

Consensual Living Book List

These books are ones we have found helpful, we hope you will too. They are in no particular order.

***Kohn, Alfie, Unconditional Parenting**

Author of nine books, including the controversial *Punished by Rewards*, Kohn expands upon the theme of what's wrong with our society's emphasis on punishments and rewards. Kohn, the father of young children, sprinkles his text with anecdotes that shore up his well-researched hypothesis that children do best with unconditional love, respect and the opportunity to make their own choices. Kohn questions why parents and parenting literature focus on compliance and quick fixes, and points out that docility and short-term obedience are not what most parents desire of their children in the long run. He insists that "controlling parents" are actually conveying to their kids that they love them conditionally—that is, only when they achieve or behave. Tactics like time-out, bribes and threats, Kohn claims, just worsen matters. Caustic, witty and thought-provoking, Kohn's arguments challenge much of today's parenting wisdom, yet his assertion that "the way kids learn to make good decisions is by making decisions, not by following directions" rings true. Kohn suggests parents help kids solve problems; provide them with choices; and use reason, humor and, as a last resort, a restorative time away (not a punitive time-out). This lively book will surely rile parents who want to be boss. Those seeking alternative methods of raising confident, well-loved children, however, will warmly embrace Kohn's message. (Mar.) Forecast: *Kohn is a controversial and popular author/speaker, well regarded by scholars and educators. This title should appeal to parents who want to explore the "whys" and not just the "hows" of raising kids.*

***Fortune-Wood, Jan Without Boundaries: Consent Based, Non Coercive Parenting and Autonomous Education Second edition is titled With Consent**

Probably the most radical book I've ever read. It expounds a complete philosophy of parenting called 'Taking Children Seriously' (TCS) and re-interprets children's 'difficult' behavior as expressions of their need for autonomy. We very seriously tried this method of parenting and have learnt a lot from it - in particular the excellent examples it gives of different ways we try to control our children (often ingrained habits we're unaware of) and ways of creatively finding solutions where 'all win'. We don't do it anything near 100% but its completeness and radical way of looking at childhood have been valuable.

***Rosenberg, Marshall, Nonviolent Communication**

Do you hunger for skills to improve the quality of your relationships, to deepen your sense of personal empowerment or to simply communicate more effectively? Unfortunately, for centuries our culture has taught us to think and speak in ways that can actually perpetuate conflict, internal pain and even violence. Nonviolent Communication partners practical skills with a powerful consciousness and vocabulary to help you get what you want peacefully.

In this internationally acclaimed text, Marshall Rosenberg offers insightful stories, anecdotes, practical exercises and role-plays that will dramatically change your approach to communication for the better. Discover how the language you use can strengthen your relationships, build trust, prevent conflicts and heal pain. Revolutionary, yet simple, NVC offers you the most effective tools to reduce violence and create peace in your life—one interaction at a time.

***Thich Nhat Hanh, Peace is Every Step**

Thich Nhat Hanh's writing is deceptive in its subtlety. He'll go on and on with stories about tree-hugging or metaphors involving raw potatoes; he'll tell you how to eat mindfully, even how to breathe and walk; he'll suggest looking closely at a flower and to see the sun as your heart. As the Zen teacher Richard Baker commented, however, Nhat Hanh is "a cross between a cloud, a snail, and piece of heavy machinery." Sooner or later, it begins to sink in that Nhat Hanh is conveying a depth of psychology and a world outlook that require nothing less than a complete paradigm shift. Through his cute stories and compassionate admonitions, he gradually builds up to his philosophy of interbeing, the notion that none of us *is* separately, but rather that we *inter-are*. The ramifications are explosive. How can we mindlessly and selfishly pursue our individual ends, when we are inextricably bound up with everyone and everything else? We see an enemy not as focus of anger but as a human with a complex history, who could be us if we had the same history. Suffice it to say, that after reading *Peace Is Every Step*, you'll never look at a plastic bag the same way again, and you may even develop a penchant for hugging trees.

