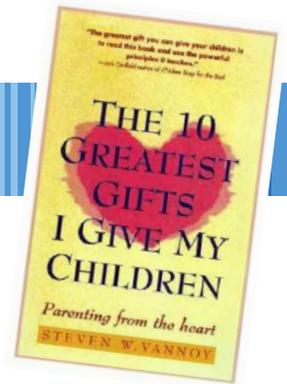


## EXPANDED STUDY GUIDE

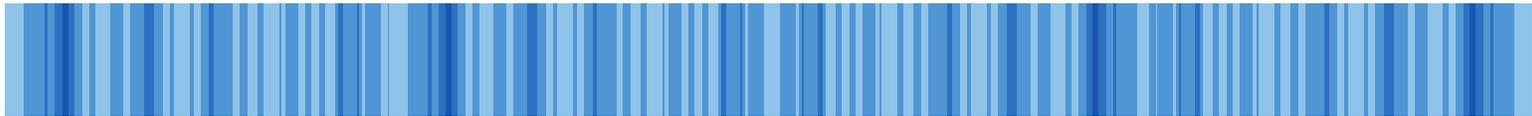
### *The 10 Greatest Gifts I Give My Children*



People around the world have gathered with others to explore the concepts and tools in *The 10 Greatest Gifts I Give My Children* to move their vision of thriving children in a growing, productive society forward. We are honored you have chosen to join us.

Most of the following is written in the context of children and family, however, most questions can easily be substituted with your organization or community.

*This free study guide, and others, are available to download from [verusglobal.com](http://verusglobal.com).*



# CONTENTS

Introduction by the author .....	3
<b>Group Launch and Meeting 1</b>	
Getting Started .....	4
Group Coordinator.....	4
The Goal.....	4
Tips for a Book Study Group .....	5
Meeting 1 - Introduction and Group Launch .....	6
<b>The Tools: Meetings 2 – 6</b>	
Meeting 2 - Tool 1: Forward Focus.....	7
Meeting 3 - Tool 2: Messages .....	8
Meeting 4 - Tool 3: Teach.....	9
Meeting 5 - Tool 4: Listening.....	11
Meeting 6 - Tool 5: Modeling & Parenting from the Heart.....	12
<b>The Gifts: Meetings 7 – 9</b>	
Feeling Fully, Self-Esteem & Compassion .....	14
Balance, Humor & Communication .....	16
Abundance, Integrity and Responsibility, & Conscious Choice .....	18

## Introduction by the author, Steven W. Vannoy

We all have wonderful dreams for our families when we first see our children, whether they are born to us, chosen for adoption, or blended in through new relationships. But all too often the real world starts to get in the way as jobs, bills, schedules, to-do lists, fears, and broken promises obliterate our vision of those dreams.

This book and study guide provide a way to rediscover and realize those dreams again – but with a much different twist. If we simply do more of the same old things in the same old ways we just get more of the same old stuff, including lost or broken hopes and dreams.

This book and study guide are not about creating Band-Aids for old problems. Instead, they focus on the ways you can immediately begin to achieve your vision for your family or school or neighborhood – for today, tomorrow, and the next century.

## Group Launch and Meeting 1

### GETTING STARTED

As the organizer of the group, you will need to make a copy of this guide for each member, or have them download and print a copy from the website.

You can use this book and study guide with any group of people wanting to move forward in a new way including your book club or church study groups. If you purchase multiple copies of the book from us, you will receive a discount. Call us at +1.303.577.0075 or email [info@verusglobal.com](mailto:info@verusglobal.com) for more information.

### GROUP COORDINATOR

This study guide is designed to have a Group Coordinator for each session. The Coordinator would arrange and confirm location, attendance, refreshments, and lead the discussion group. In addition, the Coordinator facilitates conversation, recognizing each speaker, and ensuring the discussion stays on the subject for that session. Their goal is to honor the person talking, and support efforts at home as well as sharing with the group.

We find the groups that work best use Forward Focus Questions (see Chapter 1) to avoid a teaching or telling style (which can shut down sharing). By creating a supportive, warm, trusting environment, people become more excited about the potential and success of their family. Everyone is encouraged to share their experiences, ideas and stories. The Coordinator and the group are on the same team, sharing in the opportunity to help one another, each family and the community.

### THE GOAL

As each participant begins to share ideas and stories with other parents, an amazing phenomenon happens: each person gains a sense of authority over the ideas presented, making the ideas his or her own. This improves family life and positively affects everyone's personal growth in career and interpersonal relationships. Placing blame or feeling powerless is quickly replaced by taking responsibility for enhancing self, home and community and ultimately leads to the realization that each person can make a vital difference.

