



PARENTING COURSE

# *How Do You Show Up For Your Children?*

*By Joe Atkinson*

**5 DAY COURSE**

Aim - To explore how you show up as a parent and improve the relationship with your children.



Day 1



Joe Atkinson

**‘Our beliefs control our bodies, our minds, and thus our lives....’**

BRUCE LIPTON

## What Is a Belief?

In the dictionary a belief is defined as:

*A strong feeling that something or someone exists or is true; confidence that something or someone is good or right*

Below is a list of some common core beliefs. This list is not finite and there are more. Read them out to yourself and notice which ones resonate with you. Pick one that stands out to you and say it to yourself. Notice your reaction. Are there any sensations in your body? Try not to analyse in your head, but just notice your reaction. When you notice any analysis, just ask yourself to return to observing your own bodily sensations.

You might find yourself identifying with more than one core belief. Many of us will have more than one. But just pick the one which stands out the most for you for now. Don't think or analyse, just go with the one that you are drawn to. There is no right or wrong answer.

Once you have spent a bit of time looking at them pick one and write it down below.



<b>I'm not good enough</b>	<b>I'm stupid</b>	<b>I can't change</b>	<b>I can't say no</b>
<b>I'm powerless</b>	<b>I have to be perfect</b>	<b>I'm unlovable</b>	<b>It's my fault</b>
<b>I'm worthless</b>	<b>I'm a failure</b>	<b>There is something wrong with me</b>	<b>My needs are not important</b>
<b>I don't matter</b>	<b>I'm alone</b>	<b>I'm not important</b>	<b>It's not ok to ask for help</b>

**I identify with the core belief.** \_\_\_\_\_



Sit a bit longer with this belief as you write it down and notice some sensations that come up in your body. Try saying it in your head a few times or even out loud.

Write down any sensations that you notice here:

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So now we have identified a core belief to work with. You might start noticing that you have some judgement towards this belief. Maybe you perceive that you're stupid for having this belief, or that you're frustrated that you have it, or that you just want to run away from this belief. I'd like to invite you to set an intention over this week to just drop those judgments. They will not be useful here. SO find a quiet space, sit with yourself and set that intention.

You can do this by asserting the intention to yourself, speak the words in your head or even better outloud.

You could say something like:

“I will not judge myself, for having the belief ‘I am not good enough’”

So, now you have your belief that we will zone in on over the course of the week.





Free Writing

As you complete the exercises it’s useful if we use the structure of FREE WRITING. In free writing, we specifically do not try and overthink our answer. We do not think about spelling, grammar or punctuation. We put our faith in our hand as a messenger and we just write. You do not have to think and analyse the questions much. Read them, take a little time to sit with them and consider them and when you are ready just write freely. No one will see this unless you want to share it with someone. There are no right answers here, so don’t write what you think you might want someone to hear. Write whatever comes to you.

Write freely.

**Exercise:**

How is or could this belief be affecting my role as a parent? Write down all the negative things that this belief could be impacting on your role. These could be things you are absolutely sure could be having an effect or things that might potentially come up in the future

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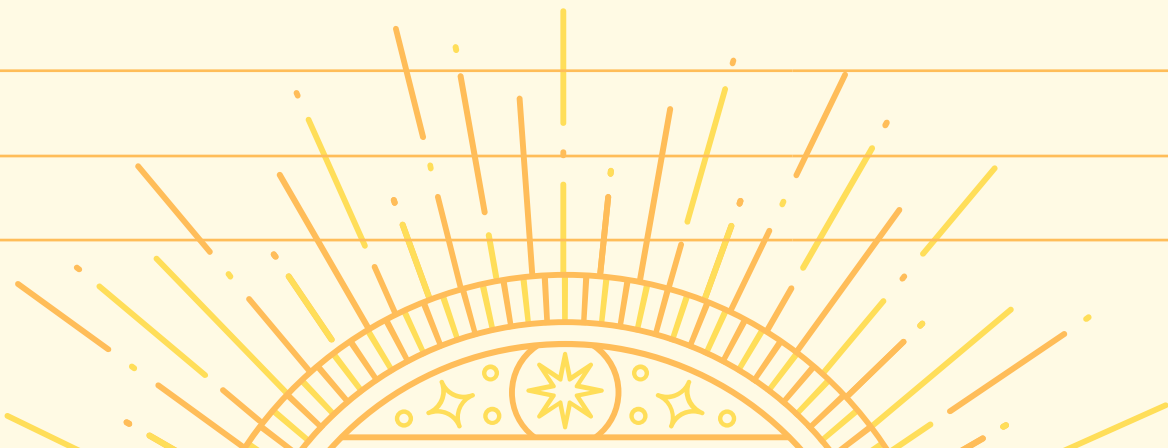
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Day 1



Joe Atkinson

**Exercise:**

Imagine yourself in 10 years time. How would things be with your children if you held this belief for the next 10 years?

