

LOVE VOWS

Connection, Words, Presence



Pablo Serna



Every word, every gesture,
and every look leaves a
mark.

Pablo serna



Author's Note

This eBook is a complement to Love Vows: Promises, Memories, and Unforgettable Moments, a book designed to strengthen the bond between parents and children through words, memories, and promises that transcend time.

To dive even deeper into this connection and discover the full essence of Love Vows, you can get your copy here: ([purchase here](#)).

Thank you for allowing these words to become part of your connection with your child.

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Introduction

Being a parent is one of the deepest experiences in life. It is a journey filled with unforgettable moments, constant learning, and, at times, uncertainty. There are no perfect manuals or absolute answers, but there is something that always guides us: **love**.

This book is not meant to give instructions or magical formulas on parenting. Rather, it is a reminder of what truly matters: the connection with our children, the way we look at them, the words we say to them, and the love we leave in their hearts.

Here, you will find reflections on the importance of raising children from a place of love rather than fear, on the power of our words, and on how vulnerability brings us closer to our children instead of pushing them away. Parenting is not about being perfect; it's about being present.

Each page is an invitation to see parenthood from the heart, to let go of the pressure of doing everything right, and to focus on what is truly essential: moments, presence, and unconditional love.

Thank you for allowing me to accompany you on this journey. I hope these words resonate with you and provide a space for reflection, connection, and growth.

With love,

— **Pablo**

I. The Flow of Water

Watering with Awareness

Welcome, and thank you for choosing to build this stage of your life in a meaningful and enriching way, both for yourselves and for your children.

"Love Vows" is not a parenting manual or a guide on how to educate your children. It does not seek to provide instructions but rather an invitation to connect more deeply with them.

My name is Pablo, and although I am not a father, I wrote this book from the perspective of a child—because we have all been children first. The relationship between parents and children is one of the most important and, at times, one of the most challenging bonds in life. It forms the foundation of who we are, how we see the world, and how we learn to relate to others.

Imagine that you, as a parent, are a **hose**. Your child is like the many plants that exist around you—some are vibrant flowers, others are resilient herbs, each with its own unique characteristics. And you decide **what to water**.

Your actions are the **water** that either nourishes or harms. The strength with which the water flows represent your **values and emotions**. If the stream is too strong or lacks direction, it can cause harm instead of nurturing. And without realizing it, we may impact our children in ways that could shape them for life.

Perhaps at some point, we have **poured water without realizing its effect**—out of **haste, anger, or impatience**. Sometimes, we do it because we believe it is the best way. We want our children to be strong, to understand how life works, to learn to defend themselves. Other times, we react without thinking, driven by **exhaustion, stress, or the wounds of our past**.

But the important thing is that **we always have the choice** of where to direct the water.

The Impact of Every Drop

Every word a parent speaks leaves a mark on their child. It can be a **seed** that blossoms over time or a **thorn** that lingers for years.

There are phrases that **nurture**:

- *"I trust you."*
- *"I am here for you."*
- *"I am proud of you."*

And there are phrases that **wound**:

- *"You're good for nothing."*
- *"You always do everything wrong."*
- *"You disappoint me."*

No matter how many times we tell a child they are valuable, if at the same time we **water them with words of criticism and rejection**, the impact of those wounds may last longer than we imagine.

In the end, what they will remember most is not what we taught them, but how we made them feel.

That is why *Love Vows* serves as a reminder of where to direct that water. It is a signal pointing towards self-love, confidence, self-esteem, emotional intelligence, gratitude, and respect.

It's Not About Being Perfect

Many parents feel the pressure to be perfect. But the truth is, there are no perfect parents. What truly exists are present parents—those who, amid their successes and mistakes, are willing to learn, grow, and love in the best way possible.

It's not about avoiding mistakes; it's about learning how to repair them. If at some point you poured water with too much force and unintentionally hurt your child, you can always return and water them again—this time with love, patience, and new words and actions.

The problem is not making mistakes; it's not acknowledging them.

When a parent can say, *"I'm sorry, I made a mistake,"* they teach their child a valuable lesson: that they don't need to be perfect to be loved, that they can make mistakes and still be worthy and valuable.

A Book That Guides, not a Rulebook

"*Love Vows*" does not aim to tell you what to do or how to raise your child. There are no magic formulas for parenting because every child is unique.

Rather, this book is a compass—an invitation to reflect on how you want to be remembered by your child, what kind of connection you want to build with them, and what seeds you want to plant in their heart.

This is not a book meant to teach children.

