

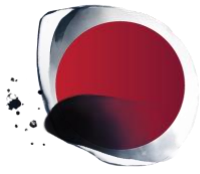
## Pick Up the Baby



We must make a conscious effort to find happiness and peace.

"Many of us have so much pain that it is difficult for us to touch a flower  
or hold the hand of a child."

— Thich Nhat Hanh



The profound simplicity and beauty of a child can bring up a great deal of pain for a father who has suffered too much disappointment and hurt when he was a child. You can feel bad when all that is in front of you is good and pure. Even when you are committed and willing to sustain a relational presence, it can be very difficult, and you can end up feeling like you are in a foreign territory.

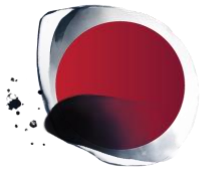
Thich Nhat Hanh suggests that one must first touch peace and joy as a way of healing and strengthening the self. If we have or had an absent father, **we must make a conscious effort to find happiness** and peace within our experiences with our children. Fortunately, this is made easier because they are so darn cute. And we must recognize that it is necessary to find ways to compensate for our defenses, which, if not put in check, will simply be passed on. There is a simple truth:

*That which we leave undone in our own psyches, our children inherit.*

*In short, if our suffering is left in the unconscious,  
it is likely to repeat in our children.*

Our children are incapable, at the early ages, of defending against this sorrow that many of us carry within us; it remains our responsibility to choose to do something about it.

The practice of mindfulness is a process that creates this capacity to take responsibility. When we do the hard work necessary to resolve the conflict within our own psyches, we, at the same time, remove the potential for conflict playing out with and within our child. In these relatively simple moments rests the potential to remove the conflict for generations to come. Ending this tyranny of the past generations may work to ensure the potential for wellbeing in future generations. Samsara, the circle of suffering, stops in a moment of mindfulness.



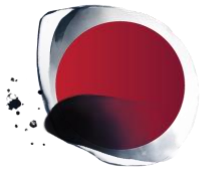
It is said that it takes 10,000 hours of practice to be masterful at any endeavor.

Claim each moment with your child and practice:

- When he cries because he cannot sleep, go to him.
- When she pushes you away, give her space and idle next to her until she is ready to open again.
- When he wants to talk, stop what you are doing, stop everything you are doing, and listen.
- When there is a celebration ahead, a birthday, holiday or simply a successful study session, be available and recognize her existence in a way that she can see herself in your response. Hold your child.
- When he is a baby, hold him.
- When he is an infant, hold him.
- When he is a toddler, hold him, catch him, pick him up when he falls.
- When he is a little boy, hold him.
- When he is a pre-teen, teenager, young man, adult – by then, you will know how and when he will let you hold him.
- Hold him then.

A friend relates: “I literally suffer from a lack of being held by my father. I was a sickly child and apparently did nothing but ‘scream and stink’ for the first six months of my life. Today, when I watch my husband holding my daughter, my heart heals. I cannot go back in time to embrace myself as a baby (though my therapist did have me do this!), but I can support my husband while he does this for our baby girl.”

Remember to live into each moment with your child as an opportunity to cultivate your fatherhood, your parenthood. We all learn in the doing, over-and-over again.



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*I experience where my body has been broken.  
A deep and weighted tiredness has brought me here.  
In each place of pain, I miss him  
And realize his return to me as I hold and nurture my child.*

## Reference

Nhat Hanh, T. (1992). *Touching peace: Practicing the art of mindful living*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax. p. 27

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*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.*