



Raising Human Beings: Creating a Collaborative Partnership with Your Child

Ross W. Greene

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Renowned child psychologist and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Lost at School* and *The Explosive Child* explains how to cultivate a better parent-child relationship while also nurturing empathy, honesty, resilience, and independence.

Parents have an important task: figure out who their child is—his or her skills, preferences, beliefs, values, personality traits, goals, and direction—get comfortable with it, and then help them pursue and live a life according to it. Yet parents also want their kids to be independent, but not if they are going to make bad choices. They want to avoid being too overbearing, but not if an apathetic kid is what they have to show for it. They want to have a good relationship with their kids, but not if that means being a pushover. They don't want to scream, but they do want to be heard. Good parenting is about striking the balance between a child's characteristics and a parent's desire to have influence.

Dr. Ross Greene “makes a powerful case for rethinking typical approaches to parenting and disciplining children” (*The Atlantic*). Through his well-known model of solving problems collaboratively, parents can forgo timeout and sticker charts; stop badgering, berating, threatening, and punishing; allow their kids to feel heard and validated; and have influence.

From homework to hygiene, curfews, to screen time, Dr. Greene “arms parents with guidelines that are clear, doable, and sure to empower both parents and their children” (Adele Faber, coauthor of *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen*). *Raising Human Beings* is “inspirational...a game-changer for parents, teachers, and other caregivers. Its advice is reasonable and empathetic, and readers will feel ready to start creating a better relationship with the children in their lives” (*Publishers Weekly*, starred review).

Raising Human Beings: Creating a Collaborative Partnership with Your Child Details

Date : Published August 15th 2017 by Scribner (first published August 9th 2016)

ISBN : 9781476723761

Author : Ross W. Greene

Format : Paperback 304 pages

Genre : Parenting, Nonfiction, Psychology, Audiobook, Childrens, Self Help



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From Reader Review Raising Human Beings: Creating a Collaborative Partnership with Your Child for online ebook

Abby says

*A child's most important task is to figure out who he/she is (skills, beliefs, goals, etc.), then pursue a life congruent with it. A parent's most important job is to help the child with this task by sharing wisdom and experience.

*When there's a mismatch between the expectations placed on a child and the child's ability to meet those expectations, problem behaviors arise.

*Traditional methods of discipline, which focus on behaviors only and are based on power and control, aren't necessarily effective. Collaborative problem-solving is not only effective, but also empowers kids. It fosters empathy and honesty and helps kids practice important real-life skills like articulating their concerns and working together to solve problems.

*Many parents default to an authoritarian style because that's all they know, or because they feel anxious, powerless, and pressured by society to maintain "control."

Collaborative problem-solving steps:

1. Talk to the child to determine his/her concerns about the issue
2. Share your concerns about the issue
3. Work together to develop a realistic and mutually satisfactory solution

Check out the book for more details on the steps and for problem-solving scenarios. I am a parent, but I heard about the author through my work as an educator. His books Lost and Found and Lost at School address the collaborative problem-solving process in schools, so I'll probably check those out as well.

Kendra says

The only parenting book anyone needs to read. Hands down. I was introduced to Greene a couple of years ago. While that book focused on kids with more explosive personalities, this book focuses on all kids and how to use problem solving instead of 'parenting' when interacting with kids (my words). It's the same method in both books, but he takes more time to give examples and demonstrate how the problem solving method is applied to everyday situations. Even if you already have a great relationship with your kid, this will still make a difference and expand on the life skills you're already equipping them with. If you think it's too late for you and your child, that your relationship is what it is - you need this even more. It will take more work, but he shows that it's possible.

Laura says

I liked the style of writing Dr. Greene has. He presents information and the reasons for his suggestions, he gives real-life dialogue and scenarios, and he also includes a sort of FAQ about each chapter's topics. I like that he addresses each concept with this detailed attention to suit many different styles of learning. I found myself drawn to the real-life situations and narratives and admiring how each situation unfolded rather than the question and answer portion (which I found more critical and tiresome).

I didn't agree necessarily with the idea to abandon the pattern of parental authority and decision making. I don't think it makes me a horrible parent or person for not allowing every.dang.thing to be an open discussion and collaborative problem solving experience-- especially not when the safety of my child (or other children) is at stake. There were times when I felt a bit demonized for relying on what Greene refers to as Plan A where as I saw some scenarios of using Plan B as capitulating to an immature human.

