

PERSONAL PUZZLE JOURNAL



Your reflections.
Your growth.
Your Parenthood Puzzle



theparenthoodpuzzle

**This Personal Puzzle
Journal belongs to:**

Welcome to Your Personal Puzzle Journal

Each chapter in *The Parenthood Puzzle* includes reflection prompts designed to gently guide you, helping you notice patterns, understand your past and present experiences, and access greater clarity and choice in your life.

This journal is your sacred space: a place to pause, breathe, and step fully into your own story. Each page invites you to reflect, notice, and explore, not to judge, but to witness yourself with gentle curiosity.

Begin with curiosity and a genuine desire to understand, not to know, but to make sense of. This is your journal, a space for your thoughts, feelings, memories, and experiences to flow freely and safely. The more honest you can be with yourself, the deeper your reflections will take you.

Your Ritual:

1. Find a quiet moment and get comfortable. Make a cup of tea, light a candle, sit in a sunny spot outside, or curl up in a cosy corner of your home.
2. Approach each prompt with openness; there are no “right” answers, only your truth.
3. Write freely, allowing your thoughts and feelings to flow. Give your inner critic permission to rest.
4. Close each session with gratitude for the insight and awareness you’ve gained.

Return to this journal whenever your mind needs stillness or your heart seeks clarity. With each reflection, you are piecing together your personal puzzle, one mindful piece at a time.

The Purpose of Reflection

Reflection is a powerful tool for understanding yourself and your experiences. When you take the time to reflect and create a coherent narrative of your life, you begin to make sense of your reactions, your ways of connecting, loving, and showing up. With this clarity, you can walk through the world feeling grounded and whole, rather than questioning yourself or feeling “wrong” or “crazy” for how you respond.

Reflection requires intention. Recalling memories and exploring your past asks for regulation and safety. Your mind and body have stored all of your life’s experiences, and for good reason, it has tucked away the painful, uncomfortable, or unresolved moments. These experiences were often sealed away unconsciously or consciously to protect you.

When you choose to open those boxes, it is natural to feel resistance, fear, discomfort, or doubt. If that happens, pause. Take a deep breath and return to your body. Remind yourself who you are now, and notice the resources and support you have in this moment. You are safe. You are in your body. You only need to go as deep and as slow as feels safe for you.

No one is forcing you into this. Reflection is something you get to do. With patience and gentleness, you can support yourself as you explore, allowing insight, understanding, and healing to unfold in your own time.



Testimonials

This page is all about you. Here, you can gather and celebrate the wonderful things people have said to you, about you, or about the way you show up in the world - especially the lovely things your children notice and say about you.

You can also write affirming words about yourself: your strengths, your unique traits, and the ways you bring love, care, and wisdom into your life and family.

How to Use This Page

This is your space to celebrate you and all the ways you shine. Here are some ideas to get started, but there are no rules - follow your heart:

1. Jot down compliments, kind words, or messages of gratitude you've received from friends, family, or colleagues.
2. Capture the little things your children notice and say that show their love, admiration, or appreciation for you.
3. Write affirmations about yourself - your strengths, your unique traits, and the ways you bring love and care into your life and family.
4. Fill this page with anything that lifts you up and reminds you of your worth - poems, doodles, quotes, or even a single word that makes you smile.

Return to this page whenever you need a reminder of how special you are, the impact you have, and the love you share. There's no right or wrong way to do this - just write from your heart and enjoy celebrating you.

A Note from the Author

As the author of *The Parenthood Puzzle*, I want to say that I see you. I see someone who is deeply committed to love - because your choice to read this book and dedicate time to your Personal Puzzle Journal shows your willingness to learn, grow, and become the best version of yourself, both as a person and as a parent.

Thank you for the love that you are, and for the love you give. You are making a difference every day, and you are truly wonderful.

Your Turn

Now it's your turn - fill this page with your own reflections, affirmations, and the beautiful words others have shared about you. Take your time, enjoy the process, and let this page become a celebration of you.









Introduction

Meeting Your Reflective Self

Before you begin exploring the pieces of your parenthood puzzle, take a moment to connect with your reflective side - your inner observer, your curious self, your part that notices, wonders, and learns from your experiences. This is your space to gather your thoughts, intentions, and questions before diving into the journey.

Your Reflection Prompts:

1. Why did I choose to read *The Parenthood Puzzle*?

Consider what drew you to this book and what inspired you to begin this journey.

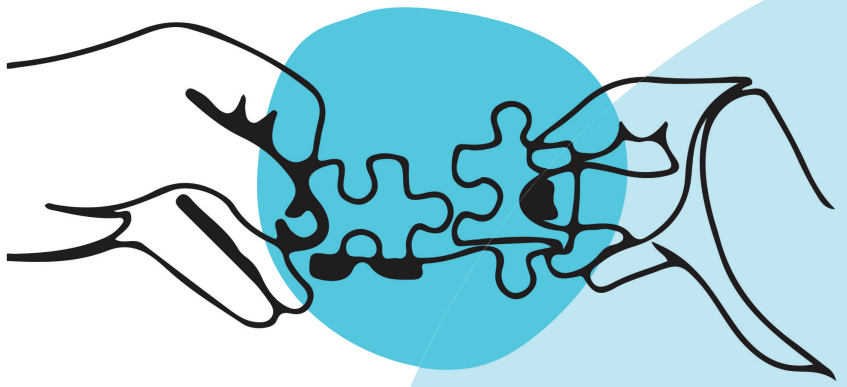
2. What am I hoping or needing to receive from reading this book?

