

Boundaries & Connection

A new way to set boundaries and keep connection

Welcome to Module 3. In this module you'll:

- Learn how to balance boundary setting with connection.
- Set boundaries that are aligned with your mama vision and supportive of your child's uniqueness.
- Learn how to repair mama mistakes you make AND help your child do the same for great relationships.
- Learn how to nourish your child's brain for positive behaviour and happiness.

In the last module you learnt about your child's brain states and how to respond to them in a healthy and meaningful way. In this module we're going to build on that with more complexity. We'll be moving further into new paradigm practices for behaviour regulation and connection, and away from old-style authoritarian boundary setting that may not be working for you or your child.

The old paradigm way sounded like this, "I'm the authority. I will tell you what to do. You will listen to me". YOU were the boss, and your child was expected, demanded and sometimes punished to achieve the result of "doing what they were told".

The new way has you saying to yourself: "Wow, I understand what brain state you are in...(eg. the red, the yellow or the green). I know how to approach you + what you need. I have a flexible roadmap to follow. I experiment with my approach whilst keeping my eye on connection as the vital key."

This new way is underpinned by understanding and compassion for both yourself and your child. You get to keep your heart open and boundary at the same time.

You understand that your child deeply desires to be connected to you, and will be more likely to behave the way you want if they feel seen and heard by you.

Yes, it's a skill set many of us need to learn, and that's ok. We're not striving for perfection as they're no such thing. What we're doing is changing our parenting practices to be more in alignment with the latest neuroscience and attachment wisdom.

In the second part of this module we'll discuss the **key things** your child needs to be able to spend more time in the highest functioning brain state. This will result in more positive behaviours and the sort of

happiness that is deep, sustaining and peaceful. We call this being '*in the green*'. The helpful strategies are called "green juice". You'll get to understand what will provide, '*green juice for your child's brain*', that is, the important parenting tools that will make all the difference to wiring your child's brain in a healthy, positive & happy way. These parenting tools are in addition to the embodiment practices you learnt in Video 2 'the missing how-to in motherhood' video training. These embodiment practices are an absolute MUST to start with.

Together, with these addition tools, you'll end up having a gorgeous treasure chest of motherhood tips and tricks!

Have you ever wondered where your mama strengths and weaknesses are when it comes to boundaries?

There are typically two mama types which are important to identify with:

The mother who only understands her own experience, and doesn't connect with her child's experience ... will have difficulty in developing a close and meaningful relationship (*the disconnected mama*).

AND

The mother who only considers her child's point of view and neglects her own internal experience. She will likely have difficulty setting boundaries with her child, leaving her feeling angry and exhausted, and her child feeling insecure from lack of boundaries (*the out-of-control mama*).

Which type of mother below do you tend to lean towards? We usually have one area more strengthened than the other, yet it's the balance between the two that's necessary for whole-brained intuitive parenting.

Go to the [Boundaries Playsheet](#) and identify where you think you might be on the mama type continuum.

Where do you place yourself on the connection/boundary continuum? I suggest you do the playsheet exercise in an embodied way as well. Start in your living room. If one end was the 'disconnected mama' who only identified with her own internal needs, and the other end was the 'out-of-control' mama who only identified with her child's needs where would you stand? The ideal is to be in the middle. Play with this. Start in another part of the continuum and get a sense of what that would be like in your bodyfulness, heartfulness and thoughtfulness.

You might like to share your findings in the [Facebook Village](#), and learn from each other!

If you're closer to the **disconnected mama** end of the spectrum it's important for you to be doing the Embodiment Practices with your child so you're tuning in more to their internal world and they feel more seen, felt and heard. You may also need to consider dissolving some unnecessary boundaries that are rigid and don't have a purpose.

If you're more towards the **out-of-control mama** end of the continuum you'll need to be practicing bringing some boundaries in closer with the three step formula which you'll learn in this module. You're also need to be doing the embodiment practices for yourself so that you're tuning into your internal needs and begin to honour these more.

A new way to set Boundaries

In this section you're going to explore the new way to set boundaries that are aligned with your mama vision.

Boundaries are important for your child because they keep them safe and help them feel secure. The new- way boundary setting models and teaches children about healthy relationships as well. It shows them how to set their own boundaries and how to make their own good decisions based on what their body, heart and mind is telling them.