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**Exercise:**

Who would you be without this belief as a parent? What would be different?

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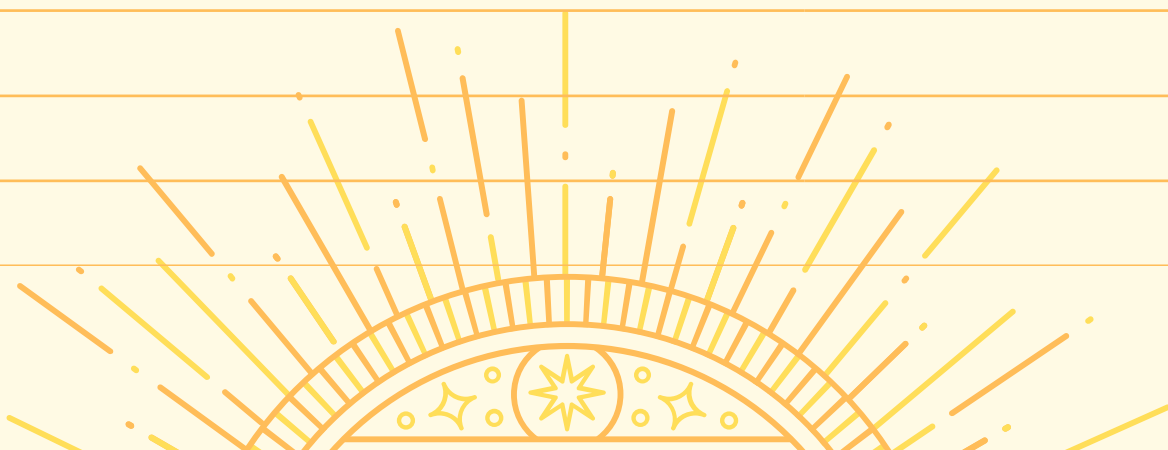
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Day 1

**Exercise:**

Imagine yourself in 10 years time without this belief. How would things be with your children then if you didn't hold this belief for the next 10 years.

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**Thank you for completing Day 1 of this parenting course.**



# ‘Understanding is love’s other name. If you don’t understand, you can’t love’

THÍCH NHẬT HANH

## Where does this belief live?

### Green Bush exercise:

If I were to call you a green bush. How would you react? Yes, that is right, I am looking at you and saying, ‘*You are a green bush*’. It’s not a metaphor, there are no tricks and this is not a joke. I am asserting to you that I think you are a green bush. Take a moment to consider this scenario seriously. I repeat, **this is not a joke**. It would be quite a bad one anyway! So seriously, take some time. How would you react? What would you notice about your reaction?

Write some thoughts and bodily sensations down that you notice?

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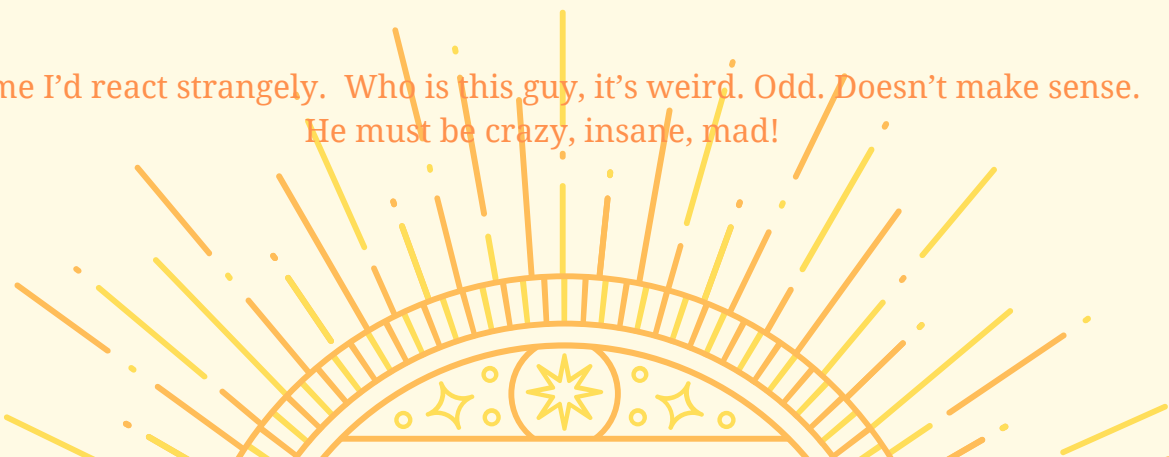
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For me I’d react strangely. Who is this guy, it’s weird. Odd. Doesn’t make sense.  
He must be crazy, insane, mad!