Reflect on your intentions, hopes, or areas of growth you are seeking.

3. Who am I reading this book for?

Yourself? Your inner child? The child you are parenting? The child you long to one day parent?

Take your time with these prompts. There are no right or wrong answers - only your personal truth. This is the first step in piecing together your personal puzzle and opening the space for self-discovery.



Chapter 1

Building The Parenthood Puzzle

PERSONAL PUZZLE JOURNAL

Welcome to the first step in exploring your parenting journey. This chapter invites you to pause, reflect, and notice the pieces that shape your experience as a parent - your patterns, motivations, and intentions.

By understanding these pieces, you can approach parenthood with awareness, clarity, and choice.

Take a moment before you begin. Settle your mind, center your heart, and allow your reflections to flow.

Each answer is a piece of your parenthood puzzle, helping you to know yourself, your family, and the life you are creating - one mindful insight at a time.



Your Reflection Prompts:

1. Your Personal WHY – Why did I choose to become a parent?

Explore your motivations, desires, and the deeper reasons behind this life-changing decision.

2. **The Long-Term WHAT** – What kind of parent do I want to be, and what do I want my parenting to make possible for my child and for myself?

Envision the family life you hope to create and the values you want to cultivate.

3. **The WHO Behind Your Parenting Decisions** – Who is parenting, and who are you really doing it for?

Reflect on the influences, beliefs, and expectations that guide your choices, and consider who you are at the heart of it all.



Your Compass

FINDING YOUR ANCHOR

Parenthood can be a journey full of joy, challenge, and discovery. Along the way, it's helpful to have something that grounds you - something that brings you back to your WHY, your reason for choosing this path, and the values that guide you.

This page is your compass - a space to gather the words, images, or symbols that anchor you. It could be:

- A phrase, poem, or mantra that inspires you
- A song lyric or quote that lights your way
- A picture of your child or a loved one
- Anything that reminds you of your purpose and intention as a parent

Your Invitation:

I shared three quotes in *The Parenthood Puzzle* that help keep me on my path. Now, I invite you to do the same. Capture here the anchors that will guide and uplift you when you need clarity, calm, or courage.

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[illegible]

Return to this page whenever you need to reconnect with your purpose. Let these anchors remind you of your intentions, your love, and the life you are creating.



Naming What's Going Well

CELEBRATING YOUR STRENGTHS AND GIFTS

Parenthood is full of moments that inspire, challenge, and teach us. Sometimes it's easy to focus on what's hard or what needs improvement - but another important piece of your parenthood puzzle is noticing what *is* going well.

When we pause to acknowledge our strengths, gifts, and the positive moments in our parenting, we strengthen our awareness of what works and attract more of it into our lives and relationships. This is sometimes called *confirmation bias* - our brain naturally noticing and creating more of what we focus on.

Your Invitation:

Take a moment to list **10 things that are going well in your parenthood journey**. These can include:

- Your strengths, natural talents, and unique gifts as a parent
- Moments of connection, love, or joy with your child
- What's working well in communication, routines, or family life
- Small victories or blessings you notice in your parenting

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There are no limits - let your mind and heart notice everything that brings light, ease, or growth to your family life. This is a space to celebrate yourself and the pieces of your puzzle that are already thriving.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Return to this page whenever you want to reconnect with your blessings and strengths. Each reflection is a reminder of the positive foundation you are building for yourself and your family.



What Needs Attention

EXPLORING AREAS FOR GROWTH

Parenting is a journey of discovery, and part of that journey is noticing where we feel challenged or stretched. This page is your space to reflect on the areas that need attention - where you feel stuck, confused, lost, or powerless - and what you would like to grow into as a parent.

Your Invitation:

Take a moment to consider:

- What aspects of your parenting feel challenging right now?
- Where do you feel stuck, unsure, or overwhelmed?
- What skills, habits, or ways of being would you like to develop or strengthen?
- How would you like to grow as a parent to better serve your child, yourself, and your family?

There are no right or wrong answers. This reflection is not about judgment - it's about awareness. By naming the areas that need attention, you begin to see the pieces of your puzzle that are ready for care, growth, and transformation.

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Return to this page whenever you want to check in with yourself, notice progress, or identify new areas for attention. Each insight is a step toward clarity, choice, and conscious parenting.



Your Ideal Parenthood Puzzle

DREAMING YOUR FAMILY LIFE

This page is your invitation to imagine your dream family life - the parenthood puzzle you are creating. Take a deep breath and allow your imagination to roam freely.

Your Invitation:

- What kind of connection do you long to have with your child?
- What atmosphere or energy do you want to create in your home?
- What rhythms, routines, or ways of being do you want to guide your family life?

Don't worry about *how* you'll get there - this is about *what you want*. Let yourself dream big, freely, and without limits. Write it all down here: the hopes, the visions, the feelings, and the moments you imagine sharing with your family.