## Tips for a Book Study Group

Below are tips from previous groups to make your group most satisfying and enriching.

- A group of three to eight people works well to share a variety of differing perspectives and to allow everyone time to share.
- Groups meet anywhere from once a week to once every 2-3 months. Meetings typically last from one hour up to three hours.
- Begin each meeting with a meeting opener to support the focus of the group on the topic for the meeting. Examples are below or choose an opener from the questions for the meeting. End each meeting with a meeting closer – examples below.

### Sample Meeting Openers:

- > How have you used this tool or given this gift in the past? In the last week?
- > What is the cost of doing it the old way? What is the benefit of doing it the new way?
- > What are the gifts (qualities and values) you are giving your family in using this tool/ sharing this gift?
- > What did you find most interesting from the reading this week?

### Sample Meeting Closers:

- > What insight was most valuable for you this week?
- > What are you committed to doing this week to build the vision of your family?
- Especially during the first few meetings, have group members write their thoughts to almost every question before sharing it with the group. This supports each person to become more fully engaged in the group by actively thinking about each question that is asked. Your group discussion will be richer as a result.
- Allow everyone to share their thoughts to each question.
- For each meeting, there are a lot of great questions and often too many discuss in even a three-hour meeting! The questions are numbered to make following along easier. Choose 3-8 questions that are most interesting to you and to the group to explore. Individual group members may choose to explore the other questions on their own or you may wish to discuss them at a future meeting.
- Consider drawing the Energy Circle (from page 43) on a piece of paper and post it on the wall during your meeting so group members can use it for reference.

## Meeting 1: Introductions and Group Launch

**Operating Guidelines.** Ask your group members their ideas for group guidelines for your meetings and come to agreement for what you will all follow. The group leader at each meeting will ask the study guide questions and recognize each member who wishes to speak. To keep everyone participating, the group leader should:

- ALWAYS USE FORWARD FOCUS QUESTIONS (see Chapter 1) to focus the group on solutions rather than dwelling on the problem.
- GIVE EACH SPEAKER YOUR UNDIVIDED ATTENTION AND LISTEN to what he/she has to say. If necessary, use a time limit to give everyone a chance to speak.
- REALIZE THAT THIS IS NOT A DEBATE about what's right or wrong. This is a sharing of ideas, questions, and success stories among participants.

**Preparation.** Consider asking the group members to read the following pages before the first session:

- No Band-Aids, Please (page 15)
- King Dad, Queen Mom (page 17)
- Five Powerful Parenting Tools (page 27)

These chapters provide an introduction to the book and give a flavor of what you will be discussing in the coming weeks. (There are no questions provided in the study guide for these chapters.)

Ask the following questions and have everyone share to begin to shape your group experience focusing on the front side of the Energy Map (see page 43).

- Share the names and ages of your children, and something you value most about your family.
- What is your objective in joining the group?
- How do you expect this to benefit your family (community/organization)?
- Think back to the first time you met your kids. What were your dreams for them?
- What qualities and values did you want them to grow up with? What are your dreams for them now?
- What is the value of giving these gifts to your family?

Review the suggested study guide and modify as needed. Decide how often you will meet and how you will choose the questions to discuss.

End the session with a meeting closer - a question that everyone responds to - something like: What kind of parent (community or organization member) are you committed to being this coming week? What difference will it make?

## SAMPLE MEETING OPENERS:

- How have you used this tool in the past? In the last week?
- What is the cost of doing it the old way? What is the benefit of doing it the new way?
- What are the gifts (qualities and values) you are giving your family in using this tool?

## Meeting 2: Forward Focus

“We only have a certain amount of energy, time, and potential to use each day. Of the 100 percent we have, only we can choose where to focus it. And while at times it may look as if we’re moving forward, most of us are really aiming backward – back at all our accumulated problems, what didn’t work, what went wrong, who else’s fault it was, why we can’t get where we want to go. Meanwhile, the families that are really going forward look forward, with only a brief glance back now and then to gain perspective and remember what worked before so they can do more of it.” (page 39)

