

The True Power of Parenting

FREE Magazine for 'The I AM Program' Subscribers



The Most
Precious
Gift Under
Your Tree

**'LOVE
is The
Answer'
for Orphans
in Uganda**

**Thrifty
Christmas**

Giving
The Gift
Of YOU

**Building
Schools &
Smiles
in East
Timor**





Letter from the Editor

I am very excited to be bringing together a collection of information and resources for parents in our new e-zine, The True Power Of Parenting Magazine.

I am a mum of eight wonderful cherubs (and devils) so I am familiar with many of the struggles and triumphs of parenting, from bedwetting to teenage rebellion and waving goodbye as they proudly fly the nest.

Beginning my parenting journey as a single, teenage mother of twins 23 years ago put me in an unusual position and left me quite needy of support. I had trouble finding the kind of information I needed to help me navigate this brand new and somewhat terrifying world of motherhood!

Over the years, however, my passion for understanding emotional intelligence in relation to parenting led me to study my bum off in both the personal development and parenting arenas. What I've learnt and what I continue to learn has changed the way I parent, and it's transformed my life and my children's lives. So now, I have a great desire to share this information with YOU.

We all have the power to empower our children by planting positive and life-affirming seeds and even



more so by learning to love ourselves deeply and treat ourselves with the respect we deserve and wish for our children. That's why I founded theiamprogram.com, an emotional intelligence resource and information centre for parents and educators. I now want to make this information even more accessible and specific for parents and that is where The True Power of Parenting Magazine comes in.

My aim for this e-zine is to be a resource to remind parents of their marvellous potential as true, responsive guides to this generation of future leaders.

I hope you enjoy our first holiday issue. The theme is 'giving' with a number of inspiring articles written by mothers and educators, as well as excellent gift ideas, resources and fun for the kids!

Please send in your comments to

arna@theiamprogram.com

and be sure to contact me with any questions, ideas or even for some simple parenting support.

Giving and Receiving are One in Truth ~ A Course in Miracles

Arna Baartz, Editor

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The Most Precious Gift Under Your Tree

by Arna Baartz

There is no doubt that regardless of what was to happen in life the one thing we'd wish for above all else would be our children's safety and happiness.

It is easy to be distracted from our first wish, however, when there is so much propaganda convincing us that the way to true happiness is to buy, buy, BUY!

The truth is we could spend as much money as we have and more and still have stress and pain during the holiday season.

The energy at this time of the year has reached the point of dis-ease for many and, when you consider the initial intention behind the happy holiday, that is quite the irony.

My three-year-old recently asked me why we had Christmas and I found myself stumbling. I am not affiliated with an organised religion so I didn't feel comfortable telling a traditional story. Having said that, I AM a spiritual person so I had misgivings about being too superficial or cynical in my answer.

I chose to tell the curious poppet that once upon a time there lived a man whom some knew to be a great philosopher.

This man believed in love and kindness, he gave all the love and help he could to everyone he met, simply because he wanted them to know that they were special and loveable. And now we celebrate Christmas to remember what this guy taught, LOVE.

We give to each other to remind ourselves how wonderful it feels to love each other and how loving and helpful it can be to give.

My child was content with my answer (for now) but the conversation got me thinking.

The Christmas story serves to illustrate our need to look past the shiny baubles and realise that the true gift of life lies in our love for each other, family and strangers alike.

A gift can be a simple smile or a light touch upon the hand. A gift can be a lollipop, a pre-loved toy or a piece of poetry on a homemade card.

A gift CAN be a kind or positive thought directed with intention to the self or to another.

Amid all the hoo-hah of Christmas we need to be mindful and even courageous as we stand firmly on our angel feet and make these statements of love to our children and families.

The most precious gift under the tree is the child and the set of loving values we plant like colourful seeds inside our children's minds.