It is a book meant to remind parents of the importance of love in childhood.

Because childhood is short, but its impact lasts a lifetime.

So before moving forward, I invite you to ask yourself:

"Every action and word we give to our children is like the water that nourishes them. The way we raise them shapes what will grow within them."

- *What do I want to water in my child today?*
- *What values and emotions am I nurturing in my children through my words and daily actions?*
- *What kind of energy do I transmit when I interact with them? Is it calm, love, impatience, anger?*
- *If I had to consciously choose today what I want to flourish in my children, what would it be?*

II. The Power of Vulnerability in Parenting

When we think of parenting, we often imagine unshakable figures, full of certainty and answers. We believe that a good father or mother is someone who always knows what to do, never makes mistakes, and firmly guides every step of their child's journey.

But the reality is different: being a parent does not mean having all the answers. It means being present, open, and willing to learn.

And this is where vulnerability comes in.

A Story About Vulnerability and Love

Sofía had a 7-year-old daughter named Emma. One night, after an exhausting day, Sofia lost her patience when Emma spilled a glass of water all over her freshly completed homework.

"You always make a mess!" she said in frustration.

Emma didn't respond. She simply looked down and remained silent.

Sofía saw something in her daughter's eyes that made her pause—**it wasn't defiance or anger, but sadness**. She realized that her reaction had hurt her daughter more than the spilled water could have ever damaged the paper.

Taking a deep breath, Sofia knelt and hugged her.

"I'm sorry, Emma. I shouldn't have spoken to you like that. It was just water, and you are more important than any homework."

Emma looked up and, with a small smile, said:

"It's okay, Mom."

That simple moment **changed the way Sofia saw parenting**. She realized she didn't need to be the perfect mother—she just needed to be **present**, capable of recognizing her mistakes and making things right.

Vulnerability Is Not Weakness—It's Connection

We live in a world that teaches us to **hide our emotions**, to be strong at all costs, to never show doubt. But vulnerability is not a weakness. In fact, it's the opposite:

It's the bridge that connects us to others. It's the space where trust and authenticity grow.

A child doesn't need a **perfect** parent. They need a **real** one.

One who can say:

- *"I don't have all the answers, but we'll figure it out together."*
- *"I made a mistake, and I'm sorry."*

When a parent allows themselves to be vulnerable, they show their child that **love isn't about being flawless—it's about being present, even in uncertainty.**

The Impact of Vulnerability on Children

Children learn from what we do, not just from what we say. If they grow up in a home where their parents are open and human, they will learn to be the same.

When a parent admits a mistake and apologizes, they teach their child that they don't need to be perfect to be loved. They show them that making mistakes is part of life, that love doesn't disappear because of an error, and that there is always room to make things right.

When a parent expresses their emotions honestly, they teach their child that feelings aren't something to be ashamed of. That sadness, fear, and frustration are a natural part of life, and that instead of hiding them, we should seek to understand them.

When a parent allows themselves to receive love and support in difficult moments, they show their child that they don't have to face everything alone. That asking for help is not a sign of weakness—it is a sign of courage.

True Love Does Not Demand Perfection

Sometimes, the pressure to be a "good parent" makes us forget that love is not about perfection—it's about presence.

That it's not about never making mistakes but knowing how to ask for forgiveness.

That it's not about having all the answers but being willing to learn together.

Being vulnerable with our children is an act of deep love. It tells them, without words, that we see them, we understand them, and we are here for them—fully, with our strengths and flaws alike.

Because at the end of the day, what our children will remember the most is not whether we were perfect, but whether we were truly present.

"Showing our vulnerability does not make us weak—it makes us approachable. A child who sees their parents accept their mistakes and emotions learns to do the same."

Self-reflection questions:

- *How do I handle my emotions in front of my children?*
- *Do I allow them to see me make mistakes and correct them with love?*
- *Do I express my feelings in a healthy way, or do I tend to hide them to appear strong?*

III. Emotions

From an early age, we are taught to classify our emotions as **"good" or "bad."**

We are told that **happiness is positive**, but that **sadness is something to be avoided**.

We learn that **calmness is desirable**, but that **anger is dangerous**.

Without realizing it, we grow up believing that some emotions make us strong, while others make us weak.

But what if all emotions have a purpose?

What if, instead of judging them, we learned to listen to them and then let them go?

A Story About Sadness and Anger

Six-year-old Santiago came home from school with a deep frown on his face. When his mother asked what was wrong, she noticed he was on the verge of tears.

"Nothing," he replied, crossing his arms.

