How to Make Peace with Your Parents

A six-week self-guided programme

Reflection, compassion and healthy boundaries



Leaf Coaching

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How to Make Peace with Your Parents

Your workbook at a glance

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Move through the six weeks at your own pace. Each week includes teaching, reflection, a body-based practice, an Islamic reflection and an invitation to bring your learning into everyday life.

Week One: The Honest Beginning

Recognising what happened without forcing a verdict.

Core Theme: Honest noticing, without shame.

The Teaching

The single biggest obstacle to making peace with your parents is the story you have been told — and the story you have told yourself — about what you are allowed to feel.

You may have been told: they did their best. They had a hard life too. You should be grateful. In Islam we honour our parents. What kind of child complains?

None of these things are necessarily untrue. And none of them are a reason to skip the honest beginning.

Making peace starts not with forgiveness — that comes later, and cannot be rushed — but with truth. Seeing clearly what happened. Naming what it cost you. Acknowledging the gap between what you needed and what you received.

This is not an exercise in blame. Blame keeps you stuck. This is an exercise in clarity. Clarity can set you free.

The difference between blame and honest witnessing

Blame says: it is entirely their fault, they are terrible, I am a victim of them.

Honest witnessing says: what happened, happened. It had an effect. That effect is real. I am allowed to name it. I am also more than it.

One of those keeps you in a loop. The other begins to open a door.

What Islam says about honest reckoning

The Prophet Ibrahim (as) was able to say, with love and without hatred: 'O my father, why do you worship that which does not hear and does not see?' (Qur'an 19:42). He named the problem clearly. He spoke truth with adab — respect — but he did not pretend.

You are allowed to do the same.

Psychological Insight

Denial is a survival strategy, not a character flaw. If naming what happened with your parents has felt impossible, it is likely because at some point it was genuinely unsafe to do so. Children cannot afford to see their caregivers clearly — they depend on them. Adulthood offers, for the first time, the relative safety to look.

Neurological Note

The brain's default mode network — the system active when we are self-reflecting — often edits our autobiographical memory to protect our emotional stability. This means we genuinely may not remember things accurately, or may have minimised them over time. Gentle, supported re-examination of our history is not self-indulgent. It is neurologically necessary for healing.

Reflection Prompts — Week One

Take your time. Write freely. There are no right answers.

1. What is one thing that happened in your childhood with your parent(s) that you

have never fully allowed yourself to acknowledge was painful?

2. What story have you been told about what you are allowed to feel about your parents?

Where did that story come from?

3. If a close friend described to you the same childhood you had, what would you say to them?

(Notice if it is different from what you say to yourself.)

4. What have you had to become — what armour have you put on — because of your upbringing?

How has that served you? What has it cost you?

5. Complete this sentence: 'The one thing I have never let myself say about my parent is...'

Somatic Practice — Coming Out of the Story and Into the Body

We often think our way around painful emotions rather than through them. This practice brings you into the body — where the truth may still live.

Duration: 10 minutes. Sit quietly, no distractions.

If you wish, record yourself reading the practice slowly and play it back to yourself, or ask someone you trust to read it aloud to you. Leave pauses between the instructions so you have time to breathe and notice your response. You can pause or stop whenever you need to.

Body Honesty Practice

Sit comfortably. Feel your feet on the floor. Take three slow breaths.

Bring to mind one of your parents — whoever feels most present right now.

Don't think about them analytically. Simply hold them in your mind.

Ask yourself: where do I feel this person in my body right now?

Scan slowly: jaw, throat, chest, belly, shoulders, hands.

When you find a sensation — tightness, heaviness, heat, emptiness — stay with it.

Don't try to explain it or fix it. Just breathe into it gently.

Ask the sensation: 'What have you been holding for me?'

You don't need an answer. The question itself is the medicine.

Rest for a few minutes. Place a hand on the place you found.

Say: 'I am beginning to look. I am safe enough to look.'

When the practice is complete, take some time out before moving on. Breathe at a comfortable pace, notice the room around you and give yourself space to absorb the experience. You might sit quietly, have some water or take a gentle walk. There is no rush to reflect or find the right words; return when you feel ready.

Islamic Reflection — Week One

Ya Muqallib al-Quloob — O Turner of Hearts — turn my heart toward truth.

Not the truth that is easy, but the truth that heals.

Help me to see clearly without resentment, and to speak honestly without cruelty.

You are Al-Baseer — the All-Seeing. You have already seen everything I am only now

beginning to look at. I trust that your seeing of me is full of mercy.

Weekly Intention

This week, I will practise telling the truth — just to myself.

When I catch myself minimising or defending, I will pause and ask:

'What would I say if I were allowed to be completely honest?'

I will write it down. I will not perform ‘okayness’ with myself.

Taking This Into Everyday Life

Choose one small action this week: an honest response even if it is private, a clear limit when it is necessary, an ordinary shared moment that is not clouded by duty, or simply noticing what you feel without having to fix it. Write down what happened and what you learned.