

EASTSIDE

# MAMAMAG

Oct/Nov 2018

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# THE BUMBLEBEE NAMED RON

How do you inspire your kids to care about the Earth and the environment? Well, what if your main task is to empower them to be what they already are: *immensely caring*.

Most children are born caring about everything, from a tiny ant, to the biggest, most beautiful tree in the forest.

They don't come into the world with the judgement that a person is better than a dog, or a dog better than a frog, or a frog better than a flower.

For them, it all starts out as magic. Just think of all the different collections of wooden sticks and grey little stones that you've found in their pockets: nature's own treasures and toys. It is actually this society that teaches them – and once taught us – to judge it as throwaway things, with little value.

I still remember when my daughter was six years old and a big bumblebee flew into our apartment. It flew around, increasingly confused, and kept bumping into everything. I tried several times to shoo it in the direction of an open window, with little luck.

My daughter's eyes were wide as she watched the flight of the bumblebee. After a while, she named the bumblebee Ron and grew increasingly concerned about the fact that he may lose his family if he stayed with us too long.

Finally, I managed to catch the bee in a glass jar and carefully carried it out on the balcony and set it free. My daughter and I watched it fly away into the sky. When my daughter looked up at me, she was beaming and she said; *"Mum, you're a hero!"*



Now, this may just seem like a simple, sweet story but it actually marks an important in how you can invite your kid to care about the environment. Here are some tips to empowering your children to care more about our precious Earth:

### #1. Encourage your kids to have a personal relationship with nature!

Let them name the bumblebees, ants and frogs, and talk to them about their families and lives. Inspire them to find their own special, secret places and hideouts in the "wild" – like a nearby park, beach or even your own backyard – and maybe tell them about yours, from once upon a time. Let them keep all those treasures they find, and admire them together, mud and all!



### #2 Show them that you care

Yes, saving a bumblebee may seem like a small, silly thing, and sometimes not even possible. Your kids, especially when they're young, do and be what you do and be... *not so much what you tell them.*

So if you care about animals, this will show them that animals are worth caring about. If you turn off the lights when you leave the house, sort your garbage and cycle to work, it will show them that those things are actually important to do.

You are your child's heroes and role models, so it's important to be conscious of your choices and lead by example.

**"Mum, you're a hero!"**

### # 3. Show them what you love!

If you would like your kids to care about Earth, share with them what you truly enjoy about our planet!

Sleep under the stars, plant a tree, watch the sunset, even owning a pet, will show your children what you love and appreciate about our precious planet. True joy is next to irresistible and very contagious. Especially if someone we trust and love introduces it to us, like our parents.

Even though my daughter is now a teenager and she's no longer naming bumblebees, and doesn't like being told what to do, she still acknowledges what I shared with her during her childhood, and has developed an intelligent and eco-conscious mind.

I even encourage her to create lists of things we can be and do as a family, that would contribute to the planet. And I plan to listen to her.

That is my last and most important tip.

### #4. Trust that your kids know

Your kids function like big radio receivers and pick up information from everyone and everywhere. They know more than you've probably ever dared to imagine. So, ask them questions and honour their point of views and suggestions for the planet.

That, more than anything else, will inspire and empower them to continue caring, well into teenage and adulthood.

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