

## Feel Empowered When You Connect with Your Inner Child!

It is safe to say that the nursing profession has been feeling powerless this past year. Nurses are uncomfortable with feeling powerless, though, because nurses are movers and shakers and healers and helpers. There have been many resources available to us that aim to empower the nurse, which will make us resilient during these challenging times. Still, one fun and easy way of feeling empowered is to connect with your inner child.

In her article, *Ten Ways to Tap into Your Inner Child*, Dr. Diana Raab writes, “Being in touch with your inner child is a safe way to take a break from everything that’s going on in the world. The inner child thinks positively and believes in the possibilities in everything. If you put yourself in ‘child mode,’ we become more open to the magnificent opportunities that exist around us. (Raab, 2020)” The child who thinks positively and believes in the possibilities in everything is self-confident and empowered; empowerment can be nourished by self-confidence (Mind Tools Content Team , n.d.).

Try to remember a time in your childhood when you felt no limitations—a time when everything was magical, and your energies were limitless. Remember how you used to play. Did you like to use your imagination to play with dolls or action figures? Did you like to dress up and impersonate fairies, princesses, knights, and cowboys? What was it like to live in that temporary imaginary world? Remember how you used to use your body to run, skip, or play kickball. Maybe you spent time at the park; perhaps you used to play on the swings or the slide. How did you relate to the people and animals around you? Weren’t you free to be you? You had no self-judgment! You weren’t afraid to show your true self. As we grow older, our mindset becomes rigid, limiting our imagination and free-flowing ideas. But we can soften our mindset by reconnecting with our inner child (Raab, 2020).

It does not matter how old you are now; there is no age limit when venturing to find and connect with your inner child. You can start by looking at your baby and childhood pictures to recognize how wonderful you are. Next, consider the way children play to inspire you, and play like a child.

Looking at cute pictures uplifts our spirits, lessens our stress levels, and can make us happy. We are visual beings, and our brain processes images in a biased fashion to alert us to whether the images we see are safe or not safe. A large part of our emotions are based on our visual experiences, so when we look at cute pictures, a positive feeling is evoked. Keeping real photos of loved ones at hand provides positive reinforcement as a reminder of who is important, what we are working for, and confirmation of achievements and what we strive for (Moore, 2015). Now, look at photos of yourself when you were a child or a baby. Weren’t you adorable and lovable? Now imagine yourself cuddling and talking to your child-self. Think about all the loving and positive things you can say to your child-self, remember all of your achievements you’ve accomplished in your lifetime, and why you work to do the things you do. Look at your child-self to realize your life has meaning. Fill your heart with self-love, so you can unleash your magnificence and revitalize your self-confidence.

Think of how children play. Children are curious and determined. Anything goes when it comes to child's play. They don't appear to have any sense of time, and their playtime is often filled with smiles and giggles. With all this considered, play like a child.

Adults who take the time to play will find that it reduces stress, improves relationships, and boosts creativity and learning abilities. Play often causes us to smile and laugh, which helps to induce a sense of wellbeing. Also, children learn best when they are playing, and this applies to adults, too. While adults are amused and relaxed, they can learn new things and are also more creative. It would also be beneficial to your work-life if you incorporate play. It can be as simple as telling jokes to your coworkers or engaging in games during breaks (Lawrence Robinson, 2020). Engaging in fun activities or hobbies will inspire a positive mindset, making you more resilient (Scott, 2019). What type of fun activities or hobbies can you engage in to bring you happiness? Here are a few fun ideas to get you started: color with crayons in a coloring book, put a puzzle together, skip rocks, jump mud puddles, play cards – Go Fish, build things with Legos or Lincoln Logs, blow bubbles, swing away on a swingset, explore the outdoors, play with clay or Play-doh, etc. You get the point. Do something fun, find a new hobby, and laugh a lot.

Find and reconnect with your inner child today so that you can become a more confident, happy, and empowered nurse.

Play on, Healthy Nurses!

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#### References

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