

MOTHER FROM YOUR WISDOM

*The New 3 Rs to Empower
Kind, Confident, Creative Kids*

By Souzzann Zink



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Introduction

In our desire to do the best by our children, and our commitment to give them everything they need, we sometimes find ourselves tripped up by:

- Our own upbringing
- The scars we carry from our own childhood
- Misguided advice from others
- Conflicting advice
- Our over-scheduled lives

Often, this results in inner conflict:

We want this

- To be a better mother
- Responsible kids
- Kind kids
- In adulthood - mature grownups
- Good, loving human beings

But not this

- Mom-guilt
- Punishment/other harsh discipline
- Yelling - unintended shaming
- Constant worry we'll blow it
- Exhaustion!

In this short book, I'll show you how to change all that. I know you would do anything in the world for your kids - if you only knew what they really needed! It will take work on your part, but by now I'm pretty sure you know there's no way to be a good mom without that. What I will promise you is that the effort you put in to make the changes I offer will reverberate out through all your interactions with your children and everyone else. These strategies and mind shifts will not need your attention once you master them. Instead, the time you put in to learn to do what will actually work, quickly saves you time.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Souzzann is a master when it comes to guiding moms to bring out the best in their kids - and themselves. A former Montessori educator with over two decades of classroom and administrative experience in public and private Montessori schools in Utah and California, she owned the school her now grown sons attended and helped start two others.

Her experience helping over a thousand parents, including in private practice and transformational workshops in 3 countries, shapes her current specialized work with visionary moms. Her most challenging lesson was figuring out how to do her work in the world and still have a life.

A New Model of Radical Love

The New 3 Rs

You may have wondered how a whole system of mothering could be included in just a few pages. The secret is that your moment to moment decisions need to be guided by understanding the big picture of what your children need - and what it takes for you to prepare yourself to fill those deepest needs. This approach is not for everyone. I believe those willing to undertake the emotional work it requires will be so unusual that I've named these moms, 'The New 1%'. Many times these mothers will be financially secure. That's not what I'm referring to here, but it may be related.

I'm talking about love - letting that be your guiding light with your kids and in your life. Leading from love most of the time is still very uncommon in our culture - but the ranks of those willing to do what it takes to live that way are growing. Often, they will also be very successful out in the world. Because this is exactly what the world needs now - and so urgently needs now - it may also bring financial rewards. People pay for what they need. For those willing to apply the effort they bring to their business, their profession, or their cause to their mothering, the rewards are beyond measure. This is one approach to committing - at that level - to your children's highest good.

THE ASPECTS OF RADICAL LOVE

It's easy to say, "I love my kids", but much harder to put that love into action in all situations over the days, months, and years of their childhood. You need a model to help you gauge, moment to moment, where you are doing that, where you aren't, and what you need to change immediately if you get off track.

Three aspects of a radical approach to love are:

Radical Respect

Radical Responsibility

Radical Relatedness

Live As Love

There's a simpler way to state this: Live As Love. This is actually a 3 step process as well as a model from which to review and improve the way you relate to your kids. Here is an overview of the system as 3 focal points, 3 steps, 3 external results and 3 internal results. The integration of these 3 aspects with a Montessori-based model of the interactions of children, adults, and the environment can be found on page 11.

Focus	Step - Action	Outer Result	Inner Result
Live	Land	Radical Respect	Heart - full
As	Look	Radical Responsibility	Aware
Love	Love	Radical Relatedness	Inspired

RADICAL RESPECT

Radical Respect means living fully from a perspective of treating yourself, your children, and the entire planet with a generous, conscious regard similar to awe. Only from this space are you truly living in the moment. Unless you are simply rested in that attitude 24/7, you will need to notice when you aren't and find a way to 'Land'.

Live • Land • Radical Respect • Heart-full

With Children

With your kids this shows up as always approaching them as the sovereign, divine beings they are. Just as you would never shout from the other room at a respected mentor, grab the hand of an author you admire without thought, or pick up your best friend and hoist them over your shoulder without warning - you would never do those things with a child of any age if you are rested in Radical Respect.