I appreciated his respect for children though and their emotions, and I'm intrigued to read his books about schools. I imagine I could glean much from what he has to offer about our approach to education.

I received a galley of this book via NetGalley for review.

Stephen says

The book largely involves describing and working through the possible plans for parenting (text below from Joanna's review)

Plan A: Our common default as parents, directive and punitive, solving problems for our kids. Author argues we need to steer away from Plan A.

Plan B: The collaborative approach using empathy, appreciating how one's actions are affecting others, resolving disagreements in ways that do not cause conflict, taking another's perspective, and being honest.

Plan C: defer unsolved problem until kid is ready developmentally or until kid has tried to solve on her own. Plan C is usually arrived at after talking to your kid.

A lot of the plan B discussion reminded me of another book *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk* by Adele Faber, Elaine Mazlish, Kimberly Ann Coe. If you liked that one and want more examples and discussion regarding using empathy and reflecting this could be good. However if you can only read one the Faber book may be a better choice as I recall it feeling more substantive in its recommendations.

Margo Kelly says

I highly recommend this book. It would make a great gift for parents with children of any age – but the younger the better. It's easier to instill a sound pattern of parenting when the kids are young; although, this book does offer excellent examples of changing parental styles even when the kids are teenagers.

Over the years, I've read quite a few parenting books, and one of the things I've learned is: you do not have to agree with every single bit of advice offered within the pages. Take what works for you and apply it to your situation.

Ross W. Greene, PhD, has taken experiences from his twenty-five years of being a clinical psychologist and organized his advice in a very easy-to-read format. Instead of compiling pages and pages of never-ending advice and examples all in the same font and line spacing, the author (and editor and publisher, I assume) diversified the text. There are paragraphs where straight information is delivered, there are case studies presented in stories, there are Q&A sections, and there are plenty of subtitles to help keep you engaged with the book. While most of the writing is excellent, Greene does like to start sentences with the word "but" and

he loves his creative dialogue tags such as hissed, mumbled, grumbled, and protested. None of which actually took away from the overall content, but it was distracting to me.

While I loved and agreed with much of Greene's advice, I will tell you that I let my babies cry themselves to sleep in their cribs. After reading this book, if I had to do all over again, I would still let my babies cry themselves to sleep. And yet, I am certainly one to advocate parents considering alternatives to figure out what works best for them.

Greene's straight-forward method of "Creating a Collaborative Partnership with Your Child" is one that will foster kinder human beings who are able to problem solve with empathy not only while growing up but also as adults.

Some of my favorite ideas and lines from the book:

"Identity achievement refers to a person who has both undergone the identity exploration process and has also developed a well-defined self-concept and identity. She know who she is, what she believes, and where she's going" (page 24).

"What's best for him is likely to involve more 'listening' than 'lessoning'" (page 35).

"Your child would prefer to be doing well" (page 39).

"But there's another reason solving problems collaboratively is hard: many adults haven't had much practice at it, having been raised by parents who were probably highly skilled at demanding and insisting" (page 81).

"I've worked with three-year-olds who had an easier time participating verbally than some seventeen-year-olds" (page 190).

"We live in the information age, and we are saturated with demands for empathy ... sadly, that fatigue sometimes causes us to respond with less compassion and empathy in our interactions with our children..." (page 240).

Marissa says

There are a million parenting books out there... and I've only read a handful of them, to be honest. And most of the time they sound good while I'm reading them, but as soon as I put the book down it's out of my head. This one is not like that. Greene has put together a book that is so practical it sounds ludicrous, but I know that it will be a parenting technique I use for the rest of my life.

You see, Greene has put together a how-to for parents, knowing that so many parenting books promise to give a gameplan, but never really give the nuts, and bolts of the plan - this time, Greene gives starter scripts. He gives word for word conversation starters to use with kids no matter their ages, and even goes so far as to guess what you will be thinking while you are using these starters.

Plus, at the end of each chapter he addresses tons of reader questions so that there are no questions by the time you reach the end of the book. The only question you will have is why didn't i read this book sooner!