***Rosenberg, Marshall, Raising Children Compassionately: Parenting the Nonviolent Communication Way**

Your search for parenting tips that actually improve your family dynamics is over. While other parenting resources offer communication models or discipline techniques, this powerful, practical booklet offers the unique skills and perspective of the Nonviolent Communication (NVC) process. NVC

stresses the importance of putting compassionate connection first to create a mutually respectful, enriching family dynamic filled with clear, heartfelt communication. An exceptional resource for parents, parent educators, families and anyone else who works with children.

For over 40 years Dr. Marshall Rosenberg has taught NVC to parents, families, children and teachers. Parents around the world have used his advice to deepen family connections, move past conflicts and improve communication. His revolutionary approach helps parents motivate children to cooperate without either the threat of punishment or the promise of reward. Learn how to model compassionate communication in the home to help your children successfully resolve conflicts and express themselves clearly.

***Faber, Adele and Elaine Mazlish, How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk**

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk is an excellent communication tool kit based on a series of workshops developed by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish. Faber and Mazlish (coauthors of *Siblings Without Rivalry*) provide a step-by-step approach to improving relationships in *your* house. The "Reminder" pages, helpful cartoon illustrations, and excellent exercises will improve your ability as a parent to talk and problem-solve with your children. The book can be used alone or in parenting groups, and the solid tools provided are appropriate for kids of all ages.

***Faber, Adele and Elaine Mazlish, Siblings Without Rivalry**

With a title like this, it's no surprise that authors Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish had a monster bestseller on their hands when the book first appeared in 1988. From the subsequent deluge of readers' stories, questions, and issues, they have created nearly 50 pages of new material for this, the 10th anniversary edition. The central message remains the same, and sounds almost too simple: avoid comparisons. But parents know that's easier said than done. The value of Faber and Mazlish's discussions is precisely that they talk you through umpteen different situations and outcomes to help you teach your brawling offspring a new set of responses. The highly informative text is punctuated with helpful summary/reminder boxes and cartoons illustrating key points. It's a must-read for parents with (or planning on) multiple children. But parents of young children who get along fine (so far) should read it too--as the authors make very clear, rivalry is inevitable. The only question is how to manage the rivalry with intelligence and compassion, and on that subject they offer a wealth of good advice.

***Fitzenreiter, Valerie, The Unprocessed Child: Living without School**

The Unprocessed Child is a work of nonfiction about a child raised with no coercion and no curriculum. Laurie Chancey spent her childhood immersing herself in topics of her own choosing. She was never forced to learn something simply because tradition and/or society said it was necessary. No one was looking over her shoulder to make sure she was learning the "proper" subjects.

Having never seen a textbook or taken a test, never used workbooks or any type of teaching techniques, Laurie scored in the top 10% of the state of Louisiana on her college entrance exam. She enrolled in college when she was eighteen, and graduated summa cum laude three and a half years later. Laurie is a bright adult, but her IQ is not why she did so well. She spent her life learning to learn and it's something that now comes easily to her.

The Unprocessed Child was written by her mother and is full of examples of raising a child with respect and dignity. It is the first book written about a radically unschooled child who has now reached adulthood and is a responsible member of society.

Questions about the radical unschooling lifestyle are answered on topics ranging from socialization, parental responsibility, self-discipline, chores, bedtimes and much more. The book shows that it is not only possible to befriend your child, but that it is highly preferable to the struggles that so many parents go through with their children. It proves that school is not necessary for learning, socializing or motivation.

***Gordon, Thomas, Parent Effectiveness Training**

P.E.T., or **Parent Effectiveness Training**, began almost forty years ago as the first national parent-training program to teach parents how to communicate more effectively with kids and offer step-by-step advice to resolving family conflicts so everybody wins. This beloved classic is the most studied, highly praised, and proven parenting program in the world -- and it will work for you. Now revised for the first time since its initial publication, this groundbreaking guide will show you:

How to avoid being a permissive parent

How to listen so kids will talk to you and talk so kids will listen to you

How to teach your children to "own" their problems and to solve them

How to use the "No-Lose" method to resolve conflicts

Using the timeless methods of P.E.T. will have immediate results: less fighting, fewer tantrums and lies, no need for punishment. Whether you have a toddler striking out for independence or a teenager who has already started rebelling, you'll find P.E.T. a compassionate, effective way to instill responsibility and create a nurturing family environment in which your child will thrive.

