WHEN YOU FEEL HELPLESS AS A PARENT

A little support for those moments when you don't know how to make things better.



QUANTUM GODDESS HEALING

WHEN ALL YOU WANT TO DO IS HELP

There's something incredibly difficult about seeing your child struggle and not knowing what to do.

Maybe they're anxious, unhappy or going through something you can't change.

Perhaps you've tried talking, reassuring them or offering solutions, but nothing seems to be helping.

Or maybe it's the everyday moments. The arguments, the frustration, the same conversations going round and round, leaving you wondering what else you can try.

When we care so deeply about our children, it's natural to want to make things better.

And when we can't, we might feel worried, frustrated, frightened or helpless.

When we're feeling overwhelmed, it can be hard to think clearly about what might actually help.

This guide offers a few simple things you can try. Some are for you, and some may help you explore what your child needs.

You don't have to try everything, and not everything will be right for every family.

You might not be able to make everything better. But that doesn't mean there's nothing you can do.

A LITTLE SPACE FOR YOU

When something is happening with our children, our attention often goes straight to them. What do they need? How can I help? What should I do? But how often do we stop to notice what's happening for us?

Here's a little practice you can try, whether you're in the middle of a difficult day or simply want a few moments for yourself.

A Moment to Pause

1. **Take a moment, if it's safe to do so**
   Feel your feet on the floor and notice the support beneath you.

2. **Take a couple of gentle breaths**
   At a pace that feels comfortable.

3. **Place a hand somewhere that feels comforting**
   Perhaps your chest, or your stomach. Notice the warmth or gentle pressure of your hand.

4. Ask yourself: **How am I feeling right now?**
   Give yourself a little time to notice. There might be worry, sadness, frustration, physical sensations or uncertainty.

Whatever comes up, see if you can allow it to be there for a moment, without needing to change it or work it all out.

You might gently remind yourself: It's okay to feel what I'm feeling. Stay here for a few moments, if that feels comfortable.

AND WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Now that you've taken a little time to notice how you're feeling, you might gently turn your attention to what you need.

5 Ask yourself: **What do I need right now?**
Perhaps it's fresh air, rest, a conversation with someone you trust or simply a little time to yourself. You don't have to know the answer straight away or be able to meet that need immediately.

6 **Return to the present**
When you're ready, bring your attention back to what's around you.

A little reminder

Your feelings and needs matter too. Taking a little time to care for yourself can be valuable in its own right, but you may find you have a little more capacity to support others as well.

Would you prefer someone to guide you?

We've also put together a short guided audio practice for those times when you'd rather have someone gently guide you through taking a little space for yourself.

Listen to the guided practice here

Or scan QR code

WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT



Sometimes we want to reassure our children, offer advice or find a solution. And sometimes that's exactly what's needed.

Other times, they may need us to listen, offer comfort, give them space or understand how they're feeling before deciding what to do next. So how do we find out?

Something to try: PAVE

PAVE is a simple practice to help us slow down, listen and explore what might help. It builds on the pause you've just practised, which in everyday situations might only take a few seconds.

P

Pause and steady yourself

Notice what's happening within you. Perhaps you're worried, frustrated or feeling an urgency to make things better. Take a breath or feel your feet on the floor before responding.

A

Acknowledge your own feelings

Recognise what you're feeling and any assumptions you might be making. Your feelings matter, but they may not be the same as your child's.

V

Validate their experience

Give your child room to tell you what's happening, if they want to. Listen, acknowledge what they've shared and check your understanding.

E

Engage with curiosity

Explore what might help rather than assuming you know. Your child might not know what they need straight away. You can offer simple choices, give them time or return to the conversation later.

FINDING THE WORDS

Sometimes it's hard to know what to say, particularly when we're worried about our child or unsure what they need. Here are a few things you might try.

To listen and validate

"That sounds really difficult. Have I understood that right?"

"I can see you're upset. Would you like to tell me about it?"

"I can understand why that might have been upsetting for you."

To explore what might help

"Would you like me to listen, or would it help to think about what you could do?"

"Would you like some space, or would you prefer some company?"

"What would you like to happen?"

Your child might not know what they need straight away. You can offer simple choices, give them time or return to the conversation later.

PAVE isn't about getting it perfect

These aren't four steps you have to complete in order.

You might need to pause more than once, return to listening or change your approach as you learn more about what your child needs.

Sometimes practical help, boundaries or action to keep your child safe will be needed too. And sometimes your child will still be upset afterwards.

The aim isn't to make every difficult feeling disappear. It's to understand what your child needs and consider how you can support them.

PAVE IN EVERYDAY LIFE



Imagine your child comes home from school and says:

“Nobody wants to sit with me. I hate school.”

Our natural instinct might be to reassure them:

“I’m sure that’s not true. Why don’t you sit with someone else tomorrow?”

You’re trying to help, but perhaps your child doesn’t feel heard, or isn’t ready to think about solutions.

What might happen if you tried PAVE instead?

P **Pause**
Notice your own worry and urge to make things better straight away.

A **Acknowledge**
Recognise that you're feeling frightened or helpless about your child being left out. You don’t yet know exactly what’s happened or how they are experiencing it.

V **Validate**
“That sounds really upsetting. Do you want to tell me more about what happened?” Listen to what they share, without rushing to reassure or offer advice.

E **Engage**
“Would you like us to think about what you could do tomorrow, or do you just need a bit of comfort right now?”

Your child may still feel upset, but they may also feel a little more heard and understood.

WHEN YOU CAN'T MAKE IT BETTER



Sometimes, even when we've listened, offered comfort and done what we can, our child is still struggling. And that can be incredibly hard.

Sometimes it's not just the situation we're finding difficult. It's being alongside our child's feelings when we can't take them away.

Perhaps we find anger uncomfortable, struggle to see someone we love feeling sad or feel overwhelmed when they're distressed.

We all have our own experiences of emotions, and some feelings may be harder for us to be around than others.

It might help to gently ask yourself:

What happens for me when my child is upset, angry or shut down?

Am I finding it difficult to be with how they're feeling?

There's no judgement in these questions. It’s simply an opportunity to understand yourself a little better.

And if you notice your own feelings becoming overwhelming, you can return to the little pause practice earlier in this guide.

WHEN YOU'RE FEELING STUCK

Sometimes our worries, our child's feelings and everything we wish we could change can become tangled together.

Separating these things may help us see where we still have choices and where our time and energy might be most helpful.

If you'd find it useful, you could reflect on these two questions.

What is within my control?

Perhaps it's how I respond, whether I listen, offer comfort, give my child some space or seek additional support when it's needed.

What might I need to recognise is outside my control?

Perhaps it's how my child feels, the choices other people make or how quickly a situation changes.

Recognising what's outside our control doesn't necessarily make it easier to live with. We may still worry or wish things were different.

But it might help us focus some of our energy on what we can offer. And sometimes one of the most meaningful things we can offer our child is knowing we're there.

We might say: *“I don't know exactly how things will unfold, but we can take it one step at a time. And you don't have to do it on your own.”*

You can't always change what your child is going through. But you can still be alongside them as they find their way through it.