Jessi says

This book has a number of extremely helpful thoughts and strategies for working with your child to work on difficulties they may be having. I love that it focuses on empathizing and collaborating to get the problems solved so that dignity is preserved and both parties are working together. I take issue with one of the main tenets -- "kids do well if they can because doing well is preferable." I think that it is probably true in a lot of cases, and adopting that attitude toward a child can be very helpful in diffusing a lot of issues. However, human nature in children and adults is such that none of us are always coming in with a squeaky clean motive, even if there are various layers of responsibility to each decision made. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." At our core, we are flawed. Also, parents do occasionally have to impose consequences that are worked out unilaterally because boundaries are also extremely important. It makes a lot of sense to use this book's method to tweak some of these boundaries, but simply saying your child should have an EQUAL say with you in everything is very naive and could even be harmful.

Kristine says

Raising Human Beings: Creating a Collaborative Partnership with Your Child by Ross W. Greene is a free NetGalley ebook that I read in early July.

Terrific, but far too short; it's more of a handbook than the resource manual that it should be. Greene's mix of simulated dialogue, anticipated questions, mockup case studies, and easy to follow developmental research essays fit this topic to a tee.

Bam says

#2106-aty-reading challenge--week-19: a non-fiction book.

I thought this was an excellent book on parenting skills--resolving problems with collaboration and teaching empathy and appreciation for another's point of view. Oh, if these skills could only be applied to the world at large, most especially the political arena!

Dr Greene lays out a three-step program for problem-solving in a collaborative partnership with your child, gives several examples, answers questions and gives advice about overcoming hurdles that may arise.

Many thanks to the publisher, author and NetGalley for the opportunity to read and review this excellent book!

Miriam Downey says

Read my full review here: <http://mimi-cyberlibrarian.blogspot.com>

At a family picnic the other day, my granddaughter (age 5) was having a hard time focusing on eating her dinner. There was a lot of food on her plate, and she had touched none of it. My daughter said to her, "I think that you have two options here: one option is to just sit here staring at your plate until the picnic is over. The other option is to come up with a solution with me about how much you need to eat and then eat that amount so that you can go and play." My granddaughter decided that the second option was the best. She said that she was worried that there was too much food on her plate. She and her mother figured out the amount she needed to eat; she ate quickly; and then got up to go play with her cousins. One of her aunts watched the entire exchange and remarked, "Gee, I wish I had known that strategy 10 years ago when I needed it."

In his excellent book, *Raising Human Beings*, Dr. Ross Greene has created a plan to encourage collaborative partnerships between parents and children that can help to resolve the many scenarios that parents and children have to negotiate on the pathway to adulthood. The goal, of course, is for parents to help their children develop skills to become independent without becoming adversarial.

To go back to my granddaughter's food situation. Dr. Greene suggests three sets of options, One option is Plan A, the plan in which the parents are in control. "You are going to sit there until you finish that food." Plan B is the plan my daughter chose. It takes into account the child's problem and together they seek to find a solution. Plan B actively uses three steps (empathy, define adult concerns, and invitation) to establish understanding and work in partnership to come up with solutions that address every party's concerns.

Dr. Greene also offers Plan C in which the parent defers to the child's skills, beliefs, values, preferences, personality traits and goals. An example of this would be another granddaughter's decision not to play soccer anymore and to try out for the cheerleading squad, instead. Still athletic but more social. Her parents deferred to her decision-making skills, even though her father was disappointed because soccer had been an interest that they shared.

Raising Human Beings has a child rearing plan that goes way beyond the "Because I said so!" form of decision making to a much more collaborative and affirming style of parenting. Ultimately the child becomes a far more confident decision maker—ready and able to become independent. The reviewer in Publisher's Weekly concludes: "This book is a game-changer for parents, teachers, and other caregivers of children. Its advice is reasonable and empathetic, and readers will feel ready to start creating a better relationship with the children in their lives."

