

# 10 Steps to Unconditional Love

*Guest post by Laura Markham.*

We all know that children require unconditional love to thrive. But how many of us feel capable of giving it? We can't, quite simply, give something we don't have inside. Loving your child starts with loving yourself.

So if you didn't have a perfect childhood, if you're more cranky than compassionate, should you just give up on being a good parent? No. Research shows that we can always grow inside, to become more loving to ourselves and others. In fact, the fastest path to stretching our hearts is parenting, because our love for our child motivates us to grow. (You sacrifice and work harder for your child than for your own well-being, right?)

It takes work, but the good news is that as our hearts get bigger, we're not just better parents. We're happier people. Healing your ability to love takes daily attention and commitment, but it's quite do-able. Think of it like playing the piano. In the beginning, a scale is an effort. But in a year, you can play a sonata. Here's how.

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