There are misconceptions about children, their capabilities, and preferences that often get in the way of treating them with this depth of respect. Some of the essential ways we extend this to our kids are counter-intuitive. We try to save them from what we dislike when that is not what will serve them. We overestimate their abilities in some areas and underestimate them in others - at each stage of development.

Practices to give them a full measure of respect:

- ❖ Provide them a chance to form a right relationship to work - early.
- ❖ Recognize the role of ever-increasing independence in building self-esteem.
- ❖ Model respecting yourself.
- ❖ Model radical self-care - including regular practices.
- ❖ Understand, respect, and honor their developmental timetables.
- ❖ Use those windows of special openness to learning, or more accurately developing, certain skills including:
 - oral and written language
 - order
 - balanced sensory awareness
 - fine and gross motor basics

With Yourself

With yourself, Radical Respect is essential for two reasons. First, it is impossible to take this approach to mothering without caring deeply for your own well-being. To go to the level of emotional rigor required to be with your kids in this way you must not be depleted, much less exhausted. Second, the primary way children learn respect is from their models. They absorb their way of being in the world energetically just as they absorb language, gestures, and every other aspect of culture, especially before age 7 and quite dramatically before age 3.

Radical Self-Respect must include radical self-care. Mindfulness practices and embodiment practices are essential to bring your mental and physical capabilities to the level of your spiritual aspirations. At a minimum this includes:

- A time-tested movement practice such as yoga, tai chi, qigong, or walking
- Inner practices such as meditation, contemplative prayer, or silence
- Mindful establishing and maintaining of personal boundaries
- Healthy diet, including sufficient water
- Time outside in nature
- Adequate sleep (7-8 hours unless 6 hours proves to result in no decreased energy)

With Others

To lay the groundwork of respect with our children, they must see us treating others with a deep level of respect. This includes:

- ❖ Speaking with respect to and about other people, both children and adults
- ❖ Respecting the property, ideas, and work of those around us
- ❖ Demonstrating the respect we have for the time and work of others by paying and tipping well for quality goods and services
- ❖ Honoring the precious time of our friends, family, clients, readers, and peers by choosing carefully how we ask them to spend time with us or consuming our work
- ❖ Tracking the commitments we make carefully so we can keep them, or adjust them, with integrity
- ❖ Bringing difficulties we have up directly with the person who can help solve them

The Challenge and Promise of Living Radical Respect

These habits set us, and our children, up to be able to go to the next step of taking Radical Responsibility for all aspects of our lives. These habits of mind are not usually easy to develop and are almost always challenging to follow consistently. For most of us, we are working against the powerful influences of:

- Habits - Modeled for us and deeply ingrained from before age 7
- Worldviews - Those common in people around us and hard to move beyond
- History - Particularly experience we were exposed to personally and culturally

These challenges to creating a mindset of Radical Respect are exactly why it is so crucial that we do this challenging emotional work while our children are as young as possible. The earlier we shift what we model for them, the more powerful the influence - and the easier things become for us and for them. This is not about working harder physically on our children's behalf, especially over time, but it does take a commitment to mentally and emotionally challenging changes. The beauty of it is that the influence of changes made at this level ripple out through all our actions and permeates all we do. Just like helping children learn to do things for themselves, it takes time and effort up front, but actually makes things easier and requires less work down the line. In business terms, nothing scales like attitude and mindset work.

RADICAL RESPONSIBILITY

Radical Responsibility means acknowledging our own role in everything that happens in our lives, even those events that seem to happen to us or even victimize us. Only when we are able to respect our own heart and efforts completely, and reject any impulse to beat ourselves up, can we make this challenging leap. It is a delicate dance to honor the needs and value of others, while recognizing the level of power we all have to craft our own lives.