1. What is an example of when you were on the back side of the Energy Circle and the cost of that to your family in the last month?
2. What is an example in your life of the mind factor that states you can only focus on one thing at a time? What is the cost if we focus on more than one thing at a time? What is the benefit if we only focus on one thing at a time?
3. Since we now know we go towards our focus, the focus we hold for our child (or significant other) is essential. What focus do you want to hold for your children? What is the evidence you are holding that focus? What are 2-3 behaviors that represent that focus?
4. We can’t avoid a don’t. In your words, what does that really mean? Why might that be true? What might be the value of saying what we want them to do, rather than what we don’t want them to do? What might be the impact if we focus on what we want and only say no occasionally?
5. How do you think we would interact with each other better if we were to remain forward focused?
6. What are examples of ‘don’ts’ you might use? What behavior do you want instead? How can you change your focus to be forward focused? What would be the value of that?
7. Please give an example you’ve seen that we goes towards our focus? How would you like to utilize this insight with your family? What difference will it make?
8. Please give an example of a situation in the past where your family has focused on what’s not working. How might that hurt your family over time? Now, share an example of where your family has focused on what is working. What might be the impact of that over time?
9. At some point, we have all focused on behavior we didn’t like in our family. What is the cost of this focus over time and how it would hurt your family? Now share an example of when you focused on behavior you like in your family. How will this focus help your family?
10. Describe a situation where something bad happened to you, and you made a choice to respond and learn from it and to turn it into a positive. What did you learn from this experience that you still use?
11. Turn to page 46 and read the middle quote out loud. Write down a few thoughts about what resonates with you about this quote. If the quote is true, how can you leverage this thought to serve your family?
12. How often do you ask, “What happened at school (or work) today?” and hear nothing? What difference would it make to ask Forward Focus Questions?
13. Turn to page 60 and read the top quote out loud. What does this quote mean to you? How can you leverage more of this in your family?
14. Turn to page 60 and read the second quote aloud. Why might this be true? What creates this dynamic? What are examples in your family that are the opposite – where you are perpetuating great behavior?

## SAMPLE MEETING CLOSERS:

- What insight was most valuable for you this week?
- What are you committed to doing this week to build the vision of your family?

## SAMPLE MEETING OPENERS:

- How have you used this tool in the past? In the last week?
- What is the cost of doing it the old way? What is the benefit of doing it the new way?
- What are the gifts (qualities and values) you are giving your family in using this tool?

## Meeting 3: Messages

“There are really only two kinds of messages we can give our children – hurtful ones that belittle or diminish them, or love messages that reinforce their goodness, their talents, and their possibilities.” (page 69)

1. With your family interactions, what is important to you and why? How can you communicate that to your family?
2. Have you ever been given a compliment that made you feel really good about yourself? Why do you think that is so? Did it make you do more of what you were complimented on?
3. We know some compliments can backfire and others are effective. In your opinion, what makes a compliment really effective? What makes a compliment backfire?
4. Why might it be powerful to ask someone to teach you how to do something they are good at? How might that make them feel?
5. What would your family be like if you focus on the greatest things that happen to you each day?
6. Turn to page 70 and read the top quote aloud. If you’re like most people, you’ve grown up and heard hurtful messages, albeit with the best of intentions. What are some hurtful messages? Consider that some might be very subtle. What are the costs of these messages? What are loving or helpful messages? Again, these might be subtle. What might be the value of loving or helpful messages?
7. Do you know of a time when you sensed your response, positive or negative, and you choose a high road approach? What is the value of pausing for a moment so you can take the high road rather than the low road? What are the short-term implications of the high road vs. low road? What are the long-term implications of the high road vs. low road? If we take a low road, what are the short-term and long-term costs?
8. Turn to page 83 and read the story of the three letters from Teddy. This story almost always makes people cry. What is it about this story that moves people so deeply? How does this story possibly relate to your life and your family?
9. How do the messages you send people translate into the way people behave or feel?
10. What have learned from this chapter that you will never go back on? It is never too late! You can’t go back and change messages in the past. Is there is a message you will commit to going forward?

## SAMPLE MEETING CLOSERS:

- What insight was most valuable for you this week?
- What are you committed to doing this week to build the vision of your family?

## SAMPLE MEETING OPENERS:

- How have you used this tool in the past? In the last week?
- What is the cost of doing it the old way? What is the benefit of doing it the new way?
- What are the gifts (qualities and values) you are giving your family in using this tool?