Return to this page whenever you want to reconnect with your vision. This is your blueprint for the parenthood puzzle you are intentionally creating - your aspirations, your heart's desire, and your guiding light as a parent.



Putting the Pieces into Practice

GATHERING YOUR INSIGHTS

As you come to the end of this chapter, take a moment to gather what has arisen for you through reading, reflecting, and exploring your parenthood puzzle. This is your opportunity to notice the insights, gifts, and choices that will guide you forward.

Your Reflection Prompts:

1. What did I learn that I wasn't fully aware of?

Consider the discoveries about yourself, your patterns, or your parenting that came to light in this chapter.

2. What did I receive as a gift for my parenthood?

Notice the wisdom, encouragement, or inspiration that can support you as a parent.

3. What am I choosing to take away from this chapter?

Reflect on the key practices, intentions, or mindset shifts you want to carry forward into your family life.

Take your time with these prompts. Each answer is a piece of your parenthood puzzle - an insight, a gift, or a choice that brings clarity, purpose, and presence into your journey as a parent.



Your Practice Pieces

PUTTING INSIGHTS INTO ACTION

Now that you've reflected on your parenthood puzzle, it's time to turn awareness into action. This page invites you to choose at least one practice piece to dedicate yourself to - something that will help you integrate the chapter's learnings into your daily life and family relationships.

Practice Pieces to Choose From:

- **Connect to your WHY each day** – Remind yourself of your purpose and the anchor that guides your parenting.
- **Share your new awareness with a trusted person** – Talk openly about your reflections, insights, or discoveries.
- **Tell your child the story of their beginning** – Celebrate their life and your journey together.
- **Create a family vision board** – Visualize the connection, rhythms, and atmosphere you want to cultivate.
- **Have a conversation with your own parents** – Ask them about their parenthood journey and what you can learn from their experiences.

Your Commitment:

Choose at least one practice piece and dedicate yourself to it. Write it down here and set an intention for how you will bring it into your family life:

[illegible]

Returning to these practices regularly will help you move from reflection to real-life integration, strengthening your parenthood puzzle with intention, connection, and purpose.



Chapter 2

The Puzzle Pieces of You



Building Your Personal Timeline

This is where you begin to gather the pieces of *you*.

Using the visualisation from the book, take a slow walk back through your story - your childhood home, your school hallways, the moments and memories that shaped the person and parent you've become.

This page is your space to capture what you saw, felt, or remembered. You don't need to analyse - just notice.

Let this be an ongoing process. Come back to it as new memories surface and new pieces of your puzzle come into view. Everything is welcome here.

Your Invitation:

- Use the timeline below to map your life experiences.
- Along the *top*, note your proud, happy, or celebratory moments.
- Along the *bottom*, note the painful, confusing, or challenging ones.
- In between, capture any moments that shaped you - people, places, feelings, words, or experiences that still live in you today.

This is your living map - a beginning point for deeper self-awareness and compassionate understanding of your story.

Personal Timeline

Birth

Joy / Pride

Present Day

Challenges / Struggles



Patterns and Insights from Your Timeline

Now that you've gathered your memories and experiences along your personal timeline, take a moment to explore the patterns and influences that emerge. These prompts are here to guide you - trust your observations and notice what feels meaningful to you.

Your Reflection Prompts:

1. Familiar Patterns

What patterns do you notice in your parenting that feel familiar from your own childhood - in your words, your tone, your rules, or your expectations?

2. Repeating the Past

Are there any moments where you find yourself saying or doing things your parents did, either consciously or unconsciously?

3. Conscious Choices

In what ways have you gone in the opposite direction of your upbringing? What values or behaviours have you intentionally chosen to change?

4. Childhood Roles

What roles did you take on as a child (e.g., helper, peacekeeper, achiever, caretaker), and how do those roles show up in your adult relationships or parenting today?

Take your time with these prompts. Allow curiosity and self-compassion to guide your reflections. Each insight is a piece of your puzzle, helping you understand how your story shapes your present and your parenting journey.



Your Practice Pieces

Use this space to reflect and act on what you've noticed in your story and timeline. Take your time - let it be real, imperfect, and fully honest.

Inherited Patterns

List three parenting behaviours or beliefs you inherited from your caregivers.

Think about what you say, how you respond under stress, or family “rules” you’ve repeated.

Conscious Choices

Choose one pattern you want to consciously continue and one you want to transform.

What's the impact of each? Why does it matter?

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Letter to Your Younger Self or Your Parents

Write a private letter - you don't have to send it.

Use this space to process what's been passed down with honesty, compassion, and heart.

[illegible]

First-Generation Pattern for Your Child

Name one new pattern, way of connecting, communicating, or caring that you want to begin with your child.

You're not only ending patterns - you're creating new ones.

Go at your own pace. Notice each piece. See the picture you are creating.



Chapter 3

The Puzzle Pieces of Belonging

The Puzzle Pieces of Belonging

This section invites you to explore the foundational layers of who you are - your attachment patterns and early experiences that shape how you relate to your child today. Understanding your baseline formation helps you see why you respond, connect, and show up in the ways you do.

