

Grace instead of Guilt

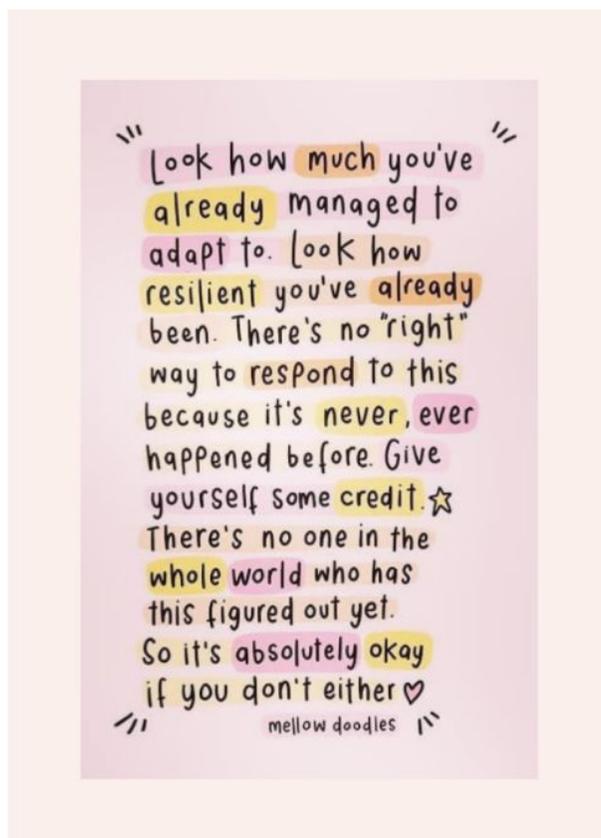
Choosing grace over guilt. How do you stop the guilt, turn off the “You should have (or shouldn’t have)” and “You aren’t a good parent, worker, teacher, spouse, partner, etc.”? How can you give yourself grace and put that guilt out of your mind and out of your heart? Here are six suggestions:

Parent guilt can creep into your life most days starting with birth (e.g. “I should have gone natural; I should have not taken that call; I should have not sent her back to nursery; I should have taken off more time from work”). It can continue through life (e.g. “I should have attended that event; I should have done this or not done that; I should have helped him with that down payment; I shouldn’t have helped him with that down payment.”). The Coronavirus Pandemic has introduced us to a whole new level of guilt - “I should be spending more time helping her with her math lesson; I should not have let him play that long; I am not a good teacher; I am not giving what I should to my job ; I am not being a good parent or a good employee; I should not have yelled at her; I am not as good as my friend at doing this; I hate this!”

What I am talking about here is not a healthy guilt that helps us learn and align our behaviors with our values; I am talking about an unhealthy, shameful guilt that gets in the way of our learning and life, that ruminates in our mind, that robs us, and that keeps us from being our best selves.

I would like to offer two things today: 1) a reality check to refocus and 2) a bit of encouragement to choose grace over guilt.

First, the reality check to refocus - Linda Stade in her Education Writer blog, sent this poster to help us get a bit of a reality check:



Whew! Take a breath, no, a deep breath, hold it and let it out slowly. Repeat that. Now, one more time.

Now read those words and focus on them again. Since the week of March 16th, you have been adapting, trying, growing, persevering, adjusting, learning, managing, and taking multitasking to a whole new level. Bravo for you! Prior to this, who knew you could manage all this?

I love this line, “There’s no ‘right way’ to respond to this because it’s never, ever happened before.” That’s what can help you release your guilt. There is no “right way” and your way is what your family needs. You know the schedules that have to be managed, the amount of outside play that is needed, and when enough is enough. As you are adding managing daily school work and teaching to your list of many skills you possess, you can be certain that YOU know best how to do this in a way that works for your family. You have always been your child’s first and most important teacher, and that has not changed.

What has changed is the amount of new information that you are teaching and how you are doing that. Remember, this pandemic has never, ever happened to you, your child, your family, your community, your commonwealth, and your world before now. Give yourself a pat on your back and permission to fumble your way through this. Hold your head high and your heart even higher. Your reality is embedded in these words - "There's no one in this whole world who has this figured out yet. So it's absolutely okay if you don't either." You do not have to have this all figured out. Can I give you some encouragement? Our teachers who are professional teachers and have their own children at home to teach too are working just like you are to figure out how to manage all of this. We all are adjusting to and working on our new reality. Let's refocus and accept this reality. You really are adapting, trying, growing, persevering, adjusting, learning, managing, and doing major multitasking, and you are enough.

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/parenting-during-coronavirus-you-are-enough>

Borrowed from: Virginia Chance Schools

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