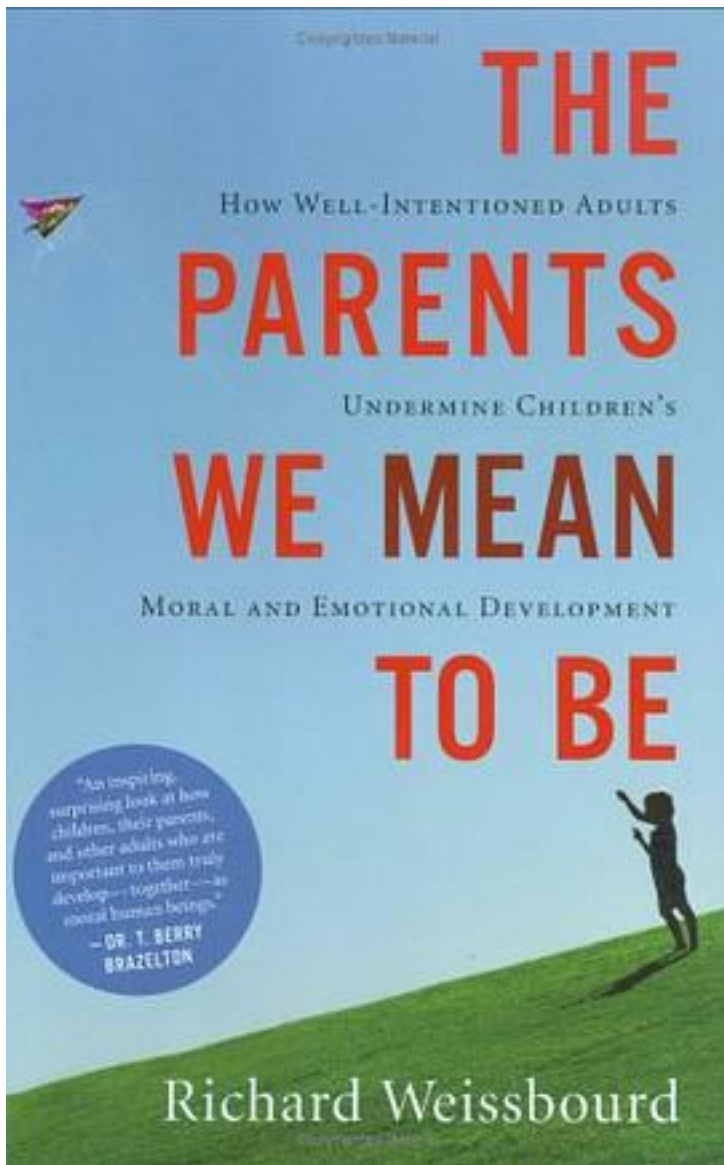


# The Parents We Mean To Be



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Harvard psychologist Richard Weissbourd argues incisively that parents--not peers, not television--are the primary shapers of their children's moral lives. And yet, it is parents' lack of self-awareness and confused priorities that are dangerously undermining children's development. Through the author's own original field research, including hundreds of rich, revealing conversations with children, parents, teachers, and coaches, a surprising picture emerges. Parents' intense focus on their children's happiness is turning many children into self-involved, fragile conformists. The suddenly widespread desire of parents to be closer to their children--a heartening trend in many ways--often undercuts kids' morality. Our fixation with being great parents--and our need for our children to reflect that greatness--can actually make them feel ashamed for failing to measure up. Finally, parents' interactions with coaches and teachers--and coaches' and teachers' interactions with children--are critical arenas for nurturing, or eroding, children's moral lives. Weissbourd's ultimately compassionate message--based on compelling new research--is that the intense, crisis-filled, and profoundly joyous process of raising a child can be a powerful force for our own moral development.

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