The prompts that follow are inspired by Daniel Siegel's 4 S's of attachment: Safe, Seen, Soothe, and Secure. Each question is a door into one of these essential areas, guiding you to reflect on how you provide safety, how well you understand and truly see your child, how you manage and soothe emotions, and how secure your relationship feels for both of you.

Use these prompts to explore honestly and with curiosity. There are no right or wrong answers - only insights that can help you understand yourself and your child more deeply, piece by piece.

Safe

In what ways do you currently keep your child safe - physically, emotionally, and psychologically?

What's your style of safety? Hands-on and protective, or encouraging independence early on? How did your own experience of safety shape how you show up today?

What's one small shift you could make to help your child feel even safer with you - slowing down, softening your tone, listening more closely, or creating a calmer space?

Seen

How well do you understand your child - not just what they do, but how they think and feel?

Do you and your child have open, honest conversations? Can you listen fully, without judgment?

Where might you deepen your understanding of your child, and what inner doubts could you meet with curiosity or confidence?

Soothe

Which emotions challenge you - in yourself or your child? Anger, fear, hesitation, frustration?

Which emotions are easier for you to be around? Their silliness, creativity, imagination, calmness?

Which emotions do you need to allow yourself to feel more fully, and what self-soothing techniques help you stay present with your child?

Secure

Who did you feel secure with as a child? What made you feel safe, held, or like you could just be yourself?

Do you think your child feels secure with you? How can you tell - through behaviour, tone, trust?

What might you be doing, intentionally or unintentionally, that could make your child feel less secure?



Your Practice Pieces

BUILDING BELONGING

Choose one or two actions to focus on this week. Small, intentional steps build secure connections, one moment at a time.

Your Action Plan:

Write down what you will commit to:

- Focus on one of the 4 S's - Safe, Seen, Soothed, or Secure. How will you show up with this this week?

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- One way to help your child feel Safe, Seen, Soothed, or Secure today:

- One way to offer safety to yourself or try a self-soothing practice:

- Optional: One family ritual or playful idea to strengthen security in your home:

Take your time. Let this be real and achievable. Start small, and notice the difference each day.



Celebration Piece

Take a moment to notice and celebrate the moments that went well this week.

Connection doesn't grow from perfection - it grows from intention and repetition. You don't need to show up in all 4 S's perfectly every time; what matters is showing up enough, with love and curiosity.

Use this space to record:

- Moments where you felt truly connected to your child
- Times you responded with patience, presence, or curiosity
- Any small wins in safety, seeing, soothing, or security

Every piece you practice weaves into your belonging blanket. You're not just learning about secure attachment - you're living it, choosing it, and maintaining it.

Take a deep breath, celebrate yourself, and carry these wins forward as you continue building trust, belonging, and connection, one piece at a time.



Chapter 4

The Puzzle Pieces of Safety

This chapter is about understanding behaviour through the lens of the nervous system. Take a moment to slow down and tune in to yourself and your child.

Use this space to notice your nervous system and how it shows up in your parenting. This is about **awareness, not perfection** - noticing patterns helps you respond with more presence and connection.

Reading the Signals

- Are you your child's safe space? How does your child respond to you physically and emotionally?

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- When your child looks at you, do they soften or brace? Do they move toward you or retreat?

- What are you like in each of your nervous system states?
 - **Red (Fight/Flight):** How do you think, feel, and act when you're in a heightened or reactive state?
 - **Blue (Freeze):** What strategies or behaviors do you use to cope, protect, or survive when feeling stuck or shut down?
 - **Green (Flow):** How do you experience connection, calm, and joy when you feel regulated and present?

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- What tools or practices help you return to Green, your low state of safety, connection, and trust?

- What practices support your child in moving through their nervous system states? How well do they work?



Your Practice Pieces

YOUR REGULATION ROADMAP

Parenting is a journey - not a race. Awareness becomes action when you slow down, notice, and respond with presence and compassion. Use this space to commit to one or two practices this week.

Choose One to Begin the Drive:

1. Learn Your Terrain

Notice your nervous system states: Red (fight), Blue (shutdown/freeze), Green (safe and connected).

Where do you find yourself most often?



3. Grounding Strategy

Choose one calming practice to try this week:

- Deep belly breaths
- Gentle movement or stretching
- Sipping warm tea or cold water
- Humming, singing, sighing
- Stepping outside to feel the ground



4. Self-Attunement with Compassion

Notice triggers and inner dialogue. Speak to yourself as you would to your child:

"I make sense. There's a reason for this, and I'm open to hearing what it is."



5. Repair in Action

Choose one moment to repair a recent interaction with your child:

"I'm sorry I scared you. I wasn't paying attention. I love you and I'd like to try again."



6. Support

If this work feels tender or overwhelming, who can you reach out to for support this week?

[illegible]

Take your time. Small, intentional steps help your nervous system settle, strengthen connection, and build trust - for you and your child.



Chapter 5

The Puzzle Pieces of Perception

Use this space to explore how your perceptions, beliefs, and mindset shape your responses as a parent. This is about noticing, not fixing - bringing awareness to your patterns helps you respond with clarity and compassion.