## Meeting 4: Teach

“Leaders, whether in business or at home, find people are willing to do ten times more than we could ever tell them to do when they are motivated and empowered to work from their own ideas and their own internal commitment. Our kids will flourish beyond our wildest expectations when we provide the leadership to develop their own commitment to be the best they can be – when in fact we “teach our children well.” (page 103)

1. What questions are you asking most often? Where is your focus? What focus do you want to have?
2. Why is it important to ask your children (or significant other) about their objectives? Asking them what they want to achieve?
3. Why do you think people respond more positively when asked questions than being told what to do?
4. What do questions achieve?
5. How do you build ownership of the result by asking questions? How do questions create ownership?
6. Have you ever seen a family use questions to manipulate someone? How can questions be misused? What’s an example? What is the cost?
7. Why is it important to listen to the answer?
8. How could the following questions cause damage?
  - Why didn’t you do it this way?
  - What were you thinking?
  - What would be the value of doing it this way?
  - Why do you think I’m asking you to do this chore?
9. Why does asking your child (or significant other) about a project and how they got it done so well have more impact on your child’s self esteem than writing a beautiful note? What outcomes does asking a question accomplish that an acknowledgement does not?
10. What are examples of times when it is not appropriate to ask questions? When is it appropriate to ask questions? When is it important to share a message rather than asking questions?
11. How can asking questions be a stronger way to lead than telling?
12. If a child hasn’t been asked authentic questions before, they may be leery or afraid of questions at first. Why?
  - What are some questions you can ask your family if this is the case?
  - What is important in your come-from (your intention for asking the questions)?
  - What must be in place before you start asking these kinds of questions?
  - What are some of things you can do before the questions, or along with the questions, to make the questions more productive and safe – where they trust you really want to know their answer?
  - What must be true when you ask these questions?
  - What are some things you could stop doing when asking questions so the child trusts you?
13. One parent shared the book with her daughter and then she shared that she was going to be asking questions, like those in the book, because she wanted to learn more about her. Why is it valuable to sometimes explain that you are going to ask more questions? What might that achieve?
14. Why is it valuable to model teaching by using questions with your significant other?

15. Why is it valuable to show your children that you don't know all the answers? What does this achieve? How important is it that you believe you don't have all the answers? Why?
16. Versus the old approach of telling, how does asking the appropriate questions equip and prepare children for the future?
17. Review the questions on page 104-106 and the sample questions below. What do these questions have in common?

#### Sample Questions

- What are you excited about for this coming week?
  - What was the most interesting thing that happened at school/work today?
  - What is the most exciting project you are working on?
  - What are you going to do tomorrow to \_\_\_\_\_? (e.g. make your teacher happy, help your sister, make your grandma feel good)
  - What do you want to learn this week, next week, this month?
  - What is the value of using these types of questions?
  - How do Forward Focus Questions help?
  - What is the value of asking questions that can't be answered with a simple yes or no?
  - Which of these questions might you use with your children? Significant other? Family? What does this do to your child when you ask this question? How does this serve your child?
  - How will this be more effective than the approach you are using now?
18. One parent said that she felt that if she kept telling her kids what to do, it would be at a great cost to their lives and it could even cost them their lives. Why do you think she said that? From page 103, what is the difference between meaningful and meaningless discipline?
  19. What is the value of modeling and asking these types of questions to your parents and to their generation? What difference will that make to your children?
  20. In addition to the questions below, what are some of the questions you can use that will help your significant other grow, bring more happiness to their lives, build emotional intelligence, build self-esteem?

#### Sample Questions

- What did you learn from that experience?
  - What will you do differently next time and what difference will it make?
  - What are you most proud of with that project? With our family? With our children?
  - What kind of relationship do you want to create with this family member? Why is that important to you?
  - What strengths do you bring to our family? What difference do you think that makes for us?
21. Read the story about the tree house on page 93. What about this story makes sense to you?
  22. How can you use these tools and be firm and strong at the same time?
  23. What have you learned from this chapter that you will never go back on?

#### SAMPLE MEETING CLOSERS:

- What insight was most valuable for you this week?
- What are you committed to doing this week to build the vision of your family?

## SAMPLE MEETING OPENERS:

- How have you used this tool in the past? In the last week?
- What is the cost of doing it the old way? What is the benefit of doing it the new way?
- What are the gifts (qualities and values) you are giving your family in using this tool?

