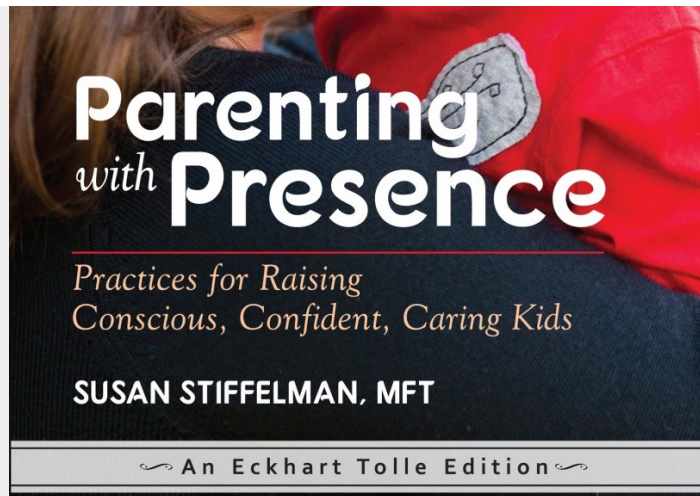


# BOOK REVIEW: PARENTING WITH PRESENCE

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[Parenting with Presence](#): Practices for Raising Confident, Caring Kids By [Susan Stiffelman](#).

I am a parenting book junkie ever since I got handed a beautiful child who was [more of everything](#). This book was sent to me a publisher friend to review and I am sooo happy that I got to read it. It's the **best parenting book** that I have read and I have read a lot of them.

The very popular and very good book: How to Talk so that kids will Listen and Listen so that Kids will Talk was good but I wasn't able to put it in practice that easily and I found doing the exercises very daunting and didn't really do any. While I got some tips and some food for thought with that book it didn't change much at home.

With Parenting with Presence however, since I have started reading this book our relationship at home has changed for the better; my 3 year old and I have been interacting very differently.

There are few main aspects I would like to talk about in this book that stood out for me and made a difference in my life.

- This book made me do a lot of **soul searching** and made me ask myself some tough questions and helped me find the answers I knew all along but I hadn't put into words. Susan Stiffelman is clearly a spiritual person who believes that we are all souls who are here on Earth to learn from each other and that the children you have are here to teach you lessons and help you grow if you allow them to.

She gives examples from her counseling practice of parents who come from a certain background (say authoritarian) and swear never to dictate terms at home but are handed a child who needs a firmer hand are at a loss. She also has practical exercises and questions that force you dig deeper into why you the parent behave a certain way with your child, does it stem from the past?

This helped me a lot as it helped me put into words what scars I was carrying from my past and how it was affecting my parenting and now that I have realized that I am being asked to practice a certain trait that I lack, I am trying to do that.

It shows us how we can change ourselves for the better as that's what our children are asking of us.

- **Captain of the ship**: Today many of us parents don't want to stifle our kids, want them to do things their way, practice child led this and child led that, strive to be gentle parents and try and respect our kids. But it's a very fine line, and soon that respect and gentleness gets thrown into full blown battles as we get annoyed as we're trying so hard to understand but the kids are walking all over us.

This book is the first one I read that gave me a clear picture of what that line was. The parent can and should be the captain of the ship and can do that in a respectful way by making contact and being firm and confident rather than getting into lawyer and dictator mode once negotiations start. This part has really helped me with N as unless I became a dictator ie. go to

your room, you cannot have this etc. there was no way to get anything done. Now many times (I won't say all or even most) it just takes a little firm tone and a little mindful contact to get him to do certain things.

- **Fear of judgment.** So many times we have a picture or snapshot of how our child should be or behave. But if you look closely there are many things that are ok with a lot of people about your child but because of our own backgrounds, the people around us, and fear of judgment a perfectly normal behavior can really get to us and cause us to behave and say things we don't mean. By acknowledging this and working towards it a great deal can change towards our attitudes to our own children and can help us to connect in various ways.
- **Connection connection connection.** Being present and connecting is probably the only one thing that is of utmost importance and the key for a beautiful parent child relationship. Kids know when we are really there and when we aren't. They instinctively know when our attention shifts and when the ping of the cellphone means we are no longer with them. I have noticed this personally, the times when I am 100% present with my son doing things with him, chatting, playing etc. is when things for the next couple of hours are smoother and he wants to be more pleasing more ready to comply or to partner me rather than disrupt. When I have tons on my mind, when I am there but not there, when I am being task oriented is when he will do everything in his power to not do anything that needs to be done. This is a valuable lesson for us as in today's technology oriented days we are doing everything in our power to harm present connections. Kids are our best teachers once again clearly telling us we're doing it wrong.
- **Nurturing intuition.** In this book I came across the term highly sensitive child and quickly looked it up and bought a book of the same name, which I will write about, in another post. Yes this is it. That's what N is, he is [high needs](#) all right but he is also highly sensitive and it got me thinking about how intuition is such a great tool for parents. I knew all along that I had to deal with him differently right from choosing a school to determining how much to push him, how to lay off on the disciplining, the holding, the wearing etc etc. Even when from the outside it looked like I was 'spoiling' or 'pandering' I held my ground as I knew all along he needed it but it's always nice to find out more and try and work towards a healthy medium.

I loved that this book combined spirituality, how to be a spiritual being and be a parent (two things that DO NOT go hand in hand for most). Susan Stiffelman quotes [Eckhart Tolle](#) (spiritual teacher and author of 'power of now') often and he has written a forward to this book.

For anyone who is facing tough times with the kids or even if you feel you need to grow as a parent [Parenting with Presence](#) and its exercises is a great read for parents with kids of any age! the first half is very practical parenting wise and the second half is more for you as a person and practices of being mindful.

Thanks for reading and let me know if you read it and if it makes a difference!



