

"Shefali Tsabary's invaluable book shows how the challenges of parenting can become a great opportunity for spiritual awakening. Becoming a fully conscious parent is the greatest gift you can give to your child."  
— ECKHART TOLLE, author of *The Power of NOW* and *A New Earth*

# THE *transforming ourselves* **CONSCIOUS** *empowering our children* **PARENT**



Shefali Tsabary, PhD

*Preface by His Holiness the DALAI LAMA*

## The Conscious Parent: Transforming Ourselves, Empowering Our Children

*Shefali Tsabary*

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# **The Conscious Parent: Transforming Ourselves, Empowering Our Children**

*Shefali Tsabary*

## **The Conscious Parent: Transforming Ourselves, Empowering Our Children Shefali Tsabary**

It's a tremendous privilege to raise children, though for a quite different reason than most of us who are parents imagine.

While we think it's our responsibility to mold and shape our children's future, the essential premise of Dr. Shefali Tsabary's *A Call to Conscious Parenting* is that our children are born to us to create deep internal transformation within us.

Our children have the power to unleash our egoic behavior unlike anyone else, triggering all of our emotional reactivity. As, through our intimate relationship with them, we are exposed to our immaturity, they become our most accurate mirror of our own lack of emotional development. In other words, by inviting us to confront who we are in our relationship with them, our children raise us to be the parents they long for us to become.

Despite our best intentions to raise our children well, in our unconsciousness we pass on emotional legacies to our children that have deep and lasting repercussions. Bequeathing to them our unresolved needs, unmet expectations, and frustrated dreams, we shackle them in unconscious patterns that shut them down to their own unique being.

To do justice to parenthood, a parent needs to become conscious. Only to the degree we are willing to transform our own emotional present do we succeed in positively influencing our children's future.

Dr. Tsabary asks us to set aside traditional parenting strategies that major in controlling our children and instead find true kinship with their spirits by tuning into who each child is in its own unique essence. Surrendering to the oneness of the parent-child relationship in this way lifts parenting out of the physical and into the realm of the sacred.

Peppered with practical, hands-on examples from Dr. Tsabary's real-life experiences with the countless families she has helped journey consciously together, *A Call to Conscious Parenting* is a manual for giving our children the opportunity to shine and dazzle with their natural state of being.

## **The Conscious Parent: Transforming Ourselves, Empowering Our Children Details**

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Author : Shefali Tsabary

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## **From Reader Review The Conscious Parent: Transforming Ourselves, Empowering Our Children for online ebook**

### **Tracey Sylkaitis says**

This was the exact book I needed at the exact time in my life that I needed to read it. I have always said that my children are my greatest teachers, but until I read this book I could not articulate or even comprehend to what extent that is true. My children both have ADHD and this book answered the complicated questions that I had in regards to what this journey my children and I were on was supposed to teach us spiritually. I knew that for me raising my children and managing their ADHD was about more than just punishment and rewards systems, and me being "right" and them being "wrong". I recognized that their behavior often triggered emotions and behaviors in me that I needed to address, I just had no clue as to why and how. This book answered all those questions and so many more. This book was really an answer to my prayers and I am so thankful to Dr. Shafali Tsabary for writing it! I will be referencing this beautiful guide book again and again! It truly is a gift to all parents and all children.

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### **Sassy C says**

Highly recommended for everyone! - To people who are committed to both raising children with awareness and to "raising" their own level of awareness spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. It really assists in accepting the "as-is"-ness of life and letting go of any rigid expectations of past/present/future events, etc.

"When you parent, it's crucial you realize you aren't raising a mini-me, but a spirit throbbing with its own signature. For this reason, it's important to separate who you are from who each of your children is. Children aren't ours to possess or own in any way. When we know this in the depths of our soul, we tailor our raising of them to their needs, rather than molding them to fit our needs."

-Tsabury

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### **Ruby says**

Another book I wanted to love because of the glowing reviews & the premise of seeing your child and your parenting journey together with your child, as a spiritual guide. I would choose Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids (Laura Markham) over this book any day.