Joanna says

It's like this book was written for me! At first I thought he was making it sound too easy and kept asking myself "How am I ever going to do this?" In the heat of the moment it's so easy to count to 5 or threaten "no cartoons!" Or "I'll take your legos away" Or beg and plead to get out of the house on time. None of those approaches solves the problem in a way that's mutually satisfactory. The author is clear that collaborative parenting is NOT living in "Pushover Provinces" just because it's not the "Dictatorial Kingdom." It's about communicating with your child, figuring out the cause of a problem from their perspective, allowing them to come up with a solution, and discussing what you think based on your experience and wisdom of being the adult. It's important to try something that meets your values and expectations and is still responsive to who the kid is and wants to be. It takes practice and the first attempt at solving the problem often doesn't work and you have to keep working on it. I liked the emphasis on figuring out the major unsolved problems you see, checking in with your kid, and talking about them at a time when you both are relaxed and focused, not

pressed to leave the house or distracted. How does it work? There are three approaches the author discussed:

Plan A: Our common default as parents, directive and punitive, solving problems for our kids. Author argues we need to steer away from Plan A.

Plan B: The collaborative approach using empathy, appreciating how one's actions are affecting others, resolving disagreements in ways that do not cause conflict, taking another's perspective, and being honest.

Plan C: defer unsolved problem until kid is ready developmentally or until kid has tried to solve on her own. Plan C is usually arrived at after talking to your kid.

I found his discussion about teachers' role to play: Academia still heavily relies on high stakes testing, unattainable expectations and punitive reactions instead of collaborative problem solving. We would do well to all work together with educators.

He also has a chapter on "parental angst" on why we tend to use Plan A: we care a whole lot about our kids and want them to be safe and succeed. That was the chapter that made it seem more doable.

Bottom line: Parent in a way that fosters the better side of our human nature. He states at the end: "The real world needs more human beings." Truth.

Sarah Poling says

This may just be my favorite Ross Greene book! Not only does he give parents the much needed perspective we need on a daily basis to choose wisely how we encourage, motivate, and raise kids we want to live with. He stops and explains how to think about meeting your child's needs, he has LOTS of practical examples and tips on collaboratively working together to develop skills like empathy.. honesty, cooperation, seeing other people's perspective, ... He really is thinking about the world we live in and the important life skills we need to be well suited for life. And he builds on my favorite mantra he has given me: "Kids do well if they can, and that doing well is preferable." Kids who aren't doing well lack skills. and as parents we have the best opportunity to build those skills.

This book is approachable and easy to read, his stories and narratives help any parent grasp that all children need to be heard, loved, and assisted in gaining new skills rather than corrected and chastised for their behaviors. Each chapter has a plan or perspective, narratives that model that plan, and then a review and Q & A to help deeper understanding (and review some hang ups we might have as we hear new ways of thinking).

It's really about how we as adults process and share our expectations with those around us, and help encourage the skills to function together. I used some strategies and thoughts from this book, and explained that I had read about this way of thinking to my 8 year old, and he said- Mom keep reading that book it helped us!

For me a control seeking individual this quote really resonated, "Perhaps most important, I learned that showing that I cared wasn't necessarily best expressed by taking control or overdoing it on an intervention." Then he gave tell tale signs that your anxiety is over the top like: "if you find yourself overcorrecting, overdirecting, overcoaching, and overcriticizing so that things will turn out just so"

It's a wonderful resource, that share examples from different developmental stages (infant, toddler,

kindergartener, ... to college and beyond). It will help you step aside and gain the perspective and strategies you need to parent with a growth mindset and to build skills in your children's lives.

I received an advanced copy of this book and consider it a blessing to read it before I could buy it. It's helped me this summer be a better parent. All ideas are my own.

Chris says

As I ponder what to say about this book, I'm reminded of two quotes I like from another, *Difficult Conversations* by Douglas Stone:

People almost never change without first feeling understood.

The single most important thing [you can do] is to shift [your] internal stance from "I understand" to "Help me understand." Everything else follows from that.

Though stated differently, those ideas lie at the core of the parenting approach Greene describes in this book. Parents can best help their children learn, change, and grow--and deal with difficulties and misbehavior--by starting with listening and empathy, then asking for the same in return. Together, parents and children try to fully understand the problem under discussion and craft a solution that addresses everyone's concerns. It is both a step-by-step, formulaic method to follow in each specific instance and a general framework for helping kids grow into respectful, independent, capable people.

