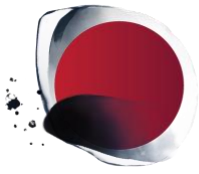


## Turning Into Presence



From the outside looking in.

Many days, too many to admit, I would pause with confusion before I entered: returning from the office, a business trip, tired, alone, about to join my family. In one house, when my son was an infant, I entered through the back door, but not before passing by the kitchen window. Pitch dark and cold outside, my wife and child illuminated, inside, as though on stage. I would pause and reflect and perhaps ponder about where I belonged. I knew in those early years, how to work my craft, my profession, my job as a psychologist. **But did I know how to be a father?**



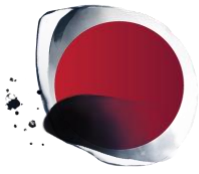
There were later years, other houses, or apartments. Still, before entering, I would pause. How could I make the transition from my vocation to my family, my home? Career was somewhat seamless, me at the center doing what I did best. Home, partnership, family, child all in the center and me out on the perimeter. Everyday... or at least most days, I would attempt to make the transition, best summarized as moving from outside to inside: house to home, work to family, self to other.

The struggle of this daily journey inspired my book: *The Present Parent Handbook*, Familius, 2017. I was and remain fascinated by how we as parents are to make the transition from one aspect of our lives to inclusion in another. How do we become a part of, how do we become present at home, without leaving the rest of our responsibilities to suffer?

In the process of writing *The Present Parent Handbook*, something became evident. We do not move away from one side of our life to connect with the other; there really is no separation. We move in and out of life as it presents itself in every moment.

When I am with my child, I may hold my work as well, but at a distance. My child becomes primary and my work secondary. When my work is primary, however, it need not conflict with my home life. Presence, a third position, ensures that one does not defeat the other. Rather, I am informed by both; and with intentional presence, I can choose where my attention needs to be in each moment. In a very real sense, I am in a dynamic dialogue with my life and those who occupy it.

There have been plenty of nights that I could have, should have, would have stayed longer at work. There remain an equal number of mornings I simply want to stay in the flow



of partnership, family, and child. Knowing that we, as parents, are the ones who have this choice, makes the choice viable.

How, you might ask, do we make this transition? We each do it, in our own way, in every moment that presents itself. We can choose to look, see, and feel. Look into your children's eyes. See what is being revealed: a smile, a sorrow, a frustration, a joy, the opportunity to play. Feel what presents in this moment: in your body, your emotions, your child's emotions. Choose to be as you are for what is being communicated, both subtly and overtly.

**Moment to moment we have the choice to gift our attention and presence**, if we are willing to receive the embrace of what awaits. We become present by turning into the moment that is seeking our attention. What we hold in consciousness, we fill with life. What we turn away from, waits, if we are lucky, or dissipates if left unattended for too long. Our life does not exist within us; our life exists around us. We just need the courage to step into it.

Image courtesy of: [Vidar Nordli-Mathisen](#) [@vidarnm](#)

*The Tim Dukes Method provides an opportunity for self-reflective individuals to cultivate the capacity to receive into consciousness hidden aspects of the self, claiming your unique gifts – ensuring that today's brilliance successfully transitions into tomorrow's wisdom. The Tim Dukes Method is designed and implemented by Dr. Timothy Dukes for determined creatives to ensure long-term viability — as a continuing investment in the well-being of yourself, family, organizations, culture, society, and the Earth itself.*