We can only empower our kids to live boldly while taking well-considered risks if we help them understand they can succeed from the efforts they make. This includes seeing the world, and the deeper structures of connection and influence we all have to everything. Our little ones can't jump to this level of wisdom or the immense personal responsibility that sets adults free, so we must understand their development and gradually offer experiences that produce this courageous approach to life.

As • Look • Radical Responsibility • Aware

One the most important aspects of this step is to study and seek deep understanding:

Look, and really see, the World As it is

This is one of the areas of greatest urgency for a mother of young children. Whether you choose it carefully or not, whether you seek to share a very truthful, wise, and accurate model of the world or not, your little ones will absorb your model along with all culture around them. Your worldview becomes their worldview through age 7 or 8, so it is crucial that you consciously decide what you will model for your kids (and what other influences you choose for their environment).

Many conscious moms study and do their best to work in alignment with powerful natural principles, sometimes called natural or spiritual laws of the universe. One such principle, commonly called the Law of Attraction, is given a lot of attention in practices that promote an abundant mindset. This is a powerful concept that can open up many possibilities. It also is widely misunderstood. One piece missing from the understanding of many attempting to work with this law is the heart of this principle. Radical Responsibility is the foundation that must come first in order to attract what you desire. Only taking full responsibility, ownership of everything you create in your life, will open up the power to use this principle - and model that power for your kids.

Especially for those who also seek to contribute to those less fortunate than themselves, it can be difficult to accept the idea that we all create our own experiences. One powerful alternative to fighting the corruption or ills of the world is to take responsibility for our part in creating the problems and then engaging our power to change things in whatever ways we are inspired to act.

This means modeling a new level of awareness for our kids. It includes teaching formal respect practices, such as asking for verbal permission to touch others, but it goes far beyond that. For our children to thrive in the world of modern complex sexual relationships, not to mention all other aspects of social life, they will need to be able to maintain their own boundaries and perceive the intentions of those around them in a whole new way. They must take full responsibility for their own well-being as soon as they are out in the world without you. It is your job to prepare them to do that to the best of your ability.

Another concept that can help us consider this radical level of personal power is to look at every experience as providing the perfect opportunity to learn the next lesson that is most needed in a person's life. To take our ability to see those in our own lives with empathy, and complete any forgiveness we still need to do, consider this possibility. What if at some level and in some way we made agreements to go through our most challenging interactions, together, so that we or those we love could learn the lessons they most needed? What if we agreed to go through anything necessary to help each other learn?

Even when we don't have all the answers, there is great power in questions that open up more possibilities. What if,

Instead of:

Shame
Blame/shame
Creating fear
Victims
Villains
Guilt
Holding on

We practice only:

Do your best
Teach responsibility
Empower
Do your best
Learn the lessons
Radical responsibility
Forgiveness

With Children

If they are too young and immature to take on the full measure of Radical Responsibility (and they are until at least age 16) how do we help them understand that ultimately they are responsible for everything that happens in their lives? We model working from this awareness, and give them increasing responsibility and choices - so they can practice making them responsibly. We coach them in making appropriate choices and managing risk on the monkey bars and walks in the neighborhood, long before you give them the keys to the car.

Only with that kind of guided practice will they be ready for the complexity of choices with humans. Only then can they wisely choose who to trust - who to keep close, who to love only from afar. With your help, they can learn not to excuse or blame others or themselves but meet people where they are and discern what they, and those close to them, need to learn next. A new level of trust, awareness & respect must be modeled, taught from birth. When coupled with firm, healthy boundaries, these skills will allow our kids to take on the world from a place of power and grace.

Our children will surpass us, and we must prepare them to do that.

RADICAL RELATEDNESS

Radical Relatedness asks these questions: What if love is all there is and we are all just expressions of it? Could it be that our problems as humans today will only be solved by a new understanding of our interrelatedness?

Love • Radical Relatedness • Inspired

What stops us from living this beautiful way? Why don't we practice radical love?