Instead of the old paradigm way of sticking to the rules and getting your child to do what you want in the short term, this new way will teach them skills for the long term. You'll be taking into account your child's uniqueness, the circumstances on any give day, and also honouring your own individuality as a parent. Your 'discipline' or boundary setting is not about having to 'look good' or 'tick any boxes' with on-lookers, instead it's about you and your child's relationship, and what you both need. This can be fluid and changing depending on the brain state you and your child are in.

We're often told that consistency of rules is important so your child feels secure knowing what's expected of them. However, it's equally important that you're consistent with your mama vision which is about your relationship and connection with your child, and developing the qualities that are important to you.

This means you may change a boundary at times to support your vision. Even though you will have a certain consistency about what you expect from your child, there will also be an element of flexibility.

We all need boundaries to keep us feeling balanced. Everyone is different. *In some areas we need to boundary more, whilst in other areas we can dissolve unnecessary boundaries.* It's good to ask yourself why you have certain boundaries. If a boundary is not critical and if there are more important priorities that are more meaningful to your relationship with your child, you might relax or dissolve it.

On the other hand, sometimes you need to bring the boundary in closer. If you're constantly letting it be all about your child and not about getting your own needs met, you'll end up more often in the yellow and red brain state yourself. That's not helpful for your child. It's better for you to set a boundary and stay in the green brain state (and for your child to be in the red as a result of you setting this boundary), than for you to say 'yes' all the time, not honour your own needs and then 'lose it'.

Let's look at some examples of both:

Examples of relaxing or dissolving unnecessary boundaries:

An example would be to allow your child to stay up later one night because there is something important to talk about and you desire to have more connecting time. Good for you. Good for your child. This is what we call 'dissolving an unnecessary boundary'.

Another example of a boundary that might be dissolved is allowing your child to choose the clothes they wish to wear. Even though you might usually choose their clothing because you get embarrassed by their fashion choice, you might decide to relax this boundary to allow for your child's unique expression and their need for some independence.

You might allow your child to have more play time and less homework time after school as you know it's been a stressful day for them. You recognise that this would help your child expend a lot of pent up energy physically and emotionally, and so you choose to relax your usual homework rule this time.

Examples of bringing your boundary in closer:

You might reflect back to your child that they look tired and need to go to bed earlier. This is an example of bringing a boundary in closer.

On a given day you might decide that your child isn't allowed to have as much time at a friend's place because you need to get home earlier for an important skype call, or you're feeling especially tired and you need to look after yourself as well.

You expect that your children attend a family meeting to create a roster for household chores. You communicate that you're beginning to feel resentful with the constant cleaning up after everyone. You explain that you want to have more sharing of the family chores so it feels fair for everyone, including yourself.

You and your partner decide that the family needs to prepare food and clothes for the next day the night before so that the mornings run much smoother and as a way of minimising your stress response.

Now it's your turn to look at your own parenting boundaries. Go to the [Playsheet](#) and do the exercise on 'Setting Meaningful Boundaries'.

EXERCISE:

In what areas do I tend to 'lose it' and need to bring my boundary in closer?

Where do I need to dissolve a boundary that's not necessary?

SHARE: any pearls of wisdom you got out of this session in [the Village Facebook group](#).

How do we set boundaries in the new relationship-based way?

The way we approach boundary setting makes a HUGE difference. Think about it. How have you felt with the different boundary-setting approaches people have had with YOU over the years? Some approaches would have felt respectful and considered. Others would have felt more like a jolt to your nervous system, and even could have triggered a negative reaction sending you into a lower brain state. You may have memories of this in the way you were disciplined as a child.

Different reactions can happen from the same boundary. It's the WAY a boundary is delivered that makes all the difference to both the way you FEEL and the way you RESPOND!

Listen to the Audio, '[The sound of your boundary](#)'. This will give you an experience of the way words and non-verbal communications such as tone of voice can impact on the way your experience a boundary. Follow the audio prompts and write down your responses on the [Boundaries Playsheet](#).

Share your responses in the [Facebook Village Group](#).

Three steps to connected boundary-setting

We need to set boundaries that make you and your child feel BOTH secure and connected. Even though this is the aim, it may not always happen and that's ok. Generally speaking it would be healthy to use this three- step formula below as much as possible. It's the formula for a connected approach.

