



Awakening to Ourselves as Parents

By Sarah Duncan

When I first awaken in the morning, I like to linger a bit. I like to connect with each of my senses and see what the day holds through each one. Even before I open my eyes, I “look” around: first, what am I hearing? If I’m at home, I usually hear birds; if I’m at a friend’s it’s traffic; if at my parents’ home, it’s clocks. Even though I don’t have much of a sense of smell, I can sniff the air and sense if it is cold, or if there is something unusual in the air, or maybe realize my nose is stuffed up and thus, I’ve found the reason for a poor night’s sleep. Depending on the season, my body gives me a special awakening. In the winter, I love to revel in the warm and cozy feeling of my blankets and quilt, snuggling into the soft warmth just a bit longer. In the summer, I’ll know if it’s already heating up outside by how warm my room is, or if the sheet has been thrown off. All this before I open my eyes. I then take stock mentally of how I feel and what is in store for me that day or I review how I feel about issues in my life. When I do open my eyes, because I live in the time-oriented west, I usually look at the clock first to see how early or late I’ve slept. If early, mmm, then I get to snuggle in a bit longer. If late, then I’d better get a move on. My awakening process, I realize, is one of senses and intuition, pleasure and anticipation.

When a baby is born, I don’t know of a parent who doesn’t anticipate, in both excitement and fear, the awesome journey he or she is embarking upon. It doesn’t seem to matter whether this is a first or second child for a family; the awakening to this new life is a time of great emotion and sensory input. Hopefully it’s a time of joy, but it also can be one of trepidation. The realization that we are parents is an awakening to a whole new life – not only this child’s, but also our own. From my own experience, I found the first three years with each of my children the most fun as this was the time of most rapid growth and discovery. Once my sons became verbal, and now as they develop their own lives and relationships outside of the home, I find it is easy sometimes to lose sight of the awesome joy and get stuck in the daily tasks of being a mother. Still, though, every now and then my boys will surprise me, and I stop, look at them, and listen – and this is a wonderful moment to reawaken to the mother inside me. When I was a little girl I had a dress that had three pockets, each labeled stop, look, listen; I would add to that, smell, feel, sense.

Stop – turn away from the urgency of daily tasks and linger in the moment. This is a great way to reawaken to who we are as parents. *Look* at your child – do you know him or her and what is important in his or her life at this very moment? See your child with the fresh eyes you once had when he or she was born, and remember the endless love and possibility you felt at that time. *Listen* to the soundtrack of your life – what is the overriding sound? Yells, laughter, cries, song? There are so many opportunities to tap into our senses in every dealing we have with our children. Feel again the awesome responsibility of your role as a parent and intuitively know that you can reawaken each day, taking different steps or making new choices in your life as a parent. I invite you to do so on a regular basis and see yourself and your child in the light of a new day.