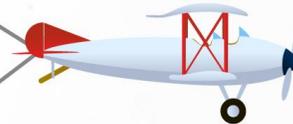


Rosie Kuhn PhD



*Cultivating
Spirituality
In Children*

101
Ways
To Make
Every
Child's
Spirit
SOAR!



*Cultivating Spirituality
In Children*

*101 Ways to Make
Every Child's Spirit SOAR!*

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First published in the United States by

The Paradigm Shifts Publishing Co.

PO Box 1637, Eastsound WA 98245

Cover design & Continuity Editing by Maureen O'Neill, at On Fire Coaching.

(Fonts: Cover: Adobe Caslon Pro, Semi-bold Italics; Marker Felt Phin; Text: Book Antiqua),

Edited by Jessica Ruby Hernandez, at Ruby Moon Healing Arts.

Cover Photo by: The Picture People, Amherst, NY

Dedication

To Andrew Jacob Fesyk, my grandson,
who inspired the writing of this book.

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Something to Keep in Mind:

The human and spiritual developments process often comes with physical, emotional, and energetic sensations. Though these feelings may seem disorienting, uncomfortable and a little disconcerting at times, they are a natural and normal component of this journey.

Most of us avoid and ignore the self-discovery process because we are uncomfortable with being uncomfortable. Expanding your capacity to be with discomfort may be part of what transpires for you as you read this book.

Consider making sure you drink plenty of water and get plenty of rest, if and when you experience fatigue. And, consider enlisting the support of a Transformational Coach, a Spiritual Guide, a fellowship group for addiction recovery, ACISTE.org for spiritually transformative experiencers, friends, and family who can listen and hear you.

Most of all, practice extending loving kindness and compassion to yourself. I have no doubt you will be delighted with your experience at the completion of this journey.

Introduction

Children are spiritual beings who, just a short time ago, adventured into the world of humans. They enter our world already having a spiritual life. In their innocence, they have access to the wisdom and wonder of the world from which they came. They still enjoy relationships with the unseens: angels and guides, their devoted friends from the other side. They have the innate ability to connect with their Spirit-selves and the spiritual world, until they become more like the rest of us. When does that happen? When do they decide to forget their essential nature as Spirit-beings? How do we as grownups participate in this forgetting? This book is my answer to those questions.”

Chapter 1

You Picked Up this Book - Terrific!

You are a grownup in search of ways to nurture children's spirituality. At the same time, you want to walk intentionally on your own spiritual path. I'm happy to say, this book is for you!

This book is written for grownups who are invested in introducing spiritual values to children – enough that they are willing to take a look at the words they, themselves speak, as well as the actions they take, and ask themselves: *Are my words and my actions in alignment with what I want for my children? Am I willing to take on practices that will not only cultivate awareness in me, but also shift my thoughts, my words and my actions, so that they are in alignment with my highest values and my highest contribution to my children's well-being?*

From the title of this book, you might expect to find specific lists of what our children need in order to develop spiritually. Instead, I offer you an opportunity to think bigger. I challenge you to be willing to look deeper for what children really need from you.

Until we grownups commit to cultivating spiritual competencies within ourselves, our children have no reason to believe a word we say. Our actions constantly speak louder than our words, either reflecting our fear-based thinking or mirroring our Divine knowing. And, as you already know, children take their lessons from who we are being, not from what we are saying.

We all pretend not to know when we act out of alignment with our principles, but in reality, we know immediately when we're not practicing our core truths. How do we pretend not to know? Why do we pretend not to know?

In order to step fully into helping children soar as Spirit beings, we have to first be willing to practice investigating, visiting, and enlivening our own deeply held spiritual principles. Then we must be willing to take up the practice of living into these principles. If we do this, children will inevitably follow our lead.

By opening to cultivating spirituality in ourselves, we bravely make ourselves available to practice whatever it takes to expand our own courage, faith and Self-trust. These practices are deeply humbling, and at the same time, nurture solid confidence within ourselves. By these practices, we develop a delightful sense of self-knowing and self-trust, which until now, have remained out of reach. We live into a life with less stress, greater ease, and a sweet ability to accept and live peacefully with what is.