The book is aimed more at parents of teens, so maybe I am blissfully unaware of the battleground that is teen parenting (my kids are 4 and 1). However the example she gives of parents in trouble are often very extreme (verbal and sometimes physical abuse, at least that's how I view belittling, name-calling, and pushing kids around) and not at all relatable. Then there are other examples of "difficulty connecting" and other vague terms/behaviours, which are connected to the parent not having been able to meet the emotional needs of the child when they were very small. She says you can absolutely turn this around, but compared to Markham's book (or How to talk to kids..), there is very little practical advice.

I just found it alienating, depressing and also a little insulting how the author assumed the readers would be parents who know nothing of gentle parenting: I feel the people who read this book are more likely to

already be in that camp, than to be of the more authoritarian or punitive parenting camp.

It was also far too long, it seems that the main idea or goal of the book is to indeed see your child as a sort of spiritual compass, someone to show you where you can grow and to do so together (which I really like); but because it is a parenting book, it had to have some more discipline/stages of life chapters in it, but none of them are then complete (quite a few pages on infancy, then toddlerhood, then "school" 2 pages and then middle school, very short indeed.)

I think I would have liked the book better if the author had:

- Stuck to the main idea of spiritual guidance through your own parenting journey;
- Given a first part, describing where the idea of this come from, the basics of mindfulness & stillness, the 'as is' world;
- Then given a second part with lots of practical examples from all kinds of different parents (ages of kids, family type, etc.) and prompts on how use those situations (or how those parents used those situations) to reflect on their spiritual path and internal growth;
- And then given a third part with more general meditations, resources and possibly things like games to play with kids, activities, conversations, etc;
- And had done a little research on who the main audience of the book would be.

One last thing I didn't agree with (but that may be more to do with spiritual choice) was the idea of helping kids disassociate from their feelings and thoughts. I know this is an important concept, but I personally prefer to teach my kids that I accept their feelings, their opinions and their thoughts for what they are, and also help them deal with them by learning to understand them and to emotion coach them. Tsabary suggests leaving a tantrumming toddler alone (if it is safe) but that teaches the kid nothing except that strong and scary emotions are something s/he is left to deal with by him/herself, something I strongly disagree with.

Good/new things I learned from this book:

- Extra emphasis on the idea that your child is who s/he is meant to be. This helped me solidify the concept of "acceptance" in every day parenting;
  - To look at my own restlessness, inability to be still and how my kids will learn that from me if I don't change it now;
  - The positive idea of growing together, of seeing your child and your struggles in parenthood as a compass to direct you to those areas that still need your loving attention.
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### **Chris Mower says**

This book should be a part of every parent's library; it's a parenting book for parents. Literally. The focus is not so much on our children's behavior, but how our behavior as parents effects our children and their behavior.

To me, the overall message of the book was to be present with your child and understand that they are their own person, separate from you—to parent consciously, with purpose and recognizing that it's the here and now that make the biggest difference. Dr. Tsabary reminds us many times to put aside our ego and expectations and help our children learn that living authentically is the healthiest and most rewarding life, not raising a "mini me" if you will.

I learned gobs about myself from reading this, and I also learned valuable information about how my behaviors affect my children. It was very insightful, sometimes to the point of really hitting home and helping me see ways that I was doing well and ways that I could improve as a parent.

I would give this book 5/5 stars, but I took 1 star away for two reasons:

1) I felt the examples in the book, while good, were all "extremes" or "worst case scenario". I would have liked to see some that were a little more moderate. Also, the examples were never followed through to the end. We only heard about the situation, but never if the situation was resolved, and how it was resolved. Of course the theories in the book are supposed to be the how, but I would have liked to have more in-depth case studies.

2) At times the book could get a little repetitive, but it was never to the point of "good heck, just move on."

Again, I highly recommend this book; it's a book on which I'll frequently be pondering.

Some of my favorite quotations (out of many):

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When you parent, it's crucial you realize you aren't raising a "mini me," but a spirit throbbing with its own signature. For this reason, it's important to separate who you are from who each of your children is. Children aren't ours to possess or own in any way. When we know this in the depths of our soul, we tailor our raising of them to their needs, rather than molding them to fit our needs.

Shefali Tsabary, *The Conscious Parent: Transforming Ourselves, Empowering Our Children* (Vancouver: Namaste Publishing, 2010), 2-3.