Greene builds the framework over the course of the book, developing each step in turn with numerous examples of putting it into practice in different situations. He explores potential pitfalls and failures, and includes a question-and-answer section in each chapter. It's very approachable and easy to understand (though did not make the most scintillating audiobook listening). It's definitely something I would recommend for every parent, educator, and caregiver.

Really, it's something I would recommend for everyone. Though this is very specifically about parenting, not much extrapolation is needed to think of it as something for managers and supervisors, as the roles and scenarios are very similar. And even without the power-dynamic roles, the approach to communication in general is one everyone would benefit from--after all, one of Greene's implementation examples is between not a parent and child but two parents.

Mrs. Reed says

I received an ARC of this book via NetGalley.

I usually don't read expository nonfiction like this. The title caught my eye, and I thought that reading it might give me some insight into parenting as well as teaching. I was not disappointed, and I'm glad I read this book. I think this will be a book that I will recommend to parents who seriously seek to build better relationships with their kids.

For me, a lot of this book was a welcome affirmation for my style of parenting and teaching. When I first started teaching, I would hear teachers referred to as someone who "runs a tight ship," and I thought that's

what I wanted for myself. I eventually realized that running a tight ship is not the way I want to interact with other humans, and this book helped me see why I felt this way.

One of the "big ideas" of this book is that parents should respond to their children's unique personalities instead of forcing children to conform to adults' ideals. When children don't meet our expectations, it isn't because they don't want to, but because something is standing in their way. Instead of punishing children for not meeting an expectation, we should have a discussion with them to find out what the obstacle is and to allow them to think about possible solutions on their own. Children should feel heard and valued, and we as adults can do this through inviting them into discussions about our concerns. Greene writes, "There's no doubt that certain aspects of The Real World are about power and control. Certain workplaces are run that way, the legal system tends to work that way, certain countries work that way too, and there's no denying that your child is going to need to know how to handle things when life swings in that direction. But you probably don't want to use autocracies or adversarial systems as your models for good parenting" (location 3487).

My favorite parts had to do with how to communicate with very small children, as my children are very small. I loved Greene's treatment of tantrums. Tantrums are so extremely embarrassing and frustrating. He writes, "Regrettably, tantrums have given a bad name--the terrible twos--to this exciting time in a child's development" (location 276). I loved the way Greene helped me reframe my thinking around toddlerhood as an "exciting time in...development" instead of the nightmare it sometimes feels like. "Tantrums," Greene writes, "are simply a signal that there's incompatibility, not a sign that your child is challenging your desire to have influence. Tantrums let you know that your child needs some help sorting things through and that it's time to get the ball rolling on teaching and modeling some important developmental skills such as delay of gratification, expressing concerns in an adaptive manner, taking into account the concerns and needs of other people, frustration tolerance, flexibility, and problem solving. Tantrums are not an indication that your child needs massive doses of Who's the Boss. If you play your cards right, the terrible twos can be a time of tremendous growth, learning, and exploration" (location 283).

The book largely explains a procedure that parents can use when discussing concerns with their children. Greene illustrates his ideas with engaging vignettes that serve as examples for how his technique can work. I found the vignettes to be extremely helpful in understanding a variety of ways that children may not meet expectations and how their parents can help them work through it with the same procedure. It was a little weird that Greene called the authoritarian approach "Plan A" and the collaborative approach "Plan B," because to most people, "Plan B" is a term used when the original plan didn't work out, and that's really not what he's saying at all. I wish that Greene had come up with another term that didn't have a rather opposite meaning already. I also liked, though, the idea of "Plan C," which is putting off a problem for another time!

As I read, I thought about ways that I have followed Greene's procedure in my classroom without even knowing it. Now that I have this book to look back on, I feel that I can strengthen my "collaborative partnerships" with my students in a more purposeful manner. Greene got me completely on his side when he wrote, "Thankfully, many educators recognize middle school as probably the toughest time of kids' development and play a more compassionate, helpful role" (location 2853). Why, yes, thank you, I try!

Emmynotahotmail.Com says

Excellent read and great way of raising your children.

The whole book is centered around one particular (great!) idea, so it does repeat itself several times.

However, the idea is so sound that I didn't really mind that much. It has completely changed my idea of raising the kids and for that I owe mr. Greene 5 stars.
