

Come Back to Me

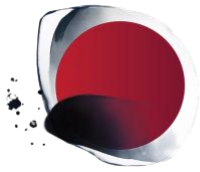
How Many Times Can You Drop Your Child Before They Stop Bouncing?

When you hold your infant in your arms, don't drop her. Pretty simple, right? You pick her up after her bath, she trusts you to hold her, keep her safe. This moment needs to be all about her. When you are listening to your boy tell you of his recent success at school, same deal, don't drop him. When your adolescent is moody and difficult to reach for unknown reasons, the same, don't drop her.

In a very real way, our holding is not limited to the physical embrace. We hold our children with our attention, our emotions, our care, our thoughts, our presence. However, to do this is a challenge we must face every day.

The challenge of remaining present for our children, moment to moment, day to day, year to year inspired my recent book: *The Present Parent Handbook, Familius, 2017*. I was and remain fascinated by what it takes to show up and remain present for our children, while balancing so many competing demands for our attention. How do we become present at home without leaving the rest of our responsibilities to suffer?

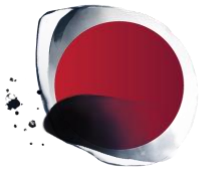
In the process of writing *The Present Parent Handbook*, something became evident. No father is perfectly attuned to his child all the time. Yet, I seldom heard stories about a father literally dropping his child. However, if we tell the truth to ourselves, we drop our children all the time. Every time we check a text, we disengage. Every time we drift off while pretending to pay attention, we detach. Every time we allow distractions to pull us away, we abandon.



So, what follows are tried and true tips that will offer you the opportunity to be immediately present with your family:

1. **Decide:** Decide to be with you family and complete any competing responsibilities prior to making the transition. That is the key: before you decide to be with your family, complete, complete, complete at least for the time being, anything that will pull you away.
2. **Agree:** Make agreements with your family that you will be present and stick to that agreement. “I am free for the afternoon,” means I am here. Make agreements with yourself and keep them.
3. **Commit:** Commit yourself fully to being present. You have now made the agreement; stick to your commitment.
4. **Remember:** You will be distracted and your attention will drift for obvious reasons – you have a lot of responsibility. However, return to the point of departure and resume being present: “Sorry, I drifted off for a moment, but I am back.”
5. **Trust:** If you decided to be on the family outing, have agreed to participate fully and are committed, then trust your decision and stick with it.
6. **Be willing to fail:** You are only human. You will find many good reasons to let go of your commitment, just this once. That is okay, just return.
7. **Start over in every moment:** When you fail, not a problem, just start over and double down on your determination to be on time, focus on your child’s event, listen at the dinner table, meet your family’s expectations.

There is one simple guideline: meet the expectations you create with your family. Failure to do so will disappoint them and the fact is, you will not feel good about it. Remember,



DR. TIMOTHY DUKES

DrTimothyDukes.com | Sanctuary | Fathering | Come Back to Me | 20231008

being dropped is painful. They will forgive you despite their disappointment. They will bounce back. But for how long?

Image courtesy of: [lauren lulu taylor](#) [@laurenlulutaylor](#)

The Tim Dukes Method provides an opportunity for self-reflective individuals to cultivate the capacity to receive into consciousness hidden aspects of the self, claiming your unique gifts – ensuring that today’s brilliance successfully transitions into tomorrow’s wisdom. The Tim Dukes Method is designed and implemented by Dr. Timothy Dukes for determined creatives to ensure long-term viability — as a continuing investment in the well-being of yourself, family, organizations, culture, society, and the Earth itself.