His mother gently insisted, but Santiago just pressed his lips together, refusing to speak. Then she remembered something—**whenever Santiago was sad, he showed anger first.**

"If you're angry, that's okay," she told him. "You can be mad at me, at school, or at anything. I just want you to know that you can tell me how you feel."

Santiago stayed quiet for a few seconds. Then, in a barely audible voice, he said:

"Matías didn't want to play with me today... he went with another kid."

Santiago's anger was, in reality, **sadness in disguise**. When his mother gave him the space to feel and express his emotions—without telling him to "get over it" or that he "shouldn't be mad", he found the confidence to share what was truly hurting him.

Emotions Appear, But We Are Not Our Emotions

- We **feel** anger.
- We **feel** sadness.
- We **feel** fear.

But we are not anger, we are not sadness, we are not fear.

Emotions are like clouds passing through the sky. They appear, surround us for a moment, but if we don't hold onto them, they eventually fade away.

The problem is not feeling—it's identifying too much with what we feel.

When a child says, "I am angry," and an adult responds, "It's okay to feel angry," the child learns that emotion is temporary—it does not define them.

But when we tell a child, "*You are so moody,*" we are labeling them. And that label may stay with them for a long time.

Teaching children that they can feel their emotions without being trapped by them allows them to live with greater emotional balance.

Emotions come, we feel them, and then we let them go.

Every Emotion Has a Purpose

Emotions are **messages**. They are not good or bad—they simply inform us about what is happening inside us.

- **Fear** protects us and keeps us alert.
- **Sadness** helps us process loss and change.
- **Anger** shows us when we feel something is unfair.
- **Joy** tells us what we love and value.

When we teach our children to **accept** their emotions instead of repressing them, we give them a valuable tool for life: **emotional intelligence**.

Validating Emotions Strengthens Children

Many parents, with the best intentions, try to comfort their children by saying:

- *"Don't cry, it's not a big deal."*
- *"Don't be angry, it'll pass."*
- *"Don't be afraid, everything is fine."*

But when we invalidate their emotions—even with love—the message they receive is that **their feelings don't matter, or worse, that it is wrong to feel certain things.**

Instead, we can say:

- *"I understand that you feel sad. Do you want to talk about it?"*
- *"It's okay to be angry. Do you want to think together about what we can do?"*
- *"I know this scares you, but I'm here with you."*

This teaches children that **all emotions are valid** and that they are never alone in facing them.

Parents Have Emotions Too—And That's Okay

In our efforts to be strong for our children, we often forget that **we feel too.**

If a child never sees their parents' express sadness, they will learn to hide their own.

If they never see their parents make mistakes and apologize, they will grow up believing that failure is unacceptable.

But when parents say:

- *"I had a tough day, but seeing you makes me feel better."*
- *"I made a mistake, and I'm sorry."*
- *"I feel a little sad today, but that doesn't mean I'm not okay."*

Children learn that emotions do not define who we are—they are simply part of life.

Feeling Is Living

There are no **good** or **bad** emotions—only emotions that need to be understood.

When we allow our children to feel without fear, when we accompany them without judgment, and when we allow ourselves to feel as well, we raise emotionally strong and self-aware children.

Because at the end of the day, we don't want children who never get angry or never feel sad.

We want children who know what to do with what they feel, who allow themselves to experience every emotion, and who never fear being who they truly are.

"Emotions are visitors, not our identity. We can feel anger, sadness, or fear, but we are not anger, sadness, or fear. We must welcome them but also let them go."

Self-reflection questions:

- *How do I react when my child expresses strong emotions like anger or sadness?*
- *Do I allow them to feel without judgment, or do I try to make them "get over it" quickly?*
- *Which emotions are hardest for me to accept in myself and in my children?*

IV. What Truly Matters

Time moves fast. One day, we hold our children in our arms, and before we know it, they've grown. Amid the routines, responsibilities, and daily chaos, it's easy to get caught up in what feels urgent and forget what's truly important.

But when the years pass, when childhood becomes just a memory—**what will our children truly remember?**

It won't be the perfect days. It won't be whether the house was spotless, whether dinner was gourmet, or whether every plan worked out flawlessly.

What will stay in their hearts are the glances full of love, the shared laughter, the nights when you hugged them without rushing, the moments when you were truly present.

What Really Matters

Sometimes, parents carry the weight of perfection. They worry about doing everything right, about giving their children the very best, about never making mistakes.

But children don't need perfect parents. They need present parents.

- They don't need expensive gifts—they need your time.
- They don't need perfect plans—they need connection.