## Meeting 5: Listen

“We could put up ten-foot banners around the house reminding our children how much we love them or how special they are, and yet these will have far less impact than a simple act of truly listening.” (page 109)

1. Why does true listening impact people so much?
2. What are some of the physical things you can do to show you are really listening? What do you need to stop doing to show you are really listening?
3. How can it be destructive to fain listening?
4. We all know the advantages to the speaker when someone listens, what is the advantage to the listener? What difference does it make?
5. What are some tools or tricks you can use to focus on being in the moment?
6. Share an example where you did not feel you were listened to. What was the cost? Share an example where you feel you were truly listened to. What difference did this make?
7. With your significant other, do you feel like you could listen deeper? What are 2-3 places you could listen deeper to your significant other? What will be the impact of that?
8. What can you do to show the other person that you actually listen to what they say?
9. How can listening to their full response and asking questions keep you from fixing the situation or trying to fix them?
10. One parent shared that when your children are talking to you, it is easy to jump to fix-it mode and to give answers to what they are talking about. It takes discipline to listen and let them come up with a solution. When she did jump in to fix-it, the cost to the child now and in the future was huge. What is the cost? How does this handicap our children?
11. Turn to page 109 and read the story about Megan and Cathy. What is it about this story that really resonates with you? Why did listening have such an impact on Megan’s mom?
12. Mostly we should drop everything and listen when our children want to talk with us. On those rare occasions when you can’t stop and listen, how can you effectively communicate with your child to wait to have the conversation to when you can have a quality interaction?
13. How do you listen to more than one person at a time, such as two children at the same time?
14. On page 112, listening is described as: “Even if you maintain steady eye contact with someone, you’re still not really listening until you actually hear what they’re saying. That means listening until the person is finished, paying attention to nonverbal clues, and not planning your response until the other person is finished talking.” Based on this description, on a 1-10 scale, with 10 being high, what rating would you give yourself overall? What rating would each of your family members give you? What are 1-2 ways you can focus on becoming an even stronger listener? What difference will it make?
15. How would you like to utilize your insights with your family?

## SAMPLE MEETING CLOSERS:

- What insight was most valuable for you this week?
- What are you committed to doing this week to build the vision of your family?

## SAMPLE MEETING OPENERS:

- How have you used this tool in the past? In the last week?
- What is the cost of doing it the old way? What is the benefit of doing it the new way?
- What are the gifts (qualities and values) you are giving your family in using this tool?

## Meeting 6: Model (page 120) & Parenting from the Heart (page 135)

“Our children absorb behaviors and attitudes and language every waking minute of their lives. And even though they may spend time in daycare or with babysitters, you, the parent, are still the most important person in their lives. The number-one way children learn is to mimic, and who better to mimic than their most important person?” (page 121)

1. What blueprint are you creating for your child for their life?
2. Parents are models in many things, including the areas listed below.
  - How to have a relationship
  - Create a household
  - How to talk
  - How to listen
  - How to resolve conflict
  - How to raise kids
  - How to treat a friend – or someone who’s not a friend
3. From the list above, what areas are you being the kind of model you want to be for your child? What is your evidence? In other words, what does your child do or say that tells you they are modeling your healthy and positive behaviors?
4. From the list above, what areas would you like to be a stronger model for your child? What are your specific ideas for how to do this? What difference will it make for your child?
5. What patterns of behavior are you passing on that you learned from your family? Which of these build your child and help him/her become more self-reliant? What behaviors would you like to change? What behavior would you like to model instead? What will be the value of these new behaviors?
6. What vision (or “jug” or mold) will you create for your child and your family now?
7. What kind of parent do you want to be? How are you already being this parent? What difference is it making? How can you be even more of the parent you want to be?
8. From page 137, “You know, I knew the old way was not working, but I had no idea the old way was actually killing her potential.” Many of us probably share this sentiment. How can our commitment to making a change, and living through our mistakes, be a model for our children? What do they learn when they see us willing to learn, grow and change, even through setbacks?
9. When your children (or significant other) are with you and you are talking about them to others, what messages are you sending them? What messages would you like to send them? What are you modeling for them? What vision are you creating for them?
10. In today’s world, our children are influenced by many things (e.g. media, other children, school, other outside influences). How can we use these tools so our children are able to respond positively to tough situations?

11. When you interact with your family, do you do so in a way that conveys the message that they are the most important thing to you? How do you make sure your family doesn't get your leftovers?
12. From page 123, "The most perfect mirrors in the world are not finely slivered pieces of glass – they are our children. When you look at them, you are looking at yourself." What do you see when you look at your children?
13. How is it valuable for your children (or your significant other) to see you demonstrating you feel good about yourself? What difference will this make?
14. What are your children (or significant other) learning from you from how you respond to your mistakes?
15. What does parenting from the heart mean to you?
16. Even if you don't get the immediate desired outcomes from these tools, what will the long-term benefits be to your children, your significant other, and your family?
17. What has been the greatest revelation or idea you have gotten from reading the book? Where are you applying it? (Share a brief story if possible.)
18. What do all 5 tools have in common?