Notice Your Brain States



- When do you notice yourself in survival (reactive) states?



- When do you notice yourself in emotional states?



- When do you notice yourself in thinking (reflective) states?

Beliefs & Assumptions

- What do you believe about yourself as a parent?

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- What do you believe about children?

- What do you believe about your child specifically?

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- What assumptions come up in challenging moments?



Your Practice Pieces

YOUR MOMENTS OF MINDSIGHT

You've explored your brain, your child's brain, and the patterns that shape your interactions. Now it's time to take one small, intentional step - one moment at a time.

Pick one practice below and use this space to commit to it:

1. Name Your Brain State

Next time you feel reactive, notice where you are: Survival? Emotional? Thinking?

No judgement - just gentle awareness.

2. Pause Before You Pounce

When your child triggers you, take a breath before responding.

Ask silently: “What else might be going on for them right now?”

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

3. Catch a Pattern

Think of a recent challenging interaction. Reflect:

- What brain state were you in?
- What might your child have been experiencing?

4. Use the Hand Model

Revisit the hand model of the brain. Ask: Where do I most often parent from?

Consider how this awareness can guide your responses.

5. Let Curiosity Lead

Swap judgment for curiosity in one moment today.

Instead of: “Why are they doing this again?”

Try: “What might this be telling me?”

Take your time. Choose one, or try a few throughout the week. Small, conscious steps build your mindsight muscle and transform connection, moment by moment.



Chapter 6

The Puzzle Pieces of Emotions

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Use this space to notice your relationship with emotions - your own, and your child's. Reflection is not about "fixing" anything; it's about awareness, understanding, and choice.

1. Echoes from Home

How were emotions handled in your childhood home?

2. Safe to Feel

Which emotions feel safe for you to express, and which feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar?

3. Mirrors and Moments

How do you respond when your child shows big feelings?

4. Hidden Clues

What might your reactions reveal about your own experiences?



Your Practice Pieces

YOUR EMOTIONAL PRACTICE PIECES

Emotions are not problems to fix - they're energy, information, and connection in motion. This is your space to explore, practice, and use the F word: FEEL.

Use the F Word

1. F.E.E.L. It!

Pick one feeling that's showing up today.

- **Focus:** Notice it in your body - tight, heavy, buzzing?
- **Embrace:** Explore where it might come from. What is it trying to tell you?
- **Express:** Move, breathe, hum, stretch, or speak it with compassion.
- **Label & Release:** Name the need behind it and let the feeling flow.

2. S.O.O.T.H.E. Your Way Back

Choose one step from the S.O.O.T.H.E. toolkit to use this week:

- **S**low down
- **O**bserve without judging
- **O**ffer yourself compassion
- **T**ake a breath or a break
- **H**old space for the feeling
- **E**xpress it safely

Think of it as a reset button - a mini-magic moment to reconnect with calm.



3. Your Daily Check-In

Pause for a minute each day and ask:

- What am I feeling?
- What am I thinking?
- What happened?
- What do I need?
- What can I do to meet this need?

This is your secret power - noticing your feelings builds emotional strength and connection over time.

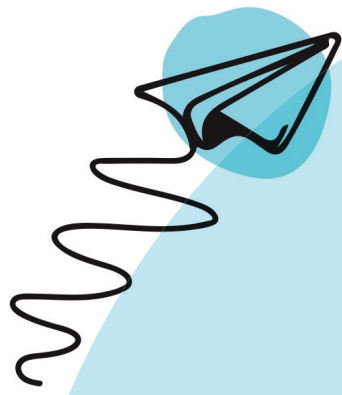
4. Model the F Word Out Loud

Try saying “I feel...” with your child today:

- Example: “I feel frustrated, so I’m taking a deep breath.”
- Notice how it shifts the energy in your interaction.
- Celebrate every tiny win - connection grows in these moments!

Your Invitation

Pick one tool, try it today, and notice the difference. One feeling at a time. One small step. This is how emotional intelligence and flexibility grows - for you, and for your child.



Chapter 7

The Puzzle Pieces of Communication

Communication is more than words. It's presence, curiosity, and connection. This section is your space to notice how you use your voice, how your child's voice shows up, and how you respond - without judgment, just awareness.



Tune Into Your Voice

Check Your Connection

What is your relationship like with your own voice?

- Do you trust it? Fight with it? Silence it?

Confident or Cautious?

How connected and confident do you feel when you need to speak up?

- What helps you feel grounded?
- What holds you back?

Safe Spaces for Speaking

When is it easy to use your voice?

- Who or what conditions allow it to flow freely?

Notice the Blocks

When is it hard to use your voice?

- Fear, doubt, habit, past experience?
- How does it show up in your body or thoughts?

Imagine Trusting Your Voice

What would change if you fully trusted your voice?

- For you?
- For your relationships?



Tune Into Your Child's Voice

Hearing “No”

What is it like when your child says “no”?

- Thoughts, feelings, reactions?

Expressed Needs

How do you feel when your child clearly expresses wants or needs?

- Ease, discomfort, pride, uncertainty?

Big Emotions

What's your response when your child shows strong feelings - anger, overwhelm, sadness?

