY.** They can be entranced with a cardboard box or autumn leaves or a wooden spoon and a saucepan lid to bang on. Life is full of opportunities for laughter and appreciation, but we become intent on all the seemingly essential 'things' we must have or do before we can allow ourselves to have fun. To increase the quality of our lives is simple. Joy is available to us from moment to moment if we choose to see it. Joy comes in many forms and shapes which will differ for each individual, so start to seek the pleasure you can find in your daily life. It doesn't have to be a momentous event, it can be appreciating the sun or a cloud or a friend's smile. Smiling actually helps your mind feel happy even if you don't really feel happy, it engenders hormone and neurotransmitter changes in your brain which lighten your mood. Additionally studies have shown that people will tend to mimic or reflect back the emotions they see on the faces of those around them. So smile, chuckle or laugh and your mood will begin to reflect this.

Live in the moment  
Accept your emotions  
Allow joy into your life

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