#### SAMPLE MEETING CLOSERS:

- What insight was most valuable for you this week?
- What are you committed to doing this week to build the vision of your family?

## SAMPLE MEETING OPENERS:

- In your words, how would you describe each of these gifts?
- What are some ways that you are already giving these gifts to your family?
- What is the value of these gifts to your life now...and when your children grow up?

**The Gifts: Meetings 7-9**

"I want them to know that the journey of life includes both pain and joy, work and play. Each one teaches you about the other. They all keep a life healthy and productive." (page 184)

**Meeting 7: The Gifts of Feeling Fully, Self-Esteem & Compassion**The Gift of Feeling Fully (page 145)

"Feeling fully is essential to growing and learning, to health, to living. Otherwise we're on automatic pilot, operating out of old patterns and belief systems. We are not fully experiencing life." (page 145)

1. What does feeling fully mean to you?
2. What is the value of feeling fully?
3. How do you model feeling fully for your children, to your significant other?
4. How do you support your children (or your significant other) in feeling fully?
5. What is the cost to our children if we are uncomfortable with feeling fully ourselves? What is the cost if we try to stop our children from feeling fully?
6. On page 149, Steve refers to taking a pregnant pause before responding. What difference could this pause make in your life? What can happen during that pregnant pause?
7. From page 153, "Feeling lets us know ourselves." What does this statement mean to you? What is your evidence that it is true? How do feelings help our children know themselves?
8. How can you use the five parenting tools to help your children feel fully?

The Gift of Self-Esteem (page 162)

"When you have high self-esteem you are nearly invincible. No matter what happens, you still know that you are a good and capable person, that you can do what you need to do again and even better. You have a rich supply of inner strength. You approach every moment, every event, every interaction with an attitude of openness instead of fear, giving instead of taking, acknowledging your strengths rather than your weaknesses. You see abundance and opportunity instead of shortage and trouble." -(page 164)

1. What difference does self-esteem make in our lives? What difference will it make in our children's lives?
2. What evidence do we have that our children (or significant other) have high self-esteem?
3. What messages are you giving your child that are building their self esteem? What messages could be hurting their self esteem? What messages do you want to give instead?
4. How can you use the five parenting tools to build your child's self esteem?
5. What are three of your child's strengths? How are you already focusing on these strengths? What difference will your focus make for your child?
6. If you focus on your child's weaknesses as opposed to their strengths, what impact will that have short-term and long-term?

7. Re-read the excerpt from page 164 about self-esteem above. Are you helping your child develop this kind of self esteem? If so, in what ways?
8. How do you nurture your own self esteem and your own internal sense of 'feel good' (page 167)?

The Gift of Compassion (page 172)

"...being compassionate means coming from a special place in your heart and mind, appreciating and valuing everything and everyone's place in the grand scheme of life. I know that's difficult some days, so be compassionate with yourself, too, and acknowledge yourself for doing as well as you are." (page 173)

1. What does being compassionate mean to you? What difference does it make?
2. How do you model compassion for your children (or significant other)?
3. How will the gift of compassion support your child in being self-reliant?
4. What are everyday ways you can model compassion?
5. How does the gift of compassion contribute to building self-esteem?
6. Why is it important for your children to have compassion for others?
7. How can you use the five parenting tools to help your children be compassionate?

SAMPLE MEETING CLOSERS:

- How can you give these gifts and be firm and strong at the same time?
- How does each of the five parenting tools work to nurture these gifts?
- In small groups, create and present to the full group plans to nurture more of these gifts using all five tools.

## Meeting 8: The Gifts of Balance, Humor & Communication

### The Gift of Balance (page 181)

"I want to set a model of balance – emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual balance. I want them to know that the journey of life includes both pain and joy, work and play. Each one teaches you about the other. They all keep a life healthy and productive." (page 183)