Teaching our children to be conscious and self-aware, raising their emotional intelligence and constructing a sound and loving value system is the brightest and most sustainable gift we can bring to our world. And that is something we can do every day, not just once a year.

*Arna Baartz
is the founder and director
of The I AM Program,
the editor of The True Power
of Parenting Magazine
and mother to
eight beautiful children.*

To learn more about
Arna and her work please visit
www.arnabaartzauthor.com



BUILDING SCHOOLS AND SMILES IN EAST TIMOR

By Kris Webb



**A friend
and I talked
vaguely for
several years about
doing something
tangible to make
a difference to
people's lives**

Tired of donating money to causes and never having a real sense of what that money had achieved, we wanted to do something where we saw a problem and found a way to fix it – quickly and efficiently.

Four years ago we decided it was time to stop talking and see if we could actually do something. A series of coincidences led us to the tiny island nation of East Timor.

Only one hour's flight from Darwin, almost half of East Timor's one million people live on less than US\$1 a day and child malnutrition is rife.

When you ask the men and women of East Timor what they need most, they always give the same answer – education for their children.

The first time I heard that answer, I decided that if people with so little put their children's learning above all else, then the least I could do was help them.

And so Spend it Well, a small organisation focused on living up to its name, was born.

Over 90% of East Timor's infrastructure was destroyed when the occupying Indonesians left in 1999. This has caused a chronic shortage of classrooms in East Timor and those that do exist are often in shocking condition.

It is common to see children trying to learn in classrooms unusable in the wet season, or in classrooms with boarded-up windows cutting out all light and air.

The East Timorese government is working hard to build and repair schools, but the job is massive.

Spend it Well is helping by building and renovating classrooms in remote rural areas – something that's made possible by co-operating with the office of Kirsty Sword Gusmao (the Australian wife of the East Timorese Prime Minister) and the country's Ministry of Education.

Spend it Well's budget isn't huge. We've built and renovated classrooms in five government schools over the last three years at project costs of US\$35,000 to US\$80,000. We work in schools which are in desperate need, but that the government can't assist in the foreseeable future.

The local community is always closely involved and work is done quickly, usually within six months.

The government funds the ongoing costs of running the schools, but we maintain a long-term relationship with the communities, funding supporting programs such as teacher training and school gardens.

Spend it Well's donors are families and individuals from all over Australia who are very much involved

with the projects, receiving regular updates and photos and in some cases, visiting the schools themselves. Spend it Well has separate funding for all of its administrative costs, which means that 100% of all donations go directly to school projects.

The opening ceremony for each school is always extraordinary. For people who have endured horrific violence and grinding poverty, having a new school built for their children is a massive event.

The villagers have few reasons to celebrate in their lives so Spend it Well always provides money for a ceremony and communal meal.

The preparations take many days and the meal (featuring buffalo meat) is the best that most of the locals will eat all year.

The official ceremonies last most of the day and we always leave knowing that that the party will run deep into the night!

Kris Webb is a successful author and mother of three lovely daughters.