THE THREE STEP FORMULA TO SETTING CONNECTED BOUNDARIES

STEP ONE - **acknowledge the desire** “You’re really wanting to run around the house”

STEP TWO - **Be honest and Set the boundary** “it’s making me feel really stressed when you make so much noise, and I need some quiet so I can be relaxed and think straight”.

STEP THREE - **Give the YES**- You can run outside and I’m going to come out with you and see how long it takes you to run around the house 3 times. Ready? This will be fun!

The YES could be a choice- you can’t do that but you can choose to do this or that.

Now it’s your turn to apply it to YOUR situation. Go to your [Boundaries playsheet](#) and complete the ‘Three steps to connected boundary-setting’ exercise.

EXERCISE:

Think about something your child does that evokes frustration and design a boundary around that behaviour. Write about it according to the 3 step formula:

1. Acknowledge the desire.
2. Set the boundary and acknowledge what you are feeling.
3. Give the yes.

What will it look like in action? Use it when the behaviour arises and see what happens and how you feel as a result. Share in the [Facebook Village group](#).

You may ask yourself if there are exceptions to using the 3 step boundary-setting formula?

Yes. In safety situations your red brain state may kick in as a healthy response. For example a snake in the backyard, a car coming too close, a hot surface. In these situations you’ll react impulsively and in a mama protective way. You might pull your child to safety, raise your voice in alarm, and consequently startle and upset your child. This is a normal mama reaction where there’s threat or danger. It’s your instinctual response and that’s important for your child’s health and wellbeing.

You’ll need to follow up with your child in a soothing and calming way, and if there’s need of repair you can follow the process we’re doing later in this module. Its called ‘Rupture & Repair’.

Pre-Reminders & Boundaries

Boundaries, boundaries, boundaries. What if you always feel like you’re always setting boundaries. Is there anything else you can do to reduce the need to do this? YES! Other than the embodiment practices of whole-body listening + connection you can use pre-reminders.

‘Pre-Reminders’ is THE most important parenting tool when it comes to preventing unnecessary altercations, meltdowns and misunderstandings. When you give your child a clear explanation of what’s going to happen BEFORE it happens things are much more likely to go smoothly. Children thrive when they know what’s expected of them.

For example: “I’m so excited for our adventure. I know we’re going to have an easy time getting in the car. I love it when I open the door, you jump in and get your seatbelt on and off we go!

Then the follow up with an 'appreciation': "I really appreciate what an easy time we just had getting in the car. I also appreciate how you are growing so big and using your manners when you ask me for things. Thank you so much. "Be genuine and full of energy or be animated to show how much you really appreciate it.

Now it's your turn. Go to the [Boundaries Playsheet](#) and do the exercise below.

EXERCISE:

Think of a situation where you often have difficulty transitioning your child from one activity to the next.

Write down what you could say to your child beforehand as a pre reminder:

Then follow up with an 'appreciation':

Embody your boundary

Transmit whole-bodied confidence that your child will meet your expectations of their behaviour. Communicate these expectations verbally and non-verbally. Expect that they'll be adhered to. Hold the presence of being bigger, stronger, wiser and kind. Use lots of love, play and forgiveness.

In the end it's your PRESENCE, your kindness and your compassion especially starting with yourself.

Be fully human. Keep your eye on love. Be relaxed, have humour. They're no perfect parent Your children need this role -modelling... so they don't feel the pressure to be perfect.

RUPTURE AND REPAIR

You are not a failure. When things go wrong or don't work (and they will), here's how to handle it. We use a process called R & R, that is, Rupture and Repair. It is an evidence-based approach to having a healthy attachment with your child and healing any breakdowns or rifts in your relationship with them. This can apply to a big fight or a more subtle build up of disconnection over time.

The rupture part refers to when a relationship has been broken down or impacted by conflict or when needs are not met. The repair part is the process that you do to bring the relationship back into harmony. If a child has rupture with the parent that isn't repaired they can form beliefs that are incorrect and can lead to all sorts of self-esteem and mental health issues. They can also develop ways of being in other relationships that are ineffective and disconnected. They may not have had the modelling to learn how to repair issues that go wrong in a healthy and communicative way.