- Curiosity? Urge to fix? Pull back?

Silence Speaks

What happens when your child retreats or doesn't express themselves?

- Worry? Helplessness? Lean in or step back?

Encouraging Voice

Where are you encouraging your child's voice?

Where might you be unintentionally silencing it?



Your Practice Pieces

SPEAK, LISTEN, CONNECT

This is your invitation to move from reflection to real-life action. Take everything you've learned about NVC and Empowered Communication, and begin experimenting in your daily life - not perfectly, not all at once, but with intention, curiosity, and compassion.

Think of this as your practice phase. Start where you are. Let the NVC framework guide you internally first: observe, name your feelings and needs, and identify a request that supports connection. The more fluent you get inside, the more naturally it comes out in your interactions.

Be transparent with your family:

“I’m trying something new. It might sound different at first, but I’m learning to communicate more consciously.”

This honesty invites curiosity, connection, and patience - for you and everyone around you.

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE THIS WEEK – PICK ONE (OR MORE!)



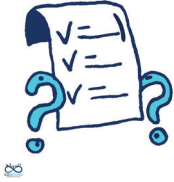
1. Active Listening Practice

Slow down. Be fully present with your child or partner. Reflect what you hear without advice or correction. Let them feel heard.



2. Tackle a Tough Conversation

Choose one discussion you've been avoiding. Use the Empowered Conversation framework or NVC steps to prepare. Even writing it out first counts!



3. Daily NVC Check-In

Pause at intervals and ask yourself:

- What am I noticing?
- What am I feeling?
- What do I need?
- What might I ask for?
- Practice journaling or speaking aloud to make it a “second language.”



4. Find a Conversation Buddy

Pick someone you trust and invite them to practice this language of connection with you.

5. Reflect on Communication Breakdowns

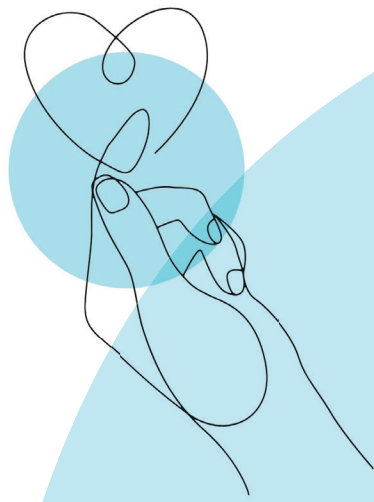
Think about a recent moment that didn't go well.

- What part of the puzzle was missing - listening, clarity, safety?
- What could you try differently next time?

6. Celebrate the Awkwardness

Trying something new **feels messy at first** - and that's how new pathways are formed. Let yourself stumble and grow.

Every conversation is a chance to connect. Start small, stay present, and let your understanding grow with each word.



Chapter 8

The Puzzle Pieces of Power

Exploring Your Relationship with Anger

In *The Parenthood Puzzle*, this chapter invites you to see anger not as something to fear or fix, but as something to understand. Anger is a natural, normal, and necessary emotion - a messenger, protector, and guide that rises to show us where something matters deeply.

When met with curiosity rather than shame, anger can help us set boundaries, name unmet needs, and protect what we love. These prompts are an opportunity to explore your relationship with anger - your own, and your child's - and to learn how to work with this powerful, mobilising energy with awareness and compassion.

Messages from the Past

What messages did you receive about anger growing up? Were you allowed to express it, or was it something to hide or fear?

Feeling It in Your Body

How does anger show up in your body? Where do you feel it most, and what sensations do you notice?

Remember a Calm Moment

Think of a time you felt anger rise and you met it with presence rather than panic or punishment. What helped you in that moment?

Befriend Your Anger

What would it look like to become a loving parent to your anger, as Jeff Foster suggests?

Your Small Practice

What's one small practice you could try this week to welcome your anger - not as a threat, but as a signal that something needs your care?

Maybe it's taking three slow breaths before responding, naming what you feel out loud, writing about what your anger is trying to protect, or moving your body to help the energy shift. Choose something gentle and simple, something that helps you meet your anger with curiosity instead of control.



Your Practice Pieces

YOUR ANGER AS YOUR ALLY

Use this space to move from insight to action. Nothing changes until you try something new. Notice, experiment, and reflect - not to be perfect, but to grow.

Reflect on Your Reactions

What does anger feel like in your body? When it rises, do you lash out, shut down, or override it?

→ Take five minutes to recall a recent reactive moment. How did you respond, and how would you have liked to respond? Imagine a new, healthier way.

Identify the Message

What value is your anger trying to protect? Connection? Respect? Justice?

→ Make a short list of your core values. Can you link recent moments of anger to something that mattered deeply to you?

Pause and Reframe

The next time anger surfaces, try this reframe: “The message for me is...”

→ Pause, breathe, and connect inwardly. Let anger guide your next step, rather than your impulse.

Move the Energy

Anger needs movement to move through.

→ Experiment with one physical release: shake your arms, stomp your feet, dance, or sing. Notice how you feel before, during, and after.

Practice in Connection

Tell someone. Let the process be seen.

You might say to your child, “I’m learning how to be with my anger in a better way, because you matter to me, and so do I.” Or you might choose to journal, send a message to a friend, or speak with a coach.