Greene, Ross, *The Explosive Child: A New Approach for Understanding and Parenting Easily Frustrated, Chronically Inflexible Children

Flexibility and tolerance are learned skills, as any parent knows if they've seen an irascible 2-year-old grow into a pleasant, thoughtful, and considerate older child. Unfortunately, for reasons that are poorly understood, a few children don't "get" this part of socialization. Years after toddler tantrums should have become an unpleasant memory, a few unlucky parents find themselves battling with sudden, inexplicable, disturbingly violent rages--along with crushing guilt about what they "did wrong." Medical experts haven't helped much: the flurry of acronyms and labels (Tourette's, ADHD, ADD, etc.) seems to proffer new discoveries about the causes of such explosions, when in fact the only new development is alternative vocabulary to describe the effects. Ross Greene, a pediatric psychologist who also teaches at Harvard Medical School, makes a bold and humane attempt in this book to cut through the blather and speak directly to the (usually desperate) parents of explosive children. His text is long and serious, and has the advantage of covering an enormous amount of ground with nuance, detail, and sympathy, but also perhaps the disadvantage that only those parents who are not chronically tired and time-deprived are likely to get through the entire book. Quoted dialogue from actual sessions with parents and children is interspersed with analysis that is always oriented toward understanding the origins of "meltdowns" and developing workable strategies for avoidance. Although pharmacological treatment is not the book's focus, there is a chapter on drug therapies.

Aron, Elaine, *The Highly Sensitive Child: Helping Our Children Thrive When the World Overwhelms Them

With the publication of *The Highly Sensitive Person*, Elaine Aron became the first person to identify the inborn trait of "high sensitivity" and to show how it affects the lives of those who possess it. Up to 20 percent of the population is born highly sensitive, and now in *The Highly Sensitive Child*, Aron shifts her focus to highly sensitive children, who share the same characteristics as highly sensitive adults and thus face unique challenges as they grow up.

Rooted in Aron's years of experience as a psychotherapist and her original research on child temperament, *The Highly Sensitive Child* shows how HSCs are born deeply reflective, sensitive to the subtle, and easily overwhelmed. These qualities can make for smart, conscientious, creative children, but with the wrong parenting or schooling, they can become unusually shy or

timid, or begin acting out. Few parents and teachers understand where this behavior comes from—and as a result, HSCs are often mislabeled as overly inhibited, fearful, or “fussy,” or classified as “problem children” (and in some cases, misdiagnosed with disorders such as Attention Deficit Disorder). But raised with proper understanding and care, HSCs are no more prone to these problems than nonsensitive children and can grow up to be happy, healthy, well-adjusted adults.

In this pioneering work, parents will find helpful self-tests and case studies to help them understand their HSC, along with thorough advice on:

- The challenges of raising an highly sensitive child
- The four keys to successfully parenting an HSC
- How to soothe highly sensitive infants
- Helping sensitive children survive in a not-so-sensitive world
- Making school and friendships enjoyable

With chapters addressing the needs of specific age groups, from newborns through teens, *The Highly Sensitive Child* delivers warmhearted, timely information for parents, teachers, and the sensitive children in their lives.

***Holt, John, Learning All the Time**

If John Holt had his way, today's primers would be replaced with the large-print edition of *The New York Times*, cursive handwriting would fade into disuse, and talking “cutesy-wootsy” to children would be considered a criminal act. This highly opinionated former teacher and original thinker spent the last half of his life challenging widely accepted classroom practices. The author of 10 books that concentrate on early child development and education, Holt is widely considered the father of the modern-day homeschooling movement because he grew to believe that schools stifle the learning process. In this, his final book--compiled by colleagues from drafts, letters, and magazine essays written by Holt before he died in 1985--he strings together his own observations and philosophies to show how young children can be encouraged to learn everything from reading and math to music and science.

