



## All They Really Need: Trusting the Wisdom of Nature to Raise Resilient Kids

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### “BASIC” COMPASSION

When you are aware of feeling heightened or uncomfortable, reflect on each of the following (in the moment or later in the day). We all tend to notice one domain more than others, which is what tells us that something is off. It can help at first to write it down. With practice, it will become more habitual. You may start to notice patterns around what events or circumstances create distress. We can do this as adults, and we can also help our littles develop these skills. This act of noticing - or mindfulness - with a spirit of curiosity and non-judgement, can help cultivate compassion for ourselves and others, and clarify the unmet needs that are beneath the discomfort.

When you are aware of a heightened experience, start by taking some slow breaths to settle into the moment. Notice the feeling of your body being supported by the ground, or a surface that you're sitting on.

Once you feel regulated, describe the situation as neutrally as possible (who, what, where, when):

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**Behaviour:** What are/were you doing during the situation (e.g., raising your voice, reaching for food, fidgeting)?

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**Affect (or feelings):** What feelings were/are you aware of? The basic emotions are joy, sadness, anger, and fear, each with many variations and adjacent feelings.



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**Sensation:** What do/did you feel in your body? Pain? Tension? Upset stomach? Trembling? Heat? Hunger? Fatigue? Sometimes it can help to walk yourself or your child through a body scan, literally paying attention to each body part to see how it feels.

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**Imagine:** If you could do anything you want in this situation, what do you imagine doing? If you were to paint a picture of this experience, what colours would you use? What symbols would appear? It can be helpful to actually take out art materials to express this visually, especially for folks who are less able to express themselves verbally. Dance and music can be a good way to tap into this too and diffuse the energy.

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**Cognition:** If you quiet your mind, what messages do you hear about the world, others, yourself? Are you capable? Are others trustworthy? Is the world a safe place to be? What interpretation are you making about the situation? It can be helpful to consider that you might be wrong. It can help to reflect on this with a spirit of humble curiosity and non-judgement.

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