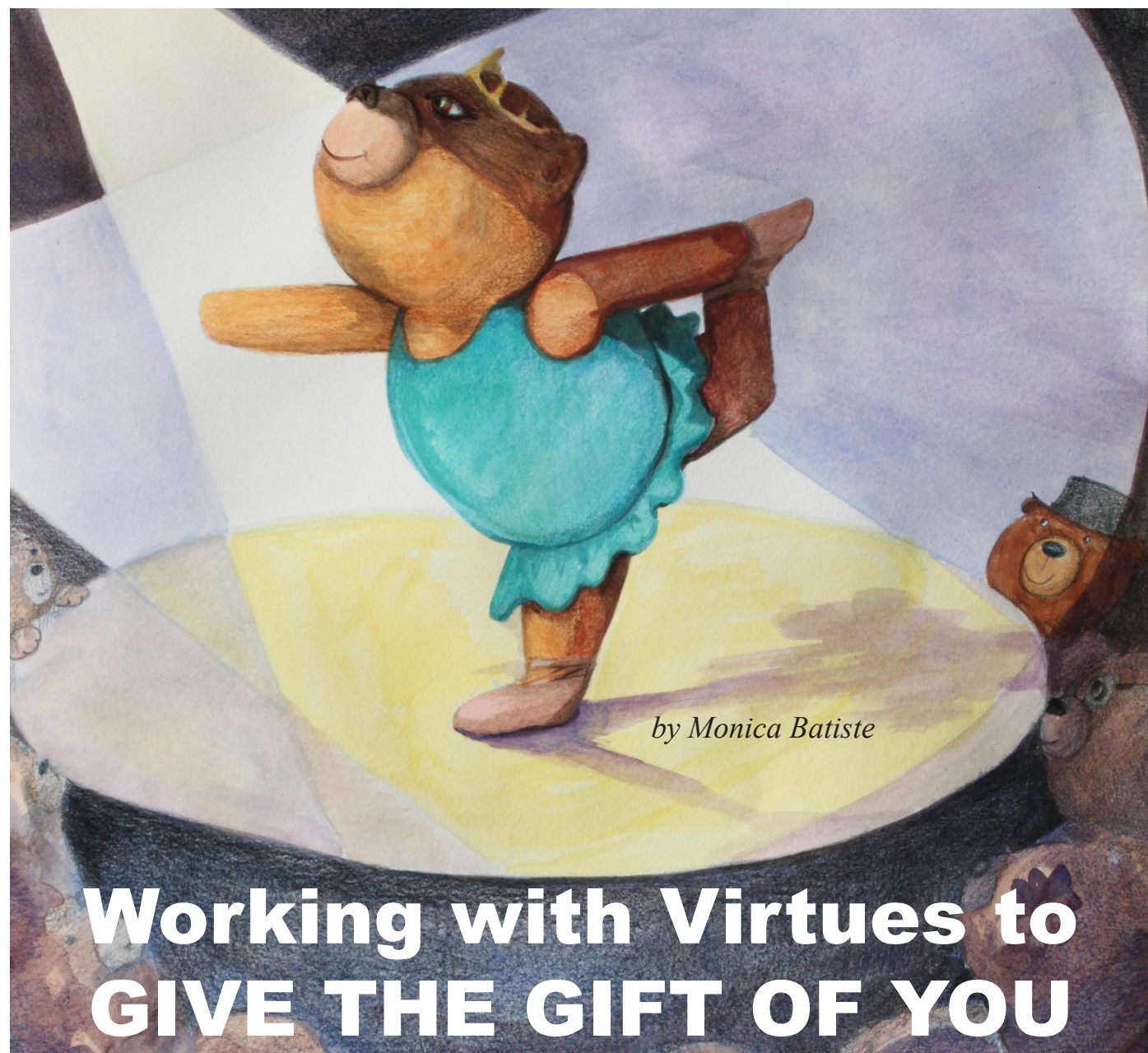
For more information and photos see **www.spenditwell.com** or email kris.webb@spenditwell.com.

Together as a family decide to donate a portion of Christmas gift money to someone in need.



It is common to see children trying to learn in classrooms unusable in the wet season, or in classrooms with boarded-up windows cutting out all light and air.





Virtues are the building blocks of our character. Everyone has every virtue; it's just that some are more developed than others.

For example, a thief might have underdeveloped honesty, but they would have lots of determination. Imagine a lawyer without detachment or a police officer without courage.

You might think you lack some of the virtues, but you don't. You were created with all of the virtues, only you have probably developed them in different amounts.

To grow virtues in yourself and others, acknowledge them and watch them develop. The more you acknowledge virtues in yourself and your children, the more the virtues grow and the more your parenting and self-esteem improve.

The Virtue of Determination

Once you have made a decision, you will need determination to see it through. When you are determined, you never give up. You set goals and see them through even when it is difficult. There will always be obstacles; that's just part of life.

