

Tips for Parents by Susie Kohl

Setting Aside “Uninterruptible Time”

DURING ONE OF OUR PARENT SEMINARS, people were broken into duos and we experimented with different modes of communication. The results were dramatic. People took turns being the speaker and the listener for short periods. When the listener concentrated completely on what the speaker was saying, both felt connected and satisfied. However, when the listener checked her watch or shifted her gaze occasionally, listeners reported feeling angry and even abandoned. Interesting, since everyone knew what the experiment would involve ahead of time.

This experience was aimed at helping those who attended understand how children feel when our attention is divided during times that they want our attention. In this age of e-mail, cell phones, and multi-tasking, distracted listening often seems “normal.” Here are some ways to heighten your aware-ness of being “fully present” when you’re together.

Experiment to see how long you can play on the floor with your child or talk without interruption. Time yourself until the phone rings, someone else has a demand, or you have to run to check your e-mail. If you want to understand what this phenomenon feels like, talk to your spouse while he does e-mail or explores Facebook. Our responses to their inattention aren’t usually warm and fuzzy. Some families put technology aside for periods when they want to communicate with one another.

Receiving undivided listening helps children to feel confident and worthy.

October 22, 2014

© 2014 The Meher Schools