Holt's thoughts carry the power of common sense. One of his pet peeves: the silly, nonsensical rules of phonics drilled into schoolchildren today. One of those adages, found on the walls of many an elementary school classroom, goes, “When two vowels go out walking, the first one does the talking.” Holt points out that two pairs of vowels in the sentence violate the rule. This is not only confusing to some children, but simply “dumb,” he complains. He dismisses picture books and primers, with their small, simple

vocabularies. In their place, Holt urges parents to expose children to the Yellow Pages, warranties, letters, ticket stubs, and newspapers--the print trappings that adults rely upon for everyday life. Holt's call for context amid learning is delivered in a sensible, delightful writing style. He even includes several graphics and number games that can easily be used at home. Anyone who comes in contact with a small child would benefit from--and enjoy--reading these last words from a man who clearly adored and remained mesmerized by children and their inquisitive minds. --*Jodi Mailander Farrell*

***Holt, John, Escape From Childhood: The Needs and Rights of Children**

The case for treating children like real people, not pets and slaves, and for making available to them all the adult rights and responsibilities as outlined in the US Bill of Rights. This book will challenge not only your ideas about what constitutes "childhood" in today's society, but your ideas about society as a whole.

***Kabat-Zin Jon and Myla, Everyday Blessings: The inner working of the Mindful Parent**

In the rush, rush, rush of too-much-to-do-and-no-time-to-do-it, the all-important, nurturing aspects of parenthood can easily disappear. Jon Kabat-Zinn, author of *Wherever You Go, There You Are* and Myla Kabat-Zinn have collaborated on *Everyday Blessings*, a book that approaches parenting from the Zen Buddhist position of moment-to-moment awareness. It's a beautiful presentation and a thoughtful approach to mindful meditation that will help you slow down, enrich your life as a parent, and nourish the internal life of your children.

***Sweet, Win, Living Joyfully with Children**

Parents who are on the spiritual path generally have a very special vision for their children: that the children experience the joy of awakening. When this vision becomes clear, parenting then becomes a quest to facilitate this activity for their children. The time may not yet be right for the actual spiritual awakening, but the joy and the success is in facilitating a smooth way, not in an expectation of the awakening to take place at a particular time.

In order to awaken spiritually, receptivity is required. We cannot will this receptivity into our children or even know its timing or to what extent it is developed. However we can facilitate its development by (1) providing an atmosphere based on spiritual principles in our homes and family life, and (2) striving to keep events from developing that would place barriers in the way of this spiritual receptivity. An atmosphere carefully created with these

two important elements in mind provides a valuable guidance system that leads to experiences in daily living that are beautiful to behold and positively affect every facet of life.

This book represents a compilation of articles written by Win and Bill Sweet for a parenting newsletter. For over twenty years, the Sweets have conducted workshops and other activities for parents that have provided that conducive environment for expanding the child's awareness to his true identity, the articles were written for a general public audience; therefore, the spiritual principles and truths underlying the articles are veiled.

However, principles stated in everyday language may serve as a bridge between the principles underlying them and their application in daily life. These articles and that intangible essence that lies beneath them should be of great assistance in establishing that higher consciousness within every child.

Parents on the spiritual path have a special opportunity to provide treasures that are unknown in the unenlightened world for their children. We can take advantage of these insightful articles in the realization that we are living in a spiritual universe. By resisting the temptation to call certain things spiritual and others worldly, we are reminded of the all inclusiveness of everything occurring in our lives and of everyone entering it. With the assistance of this book, the realization comes that we are operating spiritually as we operate in the human scene with enlightenment.

***Chapman, Ross and Campbell, Ross, The Five Love Languages of Children**

Since 1992, Gary Chapman's best-selling book *The Five Love Languages* has helped more than 300,000 couples develop stronger, more fulfilling relationships by teaching them to speak one another's love language. Now Chapman teams with Ross Campbell, author of best seller *How to Really Love Your Child*, to help parents speak their child's love language.

Each child, like an adult, expresses and receives love best through one of five different communication styles. This truth can work against parents who speak different love languages than their children. However, when properly prepared, moms and dads can use this information to help them meet their children's deepest emotional needs.

***Chapman, Gary, The Five Love Languages of Teenagers**

At no other time in American history have parents, teachers, and mentors been more desperate to find proven ways to reach teens. In response, best-selling author Gary Chapman presents *The Five Love Languages of Teenagers*. It contains practical guidance on how to discover and express the teen's primary love language- the way that he or she will best receive

love. It is tangible resource for stemming the tide of violence, immorality, and despair engulfing many teens today.

