

MAKING A PARADOX BOX

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A Creative Arts Activity Embracing Paradox

MATERIALS NEEDED: A small box, magazines, scissors, old magazines, small pieces of paper, & markers.

In order to embrace paradox, it helps to be able to contain the energy of the opposites in a way that allows emotions to be expressed in a safe manner, without being repressed. The paradox box allows for creative expression as well as a reminder of ways to contain the opposites.

On small pieces of paper, write down some paradoxes that you experience, with the opposite on each side. Such as: *I am happy when my son goes snowboarding. -- I am worried my son could get hurt snowboarding.* Think of ways that you can contain the paradox of parenting and cut out pictures and words from magazines that describe them, such as meditation, yoga, healthy foods, rest, etc. Glue the pictures and words to the box. You can also add ribbon, beads, or other embellishments you might have on hand. Place the small pieces of paper in the box and keep the box in a place where you can easily see it as a reminder of how you embrace and contain paradox.



EMBRACING THE PARENTING PARADOX

Parenting is a paradox of joy and pain that exist simultaneously. The joy a parent feels is often happening at the same time as periods of grief, conflicts with self and others, fears of being a good parent, problems in family communication, uncertainties regarding discipline, and other challenges facing modern-day parents.

Paradoxes are never resolved. Instead the lesson lies in embracing paradox. In a culture where the media portrays images of perfection and happiness as an ideal, the stage is set for unrealistic expectations and a tendency to want to cut off the any feelings around sorrow or challenges. Psychologist Carl Jung said, "What we resist, persists." The truth is attempting to cut off pain actually creates more of it.

This is especially challenging for parents who want to rescue their children from pain. Life is always both wonderful and difficult. The better able we are to embrace the paradox, the better able we are to witness our children's pain and teach them how to accept life as it truly is, together holding the tension of the opposites and living the richness of embracing paradox.

"The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain."
Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*