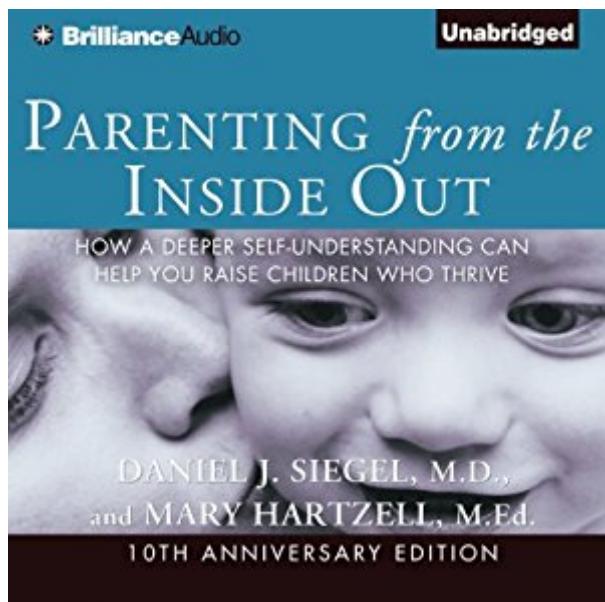


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# Parenting From The Inside Out: How A Deeper Self-Understanding Can Help You Raise Children Who Thrive



## Synopsis

"Dan Siegel and Mary Hartzell have quite deftly managed to translate highly complex neuroscientific and psychological matters into lay strategies for effective parenting." (Marilyn B. Benoit, M.D., former president, American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry). "Parenting from the Inside Out is a must-have for any parent...I gave a friend of mine a copy and she said, 'This audiobook is changing my life. I like my kids again.'" (Gwyneth Paltrow, Goop.com). "Together Siegel and Hartzell delicately peel back the many layers of parenting to reveal the pure nature of the relationship at its core." (Neal Halfon, M.D., MPH, professor of pediatrics, UCLA; director, UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families & Communities, and coeditor, *Child Rearing in America*). In this best-selling classic, child psychiatrist and coauthor of *The Whole Brain Child*, Daniel J. Siegel and early childhood expert Mary Hartzell explore the extent to which our childhood experiences shape the way we parent. Illuminating important research in the field of interpersonal neurobiology, Siegel and Hartzell explain how the parent-child relationship directly affects brain development, and offer parents a step-by-step approach to forming a deeper understanding of their own life stories to help them raise compassionate and resilient children. Drawing on Siegel's cutting-edge research on how communication influences brain development with Hartzell's more than forty years' experience as a child development specialist and parent educator, *Parenting from the Inside Out* guides parents through creating the necessary foundations for loving and secure relationships with their children.

Disclaimer: This audiobook of *Parenting from the Inside Out* includes the new preface written by the authors' for the tenth anniversary edition. However, the audiobook is based upon the first edition of the work published in 2003, not the updated and revised edition of the audiobook.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

While other authors have focused their attention on the brain of the developing child (What's Going on in There by Lise Eliot, Ph.D. and The Scientist in the Crib by Alison Gopnik, PhD, Andrew N. Meltzoff, Ph.D., and Patricia K. Kuhl, Ph.D.), in their book Parenting from the Inside Out: How a Deeper Self-Understanding Can Help you Raise Children Who Thrive, Siegel and Hartzell zero in on what's going on inside the parent's brain -- specifically how new research in the areas of neurobiology and attachment theory can help parents to understand why they parent the way they do and what they can do to use that knowledge to become better parents. The authors stress the importance of making peace with your past so that you can avoid repeating any negative patterns of family interaction with your own kids: "In the absence of reflection, history often repeats itself and parents are vulnerable to passing on to their children unhealthy patterns from the past. Understanding our lives can free us from the otherwise predictable situation in which we recreate the damage to our children that was done to us in our own childhoods....By making sense of our lives we can deepen a capacity for self-understanding and bring coherence to our emotional experience, our views of the world, and our interactions with our children." The book's content is excellent, but it's pretty heavy-going at times. The authors offer the reader a mix of straight narrative, introspective journaling exercises, and lessons in neurobiology. It's all fascinating stuff, but it requires a lot of focus and attention. Definitely not to be attempted with a child in the room!