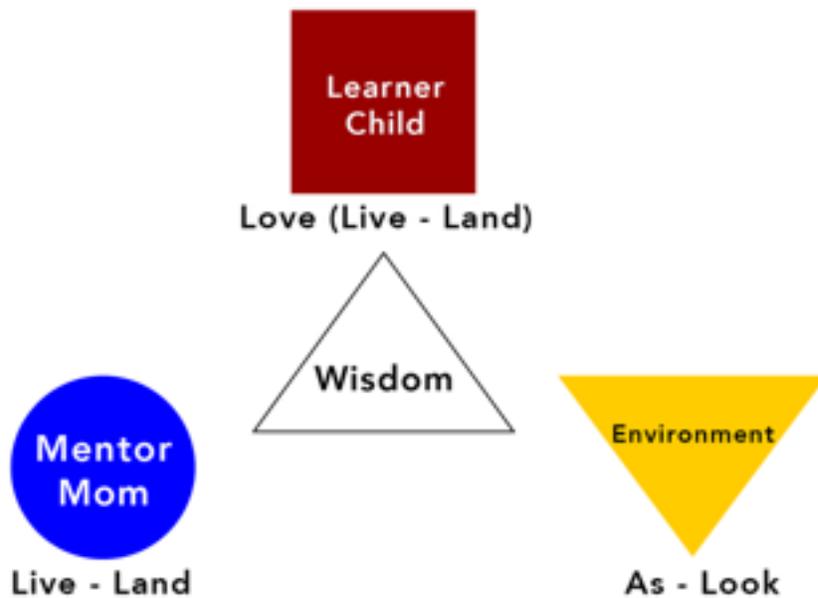
Anytime we don't choose love, we choose fear. Many fears hold us back:

- Fear of the unknown
- Fear of death
- Fear of the unfamiliar
- Fear of pain

Consider another fear may stop us from giving love full-out. We fear the knowledge of our reach, we fear sitting in full awareness of the power we have to affect those we love and the pain they have experienced when we have withheld love. If we keep our distance, we can fool ourselves into thinking that power is not real.

THE SYSTEM IN A MONTESSORI MODEL

Before we finish up with final recommendations to live a radically open, loving life with your children, here is one last way to look at this system in the context of you, your child, and the world. It gives another useful way to think about your role with your child - that of mother as mentor. It is based on a model commonly shared in Montessori education.



The Wisdom Path to Mothering

You recognize this is a complicated world moving faster and faster. Even if you aspire to this level of radical love, you recognize it will be challenging day to day. So how do you practice this, if you choose?

- ❖ Practice and model radical self-care through regular practices.
- ❖ Practice and model Radical Respect for yourself, your kids, and the whole world.
- ❖ Practice and model Radical Responsibility, give your kids growing responsibilities.
- ❖ Practice and guide your children toward Radical Relatedness - Radical Love.
- ❖ Surround yourself, and your kids, with those who share and support your values.
- ❖ Seek out women who inspire you with high commitment to living high values.
- ❖ Gather around you a close circle of leaders - women you trust as a group to know what you don't - and to see and point out what you don't know you're missing.
- ❖ If you are co-parenting, work together to develop and live a shared vision of conscious parenting and commit to each other and your relationship.
- ❖ Live your deepest values: your children, family and vision.
- ❖ Invest your time, your money, and most importantly - your full energy - in them.

So how do you do all this consistently, become the better mother you want to be, and not fall into mom-guilt? How do you get increasingly solid in rejecting all oppressive practices and bring up loving, kind adults who give their deepest gifts?

You take care of yourself, always remembering you can't do this if you are depleted much less exhausted, and you do the best you can.

*Do the best you can until you know better.
When you know better, do better.*

Maya Angelou

You keep in mind the dual nature of power in the world:

Keep deepening or expanding while resting in the perfection that always exists.

Find the support you need, pay what it's worth to get it.

*If you aren't willing to live your values now,
when will you start?*

Seth Godin

A FINAL WORD

You can do this. The very fact you aspire to give your best to your kids means you have it in you to love them at an increasingly deep level over time. Always look back on how far you have come.

Live your deepest values - Live as Love!

with love,

Souzzann