- They don't need complex explanations—they need love in its simplest form.

When a child grows up, they won't remember how many toys they had, but they will remember who played with them. They won't remember if their clothes matched perfectly, but they will remember who held them when they were scared.

In the end, it's the small, everyday moments that build the most valuable memories.

Creating Memories Without the Pressure of Perfection

Childhood is fleeting, and a child's memories aren't filled with big events, but with **small experiences full of love**.

- A simple *"I love you"* before bed.
- A *"Tell me more"* instead of *"I don't have time"*.
- A slow walk together, with no rush.
- A moment of laughter over something silly and unexpected.

None of these require an extraordinary effort. They only require presence.

If there is one thing we want to leave in our children's hearts, it is the certainty that they were loved. Not in a perfect way, but in a real way, with mistakes and lessons, but always with love.

What Stays in the Heart

When time passes and our children grow, when childhood becomes just a memory and we can no longer hold them in our arms, it won't be the material things or the fulfilled expectations that they will remember.

They will remember the love in your eyes when you looked at them.
They will remember the words that made them feel safe.
They will remember the moments when they were your priority.

So today, during all the noise and daily routines, let's pause. Let's let go of the need to be perfect and choose what truly matters.

Because in the end, the only thing worth remembering... **is love.**

An Invitation to Reflect

To dive deeper into this idea, I want to invite you to read a beautiful and meaningful piece: "**Father Forgets**" by W. Livingston Larned. ([*You can read it by clicking here.*](#))

This article is a powerful reminder of the importance of seeing our children with more compassion and less pressure, of focusing on what truly matters, and of releasing the need for perfection.

It's a text worth reading **with an open heart.**

"What children will remember is not our perfect moments, but our presence, our gaze, and our words of love."

Self-reflection questions:

- *Am I truly present with my children, or is my mind often elsewhere?*
- *What are the little moments I want them to remember from their childhood with me?*
- *What can I do today to be more present, without waiting for everything to be perfect?*

V. Love or Fear

Raising from Love Instead of Fear

Being a parent is one of the most transformative experiences in life. From the moment a child enters the world, a great responsibility is born: to guide them, protect them, and give them the tools they need to grow.

But too often, that protection **comes from fear**.

- Fear that they will suffer.
- Fear that they will fail.
- Fear that we won't be enough as parents.

Without realizing it, this fear becomes the foundation of our parenting. And when we raise our children from fear, we teach them to live in insecurity, guilt, or the constant need for approval.

So, how can we raise from love instead of fear?

What Parenting from Fear Looks Like

Parenting from fear can take many forms—some so subtle that we don't even notice them:

Overprotection: Not allowing children to face difficulties because we fear they will suffer.

- *Example:* Not letting a child try something new because they might get frustrated or fail.

Excessive control: Trying to decide every aspect of their lives to prevent mistakes.

- *Example:* Choosing their activities, their friends, or even their emotions for them.

Using fear as a tool: Disciplining through threats, guilt, or punishment.

- *Example: "If you don't behave, no one will love you."*
- *"If you don't get good grades, you'll never be successful in life."*

When children grow up in an environment based on fear, they learn to doubt themselves, to fear mistakes, and to seek external validation rather than trusting their own judgment.

Raising from Love Creates Confident and Happy Children

Raising from love does not mean protecting children from difficulties. It also does not mean being permissive or avoiding boundaries.

Raising from love is about guiding rather than controlling. It's about allowing children to make mistakes, to learn, and to develop self-confidence.

When a child is raised from love:

They learn to trust themselves.

- Instead of saying: *"Don't do that, you'll fail."*
- We can say: *"Try it—I'm here to support you."*

They develop resilience.

- Instead of avoiding challenges, we accompany them through the process.
- We can say: *"Sometimes things don't go as planned, but there's always something to learn."*




They feel loved for who they are, not for what they achieve.




- Instead of **conditioning love** to their performance (*"If you get good grades, I'll love you more"*), we show unconditional love.
- We can say: *"I love you just as you are, no matter your successes or mistakes."*

Changing the Way We Communicate with Our Children

The words we use have a deep impact on children. Sometimes, even the smallest change in how we express ourselves can completely transform the message they receive.

Here are some examples of how we can replace fear with love in our words:

-  *"Don't cry, you're too big for that."*
-  *"It's okay to feel sad, I'm here with you."*
-  *"If you fall, I told you so."*

-  *"If you fall, I'll help you get back up."*
-  *"Don't do that, you're going to mess up."*
-  *"Give it a try, and if you need help, I'm here."*

When children grow up in an environment where their emotions are validated and where they can explore the world without fear of failure, they become more confident, resilient, and happy adults.