Day 2



Joe Atkinson

Now, consider that I call you the worst parent in the world. How would you react then? I am standing in front of you calling you ‘the worst parent in the world?’.

How would you react now? What would you notice about your reactions. How about if I substitute the belief you were drawn to in day 1. How would you react then?

Write some thoughts and bodily sensations down:

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*For me, there my whole body would be alive to this sense of dread. I might feel an immediate reaction inside and notice changes within the body. ‘I’ve been found out, they know something about me, what have I done? I knew it....’ Etc.*

So what is the difference here. These two statements – ‘You’re a green bush and you’re the worst parent in the world’. We both know rationally that they are completely wrong. Yes, one is completely abstract, but it is no less true is it? So why, if you noticed one, the difference in reaction.

If you notice a difference then I would like you to consider this. Is there a chance? Are you open to the possibility that YOU are the one that hold the belief that you are the worst parent in the world. YOU are the one that identifies to the belief? Because if you didn’t it would be like someone calling you a green bush. Another way of looking at it is that you are certain that you are not a green bush but are you certain that you are not the worst parent in the world? If you recognise some uncertainty then that this may be the cause of you having a different reaction.



Day 2



Joe Atkinson

Consider this and take some time to journal some of your thoughts/feelings:

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There are three things we can do if we notice something that is painful for us. We can blame events, other people or ourselves. Notice blame and judgement. Any judgement you have is a choice that will not give you any other benefits. Now you know that you are the one who holds the belief. We now also acknowledge any judgement or blame we have for holding this belief.

We notice that this belief lives inside us and that it isn't to do with other people or any events. We set the intention of bringing curiosity, love and compassion to this belief. Imagine you are going to befriend it. It's like an old friend. It could be that it even helped you at some point? Why else would you have identified with it in the first place? You're going to spend some time with it. Keep noticing any judgement or blame as it arises and also notice as it goes away.

For the next 24 hours you are to notice this belief as it appears in your life and you are going to acknowledge it with curiosity, love and compassion. You're not going to try and change it, run from it, hide from it. You are simply going to notice it and acknowledge it with curiosity, love and compassion. The word compassion is an interesting word. Compassion comes from the Latin word 'pati; to suffer and com means 'with'. So you can look at compassion as suffering with.



Day 2

 Joe Atkinson

At the end of the day write about some of the times you noticed this belief and how you acknowledged it with curiosity, love and compassion. What happened? What was it like? Notice any sensations?

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**Thank you for completing Day 2 of this parenting course.**



**‘The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvellous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose a holy curiosity.’**

**ALBERT EINSTEIN**

## WHY did we create beliefs?


You see these beliefs; they govern our lives unconsciously. Ever tried to make a change and not been able to do it? Well the chances are that there would have been a belief there holding you back.

**The good news is beliefs are not certain and we can challenge them.**

**Let’s look at the word belief:** An acceptance that something exists or is true, especially one without proof. Accepting that something is true, but not knowing. If we look behind them they can be quite fragile. But we get stuck with them.

So let’s take a common core belief that I am sure many of us can connect with: ‘I am not good enough’. What would be the function of us accepting that that is true? How would that serve us? Because we would not have accepted and identified with it unless it served us at some point in our lives.

One idea is that perhaps growing up some things happened, and we received messages that something is wrong. Something went wrong. Something didn’t work out. Maybe your parents split up. Maybe your mum was depressed. Maybe your parents were too busy and couldn’t enjoy your company. So what option does a child have living with this. We notice if judgement starts to creep in again here and we ask it to step aside for now. Ask yourself with a strong desire to learn something here. We ask with curiosity.



You could create the belief - “the world is not good enough for me”. It would make sense; your needs have not been met and so the world is a bad place. We are born into this world with such assurance that we deserve to get our needs met. Just remember your own child when they were just a few weeks old. The whole world is there for them and it is all theirs.

