



On Busy-ness

One of the cultural messages that seems to be in the ether for this generation of families is that children need to be kept busy, that if they are not busy they will get into mischief or fall into boredom, and it is our parental responsibility to ensure their busy-ness. Within the SelfDesign model we approach this area from quite a different direction.



In SelfDesign, we feel that it is most natural for our child to want to be with us, first and foremost, and especially during the formative years. If she doesn't want that, it's worth examining whether we are generally too busy for her to access us, and perhaps she has given up - or perhaps we've lost the glow of seeming to be the most engaging act around! In truth, if we are energetically available to her, she might not necessarily choose to be engaged in all the external activities we think are necessary to help her thrive. Soccer, piano, theater, and swimming are all terrific things, yet she might be desiring much more to have at least some days with us as we cook or shop, run errands or curl up and read. If she is in proximity to us, rather than always away from us, and if she can count on our emotional (as opposed to continuously physical) presence, she can learn within her own environment how to move independently, doing what she is passionate about and checking in with us as she needs to.

True Needs

When we have a deep understanding of our own personal needs and values, it becomes second nature to know which things we can let go of in our parent/child dance. An issue of contention like 'no snacks before dinner' can become a quick internal inventory about the kind of nutritional nurturing (a genuine parental need) we've provided for our child that day, and there can be an ease in supporting the snack once the inventory has uncovered that our child is justifiably hungry.



We can begin to look at the various situations we encounter with our child each day as individual assessments, as opposed to applying a general rule to them. If we hold that one of our root needs is to have powerful connection with our child, the insignificant and tiny 'battles' in which we can engage suddenly become moot points. We can look past them and move to the arena where things really, truly matter. Creative parenting is often about backing up and letting go, and as long as we are clear about the things that matter, we gain much more than we lose by following this path. Trusting that our child may really know what she needs, versus simply wants, in the moment, opens up conversation that is collaborative and very respectful at base.