When you are determined to reach your goals and make your life a happy one, you face each obstacle. See each obstacle as a challenge rather than a reason to quit, and then you will persevere.

Believe that you can do great things and you will find the determination to achieve.

It doesn't matter what others think, it matters what you think. Live by your own standards and create your own reputation. You are the only one responsible for your life. Only you can reach those heights.



Set your own goals

Believe you can achieve

Take Steps Every Day

you will find your determination

The Virtue of Excellence

By striving to be and do your best you are giving yourself the gift of self-creation.

You allow yourself to grow. When you practise excellence in everything you do, you will discover great things about yourself as a person and a parent and realise the many qualities that you had been hiding.

To bring out your best, you will need to use your virtues of confidence and courage. It can be frighten-

ing for some people to shine. Marianne Williamson wrote an insightful piece on bringing out your best in her book, *A Return to Love*:

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.”

What she is suggesting is to let yourself shine and to be the best person that you can be. We are all meant to shine and be brilliant.

You have within you all the means, talents and courage to make your dreams come true.

You owe it to yourself and your children to follow your heart and live your dreams.

There is no one in the world like you and there never will be. You have a gift to bring to the world and the world will be grateful for the gift of YOU!

Monica Batiste is a Yoga teacher, author, artist and mother of two beautiful daughters.



To learn more about Monica please visit www.monicabatiste.com.au



Thrifty Christmas Can Be a Blessing

A version of this article was first published at Fairfax's Essential Baby site.

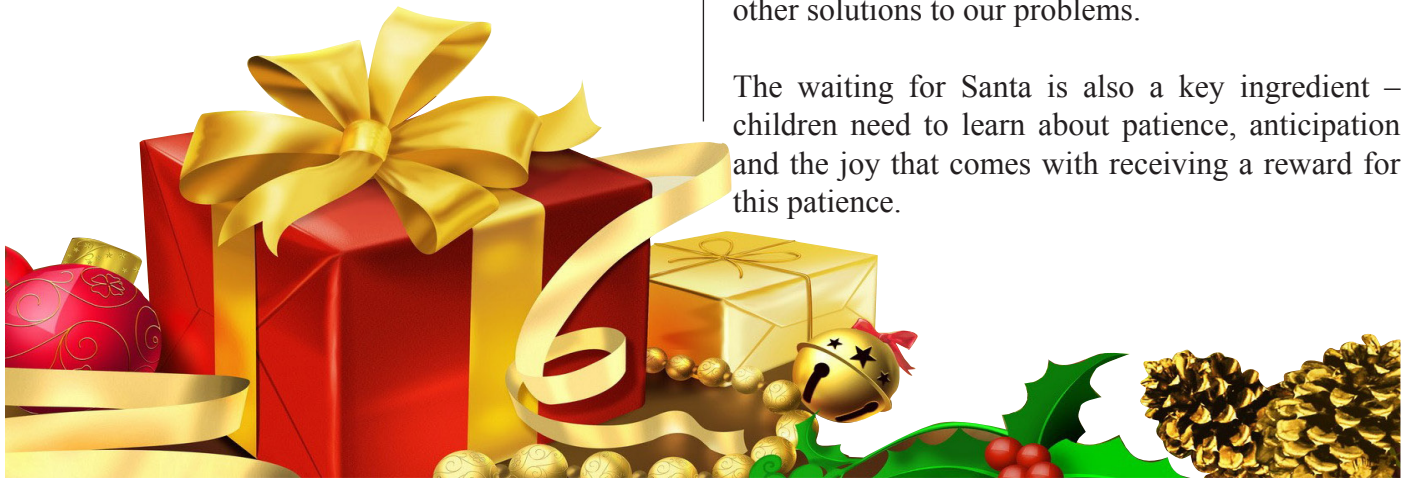
By Maggie Dent

With the economic downturn, many parents are really feeling the pinch this year but I'd like to look at the silver lining and suggest that a 'tighter' Christmas is also the perfect excuse to keep things simple and less stressful for children during this silly season.