Through these practices, we also become far more willing to be present in our children's lives, as the gift of their presence in our lives becomes very, very clear. If this is the kind of parent/stepparent/grandparent or guardian that you've dreamt of becoming- read on!

Chapter 2

The Rules Of Consensus Thinking

Conforming to the standards set out by culture, religion, government, education, society, and family, often requires that we deny and ignore our own internal reality, our soul or Spirit-self, if you will, for the sake of what we get, or hope to get, from blind allegiance to external power sources. In exchange for our loyalty and obedience, we expect to be rewarded with security, stability, status, and perhaps monetary gain. For those committed to serving God through religious practices, we expect to effortlessly pass through the gates of heaven.

However, few people actually experience the rewards of such service. Most of us inevitably realize that we've abdicated our souls - our Spirit-self, for the sake of allegiance to the promise-makers, not the promise-keepers. This is endemic in both Western and Eastern societies. We are in denial of that fact that, not only have we been willing participants in this process, but we are training our children to do the same.

From the moment we are born, we are immersed in a learning process, which, more often than not, teaches us to do what we are told to do. In childhood, most of us learn to think what we are taught to think and to ignore our own inner voice. We are taught to ignore our emotions, our bodies and their messages.

We also learn to deny our own personal needs and wants, for the sake of others' needs and desires - these *others* often include our schools, churches, governments, families, as well as friends. We train ourselves to follow fear-based thinking, which is at present, the consensus view of reality. When we have an original thought or creation, we usually do not follow it, as it would be dangerous to break with this consensus thinking.

We train ourselves to not only *ignore* our inner truth, but to buy into the lie that it isn't safe to trust it. In this way, we are banishing it for perhaps a lifetime, or, at least until it is safe to begin to question reality.

In essence, this is where each of us are today; vaguely aware of the existence of an inner ME (Miraculous Existence) that has thoughts, feelings, needs and wants, and at the same time, afraid to explore that inner-self, because we are convinced that the ramifications may be dire.

Chapter 3

Confused?

Most of us live with a nagging confusion, due to the fact that we are immersed in a reality where religion and spiritual traditions are touted as the bedrock of our society. As children, many of us were taught spiritual principles through religion. However, the majority of our religious institutions are systems governed by a hierarchy of authority that requires obedience to the rules and to those who enforce the rules. We then train ourselves to be vigilant to “doing it right” and “not doing it wrong”. In so doing, we hope to avoid punishment, persecution, and damnation. As a result, the spiritual principles we were meant to live by were kicked to the curb.

We hear the words – “Think Differently,” “Be the Exception,” “Go for the Extraordinary,” “Be Your Self”. However, more often than not, the humiliation, ridicule, and ostracizing that is rampant, even within our elementary schools, convinces us to play small, and keep our ideas to ourselves. It’s very confusing – especially to children.

Each of us grownups carries the wounding and trauma created through our own parents’ confusion and inconsistencies: not walking their talk, not saying what they mean and not meaning what they say. Most of us, now as grownups, pretend that we aren’t confused or challenged by these dilemmas. Rather than addressing our confusion, we, like our parents, ignore it, in hopes that sometime later in life, the questions will answer themselves.

In the meantime, we, perhaps unconsciously, are doing and saying just as our parents said and did. Though we sometimes catch ourselves in the act, rarely are we willing to make a change. And, like our parents, we hope that our children and grandchildren don’t notice. The sad fact is, they *do* notice, and are deeply affected by the contradictions of our words and actions – just like we were and are today.

Here's the bottom line: as long as we continue to deny and avoid addressing our confusion and these obvious incongruities, we will continue to contribute to our own personal suffering, and to our children's suffering.

With that said...