Making mistakes is important: children need to learn this is OK. In fact it's fantastic for learning AND it's the way mistakes are handled that gives the relationship so much depth. It develops trust between child and parent so that your child knows they can come to you even when they stuff up or things are really bad. It's a healing opportunity. It often brings you closer. Repair is important modelling for learning about our inner world and the inner world of others, and about relationship. This helps develop empathy and compassion and skillsets that help with intimacy and the ability to be open-hearted, forgiving, able to ask for what you need, and be well boundaried.

Video 3 of The Missing How-To in Motherhood explains the 5 step process Of Rupture & Repair. Lets review it [here](#).

Rupture and Repair: the 5 Step Process to repair and forgive your mama mistakes

1. Approach your child when you are calm, and they are calm
2. Say what happened, and how you felt. Ask your child how they felt. Listen. Really listen.
3. Tell your child that you're sorry, and that they're not responsible for how you feel or what you say or do.
4. Ask them what they need from you. Tell them how you're going to meet their needs and do it differently next time.
5. With a breath of self-compassion tell yourself its ok to be human. "there's no way to be a perfect mother, but plenty of ways to be a good one". And you just did the most awesome repair act that only AMAZING MOTHER'S DO.

Let's get you prepared to manage a Rupture and Repair Process with your own child. Go to the [Boundaries Playsheet](#) and do the exercise below.

EXERCISE:

Think of a senario where you might need to do a repair with your child. Design a plan of how you might approach this using the 5 step Process.

Share in the [Facebook Village](#). Learn from other mothers and my word for word how-to example.

Well done. Boundaries has been a big part of module Three. You might like to revisit this playsheet time and time again as things change within yourself, your child and your situation at large. Even though the motherhood journey is fluid and ever-changing you can use these formula's as your toolset to carry you through.

GREEN JUICE FOR YOUR CHILD'S BRAIN

It's tough. Your child is likely to be in the yellow zone, and even the red zone often despite your best efforts. This is very normal and natural. Not only is it normal developmentally, it also gives you information about what's happening for them, and what their needs are in the moment. They're in the red zone because they're tired or angry or not sleeping well, or in the yellow emotional brain because things aren't good at home, or there's been a lot of changes happening in their body, new stages of development (eg. teething, or growth spurt), a medical problem, bullying or stress at school. The emotional pain is a way of saying something's not working, or I need rest or some other form of attention. Our bodies are constantly seeking equilibrium and will let us know if something is out of balance.

We want to enable our children to be in 'the green' as much as possible. It's the brain state where they're more receptive to learning, being creative and able to function at their highest capacity. Most mothers want to know, "is there anything I can do to help them be in the 'green' more often?" The answer is, "Yes!"

Other than it being much more pleasant for you, the benefits of helping your child 'be in the green' for their nervous system - calming and positive brain wiring - are HUGE. It's a win/win, for both you and your child.

There is a massive amount of emotional development that takes place in the first few years of a child's life, and to varying degrees right through to adulthood. Children need the right sort of connection, positive experiences, skilful interventions and healthy modelling from their parents and caregivers to fuel their emotional & social development. This can be likened to a kind of SUPERFOOD or GREEN JUICE for the BRAIN.

How do you provide this for them? In this next section we'll cover these ways to fill your child up with GREEN JUICE for their brain:

THE TWO KEY INGREDIENTS - GREEN JUICE FOR YOUR CHILD'S BRAIN

These two ingredients are and absolute MUST. They are the elixir for your child's brain, heart and soul. Focus on these and everything else will fall into place.

1. Embodiment Practices - Whole Body Listening

You already know about this. This is the part where you open your heart and feel how your child feels while at the same time keeping a sense of yourself. The bodyfulness, heartfulness and thoughtfulness practices you learnt about in modules one and two. All in all it's about whole-body listening, responding and helping your child learn about their inner world. There's no faster way to bring them back to green. More about 'being' than 'doing': "I hear you."

"I see you are feeling..." "I get it."

"HMMMMMM. Yep. Sad." "Urrgh!, you're so MAD!"

Use the embodiment practices often. (You should have plenty of opportunities every day!).

When your child wants something that they can't have, acknowledge and stop talking. Repeat if they persist and then if necessary, set a boundary and redirect.

