



'A Mind of Their Own' Discussion Questions

Session 1: Chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4

What are the particular pressures your children are facing right now? What are the pressures you are under? (Intro)

Katharine reminds us that as parents we are the biggest influence on our children's lives.

- o Have you ever thought of yourself as 'keeper of the atmosphere' in the home? (Chapter 2)
- o What kind of atmosphere do you hope to create and keep?

Katharine reminds us that it is possible to 'train our brains' and build more positive ways of thinking.

- o Which negative brain 'pathways' do you see your child taking?
- o What could you do to help them create positive new ways of thinking?
- o How can you help your child to catch, challenge and change negative thinking patterns?

Katharine writes about creating family traditions, celebrations and rituals.

- o What traditions do you currently have?
- o Which new ones could you start in your family?

Katharine reminds us that the most important A* is emotional health. When children are assessed from a very young age, how can we help them build an emotional buffer?

What practical tips about dealing with school stress (p.42) would work well for your children?

What does success look like in your family:

- o this week?
- o this year?
- o for each of your children?
- o for you?



'A Mind of Their Own' Discussion Questions Session 2: Chapters 5, 6 & 7

Does your family enjoy watching TV talent shows together?

Do you ever catch yourself yearning for the celebrity lifestyle and thinking that your life is ordinary and unfulfilling by comparison?

How, as a family, can you better appreciate the good things about your family life?

Which hobbies, activities or interests does your child love best?

What more can you do to help them develop their skills to be the best they can be, while keeping realistic expectations?

When did your child last lose their temper? Looking back, was there an 'emotional smoke signal' you can identify? How could you help your child 'blow the match out'?

At what times does your child seem to want to talk? How could you make more time to listen and to give your child your full attention?

Are there any chores you are currently doing which you could give to your child? Think of ones which might also help them in problem-solving, or to feel a sense of achievement and self-esteem.

What can you do to create a restful environment at bedtime, and establish good sleeping habits? (p.70)



'A Mind of Their Own' Discussion Questions Session 3: Chapters 8, 9 & 10

Katharine explains the difference between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset. Think about a time your child failed, or was unable to do something.

- o How did they respond?
- o Were they able to dust themselves off and try again?
- o Take a look at the action points on p.88 and discuss how you might help them to turn failure into an opportunity.

What kind of things do you tend to praise your child for? What could you do to focus more on praising effort than on praising achievement?

Can you remember any specific words of praise from your childhood? What has the impact on your life been? Can you think of any words of praise – from a teacher, friend or yourself – that have made a real difference to your child?

How do you feel about 'taking a hit in the popularity stakes' in order to set and maintain boundaries?

Do you think the boundaries you have put in place give security to your child, or make them feel restricted?



'A Mind of Their Own' Discussion Questions Session 4: Chapters 11, 12 & 13

Did you have a best friend growing up? How did this shape you?

Which of the action points at the end of chapter 11 (p.118) might help you to foster good friendships in your child's life?

Think about how lockdown impacted your own and your child's relationships. What was your experience of friendship during the pandemic? Has this changed the way you view friendship?

Do you see failure as something that hinders your child's success, or as fertile soil for growth?

Katharine points out that children are always listening, and our own anxiety can have an impact on them. How does this make you feel? How can you use this knowledge to influence your children in a positive way?



'A Mind of Their Own' Discussion Questions

Session 5: Chapters 14, 15 & 16

Can you think of times you've been negative about your own or other people's appearance?

Are your children self-conscious about their appearance? How can you show them that their worth doesn't come from the way they look (p.150)?

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Spending time with children helps them develop a sense of self-worth. Yet it can feel like unproductive time, and just another pressure in our already busy schedule.

- o How can you change this thinking?
- o Can you involve them in routine tasks, share a hobby, or eat together more? (p.160).

How do you respond when your children are sad?

- o Do you sometimes try to fix it or minimise it (p.168)?
- o Why do you think that might be?

Think about ways you can be there for your children and let them know that it is OK to feel sad sometimes.



'A Mind of Their Own' Discussion Questions Session 6: Chapters 17, 18 & 19

Do you naturally take risks in your own life, or are you more cautious?

Who or what springs to mind when you think of resilience or anti-fragility?

Have you ever allowed your child to struggle with a task instead of swooping in to rescue them, or allowed them to experience the natural consequences of mistakes (like forgetting their sports kit)?

- o How does it feel as a parent to watch that process?
- o What are the benefits of allowing them to struggle or to experience some consequences?

Did you have mentors or adults you could turn to when growing up? Who are the people your children can turn to for help? How can you help others raise their children?

What are some new (age-appropriate) risks and challenges you can encourage your child to try? How might you prepare them (p.186)? How can you help your child to bounce back (and even forwards) from setbacks?



'A Mind of Their Own' Discussion Questions Session 7: Chapters 20 & 21

What has been your experience of parenting in the pandemic? What have been the highs and lows?

What have you as a family lost, or missed out on? How have you dealt with this?

Do you think your family has developed any new behaviour patterns during lockdown, and are they positive ones you'd like to keep?

What links do you see between identity and emotional wellbeing?

How can faith be an anchor for identity?

What has most impacted you as you have read 'A Mind of Their Own'?