

# Hand In Hand

*How to comfort  
the child that's  
still inside you.*



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# Introduction

## *The Hand You Were Always Waiting For*

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*There is a child still living within you.*

Not a child who needs to control your life, and not a child you must remain forever trapped beside, but a part of you that still remembers what your adult mind may have learned to dismiss. This child remembers the rooms where you felt safe and the rooms where you did not. They remember the warmth of being welcomed and the ache of being overlooked. They remember the words spoken to you, the silence that surrounded you, and the feelings you absorbed before you had the language to explain them.

Your body grew. Your voice changed. You learned how to work, solve problems, accept responsibilities, and appear capable. You developed ways to function in the world. From the outside, you became an adult.

*But growing older does not automatically heal what happened when you were young.*

The frightened child does not disappear simply because you learn to hide your fear. The lonely child does not vanish because you become independent. The child who felt unworthy does not stop seeking approval merely because you achieve success. The child who learned to keep everyone happy may grow into an adult who cannot say no. The child who feared abandonment may become an adult who holds on too tightly - or leaves before anyone else has the chance.

We often judge these adult patterns without understanding where they began. We criticize ourselves for being too sensitive, too guarded, too emotional, too needy, or too distant. We demand that we stop overreacting, get over the past, and behave like an adult. Yet the harsh voice making those demands may sound remarkably similar to the voices that taught us our feelings were inconvenient in the first place.

*What if your reactions are not evidence that something is wrong with you?*

*What if they are evidence that something within you is still trying to be heard?*

A child cannot always understand the circumstances surrounding their pain. They do not know that a parent may be overwhelmed, traumatized, emotionally unavailable, struggling with addiction, or carrying wounds inherited from their own childhood. A child experiences life personally. When affection is absent, the child may not think, "My caregiver is unable to express love." The child is more likely to feel, "I must not be lovable." When conflict fills the home, the child does not understand the complexities of adult relationships. They simply learn that the world is unpredictable and that safety can disappear without warning.

*These conclusions are rarely formed through conscious reasoning. They are felt into existence.*

Before you could evaluate your environment, your nervous system was responding to it. Before you could challenge what you were shown, you were learning what to expect. You learned whether it was safe to speak, cry, make mistakes, ask for help, express anger, or simply be yourself. You learned whether love felt dependable or conditional. You learned whether closeness brought comfort or pain.

The child adapted because adaptation was necessary. Perhaps you became quiet. Perhaps you became helpful, funny, successful, strong, invisible, or fiercely independent. Perhaps you learned to monitor the moods of everyone around you. Perhaps you tried to become so good that no one would have a reason to reject you. These responses were not character flaws. They were intelligent attempts to remain connected, protected, and loved.

*But strategies developed by a child can become limitations for an adult.*

The need to please may prevent you from establishing boundaries. The need to remain strong may keep you from receiving support. The fear of criticism may prevent you from trying something new. The

expectation of abandonment may cause you to distrust genuine love. What once helped you survive can eventually prevent you from fully living.

*This is why healing requires more than telling yourself to change.*

You cannot shame a frightened child into feeling safe. You cannot criticize a lonely child into feeling loved. You cannot abandon the child within you and expect the fear of abandonment to disappear. Healing begins when you stop treating that child as the problem and begin recognizing them as someone who has been waiting for your compassion.

Imagine meeting the younger version of yourself. Look at their face. Notice their size. Consider how little they understood about the world and how dependent they were upon the people around them. Would you speak to that child the way you sometimes speak to yourself? Would you call them weak for crying? Would you tell them they were foolish for being afraid? Would you demand that they earn the right to rest, belong, or be loved?

*Or would you lower yourself to their level, look into their eyes, and offer your hand?*

*Perhaps you would say:*

—  
*I see you.*

*I believe you.*

*Your feelings make sense.*

*What happened was not your fault.*

*You do not have to face this alone anymore.*

*I am here now, and I will not abandon you.*  
—

These are not merely comforting words. Repeated with sincerity and supported by loving action, they can become the foundation of a new inner relationship. The adult you are today can begin providing the protection, consistency, patience, and reassurance the child within you may not have received.

This does not require blaming your parents or remaining consumed by the past. The people who raised you may have loved you deeply while still being unable to meet all your emotional needs. They may have been doing the best they could with the awareness and resources they possessed. Understanding their limitations may eventually bring compassion, but compassion for others must not require the denial of your own experience.

*You can understand why something happened and still acknowledge that it hurt.*

*You can love the people who raised you and still recognize what was missing.*

*You can forgive, if and when forgiveness feels right, without pretending the wound never existed.*

This book is an invitation to turn toward yourself. It is an opportunity to understand the origins of your emotional patterns, listen to the feelings beneath your behaviours, and develop a compassionate relationship with the younger parts of you. It will ask you to revisit certain experiences, but its purpose is not to keep you living in the past. Its purpose is to help you stop unknowingly carrying the past into every new day.

Along the way, you may discover that the child within you carries more than sorrow. Beneath the protection, fear, and silence, there may also be wonder, imagination, playfulness, courage, and dreams you once set aside. When you reconnect with this child, you are not only returning to what hurt. You are returning to what made you feel alive.

The journey ahead is not about becoming someone entirely new. It is about creating a safe relationship between who you were and who you are becoming. The wisdom of the adult and the truth of the child do not have to oppose one another. They can walk together.

There may have been moments in childhood when you reached for a hand and no one noticed. There may have been moments when the hand you trusted was withdrawn, or when the person holding it did not know how to make you feel safe. You cannot return to those moments and change who was available to you then.

*But you can offer your hand now.*

*You can become the person who listens.*

*You can become the person who protects.*

*You can become the person who stays.*

*The child within you has walked alone long enough. It is time to turn around, meet them where they are, and continue the journey together - hand in hand.*

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