***Falcone, Vicki, Buddha Never Raised Kids and Jesus Didn't Drive Carpool**

Buddha never raised kids. Jesus didn't drive carpool. And it's doubtful the Dalai Lama ever changed a dirty diaper at dawn. Yet, these and many other spiritual masters have provided timeless principles to assist parents in the day-to-day challenges of childrearing.

In this from-the-heart book, Vickie Falcone, founder of the Positive Parenting Network, translates the sometimes lofty ideas of the world's great spiritual teachings into seven easy-to-understand principles. While many of these wise spiritual leaders may never have had to worry about achieving peace and centeredness while driving a carload of screaming children through a traffic jam, there is profound wisdom in their teachings that we as parents can apply to the everyday challenges of modern parenting.

In *Buddha Never Raised Kids and Jesus Didn't Drive Carpool: Seven Principles for Parenting With Soul*, Falcone shows parents how to apply the teachings of these enlightened masters to the hectic and sometimes exhausting parenting world. Using her own stories and those of parents and educators she has taught and coached, Vickie illustrates each of the seven principles with several practical methods to help parents of infants to preteens create happy, connected families. Packed with useful exercises, checklists, and resources, Vickie sheds light on:

- The Secrets of Becoming a Peaceful Parent
- Connecting with Your Child and Creating Mutual Respect
- The Seven Deadly Disconnects and Their Six Second Cousins
- The Big Four Negatives: Criticism, Worry, Fear, and Guilt
- Summoning the Power of Silence
- The Recipe for Peace: Embracing What Is

This book will leave you with the tools and self-assurance to be the parent you desire to be. Anyone involved in the life of a child will benefit from this timely and exceedingly practical message set to a spiritual underscore.

Vickie Falcone speaks from experience. As mother of two, she embodies the parenting principles she teaches every day. Vickie founded the Positive Parenting Network in 1993 and is the author of the Twelve Months of Positive Parenting audio subscription series, as well as numerous articles. An in-demand speaker, Falcone has spoken for the International Network for Children and Families (INCAF), among others. Formerly the youngest real estate broker/owner in Aspen, Colorado, Falcone has merged her skills as seeker, mother, and entrepreneur, creating a unique blend of practical inspiration that leads to lasting change.

***Aldort, Naomi, Raising Our Children, Raising Ourselves: Transforming Parent-child Relationships from Reaction And Struggle to Freedom, Power And Joy**

An insightful and eloquent guide for parents who wish to raise their children with unconditional love, and empower them to be self-reliant, expressive, caring and able to form close human connections.

***Kream, Rue, Parenting a Free Child: An Unschoolled Life**

With a loving heart, generous openness, and the absolute conviction born of experience and observation, Rue is offering both practical suggestions and a paradigm stretching point of view to anyone seeking a greater understanding of a daily life of Unschooling with joy. I personally can't think of a single question that is not covered somewhere. The format is easy to read, full of warm anecdotes, challenging ideas, and the core idea that the heart of Unschooling is parenting with absolute Trust. ~Robyn L. Coburn, unschooling mom of Jayn

"It's simple, but not easy." Without even leaving home, your life can change all kinds of ways. Relationships between parents and children can go from rough and antagonistic to peaceful, productive and sweet. It's not easy, changing one's life for the better, but this book shows that it's simple.

~Sandra Dodd, unschooling mom of Kirby, Marty and Holly

I can imagine that some might think that such a life with children is just too good to be true. But I know from my own experience that it is possible! Take her advice to heart! ~Kelly Lovejoy, unschooling mom of Cameron and Duncan

The most useful book published for new unschoolers since The Unschooling Handbook. Rue addresses clearly and persuasively the most common questions and objections in an easily accessible format. The personal experience and conviction brought to each answer shines through along with her deep love and respect for her children. I'd recommend this book to anyone embarking on an unschooling lifestyle or wondering how to counter objections from family or friends. ~Danielle Conger, unschooling mom of Emily, Julia, and Sam

***Liedloff, Jean, The Continuum Concept**

Jean Liedloff, an American writer, spent two and a half years deep in the South American jungle with Stone Age Indians. The experience demolished her Western preconceptions of how we should live and led her to a radically different view of what human nature really is. She offers a new understanding of how we have lost much of our natural well-being and shows us practical ways to regain it for our children and for ourselves.