Sometimes it comes down to: do you want to be right or do you want to be connected? Your wise choices can have your child feeling seen, felt and heard. They feel like someone 'gets' me. This is extremely calming to their nervous system and nourishing to their brain. Your child will be relaxed, peaceful and happy to 'be themselves" more often.

And, of course, we all make mistakes. Remember to use the Rupture and Repair process, as explained earlier in this module, to sort through conflict and disconnection and to make things 'right' again.

2. Appreciations

This is the other biggie! 'Appreciations' fills them up with emotional juice (this is constantly drained especially with growth and development. The more they have, the better). Tell your child all that you are appreciating about who she/he is and does. "I really appreciate how patient you've been while I've been talking". "Wow, I'm loving how you're growing and changing and doing new things!" "Thanks for being so clear with your desires". Give appreciations for who they are in their being-ness as well as their doing-ness. Often. Often. Often. Every day. See it as currency for their love tank & green juice for their brain. Fill them up. Give the appreciations ten times more than the boundaries. That's what their brain needs. Do it in a whole body way using warm eye contact, touch, a verbal "wow, look at YOU, you gorgeous person", the smiles of gratitude, "you're awesome". Give these type of YES's ten times more than the NO's. Don't give up. Sometimes it takes a hundred times to see a shift, and yet it's SO WORTH IT. Brain wiring. Emotional love tank fillups. More compliant behaviour. Sweet feelings of connection. A child who is thriving! YOU rockin it as a mama!

Embodiment Practices and Appreciations are extremely useful tools when it comes to motivating your child to adopt positive behaviours. A child who feels validated and connected with through being attuned to and appreciated will begin to relax their nervous system and more easily shift into a higher brain state of GREEN. And by helping them identify the different feelings they're experiencing, either verbally or non verbally, you're helping them develop emotional intelligence so they can identify and name their feelings, and manage them more easily in the moment.

On the other hand when these practices **aren't** used and when a child feels misunderstood, disregarded or that their experiences are minimized, wrong, or they should 'just get over it', the resultant stress will have a negative impact on their nervous system and they'll begin to 'slide into the RED'.

OTHER VITAL INGREDIENTS – GREEN JUICE FOR YOUR CHILD'S BRAIN

Just like a health juice needs the added nutritional value of other ingredients to make it a 'complete food in a glass', so too does your child's brain need the nourishment of other key factors. This will make it extra delicious, extra good-for-them, and have your relationship set apart as a 'WOW'.

Using Play as a strategy

Yes. Use play as a strategy. Not just because it's fun and they like it. Because it is the language of your child's brain. Particularly in the first 3-5 years. They process information and learning more through the right- brain. This is less verbal and more creative, imaginative and body-centred. So if you want to connect with your child and teach them something then using play is the vehicle. And here's a tip: their brain is constantly seeking novelty, newness. When kids have mastered a task the brain wants to move onto something new. So save your 'play energy' for the boring repetitive tasks such as getting dressed, putting toys away and sitting at the dinner table. Bring some playful craziness and fun into these activities and your child's brain will be more engaged. It's the way you 'speak their language'. Engage with the right brain

first then bring in the left brain if you need to give direction or explanation using words. Doing both is also helping them be whole-brained and smarter. Play is currency for your gorgeous relationship together AND it is an opportunity for YOU to free up your own inner child. It's the perfect way to awaken your senses and really *feel the aliveness* of your authentic joy.

Telling Stories as a daily Practice

Help your child's brain integrate the experiences that they've had (make sense of them). A powerful daily practice is to have quiet time in the evening and go over the events of their day with them. If they are old enough to 'join in' you can interactively tell the story of what happened that day, and help them make sense of it. It can be a good teaching opportunity, a time to pick up on any relationship ruptures that need repairing, and a good way to help your child see different perspectives, problem-solve and prepare ahead.

Also, telling your own stories models to your children how to tell their own, and helps them feel connected to you as a person outside of the 'mother' role.

Daily Focus Time

Every child's brain needs a challenge that's goal-orientated. It's important to give them age-appropriate activities to strengthen their attention and engage in problem-solving and learning. This will create deep connections in their brain as a result. You can begin with all sorts toys and games when they are younger, and progress up to cooking meals, reading, learning crafts, tinkering with fixing things, and more advanced games and activities when they are older. When they are little it will be important for you to 'set this up' and show them how'.