Being an avid reader, I'm appreciative of good writing for writing itself, which I appreciated reading this book, but for practical purposes, being a new parent, this book was very vague. The basic message during the first 3/4 of the book was, "Treat your own depression and get therapy so you can be a better parent." OK, nothing new there. It was not until the last 1/4 of the book that the author gave a few concrete examples of how to "parent from the inside out." Therefore, this book may be more appropriate for a college psychology course than a practical parenting book. I made a few notes of key paragraphs for me to review as my daughter grows up: "Every day we miss opportunities for making true connections because instead of listening and responding appropriately to our children we respond only from our own point of view and fail to make a connection to their experience. When our children tell us what they think or how they feel, it is important to respect their experience, whether or not it's the same as our own. Parents can listen to and understand their children's experience rather than tell them that what they think and feel isn't valid. The following

examples may help to illustrate these ideas. Imagine that your child is riding his tricycle and falls off. It looks to you more like a surprise than an injury, but he starts crying, to which you respond, 'You're not hurt. You shouldn't cry. You're a big boy.' Your child feels hurt, whether it is his body or his pride, and yet you tell him that his experience isn't a valid one. Now consider how the child might feel if you gave a contingent response: 'It surprised you when you went over that bump and you fell off onto the grass. Are you hurt?' Or let's imagine that your child enthusiastically expresses a desire for a particular toy that she has seen advertised and you respond with, 'Oh, no, you don't really want that--it's just a piece of junk.' Your child just told you that she does want it, which doesn't mean that you have to get it for her, but you can acknowledge her desires. 'That toy really looks like it would be fun to play with. Tell me what you like about it.' If she continues to insist on getting the toy right away, you can say, 'I see that is hard to wait when you like it so much. Maybe you want me to write it down so when it is time to get a present, I'll know what you might like to have.' When parents understand that they can let their children have and express their desires without having to fulfill them, it frees the parent to make a connection to the children's experience without having to deny their feelings. If verbal and nonverbal signals communicate different messages--are not congruent--the overall message will be unclear and confusing. We are getting two different and conflicting messages at once. Suppose a mother is sad and her daughter, picking up the nonverbal signals, asks, 'Mommy, what's wrong? Did I do something to make you sad?' and with a forced smile, her mother replies, 'Oh no, honey, I'm not sad, everything is just fine.' The child will feel confused because of the double message. Her experience is informing her of one thing while the words of her mother are giving a contradictory message. If there is a mismatch between the verbal and the nonverbal, it can be quite disorienting for a child trying to sort out the confusion and the incoherence of the communication. Our children benefit when we express our feelings directly, simply, and in nonthreatening ways. A child wants to know not only what his parents think but also how they feel. It may be useful to recall that the belief that the self is defective is a child's conclusion, arising from noncontingent connections with parents. Realizing that 'I am lovable' is important. I would also recommend going over pages 88, 186-192, 205. For a more practical parenting book, I would recommend, "Easy to Love, Difficult to Discipline." The title of the book is actually not reflective of the fact that the book's purpose is really to encourage parents to understand themselves better in order to "discipline" children lovingly, respectfully, with appropriate boundaries. The book gives concrete examples that parents can use every day.

This parenting book is far more than a "how-to". It examines the importance of the parent child

relationship from the perspective of the child's neurological and social development. It challenges parents to examine their own upbringing and to evaluate how their experiences as a child now influence their functioning as a parent. The premises explained in the book are supported by recent breakthroughs in brain research. As a psychotherapist who works with children and families, this is the book I recommend the most to my clients. At times the writing in the book is somewhat technical in nature, but there are many stories and exercises for parents that are beneficial even if the reader doesn't understand all of the language.

This book is informative, insightful, and a must read for everyone not just parents. It will help you understand what is going on in all your relationships (especially your relationships with your children). Participate with the book: do the exercises at the end of each chapter, and you will grow and mature. I am a Marriage Family Therapist and I have all my clients read the book to enhance their therapy and enable them to progress at a faster pace.

Some readers may find this book "too scientific for a parenting book" but I found it utterly fascinating and ate up every word. The age old "nature vs. nurture" debate is examined and the newer concept of nurture effecting nature emerges with either positive or negative outcomes depending on the experiences of the child and the effects of their developing brain. At times I had to take breaks from reading it to allow for integration of all the information, but the effect was that this book changed my parenting philosophy and approach, because instead of asking "what is going on in those little heads??" Now I know.

This book provides a basis for overcoming your childhood issues and creating a better future for your child and future generations. What could be better than that? I found this book to be one of the best books I've ever read and wish they made everyone read it before having children.

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