#### SAMPLE MEETING OPENERS:

- In your words, how would you describe each of these gifts?
  - What are some ways that you are already giving these gifts to your family?
  - What is the value of these gifts to your life now...and when your children grow up?
1. What does balance mean to you? What difference does it make?
  2. What does balance look like for your child (or significant other)? What does balance feel like for your child (or significant other)? How does it affect your child (or significant other) when he/she feels out of balance?
  3. How do you contribute to the balance in your child's life? In your significant other's life? In your family's life?
  4. What are the signals (i.e. what tells you) that you are out of balance? What are the signals that your child is out of balance? Is in balance? What are the signals that your significant other is out of balance? Is in balance?
  5. What does being out of balance cost you in the long-term? Your children? Your significant other?
  6. What does savoring the moment mean to you? Why is this a gift to your child (or significant other)? How do you give this gift to your child (or significant other)?
  7. What does thinking for one's self have to do with being in balance? What does perspective have to do with being in balance?
  8. If your child (or significant other) were to assess your priorities just from your actions, what would they see at the top of your list? What is the message to your child?
  9. How does the gift of listening help you give the gift of balance?
  10. What questions can you ask to help you and your family explore what balance looks like for all of you? How you can create more balance in your family?
  11. How can you use the five parenting tools to help your children with balance? To help your significant other with balance?

### The Gift of Humor (page 193)

"Ah, the gift of humor. Not teasing, not taunting someone because they're different or less powerful, but a genuine expression of joy at the pleasures and ironies and foibles of life." (page 193)

1. What is the value of humor to your life? Your children's lives? Your significant other? Your family?
2. How do you define humor? How is humor much more than learning to tell a good joke?
3. What must be part of humor for it to be a short-term gift? A long-term gift?

4. What is the relationship between humor and trust? What is the relationship between humor and balance? Humor and compassion?
5. How do you model a healthy sense of humor to your family? What difference does it make?
6. How do you model humor in a way that could be harmful or hurtful? What message could you share to begin to change to a healthier modeling of humor for your family? What questions can you ask your family to gain their support and alignment regarding positive humor?
7. Many aspects of humor are learned from our families. How can you use the five parenting tools to create a new focus for your immediate family? For your extended family? What difference will it make to your children's children?
8. How can you use the five parenting tools to help you develop more humor in your family?

### The Gift of Communication (page 201)

"With the gift of communication they can express their own ideas as well as hear different ideas from others. They can express feelings as easily as facts. Their sphere of influence in the world has almost no limits. And in the practical world, it is probably the most essential business skill they will ever learn. It is a gift of enormous potential." (page 202)

1. How do you define communication?
2. What are the signals that your child (or significant other) does not feel heard?
3. How does communication help us learn to think? What a specific example of this in your life?
4. How can you use the five parenting tools to help develop the ability to communicate? How can using these tools help you become a better communicator?
5. From page 207, "The intent and the 'want to' are equally as important as the skill." What is your intent with your children (or significant other) during your interactions? What difference does it make when your intention is to build the relationship with your child (or significant other)?
6. Think of a common situation with your child (or significant other) in which you find yourself pretending to listen or tuning out. What is the cost of pretend listening in that situation? What intention or state of mind can you begin to have during those situations that will support you in wanting to listen?
7. What strategies do you use to create responsibility, commitment, and accountability with your children (or significant other) right now? Which strategies are building healthy skills with your children (or significant other)? What strategies have you learned from this book that you will apply? What are 2-3 strategies you will commit to using at home in the next two weeks? What difference will it make?
8. How can we use the Energy Circle (from page 43) to communicate more effectively?
9. How are messages different on the front side of the Energy Circle (from page 43) and the back side? How are questions different on the front side of the Energy Circle and the back side? How is focusing, listening and modeling different on the front side versus the back side of the Energy Circle? What is the value of this?
10. What is the value of your child knowing they can always ask for what they want?
11. What is the value of your child knowing they can offer help to others?
12. How would you like to utilize these insights with your family?
13. We can't change the past, but we can move forward in new ways. What have you learned from this book and your book study group that you will never go back on? Why is this important to you?

for what they want?

### SAMPLE MEETING CLOSERS:

- How can you give these gifts and be firm and strong at the same time?
- How does each of the five parenting tools work to nurture these gifts?
- In small groups, create and present to the full group plans to nurture more of these gifts using all five tools.