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Whether our children are artistic, academicians, risk takers, into sports, musical, dreamers, or introverts, it need have no bearing on how we regard them. On a grander scale, it isn't our place to approve or disapprove of whether our children are religious, gay, the marrying kind, ambitious, or manifest any number of other traits. While a child's behavior is subject to modification that brings the child more closely in line with its essential being, their core must be unconditionally celebrated.

When our children choose a religion other than ours, a different profession than we dreamed of for them, are homosexual in orientation, or marry someone out of their race, how we respond is a barometer of how conscious we are. Are we able to respond to them with the realization that they have the right to manifest their inner being in their unique way?

Shefali Tsabary, *The Conscious Parent: Transforming Ourselves, Empowering Our Children* (Vancouver: Namaste Publishing, 2010), 26.

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What do you have a right to expect from your children? I identify three elements: respect for

themselves, for others, and for their safety. Beyond these basics, your children own the right to manifest who they want to be, even if this isn't what you wish for them. Anything more presumes ownership of who your children should be. Your expectations are yours to keep and yours to know, not for your children to hold just because they were born to you.

Shefali Tsabary, *The Conscious Parent: Transforming Ourselves, Empowering Our Children* (Vancouver: Namaste Publishing, 2010), 172-173.

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Conscious Parents trust implicitly their child's intuition concerning its destiny.

Shefali Tsabary, *The Conscious Parent: Transforming Ourselves, Empowering Our Children* (Vancouver: Namaste Publishing, 2010), 264.

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### **Saiisha says**

The one thing that had made me a more conscious mother was the poem "On Children" by Khalil Gibran in the Prophet. It absolutely changed the way I parented from the day I read it many years ago.

I feel that this book, The Conscious Parent, is the practical guide version of that poem. It hits all the right notes for a person who's on a spiritual path, and wants to guide their children through their life on this planet:

- that at a soul level, you and your child are equal
  - that your children come to awaken you to your conscious self
  - that both your approval and disapproval are ways to control your child
  - that you give up your "shoulds" and instead accept them as they are
  - that this partnership is a chance to lose your ego!
- and many, many other insights.

Despite the many examples, the book might seem a bit abstract, but it's still a great book to read that can awaken you to a different way of parenting - a more conscious way!

If you're interested in spirituality, philosophy, yoga, etc., join my Old Souls Book Club (<https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/...>) for other recommendations and thought-provoking conversations!

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### **Anne says**

Definitely the best "parenting" book I have read. This book gave me a ton to think about...about how I unconsciously react to my kids and how a lot of the problems we face in raising children, is because we are unconscious. If we wake up to our role as a parent and start parenting consciously...our children can become our spiritual teachers, and we can parent them in the way they deserve to be parented. I think I have more

questions now than I did before I read this book...but in all honesty, I think that is good thing. I would recommend this book to everyone...seriously. I think it goes beyond just the parent/child relationship...and encompasses ALL relationships. It is definitely time for me to wake up and start paying attention!!!

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### **Juanita says**

I loved this book - it resonated strongly with me. When we transform ourselves and notice our triggers, this frees our children too.

One piece that i would question is the idea that there is such thing as finding a perfect balance between between too strict or too permissive. There is no such thing as perfect parenting. There is no guarantee that finding that perfect equilibrium will ensure that your relationship with your child will turn out fine. We can hope, but our children are who they are and sometimes no matter what you do as a parent, your relationship with your child may not be as you envisioned or hoped.

As parents i think it's a balance of accepting out parenting choices and also being willing to change and adapt. Parents are so judgmental of their skills - i think that the healing begins with being more gentle and accepting of ourselves first. We need to stop looking for one parenting model and instead as this author writes - transform ourselves to empower our children.

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### **Amy says**

I wish every parent would read this book. The concepts are so valuable. Unlike many parenting books, it's less about how to parent and more about how parenting itself is an invitation for your own spiritual growth -- an opportunity to develop your mindfulness so that you can respond to your children in a present and conscious way. It contains the tools to develop your awareness about your triggers and the ways in which your own ego and projections affect your relationship with and rearing of your children. A book to own and revisit yearly to see your progress as you practice.