“For cash-strapped parents, the very best gift they can give their children is time.”

Often the very best gift parents can give their children is time. That might mean going away on holidays together or just spending time at home. It may even be a good time to put up a tent in the back yard, and go camping with the family – just for fun.

Fun doesn't have to cost a lot of money: but it does take some effort. You don't need to spend heaps on gifts for children, however you do need to spend energy creating the spirit of Christmas in your home.



Christmas is supposed to be a magical time for children, and for adults, but for many it is a time of stress, family conflict and pressure to be all things to all people. It feels more like a marathon than a festival.

I urge parents to think of their kids' needs above everyone else's during the Christmas season. Children get exhausted going from house to house, meeting with different relatives. A good way to overcome this is to get everyone to meet at a park, or at one central house – preferably not yours.

Kids get tired easily when they're excited and stressed, and more easily upset when they're out of their familiar environments or surrounded by lots of people in their home. So keeping things as simple as possible – and being relaxed yourself – is the best way to help kids be calmer and happier while the festive flurry goes on around us.

As adults, it's really crucial for us to remember how magical Christmas can be for a child and to try to foster this spirit for them and for us.

The prospect of the elusive St Nick arriving is actually a wonderful stimulant for children's imaginations.

While an imaginary character may not seem to have many life lessons to offer, Santa and the Easter Bunny play a critical role in developing children's imagination. A healthy imagination is essential for flexible thinking and creativity. It actually helps us to be more resilient as adults as we can imagine other solutions to our problems.

The waiting for Santa is also a key ingredient – children need to learn about patience, anticipation and the joy that comes with receiving a reward for this patience.

It is also an excellent opportunity to teach children early in life the joy that comes from giving to others, especially those in need. Involving kids in baking biscuits, preparing pickled onions and even making homemade chocolates is a great way to develop the art of “giving.”

The giving can be the hardest part of Christmas, trying to find the ideal gifts to buy or make within a budget, with the deadline of 25 December looming. Giving and receiving can be a big source of conflict and stress for mum or dad, or a disgruntled sibling. I prefer to see gift-giving as an opportunity to enhance someone's life.

It's important not to be swayed by advertising and commercial pressures, but rather to give your gift

with the intention of helping your child grow a little, and to enjoy a little of the magic that comes but once a year.

Maggie Dent is an author, parenting and resilience specialist and inspirational presenter.

She lives in northern NSW and is the mother of four adult sons. Maggie is the author of: Saving Our Children from Our Chaotic World, Nurturing Kids' Hearts and Souls, Real Kids in an Unreal World, Saving Our Adolescents and Black Duck Wisdom.

www.maggiedent.com

KIND ACT: Pop notes or cards wishing love and happiness into stranger's letterboxes

Ask the following 10 questions when making or purchasing a gift:


1. Will the gift create conflict through sibling rivalry?

2. Does the gift meet a special interest in your child's life?

3. Is the gift honouring Earth or does it build respect for our natural world?

4. Does the gift allow for the growth of creativity?

5. Does the gift stimulate sharing or promote building emotional competencies like patience or learning to lose?



6. Does the gift numb or stimulate the imagination?

7. Does the gift encourage laughter and lightness?

8. Does the gift honour childhood rather than promote getting older quicker?

9. Does the gift encourage being outside and off the couch, getting physical?

10. Could the gift encourage personal responsibility and empathy, like a goldfish?

LOVE is The Answer For Orphans in Uganda

by Catherine Koch



My name is Catherine and I am the founder and President of a Canadian registered charity called 'Love Is The Answer' (LITA).

LITA works in Africa assisting orphaned children and caregivers of orphaned children in areas of poverty relief and reduction, the advancement of education, and the development of local community initiatives that benefit orphaned children.

