



Daddy's Meditating



EXPECTFUL PARENTHOOD

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Ilan, Fanny, Shia & Aliya

Last month I went to visit my friends Ilan and Fanny, and their two beautiful kids in a small town an hour outside the city. I spent the night at their place, and in the morning woke up to the sounds of Fanny playing with Shia (4) and Aliya (3). I jumped out of bed, picked up a toy and got in the mix... and after a few minutes Shia asked his mom, "Where's Daddy?" Fanny replied, "Daddy's meditating". Shia nodded, and the fun continued.

When I heard this, I had two thoughts that came one after the other... "Whoa, these kids are really lucky!" followed by, "Whoa, I wish my Dad meditated when I was growing up."

You see, my life can be divided into two chapters: life before meditation, and life after. Life after meditation has less stress, increased presence and more happiness. I have a greater sense of purpose in my work and much healthier relationships. My only regret about meditation, is that I didn't start it sooner.

That's why realizing my friend's children were growing up in an environment where meditation was as common as the concept of cereal for breakfast got me really excited. Here are a few of the implications I think this has:

1. Happier Couple, Happier Kids

My parents have an amazing relationship, but that wasn't always the case. Throughout a lot of my childhood they fought quite a bit. They were both super stressed about finances and their parents health issues, and they didn't have the tools to deal with that stuff in a healthy way.

The way my parents handled disagreements and stressful situations had a really big impact on my worldview. I didn't realize how significant the effect was until years later when I started doing work on myself. It took a lot of time for me to clear up the decisions I made about life made in the infinite wisdom of a 5-year-old.

Research shows that people that meditate experience greater relationship satisfaction and have better communication. The tone and environment that's created by parents is something kids are keenly aware of, and it's clear to see that the type of partnership my friends cultivated is one that sends a really positive message to Shia and Aliya.

2. Keep Calm And Carry On

Have you ever seen someone jam their toe and flinch in sympathy, or instantly felt sad when someone emotionally shares a hardship they're going through? You're able to instinctively understand and feel what someone else is experiencing because of something called mirror neurons, a special class of brain cells that get triggered by simple observation.

This is the scientific explanation for why people often say that kids tend to have a similar temperament to their parents. It's also a big part of why it's [recommended that all pregnant women and new moms get screened for depression](#).

Since meditation helps people maintain a calm disposition, if parents adopt the practice, it's more likely that a peaceful temperament will rub off on their children. Since being a new parent can be highly stressful, it's a great time to develop a practice.

3. Inner Guidance System

When we asked our users at [Expectful](#) what annoyed them most during pregnancy, the almost universal response we got was "unsolicited advice". There are so many opinions about how parents "should" raise their children, which can be counterproductive and lead people that are really concerned with being great parents, to feel like the odds are stacked against them.

Just like the heart knows how to beat without any training, I believe that deep down parents have all the tools they need to be incredible parents. It's something that already exists inside that simply needs to be uncovered, not learned. Meditation is a simple tool that can help people get more in touch with their inner knowing, and allow access to the answers that are already there.

This is one of the things I love about Ilan and Fanny, they are incredible parents that also beat to their own drum. Although they're very informed, ultimately the decisions they make seem to come from what feels right to them, vs the opinions of others.

4. The Zen Toddler

I began meditating when I was 29, but wish someone encouraged me to develop a practice while I was

still hanging on monkey bars and drinking chocolate milk like it was my job. I still remember thinking that everything my dad did was the coolest thing ever (I still kinda do), and I'm sure if he meditated, I would have wanted in.

The incredible benefits of meditation aren't just for adults. Children that learn the skill also benefit from improved concentration, more creativity, higher self esteem and greater self awareness.

If kids grow up around meditation, it's much more likely they'll begin doing it themselves. What a great gift to give them, especially with all of the challenges they can face in today's world.

Obviously I think being around meditation can be an important technique to help families and kids be happier and more fulfilled, but I don't think it's a magic bullet. I still believe that underneath everything else, expressing love, being present and believing in children are the most foundational things to good parenting. Plenty of moms and dads that don't meditate are still giving their kids everything they need to thrive. Meditation is just one powerful tool to help support that.

Are you pregnant or a new mom?

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