Following your child's lead

They come into the world with their own uniqueness. It's what makes them special and separate from you. We can call this their essence, their spirit or their soul. You choose what you want to call it. The thing is we need to absolutely honour it and realise that their 'essence' might take us on a journey that's very different from our own. And that's to be celebrated. How do we do this? We follow the path of their passions and interests. We acknowledge what brings them delight. We seek to support natural inclinations and make choices that are supportive of their unique needs. Instead of presuming we 'know' our child and label them accordingly, we understand that likes and dislikes, attributes, tendencies and traits can shift and change as they grow and go through developmental stages. We meet them as a new person each new day allowing space for the 'not-knowing' to emerge. So often even the most aware parents are surprised!

You allowing YOUR essence to express, explore and shine is equally as important. They will sense your passion and aliveness giving them permission to do the same. They will not feel responsible for YOUR happiness as you are taking responsibility for this yourself. There's no better way for your child to embody their happiness potential than to witness you doing the same.

Time in Nature

There's growing evidence that nature is an energy source that we can draw on just by 'being in it'. Firstly it mimics the natural rhythm and time of children's being-ness, their right-brained natural state. It can be very soothing and nourishing for them to run around barefoot on the grass, have deep inhalations of clean air, allow sounds of release in an open space, and experience the timelessness and delights of nature in her

cycles. And for us as mothers it helps us reconnect to our child through their natural state of being-ness. We can experience more relaxation and aliveness with the possibility of both you and your child activating green brain states very quickly.

How can you bring nature into your day? Can you park the car a bit further away and take a walk with your child through the trees? Can you leave 20 mins earlier or stay later to have time in the park. Daily.

Body Juice

I talk about embodiment a lot. This is because the body is SO IMPORTANT. The brain and nervous system are part of the body, and need stimulation and nourishment to fully develop and to give your child the experience of aliveness and a healthy body, mind, emotions and spirit. Movement produces neurochemicals into the bloodstream which helps lift mood and energise and calm the body. It's provides a way for pent up energy to be released helping your child's body to come into balance and sometimes even ward off a meltdown or tantrum. It helps with so many things including co-ordination, balance, strength and even the physiological release of toxins through deep exhalation that comes with exercise.

Young children can get this exercise from play. Older children can be introduced to body-centred activities and sports if they're not getting enough exercise naturally. These include yoga, martial arts, dance, and many forms of sport. Exercise that is done within a team is great for children to learn about relating to others and managing within structure and rules. All in all it's 'green juice for your child's brain'. Well worth investing in.

It goes without saying that nutritional food also provides 'green juice for your child's brain'. All their organs and body systems will be functioning well which means they will 'feel good' and their brain will have the nourishment it needs to work well. Your child's immunity will be stronger, they'll be less likely to get sick. Their physical growth and development will be fully supported.

Sleep Hygiene

The neuroscience supports the importance of good sleep hygiene. This is about helping your child get into a routine of winding down before bedtime and creating the right conditions for a good nights' sleep. This will help their brain consolidate and integrate all the learning's of the day. A lot of processing happens during sleep. It's important to turn off technology at least an hour before bed, and provide a dark, well ventilated room for a good night's sleep. Encourage relaxing activities during that last hour such as bathing, reading, storytelling, quiet connection time, listening to soothing music and meditations. This can become one of the rituals of the day. Their brain will begin to predict this sequence of events in the evening, and begin to calm automatically. This is providing great foundations for deep and nourishing sleep, and for your child to wake refreshed with a brain that is less irritable and able to function 'in the green'.

Your Healing

Let's end with the most powerful strategy of all. This strategy has the potential to change subconscious patterning and beliefs that rob you from being a better version of yourself as a mother.

What we know from the attachment science is that when you make sense of your own early childhood experiences and patterns of attachment, you can begin to heal and change and give your own child a different experience.

This is the most incredibly powerful and effective thing you can do. It will have the greatest impact on your child.

The way to heal your childhood wounding is to bringing awareness to it and taking the steps to understand the past and have a different experience of the present.

There are many ways to do this including the practices and meditations within this program, and by seeking professional counselling/ personal development as required.

Well done you have completed Module Three. Head on over to the [Facebook Village](#) and share your thoughts and experiences using 'Green Juice for your child's brain'.