Unfortunately her writing could be better -- wish the editor had helped more with that. A lot of sentences start with a dependent clause and follow with an independent clause... The rhythm of the text gets a bit old at times. I still give it 5 stars because the content is so great. If you can have patience with the sentence structure, it's an invaluable book.

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### **Frederico says**

I take buddhist philosophy to heart, striving to be present soothes me, helps me, makes me hopeful and feels me with compassion. This book carries the simple message that a parent's best approach to parenting is to be present with his or her children. For those who don't quite understand this, they should read this book right now. For me, it was unfortunately repetitive, and it took me a long time to finish it. I decided to read a little bit every few days to allow for the lessons to fully sink in.

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### **India says**

Really interesting book. She says that our children can trigger areas of unconsciousness. In that moment we have a choice. In the moment we are being triggered we can either react from instinct and past pain or we can become aware of the feelings that are being triggered. Our children can be a catalyst for our own healing and we can teach them how to be present on an ongoing basis. Very intriguing

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### **Neilina Corbeau says**

So much great advice that I really need to be following. Of course, if doing so were not an immense struggle, I would not need all these helpful reminders. I'd go so far as to say that this was one of the most relevant books on parenting that I have read. Most important take home for me personally: My parenting struggles are within myself. They aren't problematic behaviors of my children. It's my unchecked anxiety controlling my reactions to my children. My children are here to provide a mirror to help me heal my own traumas.

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### **Janae says**

Oh if I had been open to and received this book ten years ago. This parenting book has transformed my daily life and relationships with my husband and children in subtle but amazing ways. I have marked and reread passages and most of all my thinking and perspective has changed.

Shefali asserts that many people parent on a reactionary basis and never examine our reasons for the way we feel or do things. She believes that our children are mirrors and spiritual partners meant to help us heal as we shape our children. We should become aware of our own reactions and feelings and then we can help our children do the same.

If you are looking for methods or ways to transform your child in thirty days, this is not the book for you. This is about changing yourself not your children. Once you embrace consciousness you are more open to disciplining and accepting life and situations for what they are and uncovering the true problem or emotion behind the action. You are then more open to finding appropriate reactions. For those of you who are family and friends, at this point I insert my spiritual bend, this is when we become open to the Spirit and the inspiration needed to correctly help ourselves and our children grow together as spiritual partners.

I truly believe I was led to this book right now because it is what I needed to move forward spiritually. A truly transformational read.

Beware it takes a while to digest. My only criticism of this book is that it is repetitive. Some say the chapters on certain age groups are too brief. I can see that but I don't think she is trying to prescribe certain methods but rather helping us have confidence in our own ability to be open to "creative" ways of helping our children.

A must read in my opinion for all.

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## Jurga Jurgita says

Turb?t pirm? kart? skaitydama knyg? apie vaik? aukl?jim?, susid?riau su tokia problema, kad skai?iau ir piktinausi. Atrodo, kad prieš tai skaitytos kelios knygos savo mintis d?st? aiškiai ir suprantamai, bet ši man kažkoks nesusipratimas, tod?l ir teko su ja "vargti" vos ne vis? savait?. Kaip teigia knygos anotacija, tai yra naujoviškas, netradicinis, gal net revoliucinis poži?ris ? aukl?jim?. Tai knyga apie dvasin? bendravim? su vaikais. Man tie visi dvasinai dalykai yra kažkoks kosmosas, nes aš esu iš t? žmoni?, kuriems viskas turi b?ti aiškiai ir suprantamai pateikta. Nesmerkiu nei toki? rašytoj?, nei toki? knyg?, nes kiekvienas skaitytojas gilinasi ? skirtingus dalykus, ta?iau skaitydama ši? knyg? ap?m? toks jausmas, kad viskas joje tas pats per t? pat? kartoja. Perskai?iusi ši? knyg? supratau kelias mintis, kuriomis ir noriu pasidalinti:

- 1) "S?moningos t?vyst?s" tikslas - parodyti, kaip galima atpažinti emocines ir dvasines pamokas, kurias mums suteikia aukl?jimas, ir kaip jas paversti akstinu patiemis tobul?ti, nes tik tobul?dami tapsime geresnias t?vais.
  - 2) S?moningas poži?ris nukreiptas ? vertybes, kurios atsiranda iš santyki?. ?ia b?tinas visiškas t?v? atsidavimas ir laisva valia, nes tik s?moningi t?vai paj?g?i paskatinti vaiko sielos poky?ius.
  - 3) S?moningai aukl?jant bendraujama su vaikais tokiais, kokie jie yra, taip stipr?ja suvokimas.
  - 4) Norint priimti vaikus tokius, kokie jie yra, reikia atsikratyti žaling? gyvenimo scenarij? ir visa siela susilieti su vaikais.
  - 5) S?moninga t?vyst? pirmiausia prasideda nuo suvokimo, kad m?s? vaikai iš prigimties yra geranoriški ir nori tinkamai elgtis.
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## Jared says

I've read some of Dr. Tsabary's articles before, seen some video talks she's given, so when I saw this audio book at the library, I picked it up. I'd read so many glowing reviews about it that I was really expecting it to be wonderful, enlightening, life-changing, etc. like a lot of the other reviewers. I have to say that for me, it wasn't. I was mostly annoyed, and I found myself scoffing or cringing a lot at her examples.

I'm already on board with gentle, respectful parenting. I already believe in and practice a "working-with" perspective, not using punishments, not yelling, all that. I've read a number of other books and found all of these concepts years ago, but I keep reading new books just to see if I can continue to grow and improve as a parent by encountering new ideas and perspectives.

A large part of why this book wasn't helpful to me is that it seems to be directed specifically at parents who are enraged at their children, who scream at them, call them names, ignore them, hit them, and generally engage in a great deal of behavior that I just can't fathom. I know there are people who are coming to this book from those perspectives, and for them this might be really helpful. It sounds like it probably is from the other reviews. So if that's where you are and you're trying to find a way to stop, this might well be helpful for you. For me, it wasn't, and listening to the stories about her clients doing these things to their children was disturbing. Any book that's trying to get someone from that point to a more gentle, respectful, "conscious" approach, is obviously going to have examples of people behaving in the harsh, punitive ways. I get that, and other books I've read that do that haven't bothered me as much. I think it's because I was listening to her say things like "So when you scream in your child's face that you don't love them anymore and that you never want to see them again, this is why you're doing that." Something about her use of the second-person

perspective in those examples just grated on me. I'm sure she did it as a way to make the people who are doing those things feel like they aren't alone. I understand the device. It just annoyed me to sit there and listen to her doing that for nine hours. I'm probably being too egoic or something.

Also, I'm not big on "zen" philosophy in general, and her overall approach and recommendations seem to fit into this concept. There's a bunch of "Don't judge experiences as good or bad, just let them wash over you and value them for the lessons they can teach you," sort of stuff. I think that's junk, personally. If that works for her, more power to her, but I can learn the lesson of an experience just fine and still see that's it's a bad one that I don't want to repeat. Sometimes that's the most important lesson you can learn from the experience!

So overall, I made it through, but the few bright spots I gleaned from it were mostly just reminders or slightly different restatements of concepts that I'd already seen elsewhere, and which had been said by the other authors in a way that resonated with me more. I wouldn't recommend this to a friend unless they were somehow already a fan of zen philosophy \*and\* super angry and reactive with their kids all the time. So people who are bad at zen philosophy, but think it's cool? Heck if I know.

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### **Janae says**

A parenting book that focuses on altering the behavior of the child by means of changing the parent. In fact, the whole book is focused on teaching the parent to examine their motives, triggers, every day behavior and delve into their past and engage in constant introspection - all in an effort to not pass on the sins of your parents to your children. This isn't a "how to" manual, which she states clearly up front. Conscious parenting requires you to live in the moment and make parenting decisions based on the specific circumstances of that situation.

The first half of the book is worth reading, but full of some very extreme parenting examples from her work as a counselor (that probably most can't personally relate to). There are some great nuggets of wisdom there, so don't skip it. The second half is more pragmatic and divided into the different stages and ages of parenting. We read this in book club and it's a great book for some deep, insightful discussion.

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