

READING GROUP GUIDE

Parenting Without Fear

By Paul J. Donahue

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Parenting
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Paul J. Donahue, Ph.D.

About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *Parenting Without Fear* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this book. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *Parenting Without Fear*.

About the Book

Many parents experience an enormous amount of pressure to do everything right and are feeling overwhelmed with their responsibilities. They are anxious and fearful that they are failing their children if they don't respond to all the expectations imposed by media and society about what being a good parent is.

Paul J. Donahue, Ph.D., can take the pressure off. He believes parents best intentions are getting in the way of being the mentors and teachers of their children that they can be. He gives parents tools to solve the many dilemmas over their children's academics, social lives, skill-building activities, and athletics that they confront every day.

Parenting without Fear will help parents to balance their own needs with those of their children, and to make informed choices regarding their family and home life.

About the Author

Paul J. Donahue, Ph.D, a nationally-recognized clinical psychologist, is the founder and director of Child Development Associates in Scarsdale, New York, a practice specializing in young children and their families.



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Discussion Questions

1. What are your biggest worries for your own kids?
 - Is it keeping up with everyone else?
 - Keeping them safe?
 - Making sure they are happy?
 - Do you find yourself peering into the future- thinking about college and their economic prospects when they are young?
 - What other worries come to mind?
2. Does it make sense to have a “mission statement for our kids?”
 - How do we decide which lessons are the ones we want to focus on and teach our kids?
 - What happens if we don’t go through this exercise?
3. In PWOFF, there is a chapter called “The Tools to Combat Fear.”
 - Which of these “tools” are the hardest to attain -- and maintain - for you as parents?
 - Endurance?
 - Confidence?
 - Courage?
4. Do you agree with the Dr. Donahue’s emphasis and theories on teaching kids to be independent and work hard when they are young- starting as early as preschool? Or do you believe that it puts too much pressure on kids and leads us to expect too much of them?
5. How would you have handled the dilemma faced by the author in the beginning of Chapter Six/The Fear of Taking Charge (pages 116-118)?
 - Have you been in circumstances with other parents where you had to stand up and go against the group?
 - What are the biggest challenges for parents in your town who want to teach their kids to be respectful and cooperative?
6. How can you teach your kids to slow down and be more “mindful?” (Chapter 7).
 - Is this realistic given our fast-paced, on-the-go family lives?
 - Without dramatically altering their lifestyle, how can parents look to cut back and de-stress, and find moments for quiet reflection and focused attention?



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7. Dr. Donahue makes the case for giving kids more time for play and outdoor exploration. Do you agree with this?

-Will our kids be harmed if they are not in a number of structured, skill-building activities like sports or dance or music?

-How do we find the right balance?

8. Few parents would argue against raising a caring and compassionate child, but how can we incorporate these values into our daily lives? Will we have to de-emphasize competition and helping kids strive to do their best?

9. How can parents in your community or in your neighborhood (or your book group) support each other in their attempts to focus on “what really matters” and live “without fear?”

10. In ten or twenty or thirty years from now, how will we know if we have done a good job as parents?

-What skills do you believe your kids need to be happy, successful and resilient adults?

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