
Book Reviews and Announcements

The Little Book of Parenting: How To Nurture Your Child to Their Full Potential

Chinyelu Kunz, illustrated by Ella Manor LaPointe

Sheldon Press, 2024

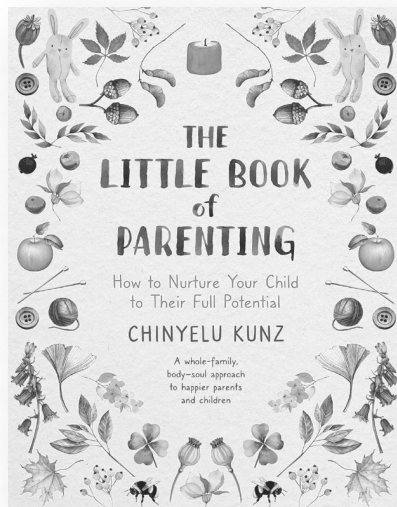
Reviewed by Donna Lee Miele

Chinyelu Kunz is a Waldorf early childhood educator who recognized the need for Waldorf-inspired parenting advice and created a mentorship program, the We Nurture collective. Out of her series of podcasts, her mentorship materials, and countless hours guiding parents and caregivers in the art of childcare, she has published *The Little Book of Parenting*, a uniquely wise and reassuring resource.

Kunz begins not with an anthroposophical overview of child development, but with the parenting relationship and with self-parenting in Part One, “Unlocking Your Child’s Potential.” She recommends approaching parenthood with unconditional love, which might seem self-evident. But it requires us to confront unconscious expectations and past experiences, awakening to the ways we might not have experienced unconditional love as children. “One of the reasons why parenting is so hard is because we are challenged with healing from our own childhood, and letting go of what didn’t serve us, all while raising our child,” she says, and “Parenting is truly an act of surrender.”

Fortunately, Kunz offers many simple, clear lists to help us approach parenthood, and to which we can fall back when we run out of steam. Among the essentials are to honor your children for who they are; to make time for self-directed play; and to understand where children are developmentally. “Sometimes,” she notes gently, “we will do anything for our child except let them be themselves, and this is often when parenting gets hard.”

In Part Two, “Building a Healthy Foundation,” Kunz explores the bases for a secure, nourishing home



life: creating rhythms, observing family rituals, building a “family culture,” recognizing the importance of sleep and mealtimes, and getting your child out into nature regularly and often. It’s less important to have perfect playthings, more important to recognize the value of a “tent” under the table and to make available the means to create one: an old sheet, some battered tin cups, throw pillows stolen from the sofa. It’s less important to talk about trees, more important to pick up a pine cone or an acorn during a walk outside and treat it as a treasure, creating a place

for it on a seasonal nature table.

Here, Kunz briefly discusses the foundational senses: “Children feel themselves into life with their whole body and with all their senses.” She also reminds us that modeling the qualities we most value is a vital part of creating our family’s culture, underscoring the need to nurture gratitude—not by constant reminders to say “thank you,” but by embodiment. “Gratitude,” Kunz writes, “might perhaps be the most important value to embody and model in family life.”

Part Three, “Supporting Your Child’s Well-Being,” while not a comprehensive discussion of anthroposophy, delves into its principles, touching on all twelve senses and the temperaments. Kunz finds this a useful foundation for her discussion of nurturing trust, setting boundaries, and supporting emotional and physical well-being. She also cites the unique spiritual understanding of the human being that underlies her approach. And she calls on parents to do a lot of writing, offering a wealth of journaling prompts to help us know ourselves as well as our children; and for partners to use and discuss, to make sure that they



are creating the family culture on equal terms.

In the end, Kunz acknowledges, “You will be triggered ... your patience will be stretched.” But, she concludes, “What’s most important is staying present to it all ... With this mindset, you will build a strong relationship with your child and strong family bonds.”

My parenting days are very different now than when my children were small—my youngest graduated high school in 2022. This book nevertheless jolted

me with a realization that I still have much to learn. It isn’t only small children who imitate us, but also anyone with whom we are in a guiding or mentoring relationship, including our grown children. And when we teach our grown children to practice self-love, they can in turn model it for their children. This “little book of parenting” may therefore have a lot to offer readers at many stages in their journey. ♦