## Meeting 9: The Gifts of Abundance, Integrity and Responsibility & Conscious Choice

### The Gift of Abundance (page 213)

“The gift of abundance is what I consider the key to all the other qualities and values that make our lives and our children’s lives so fulfilling. It allows us to view the world as a place of endless choices, endless opportunities, endless chances, endless growth. There is always another day and another way. It’s a way of approaching the world in degrees of strength, instead of degrees of weakness, of living with degrees of love and goodness instead of degrees of fear.” (page 214)

1. From the paragraph above, what resonates for you?
  - What does approaching the world in degrees of strength look like to you? For your children? Your significant other? Your family? What difference will it make?
  - What is the cost of approaching the world in degrees of weakness or degrees of fear?
  - How do you already approach the world in degrees of strength? What does this model look like for your children (or significant other)?
  - How can you use the five parenting tools to approach the world in degrees of strength?
2. What does abundance mean to you?
3. How can you use the five parenting tools to give the gift of abundance?
4. What does focus have to do with abundance? What focus do you model with your children (or significant other)? What is your attitude about abundance? What focus and attitude do you want to model for your children (or significant other)?
5. Re-read the story about Tiffany and Brian and their new bicycles on page 217. With the best of intentions, many of us have bought something for our child that was more than we intended to spend or have done something for our child rather than teaching them to do it themselves. When is it important to support your child in finding their own way to obtain something or do something themselves? Why is this so important to you? What message do we give our children when we support them in doing it themselves? How can you use the five parenting tools to support them in this?
6. How can you use the Energy Circle (page 43) to focus even more on abundance?
7. Think of a situation you are facing right now at home. Now share three ways to move the situation forward. Now share another three ways to move the situation forward. What did you discover with this exercise? What questions can you ask your family today to generate an abundance of possibility with this situation?

### The Gift of Integrity and Responsibility (page 221)

“With the gift of responsibility our children learn to take charge of their own lives; with the gift of integrity they learn to help others work through the circumstances they face. With these qualities and values we take full responsibility for our circumstances and our future. We make intelligent decisions. We live our lives with pride, fairness, and dignity. Without integrity, our children don’t trust themselves or anybody else. Worse yet, we don’t know if we can trust our children.” (page 221)

1. What does integrity mean to you? What does responsibility mean to you? How are these two concepts different from each other?
2. What do the gifts of integrity and responsibility give to your children? To your significant other? To your family?
3. What are three ways you strongly model integrity for your children? What are two ways you’d like to model integrity in a stronger way? What difference will this make?
4. What strategies do you use that are effective at building responsibility with your children? How do

### SAMPLE MEETING OPENERS:

- In your words, how would you describe each of these gifts?
- What are some ways that you are already giving these gifts to your family?
- What is the value of these gifts to your life now...and when your children grow up?

- you model responsibility with your children (or significant other)?
5. How can you use the five parenting tools to give the gift of integrity?
  6. How can you use the five parenting tools to give the gift of responsibility?
  7. From page 227, “‘Old’ parenting to me means we are taught what to think, not how to think.” What’s the cost of ‘old’ parenting?
  8. What does it look like when a child is responsible for themselves? How does this support them in the future?
  9. Okay, time to own up. What do you nag your children (or significant other) about? What behavior do you want instead? What message can you share to communicate what behavior you’d like to see and why it is important to you? What forward focus questions can you ask to explore what this behavior might look like with your children (or significant other)?
  10. Is it possible that these tools and strategies might not change behaviors overnight? You bet! Why is it important to you to use these parenting tools in the new way? How does this help you build the vision you have for your children, significant other and/or family?
  11. From page 231, what are little choices you can let your children make now? What are some big choices you can let your children make now? How can you use the five parenting tools to help you do this?
  12. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being high, to what degree do your children (or significant other) trust you? What have you done to earn that trust? How can you earn an even greater degree of trust? Why is that important to you?
  13. What are 2-3 questions you can ask to help your child accept responsibility and work toward solutions?

#### The Gift of Conscious Choice (page 239)

“Once you know that you have the gift of choice in your life, there is no more powerful tool. It allows you to figure out how to make things happen and how not to be a victim, no matter what the circumstances.” (page 240)

1. How do you define conscious choice?
2. From page 53 and page 241, why is your reaction the key to conscious choice?
3. How is conscious choice a gift?
4. Reading the story at the bottom of page 243, can you spot all the parenting tools in this example?
5. How does conscious choice relate to the Energy Circle (on page 43)?
6. How do you model conscious choice for your children (or significant other)?
7. What are two areas that you could model conscious choice even more for your children (or significant other)?
8. How can you use the five parenting tools to give the gift of conscious choice?
9. Read the story at the bottom of page 247. What is a current situation in your home that is not the behavior you’d prefer? What are three behaviors related to this situation that are working and you want to continue to see more of? How can you genuinely acknowledge these three behaviors? What difference will it make?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### SAMPLE MEETING CLOSERS:

- How can you give these gifts and be firm and strong at the same time?
- How does each of the five parenting tools work to nurture these gifts?
- In small groups, create and present to the full group plans to nurture more of these gifts using all five tools.

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