

PEDAGOGICAL INPUT

for the adventure of family life



75_ Emotional storms and the power of closeness

When we feel scared, anxious, or nervous, we experience these feelings not only emotionally, but also physically. These sensations become noticeable, for example, through altered breathing, increased heart rate and tension in the body. In these situations, physical closeness is very healing. The vagus nerve plays a major role in this context.

"Because the vagus nerve not only transports emotions from the brain to the rest of the body - it also transmits signals from the body back to the brain and thus makes a decisive contribution to calming down the highly excited nerve cells there. In practical terms this means: Anything that helps calm an agitated body also relaxes the brain." (Imlau, 2018, S.54)¹

For this reason, hugs, loving touches and appreciative accompaniment in challenging moments are particularly important, because the closeness provided ensures mental and physical well-being. In addition, the feeling is conveyed: "I'm not alone, someone is helping me, I'm being held, I'm safe."

Emotional and physical closeness, the foundation for a happy life

Repeatedly being there for each other gives children a basic trust in themselves and their environment, which strengthens them for their whole life:

"Because people who are always lovingly accompanied as children through their emotional storms develop such a strong vagus nerve over time that it gradually needs less and less help from outside to unfold its calming effect. This develops so-called self-regulation ability, which is so important for a healthy and happy life - i.e. the ability to get oneself out of the greatest stress in crisis situations, take a deep breath, shut down, find the way back to peace." (Imlau, 2018, p .55)² Science thus confirms that it is fundamentally important not to leave children alone in their emotional turmoil, but to accompany them so they learn how to calm themselves.

The daily dose of closeness

Cuddling, being hugged and the feeling of security are not only healthy and beneficial in exceptional circumstances. They can also be consciously integrated into family life, especially after a busy day; loving touches not only reduce the stress hormones in the body and increase the feeling of happiness, but also have a relaxing effect on parents and children alike.

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Recommended literature:

^{1/2}Nora Imlau, (2018), So viel Freude, so viel Wut. Gefühlsstarke Kinder verstehen und begleiten (So Much Joy, So Much Anger. Understanding and Accompanying Emotionally Strong Children), Kösel-Verlag, in the Random House GmbH publishing group, 5th edition, Munich