Presently, the United Nations estimates that, as of 2012, due to all causes including HIV/AIDS, other diseases, war, famine and even short life expectancy, there are over 55 million orphaned children living in sub-saharan Africa.

I founded LITA following a nine-month stay in Africa in 2007 and 2008. During that time I volunteered with local organisations, worked closely with orphaned children, including children living in child-headed families.

I came to understand so much about the great needs of these children during this part of my life journey and I spent time learning with small grassroots community organisations that were doing their best to provide for the many orphaned children in their communities.

Since that time, LITA has brought empowering support to over 800 orphaned children in Uganda through one or more of our programs, which focus on food, shelter, health care, safety and education.

Various projects we currently have on the go include: Mosquito Nets, Pads For Girls, Solar Lanterns, Heifers for Caregivers, Education Support and Bricks and Beds.

As I write, I am in Uganda for a number of months where we are moving forward on the construction of dorms and an admin/office/library at a child care centre we are helping a community-based organisation to develop.

The centre will house approximately 40 orphaned children who require full-time care. The dorms will be a safe, warm and dry place for the children to sleep and LITA donors have already helped provide 'decker beds', mattresses, blankets and mosquito nets for all the children at the centre!

We have recently begun a collaboration with another small organisation in eastern Uganda who are caring for 100 orphaned children in their sub county.

This group needs help to relocate a school they have been operating for the past two years that has an enrolment of 600 students. The landlord has asked them to vacate the premises at the end of the current school year, which is November 2012, so, our focus as a charity now turns to ways in which we can support this organisation to build their new school and we are very excited to raise the funds to help them to make this possible.

Every day is filled with LOVE and gratitude as I journey with these beautiful children of Uganda!

Catherine Koch is the Founder
and President of

Love Is The Answer

She refers to herself as
LOVE in service
and treats every moment as
an opportunity
to see LOVE in action!
For more information or if you
feel inspired to help LITA
(a Canadian-registered charity)

please go to <http://loveistheanswer.ca/>

KIND ACT: Allow children to choose a
charity to either help at or donate to.



**Every day is filled with LOVE and gratitude as
I journey with these beautiful children of Uganda!**

I AM GENEROUS!

Three easy gifts you can make happen for someone you love:

- Paint or draw a picture and hide it under their pillow
- Pick a bunch of flowers
- Offer to help out someone you care for

On this page make a drawing of YOU giving a gift to someone special!



I Love to Give and Receive!

AFFIRMATION PRINTOUT

MY NAME IS

and

I AM AWESOME!



Kindness CAN Be Taught



For example, a child learns to read through re-iteration, it doesn't take long to create a rudimentary template for language; written, spoken and read.

We don't give much credence to the emotional world in school, YET that is where much of our power lies. People with high emotional intelligence are far more likely to lead happy, successful lives and positively influence others.

Through a daily introduction to emotional vocabulary, interactive lessons in emotional intelligence and positive values system construction we could create a generation that views life from the perspective of kindness.

As parents, we too have the power to build emotional intelligence.

Begin by introducing 'feelings' related conversation with children and start the neurons firing!

"I feel so happy inside, to see you smiling at me this morning, Adam!" or 'How did you feel, Sam, when Alice said those words to you?'

Simple moments like this allow a child to access their emotional world and express themselves appropriately.

**Children are our future leaders,
let us teach them well!**

KIND ACT: Take flowers and smiles to a retirement home!

The brain is a malleable organ and with the right conditioning we could have the next generation creating random acts of kindness as a natural part of their daily lives.

Here is how it works:

The human is a marvelous creature. When we focus we trigger growth of neurons in the brain. Focusing regularly on the same thought causes neurons to branch out into a type of memory tree, this is how we learn everything.

A Ripple Of Kindness

The only thing better than receiving an act of kindness is giving it!



