



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Peaceful Parenting Lecture Aims to End Power Struggles, Teach Parents How to Connect To Their Own Hearts, and Convey Unconditional Love to Their Children**

*Parenting Expert to Speak at Natural Living Conference*

(Caldwell, NJ) – Raising children today can be challenging. Parents often struggle with discipline and communication issues that can be frustrating and stressful for everyone.

Often, we judge or blame our children and feel angry when they don't do what we think they "should" be doing. Then we tend to judge ourselves for judging them; we start to feel guilty or ashamed. In a last-ditch attempt to coerce our children into doing what we want them to do, we try to use rewards, or punishment. The latter can include grounding, time outs, spanking, and threats. Some parenting experts believe that power struggles are often the result of the use of punishment. Indeed, children will often react to punishment with rebellion, retaliation, fear, and/or passive resistance. In the case of the latter, children submit to their parents at the expense of their own needs. So what can parents do to avoid power struggles that lead to harmful forms of conflict?

Proponents of love-based parenting and non-violent communication (NVC), like Dr. Stephanie Mattei, believe that the principles of NVC can help parents to raise their children without relying on the threat of punishment or promise of rewards. NVC proponents say that power struggles are generally about unmet needs on both sides – needs for love, acceptance, empathy, and understanding. Both parents and children need to be heard and have their concerns and feelings validated. "Children don't really misbehave," says Mattei. "Behavior is a communication: children act in the best way they can under the circumstances, with the sole intention of getting their needs met. Once the underlying needs and feelings of the child are recognized and validated, the conflict often dissolves," says Mattei.

Mattei became a certified parenting instructor through the Beyond Consequences Institute (BCI). BCI prepares parent educators to translate the latest findings in neuroscience and child development into practical parenting recommendations about how to nurture, protect, enrich, educate, and heal children – especially those displaying severe behaviors due to trauma, abuse, and foster care and adoption experiences. Mattei has two biological children - boys - aged 11 and 7, and one daughter, aged 3, who joined the family through adoption.

It was through Mattei's encounter with the Center for Non Violent Communication - from which she obtained extensive training through the Center's Peaceful Families, Peaceful World Project - that her parenting philosophy underwent a major shift. The Center's philosophy is based on a few key elements: Observe behavior (rather than judge it) and look for the needs behind challenging behaviors, prioritize connection with your kids at all times, practice listening and expressing feelings without judgment, and share power instead of using overt or subtle authoritarian strategies.

Today, Mattei views parenthood as an opportunity for personal healing, inner growth and social transformation. "Since I was pregnant with my first son, all I wanted to convey to him was unconditional love," she says. "NVC gives me the tools to parent my children without fear, guilt, or shame-inducing techniques. It also gives me the tools to heal my own wounds, so that my love can truly be unconditional." Instead of getting angry with our kids, Mattei says, we can choose to stop, identify our judgmental thoughts, and become aware of our own unmet needs. We can then choose constructive ways to express our feelings, and transform our anger into an opportunity for building connection and trust with our children.

For the past 10 years, Mattei has facilitated parenting support groups and consulted mothers about breastfeeding issues for La Leche League. She leads workshops, writes articles, and offers counseling services based on the teachings of NVC, neuroscience, and love-based parenting.

Mattei will be a featured Breakout Session speaker at the Holistic Moms Network's 2008 Natural Living Conference, Saturday, October 18, 2008 from 8:30am to 4:30pm at the Sheraton Crossroads Hotel, 1 International Boulevard in Mahwah, New Jersey. The Conference is expected to attract several hundred people as well as sponsors and exhibitors from across the country.

With Keynote Presentations and Breakout Sessions on health, the environment, parenting and education, and an Exhibit Hall featuring healthy and eco-friendly products and services, attendees will learn about the myriad ways in which they can help protect the Earth and improve their family's health. Tickets to the Natural Living Conference are \$100 for non-members before October 10th, and \$110 at the door. Online registration is available at [www.holisticmoms.org](http://www.holisticmoms.org). Lunch – with a vegetarian option – is included with the price of admission. Conference sponsors include Organic Valley and Kiwi Magazine.

For more information, please contact HMN's Executive Director, Dr. Nancy Massotto at (877) HOL-MOMS.

The Holistic Moms Network is a national non-profit - with 130 Chapters across the U.S. - connecting parents who are interested in holistic health and green living.