

# REFLECT ON YOUR PURPOSE AS A PARENT

Difficulty: CASUAL | Frequency: VARIABLE | Duration: 20 MINS



## WHY YOU SHOULD TRY IT

Parenting can be difficult, particularly when we are also trying to balance the many responsibilities that we have in other roles in our lives (as employees or managers, children, friends, and more). Yet as parents we have a wonderful opportunity to shape young lives and, in the process, to continue our own growth and development.

Reflecting on our purpose as parents can [help us stay invested](#) when things feel challenging, which is crucial to our children's development. For instance, parents who are more invested raise kids with [better cognitive functioning, school readiness, emotional development, empathy, and ability to form strong and healthy relationships with their peers](#). Furthermore, connecting to our purpose as parents is also important to our own well-being, as people with a stronger sense of purpose in life tend to have better [mental health, physical health, and longevity](#).

## TIME REQUIRED

This practice takes between 15-25 minutes and can be done whenever you need to reconnect with your sense of purpose as a parent.

## HOW TO DO IT

Parenting can be challenging and stressful at times, but it is also an extremely fulfilling and rewarding experience. Tapping into our sense of purpose as parents can help us stay grounded and invested in our children's development while also increasing our own well-being. Here's a short practice to reconnect with your sense of purpose.

Find a quiet space where you can spend a bit of time reflecting on the following questions in a journal or on a digital device, if you prefer.

1. Think about the type of life you want your children to have. What long-term goals and aspirations do you have for them (like doing well in school or being healthy)?
2. Think about a recent positive experience you had as a parent with your children. Briefly describe it, then identify two or three of your core values it reflected (for example, going to the playground may represent your values of fun, connection, and growth).
3. What are two or three specific character strengths you bring to being a parent (like hard work, compassion, or loyalty)?
4. What are two or three specific skills you are motivated to develop as a parent (like better communication skills, empathy and listening skills, or organizational skills)?
5. Now, take a moment to reflect on your unique combination of core values, character strengths, and skills you

are motivated to develop and the long-term goals and aspirations you have for your children. Finish your reflection by writing about the impact you want to make on your children's lives or in the world through your role as a parent.

## EVIDENCE IT THAT WORKS

Mahalik, J. R., Di Bianca, M., & Martin, N. G. (2023). Evaluation of brief online interventions to increase sense of purpose for fathers living in the United States. *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*, 24(1), 26-33.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/men0000414>

Fathers who practiced Reflect on Your Purpose as a Parent reported a stronger sense of purpose and desire to contribute to the world, compared to those who didn't do the practice or those who simply learned about the benefits of paternal investment in children.

## WHY TO TRY IT

Past research suggests that knowledge alone does not inspire a sense of purpose. To find purpose, parents and individuals need to understand how their actions are linked to their life as a whole and sense of self. This short reflection allows parents to find meaning by focusing their attention on the impact that their actions as parents have for their children and potentially even the world.

Furthermore, this reflection helps parents recognize how parenting is so intricately related to their own values, goals, and skills. This is particularly important when we feel overwhelmed and start feeling uncertain about our effectiveness as parents. Thus, this short reflection helps parents recenter themselves by allowing them to remember just how meaningful their role is and how well-aligned it is to what matters to them.

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This practice is part of [Greater Good in Action](#), a clearinghouse of the best research-tested methods for increasing happiness, resilience, kindness, and connection, created by the [Greater Good Science Center](#) at UC Berkeley and [HopeLab](#).