Kindness creates wonderful feel-good emotions that brighten our attitude towards ourselves, others and life.



Imagine what it would be like if more people were kind... what a wonderful positive place the world would be.



Be part of our kindness revolution and help make a difference by getting your FREE Kindness Cards today!

Visit the **Ripple Effects** website to find out more.

**AMAZING
CHILDREN**

Meet **ADORA**: Published author, keynote speaker and more at the age of 12!

What adults can learn from kids...

www.ted.com/talks/adora_svitak.html



MAKE YOUR OWN....

Collect your children's artwork through the year and recycle into beautiful wrapping paper.

Have a painting day in which you explore the value of **LOVE** and create wrapping paper.

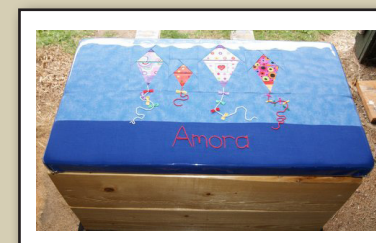


UNIQUE AND ECO GIFT IDEAS

WOODEN CHI

Personalised Toy Boxes and more, made with love from recycled materials.

www.woodenchi.com



Eco Toys

www.ecotoys.com.au



Flying Penguin

www.flyingpenguin.com.au

Giving to Another is a Gift to Self



FAMILY FUNSHOP



by Arna Baartz

I AM A GIFT!

An Emotional Intelligence Workshop
for 3-5-year-olds

VALUES TAUGHT – giving, creativity,
connection, self-awareness, love

INTELLIGENCES DEVELOPED – intrapersonal,
kinaesthetic, visual, interpersonal

What you will need – paint, paper, colours, glue, colourful bits
of paper (recycled papers/magazines/pieces of fabric, cardboard

Time Frame – One hour

Introduction

To give or receive generate the
same feelings in the body.

Sometimes we are so used to
getting/receiving from others we
take the feeling for granted or
continue to seek it without
realising that it is the feeling of love and
appreciation we are after, rather
than getting more stuff.

To add to this, there are times when we are so used
to being given to or provided for we forget how
much we have and we see ourselves as lacking and
therefore unable to give to others.

In fact, the power of giving can literally release
old ideas of lack and open our channels for a new
personal paradigm!

When we see we are able to give and how good it
feels to watch the pleasure in someone else as they
receive a gift we start to feel full; when we feel full
we are able to give even more.

This begins an awesome cycle of never-ending
fulfilment.

THE FUNSHOP

Enjoy a light-hearted discussion
with your children about giving.

Ask questions like:
‘Who likes giving presents?’

‘Who has given presents
to other people?’

‘What did you give?’

‘How did it feel in your body
when you gave the present?’

‘Did it feel happy in your tummy
when you gave your present?’

Allow the conversation to be free and
enthusiastic, participate in the discussion. As
the parent/educator, tell a short story about a
beautiful gift you gave to someone you love.

Be sure to point to your body and make state-
ments like ‘I FELT GOOD in my heart, I felt BIG
AND HAPPY in my tummy, when I watched
_____ open their present.’

When we speak in this way it incites a feelings
vocabulary and a conscious connection with
emotion and value system construction.

When everyone has enjoyed a discussion on the
way we feel when we give, direct the children to a
gift-making table.

Spend the majority of the session making gifts for
the people we love.

The parent/educator can participate by making
small cards for each child with a simple symbol and
a positive word.

At the end of the funshop you can hand out the little
gift you have made. As you hand the gift make sure
you make eye contact (if appropriate, as eye contact
may cause anxiety for some children, particularly
those on the autism spectrum) and smile.

When the gifts have been given, engage children in
another discussion.

‘How did it feel when you were
making your gifts?’

Talk about how it felt to give your gifts to each
child.

Remind the children that giving is very important
because it shows how much we love each other.
It is important to be giving, because when we give
to others it can teach other people how to be kind
also!