Children are both honest and encouraging - letting them see you work on yourself gives them permission to experience their full range of emotions without shame, and empowers them at the same time.

Each time you meet anger with awareness, you reclaim a piece of your power.



Chapter 9

The Puzzle Pieces of Power

Use this space to slow down, breathe, and notice how the PEACE process shows up in your life.

Peace isn't the absence of conflict - it's the presence of awareness, empathy, and choice.

Each reflection invites you to explore where peace feels possible, and where it still feels far away.

Your Path Back to Peace

Presence

When do you find it hardest to stay present with your child?

What helps you return to yourself in those moments?

Empathy

How do you respond to your child's big feelings - and to your own?

What shifts when you choose to listen with empathy rather than react from frustration?

Acknowledgement

What truth in your parenting has been hard to accept or allow lately?

How might acknowledging "what is" bring you closer to peace?

Clear Communication

Where do you notice misunderstandings or tension in your family communication?

What would it sound like to speak your truth clearly and kindly?

Explore Solutions

When have you worked *with* your child or partner to find a way forward?

What did that collaboration teach you about trust and connection?

Your Practice Pieces

BUILDING EVERYDAY HABITS OF PEACE

You've journeyed through the Pieces of Peace. You've read about Presence, Empathy, Acknowledgement, Clear Communication, and Exploring Solutions - and perhaps started to see where they might fit in your family life.

Now it's time to do more than just know.

As Maya Angelou reminds us:

“Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”

This is your invitation to begin - gently, imperfectly, and with intention to do better.

Reflect

Are you more permissive or more controlling in your current approach to boundaries?

Choose

What three values do you want your family boundaries to reflect? Write them down. Pin them somewhere visible. Let them guide you.

Apply

Use the PEACE Process in one real conversation this week. Hold one clear, calm limit and observe what shifts - in you and in your child.

Share

Tell someone. Text a friend, talk to your partner, or say to your child,

- “I’m trying something new, because you matter to me.”
- Accountability happens in the open.

*Don't wait for the perfect moment.
You can be the piece that brings peace.*



Chapter 10

The Puzzle Pieces of Playfulness

Discover Your Language of Play

You've explored the 12 Play Languages - now it's time to bring them into your own story: yours, and your child's. You've noticed how different styles show up in your home, in your connection, and in the little moments of joy and challenge. Now it's time to move from insight to action, to step into playfulness and make it part of your everyday rhythm.

As Fred Rogers reminds us:

*"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning.
But for children, play is serious learning."*

Quick Reference: The 12 Play Languages

1. **The Quirky & Silly Player:** Laughter, funny voices, peekaboo faces, playful antics. Joy through lightness and fun.
2. **The Creative Player:** Art, building, baking, inventing. Hands-on making brings flow and delight.
3. **The Imaginative Player:** Metaphors, stories, fantasy. Play in the world of dreams and deep ideas.
4. **The Cuddle & Cosy Player:** Stillness, softness, snuggles, and soothing rituals. Connection in calm simplicity.
5. **The Structured Player:** Routines, board games, organised fun. Brings clarity and rhythm to play.
6. **The Teaching & Guide-like Player:** Leads with vision, creating games, setting challenges, coaching from the sidelines.
7. **The Physical Player:** Jumping, climbing, wrestling, running. Movement is their mother tongue.
8. **The Nurturing Player:** Feeding dolls, rocking teddies, playing doctor or teacher. Connection through care.
9. **The Investigative Player:** Taking toys apart, asking why, experimenting. Curiosity drives their play and learning.
10. **The Dramatic Player:** Dress-up, role play, storytelling. Explores emotion and identity through pretend.
11. **The Organised Player:** Sorting, lining up, building intricate structures. Order is their form of expression.
12. **The Sensory Player:** Sand, slime, spinning, soft textures, music. Play that regulates through the senses.

This is your invitation: show up, be curious, and let the puzzle pieces of playfulness guide you.

Discover Your Language of Play

- Which play language sounds most like you? The one that feels like home, where play comes easily and time disappears.

- Which one feels like an old friend, familiar, maybe even forgotten, but still fluent in your heart?

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- Are there parts of your childhood quietly longing to return?

- What about your child? Did one of the children's languages leap off the page as them? Can you see it in the way they naturally play when no one is guiding them?

PERSONAL PUZZLE JOURNAL

- Have you ever invited your child into your play language? And what about you, have you stepped into theirs?

- How did they respond? Was there delight, resistance, curiosity?

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- What happens when you slow down and enter their world on their terms?

- What might shift in your relationship if you met your child in the language they know best?

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- How might the connection feel then?



Your Practice Pieces

PUT THE PIECES INTO PLAY

Let's move from reflection to action. You don't need to overhaul your life. Small, playful steps can make a big difference.

Try One and See What Sparks Joy

Notice your play language, and your child's.

- What lights you up? What lights them up? Begin simply by observing. Where do you feel most at ease? Where do they come alive?

Choose one moment to play.

- It doesn't have to be long. Five minutes of silliness, shared laughter, or side-by-side imagination is enough. Pick one playful interaction and lean in with presence.

