



JOURNALING TECHNIQUE: GOOD PARENT MESSAGES
From Body, Self and Soul by Jack Rosenberg (available at ibponline.com)

According to Rosenberg, optimally, all of the messages below, both the good mother and good father messages should have been given by both of your parents early in your life. As you read through each message you may notice a distinct body experience that can be identified in a different part of your body. For example, “I love you” feels different from “I want you” or, “You are special to me,” and so on. Allow yourself to experience the feelings. Listen to your body not just to your mind as you read these messages.

GOOD MOTHER MESSAGES (Earliest Childhood Messages)

1. I love you.
2. I want you.
3. You are special to me.
4. I see you and I hear you.
5. It is not what you do but who you are that I love.
6. I love you, and I give you permission to be different from me.
7. I'll take care of you.
8. I'll be there for you; I will be there for you even when you die.
9. You don't have to be alone anymore.
10. You can trust me.
11. You can trust your inner voice.
12. Sometimes I will tell you “no” and that's because I love you.
13. You don't have to be afraid anymore.
14. My love will make you well.
15. I welcome and cherish your love.

GOOD FATHER MESSAGES (“Out in the World” Messages)

1. I can set limits, and I am willing to enforce them.
2. If you fall down I will pick you up.
3. I am proud of you.
4. I have confidence in you, I am sure you will succeed.
5. I give you permission to be the same as I, to be more or less.
6. You are beautiful (handsome).
7. I give you permission to love and enjoy your erotic sexuality with a partner of your choice and not lose me.

Imagine how different your life would be if you already had received these messages and were no longer compelled to seek them from outside of yourself (from romantic partners or spouse, from your parents now that you're an adult, from your boss or coworkers, friends, children or other family members).

According to Rosenberg, there is only a brief period of time or “window” in childhood during which each of these messages can be provided by your parents. (The exact length of time for the open window is unknown, but most psychologists and psychiatrists believe the developmental window for mother messages close before puberty, while the window for father messages closes no later than early teens). When that time passes, the window closes. Even if your own parent belatedly recognizes your need and strives to fill it, it is too late. Your basic needs can no longer be completely satisfied from outside yourself. You may find yourself fruitlessly trying to obtain these messages from your partner, children, coworkers, etc.

INSTRUCTIONS:

To begin the process of “giving” these messages to yourself, memorize the first 15. Write those you can remember into your journal; then read the messages again and fill in the ones you missed. If you do this each day, you will discover that the few you keep forgetting are the ones you probably did not receive. Feel free to add any journaling notes about feelings, memories, etceteras that come up or are significantly related to the ones that you are writing down or the ones you are missing. The more consistent you are at completing this task, the more growth or movement you will begin to feel. Keep in mind that as you are writing these in your journal that you are now saying these messages from yourself to yourself. Continue the Good Mother Messages for at least 30 days before moving into the Good Father Messages.

From Chapter Two, A Psychological Overview; The Four Arenas 2

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