

Good reads

Positive Parenting for a Peaceful World: a practical guide for the first twelve years By Ruth Tod, R120, Gaia Books

Written by a peace campaigner and mom of twins, this is an unusual and thought-provoking book that would make a brilliant must-read for all South African parents. It progresses from the idea that peacemaking skills such as empathising, listening, consensus-building and reconciliation are needed in both personal and political relationships. As the author puts it: "Peace is not something just to be wheeled out in a crisis. Peace is for every day, and the more we practise peace the more we will be able to deal peaceably with conflicts when they arise."

What's really great about the book is that there are so many practical suggestions of ways that we parents can help children feel comfortable and confident, how we can communicate clearly and calmly, how we can help children care for others and make good choices for themselves. The section on conflict-resolution is particularly good, with a step-by-step guide to consensus decision-making, and a very simple guide to mediation that will be a real help to parents of fighting siblings.



Bad Childhood Good Life: How to blossom and thrive in spite of an unhappy childhood By Dr Laura Schlessinger, R120, HarperCollins

Having children makes many of us look at our own birth families in quite a different light. Sadly, not everyone had a happy childhood, and some are so consumed by their childhood experiences that they never really let go. Dr Laura, a controversial American talk show host and best-selling author, urges us to cease being victims, to take control of our lives and to break the cycles of hurt and destructive behaviour.

She doesn't minimise the devastating effects of an unhappy childhood, but don't expect excuses or even too much sympathy from Dr Laura. She's one tough cookie. She tells us that we need to look at why we are hanging onto our childhood hurt, and to start the transformation "from victim to victor". Her message is really quite empowering and inspiring, illustrated by plenty of examples from her callers and patients, and this would be an excellent read if you are struggling with issues from your own past. I leave you with one quote: "My thought has long been, what difference does it make how you got into the hole ... there's only one means of getting out of that hole: choosing to be grateful and happy every day you're alive... by letting the beauty of life in, and using your life to add to it."

See your child in Your Child

We've had lots of requests from readers wanting to know how to get their kids featured in *Your Child's* photo shoots. Please email one clear photo of your child, together with name, age and your contact details, to veronica@yourchild.co.za. We keep the photos on file in case we need a child of that age and physical type, in which case we will contact you. We're also looking for stunning locations!

Parents are talking about...

Flexible working hours. You took off a year or two to be with babies, planning to go back to work when they were in school. Little did you know that the lifting, extramurals and social arrangements would make the juggle even tougher. Everyone's looking for the working mom's Holy Grail – a stimulating part-time or flexitime career. The corporate world has been pretty slow in attracting qualified women back into the workplace by offering them flexibility, and more and more mothers are "doing their own thing". The Kidzworld website has expanded and added a new trade section which is a good source of ideas and contacts for franchises and other business opportunities. Go to www.kidzworld.co.za/trade and see what's on offer.

Car safety. Britney Spears drew the world's attention to the safety of kids in cars when she was spotted driving away from paparazzi with her baby on her lap. For the record, the best place for kids, even older ones, is in the back, in an appropriate car seat or booster seat, wearing a seatbelt.

Don't miss...

... The Your Baby Show, from 11 – 14 May at the Coca-Cola Dome in Northgate. If your children are under 6, or you are pregnant, there's plenty to see and buy. Barney will entertain the kids. Tickets are R30, with children under 12 free. Visit www.yourbabyshow.co.za

... Mother's Day on 14 May

... Father's Day on 18 June ■