Challenge a limiting belief.

- Catch one story you've been telling yourself about play, like "I'm not playful" or "It's not productive." Gently replace it with something truer: "My presence matters." Or "Play is connection, not performance."

Reflect on what shifts.

- What happens in your body when you allow playfulness in? What softens? What opens? How does your child respond when you show up in this way?

One playful step, countless connections.

Chapter 11

The Puzzle Pieces of Practice



You've done the work. You've learned, reflected, and experimented. Now it's time to put it all into motion. This is your space to notice what's shifted, celebrate what's working, and map out how to keep moving forward with intention. Practice isn't about perfection - it's about showing up, consistently, in real life.



Integration Reflections

Take a moment to honour what's landed for you. Complete the prompts below with honesty and curiosity:

- One insight that surprised me was...

- A puzzle piece I really resonated with was...

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- One belief I've shifted while reading and reflecting is...

- Something I want to remember when things feel hard is...

- One area I'm already showing up differently in is...

Choosing Your Puzzle Piece

Pick **one area to focus on for now**. Circle or highlight the piece that feels most important in this moment.

Remember, you can always come back to the other pieces later - this is about taking one step at a time, at your own pace.

- Connection
- Co-regulation
- Perception and mindsight
- Play
- Power WITH (not power over)
- Belonging
- Boundaries
- Repair after rupture
- Self-awareness
- Generational healing

Now complete:

- I'm choosing to practise the puzzle piece of:

- Because I want to...



Bringing It Into Your Life

Think about small ways to embed this focus into your week:

- Monday – What could I try today?

- Wednesday – A mindful pause or moment I could take

- Friday – A small win I want to celebrate



Celebrate Progress

- Something I'm proud of myself for

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- A parenting moment I want to hold close

- A strength I've rediscovered in myself

Integration Intention

Over the next three months, I will:



- Focus on



- Practise



- Be kind to myself by



- Stay connected to my vision through

Your Mana: Power and Presence

Mana is a Hawaiian principle that reminds us that all power comes from within. It's the life energy that flows through you, your child, your home, and the world around you. When you connect to your mana, you connect to your own flow - that place of presence, ease, and possibility where you can respond rather than react, and show up fully for yourself and your family.

Through my Level 1 training in Kahuna massage, I learned a principle that continues to guide me: all power comes from within. Experiencing this in practice reminded me that when we connect to our own energy, we can move with intention, presence, and calm - even in parenting's most challenging moments.

Being aware of your mana gives you courage and confidence. It reminds you that your power doesn't come from perfection or doing everything "right" - it comes from being grounded in yourself, here and now.

My Mana Mantra

Use this space to create a phrase that reminds you of your power, presence, and flow. Speak it, write it, or carry it with you:



- My Mana Mantra

Say it whenever you want to reconnect with your inner strength, your calm, and your flow.

Chapter 12

Parenting Puzzles Unpacked



Your Parenting Puzzle Question

Parenting can be full of unexpected twists, challenges, and “what now?” moments. In this final section, I invite you to bring your own parenting puzzle to the table.

You can do this in one of two ways:

1. **Send me your question** – email me at delicia@gobeyondparenthood.com with a parenting challenge you’re facing. I’d love to offer guidance, and with your permission, your question could be featured in a future Dear Delicia column.
2. **Journal it for yourself** – write your question below, then explore it using the tools, reflections, and puzzle pieces you’ve discovered throughout this book. Coach yourself, try new approaches, and notice what shifts.

I’d love to hear how it goes, so don’t hesitate to email me and share your story. Remember: every challenge is also an opportunity to grow, connect, and practice what you’ve learned.

PERSONAL PUZZLE JOURNAL



Your question:

*“Journal writing, when it becomes a ritual for transformation,
is not only life-changing,
but life-expanding.”
- Jennifer Williamson*



Closing Reflection Prompt

Take a moment to pause and notice how far you've come. Reflect on the insights, patterns, and moments of clarity you've discovered along the way.

- What surprised you about yourself?

- What strengths or resources have you uncovered?

- How has this journey shaped the way you see yourself as a parent and a person?

Take a deep breath and give yourself gratitude for the time, attention, and care you've invested in your story.



Keep Going with Your Journal

Your Personal Puzzle Journal doesn't end here. It's a companion that can grow with you, a space to return to whenever you need clarity, grounding, or a moment to reconnect with yourself.

Journaling is more than writing; it's a tool for insight, a mirror for growth, and a practice that helps you notice where you're thriving - and where you have room to expand. The questions you explore here aren't just exercises; they're invitations to show up fully in your life and your parenting.

Lean into this practice. Make it a habit. Let it remind you of your strengths, illuminate new possibilities, and guide you gently toward the parent - and person - you're becoming.

I've always found journaling to be a source of wisdom, perspective, and calm. Keep using it, keep trusting yourself, and keep discovering the pieces of your story, one mindful reflection at a time.

If you'd like further support, 1:1 or group parent coaching is available to help you explore these ideas more deeply and integrate them into your life. Visit www.gobeyondparenthood.com for more information.

With love and gratitude,

Delicia Moraleda

Author of *The Parenthood Puzzle*