



Are you experiencing poor connection? Check your filter, writes TARNYA DAVIS

OUR brains are wired to respond to what's novel in the environment, and to move over much of the stimulus we are exposed to.

Day in, day out, we are exposed to sounds, smells, thoughts, people, behaviours and events. We tune out much of this, which is of evolutionary benefit because if we we paid attention to each and every stimuli, we'd probably not manage to get out of bed.

This week I had the joy of spending a day with Susan Bogels, author of *Mindful Parenting*, who is on tour of Australia from the Netherlands. While we can't attend to everything, our ability to filter can sometimes be a super power, but also an evil one.

Bogels shared her research on the impact of our lack of attention on connecting with each other, and the importance of mindfulness in a parent's ability to regulate their emotions and manage the chaos of parenting. Anyone who has tried mindfulness or meditation will be familiar with an exercise where we are asked to examine a raisin as if we have arrived from mars and had never seen it before. Bogels suggests this same curiosity and observation can be used to facilitate greater connection with our children (or others) as well as managing our reactions to stress.

To see another with a beginner's mind, as if we haven't seen them before, can allow us to connect with them by noticing - it might be sounds, or smells, or touch - and may be the key to managing our monkey minds.

Just with mindfulness or meditation, the key is remembering to remember.

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