To Love Is to Trust

Raising from love does not mean shielding children from difficulties. It means standing beside them as they face them. It means giving them the security of knowing that love is not conditional—that it does not depend on their success or behavior, but on who they are.

Because at the end of the day, what children need most is not absolute protection, but parents who trust them, who walk alongside them with love, and who teach them that the world is not a place to fear, but a place to explore with confidence.

Raising from love is letting go of control and opening our arms.

It is **trusting**.

It is **being present**.

It is **loving, without fear**.

"When we raise from love, we give secure roots and wings to fly. When we raise from fear, we teach our children to doubt themselves."

Self-reflection questions:

- *What fears influence my way of parenting? Fear of them suffering, failing, or not becoming what I expect?*
- *How can I replace "be careful with..." with "I trust you, I'm here to support you"?*
- *Am I transmitting security and confidence, or am I passing on my own insecurities?*

VI. The Weight of Words

What We Say to Our Children Matters

Words are powerful. They can build or destroy, heal or wound, fill with confidence or plant seeds of doubt.

And when they come from a parent, they carry even more weight.

Children don't just hear what we say. They feel it. And often, the words we speak to them become the voice they will use to speak to themselves as they grow.

That's why it's so important to ask ourselves:

What messages are we leaving in their hearts with our words?

Words Can Leave a Lasting Mark on a Child

If we close our eyes and think back to our childhood, we can probably recall certain phrases that stayed with us. Some gave us strength and made us feel loved, while others—perhaps said without bad intentions—hurt us in ways we still carry today.

A simple *"I'm proud of you"* can give a child the security that they are valuable just as they are.

A *"You never do anything right"* can make them doubt themselves at every step, even as an adult.

Words have the power to stay in a child's heart for a lifetime.

Phrases That Can Hurt Without Us Realizing

Many times, adults say things without intending to cause harm, but children interpret them differently. Here are some examples of phrases that can have a **negative impact**:

- ❌ *"You're so lazy."* → The child doesn't learn discipline; they just feel they are not enough.
- ❌ *"You always mess everything up."* → They start believing there's no point in trying.
- ❌ *"Stop crying, it's not a big deal."* → They learn that their emotions don't matter.
- ❌ *"Look at your sibling—why can't you be like them?"* → They begin to compare themselves and doubt their own worth.






The words we repeat over and over can become beliefs in a child's mind. And those beliefs shape the way they see themselves and the world.

How to Express Ourselves More Consciously

Speaking with love does not mean avoiding limits or correction. It means doing it in a way that builds instead of destroys.

Here are some ways we can change our words to **strengthen a child's self-esteem**:

- ❌ *"You always make a mess."*

-  *“I know you can do better—let’s try again together.”*
-  *“If you keep acting like this, no one will like you.”*
-  *“Respect is important. How can we work on this together?”*
-  *“Stop crying, it’s nothing.”*
-  *“I see that you’re upset. Do you want to talk about it?”*

Even small changes in the way we express ourselves can make a huge difference.

When children grow up feeling understood, loved, and valued, they carry that security with them for the rest of their lives.

Our Words Become Their Inner Voice

Children learn to talk to themselves using the same words they heard from their parents.

If we speak to them **with love**, they will learn to love themselves. If we speak to them **with confidence**, they will grow up feeling capable of achieving anything.

If we speak to them **with respect**, they will learn to respect themselves and others.

So before we speak, let’s pause. Because every word we say today may become the voice our children will hear inside their own minds for the rest of their lives.

And if we are going to leave them with an inner voice, let it be one that makes them feel **loved, valued, and capable of anything.**

"The words we repeat to our children become their inner voice. What we tell them today will be what they tell themselves tomorrow."

Self-reflection questions:

- *What positive phrases do I want my children to remember from me when they grow up?*
- *What are the words I use the most when correcting them or feeling frustrated?*
- *If I could change one way I speak to them to strengthen their self-esteem, what would it be?*

Thank You for Being Here

Raising a child is the greatest act of love and dedication. It's not about doing everything perfectly, but about being present and connecting with the heart. I hope this eBook has been a guide—a reminder that every word, every gesture, and every look leave a lasting mark on our children.

If this content resonated with you and you'd like to deepen your connection with your children, I invite you to explore Love Vows: Promises, Memories, and Unforgettable Moments.

Find it here: ([purchase here](#)).

Thank you for being here and for giving your best in this journey.

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