

# LOVE YOUR INNER CHILD

Shower yourself with the essential 5 A's of love: attention, affection, allowing, appreciation and acceptance. It will restore the flow, joy and wonder in your life, says **Andrea Anstiss**



*Our child  
connects us  
with our  
creativity*

**A**re you able to have a rollicking good belly laugh, break into song spontaneously, cry easily, feel great about your tears, and then giggle again? Are you able to wonder at the vastness of the universe, and to marvel about the fact that you have a body and that it's so clever, while an ant and a giraffe have entirely different bodies? Are you able to fully occupy your place in the world? Do you know what your place is? Do you know what you need and can you give it to yourself?

Are you able to do all of this without the added fuel of alcohol, drugs and co-dependency, and without feelings of shame? If so, it seems you have an easy and healthy relationship with your inner child. Most of us, though, have work to do in this area. Perhaps you have been in recovery in a 12-step programme for some time, and yet you still feel that something is missing. Whatever you are experiencing now is opening you to questioning. That little child within was inevitably shut down at some point between floating in utero and reaching the age of 18. The good news is that this little child or teenager – frozen in time – is still there, always awaiting our return. »



Discovering and recovering the child within is a journey, often circular, never straight

The narrative of what happened to cause this little child to be frightened, perhaps to fight, flee and ultimately freeze, is important material that we can pick over for years with our patient friends, and in coaching and therapy sessions. Some of us choose to do that and others choose to pretend their childhood was perfect, a denial that allows us to protect your caretakers, ignore your child's inner reality, and live a façade, usually involving several addictions. Denial invariably has huge consequences for our body and our health.

*As an adult, it is now your task to do what your caretakers were unable to do fully in your childhood. This is the job known as 're-parenting'*

It is strongly recommended that we tell the story of our hurt child; it is a key step in recovering the spontaneous child within. Going beyond denial and later beyond the narrative and beyond blame into our messy, chaotic and beautiful feelings, we find treasure. Giving space to allow this little child to really be heard without judgement, to express what was not safe to express back then, is the ultimate work in world peace.

#### **IT'S NOT ALL CHILD'S PLAY – IT TAKES DONKEY WORK**

Understandably, some people are reluctant to embark upon this journey. To allow space for and really understand this little girl or boy, we need to go into and through the tsunami of feelings and denial systems. In this work, we come face-to-face with the feelings we have been working desperately to avoid and excuse our whole lives. So some people would prefer to remain in their pain, hurt, vindictiveness and addictions, thank you very much.

This must be respected. Yet adult life often gives us a few shoves; the shove is a version of "You need to dig deeper, girl, because if not, this marriage will be over, or this illness will worsen, or you will lose your job, or you will damage your own kids, or you will lose your mind." These permutations and combinations of the scenarios that life dishes out are invitations for us to reconnect with our child within; until we do, those dramas continue to play out.

Freud and his cohorts told us that what happens in our childhood affects our adult life. The extent to which our childhood wounding actually impacted us seemed vague and terribly intellectual. Now we know better. The bottom line is that goings-on in our childhood design our adult life, our relationships and our intimacy, or lack thereof. The patterns we took on from our particular family 'soup' are acted out or rebelled against, and they reverberate through all facets of our life until we wake up to what we are repeating.

By going back to that original blueprint and the feelings that are still stored in our bodies, allowing a place for them in our beings, finding healthy ways to express these feelings – including the hidden corners of shame, hatred and vindictiveness – and then grieving our losses, we restore the flow, joy and wonder to our lives.

### RE-PARENTING YOUR LITTLE WONDER DUDE

David Richo writes about the essential 5 A's that beautifully describe the essence of love: attention, affection, allowing, appreciation and acceptance. This is the best definition of love that I have ever come across. No matter how attentive your parents were, it is actually impossible to meet all the needs of a little child, and so there were times – even if you had a 'super mummy' – that you did not receive the 5 A's in the ideal amounts.



EXPRESS FEELINGS FULLY

As an adult, it is now your task to do what your caretakers were unable to do fully, to grieve those early losses and shower yourself with an abundance of the 5 A's. This is the job known as 're-parenting', and it is your job, not the job of your spouse, your friends and certainly not your children.

Re-parenting includes challenging all your family rules, such as "don't feel, stay silent, keep secrets, and be perfect". You are invited to investigate all your mistaken

conclusions about who you think you are based on your childhood experiences. There are many creative ways to do this, and you may want some guidance. This work restores self-worth, integrity and – most essentially – the thrill of being alive.

### WHO MIGHT HOLD YOUR HAND?

Discovering and recovering the child within is a journey, often circular, never straight. And, with good reason, my clients and workshop participants often ask, "How long will it take?" Perhaps somewhere between a couple of hours and a lifetime! Our child within connects us with our creativity, our present moment awareness, our completeness, our interconnectedness and our hearts. Who doesn't want that?

The time we invest in recovering our inner child and integrating her with the rest of the cast of characters that make up our complexity is the best investment we can ever make. The irony is that

as you do this work, you also come to know that who you are can never be defined only by your history; we are all much more majestic than that. And yet we cannot skip or trample over our inner child and know wholeness.

There are excellent courses designed to support you on this journey. The best techniques include body-centred approaches, with movement, painting/drawing, and space to express feelings fully. ✨

## HEALING WORKSHOPS IN DUBAI

### Healing The Inner Child workshop

Date: March 13, 2015

Time: 9.00am-5.30pm

- It is never too late to have a happy inner child.
- Shake off limiting patterns – thoughts, feelings and behaviours.
- Discover how to joyfully re-parent this child.
- Reclaim your wonder child and the wonder of being fully alive.

### Core Identity Healing Workshop

Date: March 14, 2015

Time: 9.00am-5.30pm

- You are magnificent.
- Do NOT accept making do, mediocrity or "I am not good enough".
- Radically transform old stuck beliefs of guilt, shame and lack of deserving.
- You are perfect and lovable exactly as you are even if this was not mirrored to you yet!

**Cost:** AED 1,400 per workshop. Early bird price is AED 1,200 for each workshop or AED 2,000 for both if paid before March 1.

**Facilitators:** Andrea Anstiss, psychotherapist and Hoffman Process Teacher and Lisa Laws, life and addiction coach, hypnotherapist.

Both workshops are offered in a small, anonymous group setting and give participants the opportunity to explore and heal areas within themselves and their lives.

*For more information and to book, please contact:*

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