As we get older when some of our needs are not being met, one way of making sense of that is creating a belief. If the world is not good enough for us. That is going to be a very scary belief to identify with. Who would want to live in a world that is not good enough for us. So instead, we create the belief ‘I am not good enough’. At least the problem is in me and I can still take from the world what I can. Can you see how this belief might be far less painful for you at the time?

There is something wrong with me or there is something wrong with the world?

Which one do you think is easiest to live with?

If the problem is with me then that’s ok. I can deal with that. In many ways it is safer. If the problem is out there in the world then by gosh, I need to be careful. I need to be on edge. You see we would just not let ourselves live with that amount of stress.

SO, these beliefs. We can thank them. They helped us right? They stopped us from growing up in a world with more pain. Let’s be grateful for them? Let’s thank them and acknowledge them for how they may have served us.

Write a note showing gratitude to your own belief.

Get curious...

How might it have helped you?





Day 3



Today we bring curiosity to our belief. We are already starting to notice it, the sensations, feelings and emotions that it comes with and we are going to add curiosity to that cocktail today. But not just curiosity on an intellectual level. We remain curious on all levels. Ask yourself questions that don't have intellectual answers?

Try asking yourself a question and just listening to how your body responds without words to answer it?

Write a list of some questions that you can or have already asked yourself today and journal some of the things that came up for you.

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**Thank you for completing Day 3 of this parenting course.**



**‘When you have knowledge instead of belief at the mental level, what will the corresponding state at the heart level be? That’s what is called ‘certainty’. The certainty comes from the direct presence of what you know’**

AH ALMASS

## Curiosity

So remember yesterday we talked about beliefs not necessarily being true. They are not based on knowledge. The reality is that if you have the belief ‘I am not good enough’ that it was not something you were born with. Do you think on the 1st day of your life that you even considered that you were not good enough for this world. Do you think on the 2nd day of your life you wondered if you were worthy of your mother’s milk, if you deserved it? You were entitled to all those things. You were born with this certainty.

So you now recognise that this was picked up along the way somewhere. Now is the time to recognise this deep inner knowledge and to re-connect with the part of you that is good enough, the part of you that is worthy.

The problem is that you identify with these beliefs. To identify, just means ‘to make the same’. You make it yours. That is why if we just start by compassionately noticing these beliefs as they come into our awareness, we are already starting to disconnect from them. You are noticing this belief. Not identifying with it and ensuring it is part of your personality, but just noticing it. Notice it like there is some distance between you and the belief. Like it is separate.

You see the opposite of these beliefs – I am good enough, I am worthy. Are these beliefs still? They resonate on a much deeper level. This is knowledge. This is certainty. If you light a fire, you wouldn’t say I believe that it will be hot. Why not? Because the very nature of the word means that there is some doubt in it. You would probably say ‘I know it will be hot’ or just ‘it will be hot’. Because knowledge trumps beliefs. With knowledge comes certainty.



Do you remember the certainty your baby had as a new-born, that his/her needs would be met? The world is all yours at the age, all designed just for you. That is the certainty that we are going to tap into again. You had this certainty at some point in your life, but you may have lost it along the way. It doesn't mean it is not there, but it does need recovering. The very nature of the word recovery tells us that this something has been there all along. We've just disconnected from it.

So with this I invite you to re-connect with your own sense of certainty. The part of you that is connected to this deeper sense of knowledge. You must already have some kind of a connection with it, because otherwise you would not have signed up for this free course.

I invite you to sit for a few minutes in a comfortable place and connect to this part of you. Where is it in your body? Find it and breathe into it. Feel it's energy. And with this you set the intention to cultivate a relationship with this part of you on a daily basis. How does it show up? How does it live in you? Is that the part of you that drove you to signing up to this course?

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Day 4



Joe Atkinson

Write down some ideas of how to connect to this certainty within yourself:

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Day 4

Joe Atkinson

# Hope vs Certainty

Think about something you would like to have happen in the future with your child. How would you hope your relationship turn out. Close your eyes and notice how it feels?

Get rid of that feeling now, maybe get up walk around and shake yourself out.

And now imagine how you what you hoped for in your relationship with your child. But this time you're going to expect it to happen. It will happen. Notice the difference in sensation in your body.

This is the affect that certainty can have on us. The realisation that how we want to parent is already within us.

# Incantations

One very simple way of expressing certainty is daily incantations. An incantation is they saying of words believed to have a magical effect when spoken.