*101 Ways to Make
Every Child's Spirit SOAR!*

Experience #1

Opening to This Spiritual Journey

Wrapping our heads around the concept of spirituality is challenging enough, let alone, how to explain it to children. Possibilities are overwhelming: Heaven, hell; God, no God; Life after death; East vs. West; Angels and Demons. I want to ignore the whole subject!

At the same time, I know I would be remiss as a responsible grownup if I ignore the spiritual life of my children. I am willing to take a chance, because something wonderful might come of this!

Perhaps, just through the practice of observing how I *be* me, I'll see aspects of a spiritual life that has gone unrecognized and unlived, but is still within me, somewhere. Perhaps this will be a new beginning of something beautiful!

Experience # 2

Opening to Trusting Myself

Before I can truly trust others, I have to trust that I can trust myself.

As I practice noticing when I trust others over myself, I gain opportunities to trust myself instead. I practice deferring to no one outside of me and honoring my own innate knowing.

Experience #3

Opening to Developing a Relationship with ME (Miraculous Existence)

My sense of Self is founded on how I experience myself, not on how others experience me. Developing a relationship with the inner ME requires the practice of making time to be with my Self; it cannot happen any other way. By engaging in this practice, not only am I getting to know myself, but I am also cultivating self-appreciation and self-respect.

Experience #4

Opening to Respecting ME & My Voice

To trust my own experience requires that I practice having the courage to stand up for my thoughts and my truths, speak them clearly, and be with the consequences no matter what. In so doing, I realize a degree of self-respect I've never thought possible.

Experience #5

***Opening to Experiencing My Humanity
to the Fullest***

Being human takes a willingness to dive into that which wants to be experienced and expressed through me. When I practice surrendering my resistance, the art of life effortlessly manifests from within. My unique Divine Design blossoms into its own natural expression.

Experience #6

Opening to Clarifying My Intentions and Convictions

For much of my life, I've lived according to the views and the beliefs of the people around me. I've handed my authority over to this consensus reality and abdicated my power. Hypnotized, I've lost all real connection to my own thoughts and feelings, and to my own needs and wants. I'm appalled at the degree to which I do not know myself.

As I'm coming out of the trance, I see that up until now, my highest intentions have been in service to survival. This ensured that I was accepted and approved of, and not rejected, humiliated, or shunned.

I see now how focusing only on survival was an act of self-betrayal. Without a real sense of me, I allowed myself to become just a part of the ebb and flow of consensus reality. Do I know who I am? Do I know what I want? Am I enough? Are my convictions strong enough and clear enough to keep me from falling back into the trance?

Discipline, commitment, and devotion come only through conviction. Convictions are strong beliefs wrapped up with a passionate presence. These convictions can be ignored, but not denied.

Without strong convictions, I will never be courageous enough to be committed enough to be devoted enough to truly know myself and to live into what I stand for. When I am unshakable and my convictions are undisputable, discipline takes on the nature of child's play.

I practice noticing what I think and what I feel about my life. I practice being curious about what I want. I question the degree to which I'm fulfilled in the life I'm giving myself. I sense deeper into myself for my truest convictions. Then, and only then, can I begin to make strides towards a more fulfilling and joyous life for me and for my children.

About Dr. Rosie Kuhn

Dr. Rosie focused her studies in Marriage, Family and Child Therapy in the 80's. In the 90's she specialized in Spiritual Guidance, and received her Ph.D. in Transpersonal Psychology in 2001. In 2000, she began integrating human/family dynamics with transpersonal and spiritual dynamics, creating and facilitating the Transformational Coaching Training Program through ITP, now Sofia University, in Palo Alto, CA.

Dr. Rosie is a preeminent thought-leader in the field of Transformational Coaching. Her interests and passions have taken her from boardrooms to ashrams, in service of supporting every individual to come into the fulfillment of their human-spirit.