Suggestion: make GIVING the theme of the
week, creating gifts to give others and preparing
for a ‘GIVING’ day in which parents come along
and receive gifts from their children or you invite
friends and family to receive gifts homemade by
your child.



The I AM Program has a large list of
arts-connected emotional intelligence workshops

Visit **www.theiamprogram.com**
to check them out.

*Note To Parents – although workshops have been written
for the classroom initially, ALL workshops may be adapted
to your personal needs, at home with your child or children.
The I AM Program sees the parent as number one educator in
their child's life!*

Also... Little children learn through fun, interactive experi-
ence rather than being told. This workshop is purely dedicated
to experiencing the pleasure of giving and receiving!

Giveaway

The HOMEFUN AFFIRMATION Booklet for 3-5-year-olds

The HOMEFUN booklet is designed to activate a child's awareness by using simple affirmations, techniques and suggestions.

A small child will need an older person's guidance to get the most out of HOMEFUN and will benefit greatly from the opportunity to connect on this level.

The HOMEFUN booklet is an effective tool for developing awareness of self, others and the world around.

When used in conjunction with an ongoing program of personal growth, the HOMEFUN booklet will re-iterate and lock into place a positive option for future decision-making in your child's mind.

Printable page example:

Task: Take off your shoes and stand still,
feel the ground beneath your feet... breathe in and breathe out...

I
AM
HERE NOW

Please contact arna@theiamprogram.com for your e-copy today.

As the human race we are ONE FAMILY.

When we hurt another we hurt ourselves.
When we are kind to others we are kind to ourselves.

Our thoughts affect each other too so the more kind thoughts,
positive thoughts and loving thoughts we have, the brighter and
more peaceful our world becomes!

*And it is true that each time we give a gift we are also receiving the
opportunity to feel the gift of giving.*

Submissions

The True Power Of Parenting Magazine is happy to consider unsolicited submissions from writers and readers with inspirational stories.

Next issue theme: Education

What's YOUR story?

We are looking for stories of love and hope and emotional awareness on and around the theme of education, school and your children.

If you would like to submit an article for consideration please send it as a Word document featuring no more than 700 words and be sure to include a high-resolution photo (approximately 1MB in size) to arna@theiamprogram.com

ADVERTISING

The True Power Of Parenting Magazine is offering very affordable advertising to parenting or child-related services and/or products at AU\$45 per quarter page to appear in one issue and just AU\$130 to appear in all six 2013 issues.

There are three free spaces to be given away to the first three advertisers who email arna@theiamprogram.com.

If you have a non-profit charity or organisation that is child- or parenting-related and you would like to advertise with us, please contact arna@theiamprogram.com

For our full rate card, please contact

arna@theiamprogram.com

THE POWER TO EMPOWER!

March Seminar



Call to action for all Parents and Educators
We have The POWER To EMPOWER!

Discover the True Power of Parenting and Educating

The Power to Empower is a two-day personal development course designed to rejuvenate the mind and inspire parents and educators to empower their children with essential emotional intelligence, the foundation for a happy and successful life.

Run by The I AM Program you will receive information that will delight and inspire, providing the platform for TRUE positive parenting and educating, and reminding you of your OWN inner power to connect with and inspire others.

This certified seminar will give YOU the tools and encouragement needed to bring emotional intelligence awareness into your family, classroom and/or community.

Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th of March 2013

book your space before 30th December 2013 to catch the early bird price

Fee : \$220 Early Bird: \$180

Venue: Kingscliff Community Hall, Marine Parade, Kingscliff 2487 (See Maps)

For more information, download the course PDF [here](#) or email arna@theiamprogram.com

TWO sponsored spaces to give away

The first two interested parents to contact me will get a free spot* at THE POWER TO EMPOWER workshop, including materials and e-books..

**Travel, accommodation and any other costs associated with attending the seminar are not included in the sponsorship and are the responsibility of the prize winner.*