Getting Started with Aware Parenting: "Crying In Arms" (CIA)

Most babies need to cry more than most parents realize! (You're not going crazy!)

How this information can help you:

- Crying but you don't know why
- Sleep challenges
- Understand cues
- Communicate better with your child
- Magical bond
- Maintain an environment of emotional safety
- Foster self esteem
- Build a foundation for 2-way communication & relationship skills

What it is & Why it's a thing

When your baby cries beyond immediate needs, what do (or would) you do?
What have you been taught, read, assume, or feel like is 'instinct'?

Two main reasons for crying:

1) Communication of basic needs
2) Stress release

What is CIA?

- Always prompt response and meeting needs (above reason 1)
- Allow crying beyond needs while holding, listening, accepting (reason 2)
- Most common responses to crying beyond needs:
    - Distract
    - Ignore
    - AwP offers another way!

Why it's important

- Utilizes their innate abilities (quite amazing!!)
- They desire to communicate
- So feelings don't get bottled up
- Fostering of emotional intelligence, relationship habits, communication skills

What are the results of CIA?
What do you do when you're stressed or have something on your mind?
How does it affect your breathing, body tension, sleep, eating, etc?

- Baby becomes more relaxed
- Sleep improves
- Very centered and serene
- Healthy attachment
- Ability to flow between relating and playing independently
- Well regulated, well adjusted

All of this has a positive effect on motor, social, brain development, etc!

Isn't all crying bad?

Crying itself is natural & normal.

Yes, it's harmful for a baby to be left alone crying: ***Stress is continually induced.***

But crying can also be healing. In the presence of a loved one, while being listened to and accepted, it actually regulates! ***Stress is released.***

The twist! This can seem counterintuitive.

- A baby who's been stopped from crying can appear to be calm, and this is usually referred to as "regulated."
- But when all crying is stopped, big feelings can end up getting held in. They can bubble under the surface and will attempt to come out, often through sleep or behavior challenges.
- So then, what do *regulation* and *compassion* really look like? ***CIA actually meets a need: it's not a problem, it's a solution!***

Why it relates to sleep

Have you ever experienced having something on your mind that keeps you awake at night as you mull over it—and it seems 1,000 times bigger, somehow, in the middle of the night?!

Baby innately knows:
in order to sleep, she needs to relax
in order to relax, she needs to 'let off steam'

Tired = vulnerable = feelings bubble up easily.

So: tired + feelings bubbling + crying + the crying being stopped
Can mean disturbed sleep.

It's those pent up feelings (from reason 2) trying to get out that fight sleep—not the actual baby ☺

Baby is tired & vulnerable → crying → loving, tired parents do something habitually to stop the crying and get Baby to sleep = understandable. And, sleep association!

How to get started

1. Observe Baby:
Are there times she fusses/cries and you don't know why?
Or cries "because she's tired"?

2. Observe yourself:
Notice your initial impulse when baby cries.
Are you doing anything that if you didn't, she would cry?
Feel you must *do* something or else baby won't sleep?

3. Give it a try:
Hold Baby and allow the cry either until he's done or you reach your limit.
Eye contact available
Good first times to try it: pre-sleep and/or you're certain baby was fed recently.

4. What's "normal"?
Release cries can last anywhere from 5 min to over an hour. Cries that are processing past experiences tend to be longer than cries processing something that happened that day.
Turning red, getting sweaty, or coughing (not choking) are also normal ways the body 'releases.'

5. There's nothing you need to 'do'; your loving presence is enough. Notice an impulse to try these things: pacifier, bouncing, shushing, offering toys, nursing for comfort. And then instead, explore holding, listening, and loving.

6. After a release cry, babies typically feel more relaxed (if not, there may be more coming). They typically either fall asleep or stay awake serene, settled, and content.

7. This is your journey too. If you find it difficult to listen to your baby crying, you may find it helpful to think about how were you responded to as a child when you cried or felt angry. What spoken or unspoken messages about expressing emotions did you grow up with? Sometimes what feels like instinct is actually learned habit.

It's truly magical

Be brave—go ahead and try it!
If you suspect medical concern, please check with the appropriate professionals and address it.
Don't hesitate to reach out, this is new and different—and *amazing*!

ConsciousBaby™
WITH ELIZA PARKER

ConsciousBaby.com / Eliza@ConsciousBaby.com