**All the love I need is within me now**  
**All the peace I need is within me now**  
**All the joy I need is within me now**

You can use these, or even better you can make your own. How do you want to show up as a parent for your children? You want to share happiness with them?

**All the Happiness I need is within me now.**

Day 4



Get creative and try a few out that you make sense for you.

Why not try repeating them every morning in the shower? Do them for at least 3 minutes every morning.

What this does is it creates certainty in your brain that you can connect with the deeper knowledge that you have connected with and gives you a better daily base to challenge some of your beliefs as you notice them throughout the day.

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**Thank you for completing Day 4 of this parenting course.**



**"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."**

VICTOR E FRANKL

## Honesty, Change and Love

OK, so now you spent 4 days creating a 'cocktail' for your belief. You're noticing, acknowledging, bringing love, non-judgement, compassion and a certainty to this belief. Take some time today to acknowledge how you are getting on? Are you finding this useful? Have you noticed any changes? Have you found it difficult? Have you disengaged from the process at all? Have you become frustrated with what we have been doing?

What has your experience been like so far?

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Notice in particular the judgement you might be holding toward yourself and where it might be coming from. With this we are not only noticing the belief and when it is appearing as parents, but we also notice if any judgement comes with the belief too and how that judgement manifests. We set the intention of allowing the judgement to be there, but we disconnect from it somewhat and we don't identify with this judgement anymore. We let it come and we watch it go.

So on this last day of the course we are now ready to integrate what we have learnt and move on with our life. If you have found this useful then this is a course that will not end for you. For now, you can visualise how you might bring this work into your future in your parental role.

Remember the exercises back in day 1 when you visualised how your life would be without this belief. Well in order to get there you see that this work happens daily and you can bring this into your life going forward. I'm sure there have been and if not there will be moments when you do not show up as the parent you want to be. And with this our focus shifts. We recognise before that our focus may have been on keeping, holding onto and identifying with this belief. It's helped us before and it is just trying to help us still. Like an old friend, we recognise its intention is to serve us, but now, we have the awareness that it is not serving us anymore.

## Triggers

Think back to a time when you were triggered by your son or daughter. Write specifically about what happened? What did they do? What did they say? We don't want an analysis of what happened. We just want the facts.

*e.g. My daughter did not listen to me when I asked her to pick up the piece of fruit she threw on the floor. Instead she picked it up and threw it somewhere else and laughed. I got angry with her and shouted until she picked it up and was annoyed/agitated for the next 5 minutes.*

Day 5

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What is the belief that could have been alive during this event?

*e.g. I am not important. I am powerless.*

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Notice that these possibilities right or wrong and notice how you may disregard these immediately in the moment and go to the one that would be most painful for you and your own belief. Notice how this is not a conscious choice that you make. It's automatic and directly to the your most painful belief.

How might you of acted without this belief?

*e.g. I set the boundary with assertiveness and calmness with a knowledge that this event is not a threat to me personally.*

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With this process and recognition we start to flex our response-ability muscle. Because we increase our ability to no longer react to past beliefs, but we react in the moment.

In light of this we welcome these triggers now as messengers that call us to uncover these unconscious beliefs that we hold. And we set the intention to bring curiosity, honesty and love to these triggering moments and recognise that our children are wonderful teachers.

We start to see the whole gun and not just the trigger.



**"Your conflicts, all the difficult things, the problematic situations in your life, are not chance or haphazard, they're actually yours. They're specifically yours, designed specifically for you, by a part of you that loves you more than anything else. The part of you that loves you more than anything else has created roadblocks to lead you to yourself. You're not going to go in the right direction unless there's something pricking you in the side telling you, look here, this way. That part of you loves you so much that it won't let you lose the chance. It will go to extreme measures to wake you up. It will make you suffer greatly if you don't listen. What else can it do, that's its purpose."**

**AH Almass**

This course has not been designed to 'teach' you anything about parenting, but just like the in day 4 it is written with the knowledge and the certainty that everything that you need to be the parent that you want to be is within you now already.

Thank you to everyone that got to the end of the course. I hope that this has been useful for you and if you have any feedback for me then I invite you to get in contact with me.

To find out more about Compassionate Inquiry and the work that I do, please check out my website.

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PARENTING COURSE

# *How Do You Show Up For Your Children?*

*By Joe Atkinson*

**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING YOUR COURSE**

Aim - To explore how you show up as a parent and improve the relationship with your children.