Praise for *Cultivating Spirituality in Children*

Here is a wonderful immersion into the spiritual values we need within ourselves, so we may help nurture the children in our lives. Dr. Rosie Kuhn helps us live and share the values we so desperately want for our children and for the next generations to come. This little book, *Cultivating Spirituality in Children*, reminds us that the best thing we can do for children is to start with ourselves. It shares with us an achievable path of insight, and skills.—David Bennett author of *A Voice as Old as Time & Voyage of Purpose*

“If you are an adult who lives or works with children, then I highly recommend reading this book.

Dr. Rosie Kuhn writes from the heart. Her work is powerful, thought-provoking and takes the reader on a transformational journey inward. By the end, it is clear why it’s so important for parents to figuring out our own spirituality, so that we can serve as inspiration to our children.

This book raises our level of consciousness, and challenges us to think about what it is that children need from us.

I especially appreciated the level of vulnerability to which Dr. Kuhn was willing to go, which makes the book all the more touching and personal.”

- Valerie Davis-Rucker, MS, MBA, CLC

“Any parent or person who works with children and is interested in cultivating an authentic, heart-centered relationship with them needs to read this book and put these 101 pieces of wisdom into practice!

Dr. Rosie Kuhn once again empowers us to acknowledge and be with our own humanness and vulnerability in a way that strengthens our ability to integrate our spiritual nature here on earth. By putting these 101 pieces of wisdom into practice you will not only be cultivating a child’s spirituality, but you will also be freeing yourself from the bondage of the cultural baggage of what it means to be a parent and a caregiver.”
Elizabeth J. Sabet PCC, ACSLC,

- Executive Director of HOPE – Holistic Options for People Everywhere, and Mom

The theme of this book – that the spiritual life of our children depends on the spiritual competency with which we live our own lives – sets the priorities correctly. A parent who ignores or distorts spirituality while taking the stance: *do as I say, not as I do*—is not going to effectively foster the spiritual life of their children.

The practices in this book enable parents, teachers or any adult to share their spirituality with children. It provides a guide for traveling a path together, with our children, that cultivates a spiritual journey based on sharing joy, compassion and forgiveness. *David Lukoff Ph.D., Spiritual Competency Resource Center, www.spiritualcompetency.com*

“Dr. Kuhn discusses an important, yet neglected area of parenting: spirituality and children. She raises some important questions about how best to raise children within a spiritual paradigm and context. Dr. Kuhn also suggests that we have as much to learn from our children regarding staying connected and open to the spiritual domain, and introduces a much needed discussion about this topic.”

- *Shawn Katz, Ph.D., and Dad*

“Dr. Rosie Kuhn has blessed us with her new book, *Cultivating Spiritual in Children: 101 Ways To Make Every Child’s Spirit Soar*. A book overflowing with wisdom, Rosie teaches us that the best gift we can give our children, and grandchildren, is being the person you want them to be. It doesn’t matter if you have children or not, Rosie offers ways to live our life in a way that is authentic while honoring that we are fallible human beings, whose world isn't always perfect. And that is okay... when this happens refer to Experience #31, and be okay with ‘The Big Fat Be-With.’ If we put even a few of these 101 life-altering suggestions into practice, we will change not only our own children and grandchildren, we will change our world!”

- *Cindy Griffith Author of Soul Soothers: Mini Meditations for Busy Lives*

"The first inspiring and effective compilation of opportunities to live life to the fullest as parents, grandparents, guardians, children...and spiritual beings." Hagai Heshes MAPP, and Dad

If you're at all concerned about how to best support and encourage spirituality in your children, or in any children who may be under your care, Dr. Rosie Kuhn has written the book for you! Make no mistake, though, as Dr. Kuhn makes clear, cultivating spirituality in children isn't all about what to preach – it is about walking the walk more than talking the talk. Whether we realize it or not, no amount of preaching will reach the mark when we're out of alignment with our own truth, values and principles. Dr. Kuhn encourages us to engage our own spirituality, and her 101 opportunities to practice provide ample ideas for doing just that, ultimately ensuring a more positive impact on our children's spiritual growth too. *A. Scott McCulloch, PhD MBA - Transpersonal/Transformational Coach, Thought Partner, Insight Facilitator, Founder of Tapintu*