

5 Parenting Resolutions to Ease Your Life

Do you spend much of your day trying to figure out how to get your kids to behave, how to stop the chaos, how to make them happy, and how to gain peace in your family? The answer may be surprising. You're doing too much.

Imagine having more time in your day, relieving mental exhaustion and enjoying your children more. It's easier than you think and often can be the hardest thing you'll ever do.

I offer you five ways to release agony, enjoy more of your life, and give your children more of what they need on top of it:

1. **Don't try to fix your child's problems.**

Children come to us (hopefully) with all their complaints, injuries, difficulties, and disappointments. We try to fight our children's battles, keep the boogie-men away, protect them from the big, bad world and take on their responsibilities so they won't fail.

When we try to fix their problems, whether school issues, sibling battles, fears and upsets, we set ourselves up for failure and send our children the message that they are not capable of solving their own problems and must depend on someone else to do it for them. When we step back and acknowledge their problems, we are better able to help them figure out how to solve them.

2. **In the middle of a meltdown, do nothing.**

When children are wound up into fifth gear, they cannot hear, much less think rationally. That goes for us too. Reactions are automatic, impulses take control, and nothing positive can be taught.

The best thing to do is nothing. Wait until the storm has passed, and come back to it when emotions have calmed. You will be surprised by the amends your child is able to make and the lessons you are in better shape to teach.

3. **Accept your children. Don't try to make them different.**

Do you have a child you didn't bargain for? Or one you just don't understand? We spend a lot of time trying to get our children to think, feel, and behave like us, or at least the way we want—in other words, beating our heads against the wall.

Acceptance is the most important gift you can give your child. He comes with his own package, his own personality blueprint. You can influence him positively or negatively but you cannot change him. The more you try, the more he learns that he is not okay the way he is.

Find qualities you admire, focus on strengths, and let him know there is no one else you would rather have in your life than him. Remember, he's your

teacher.

4. You don't have to have the answer, and you'll always have doubts.

Not only do you not have to know the answer but often you shouldn't. When we think we have the answer, our agenda takes control, and we aren't open to alternatives. It's fine to say, "I don't know. I need time to think about it." Or, "Hmm, what do you think?"

Doubt is the barometer by which we can tell if we are flexible or inflexible. Doubt keeps us consciously searching and learning. It protects us from complacency and neglect and allows for mistakes, apologies and negotiation.

We will always wonder what to do and teeter on either side of the line. If we don't rigidly hold the line or fall far from it with inconsistency, it means we are paying attention.

5. Talk less, be more.

Ever feel like a broken record? We nag, prod, push, and provoke—all out of fear that without it, our children will fail. The message to them is you can't do it without me. We unintentionally push them into fulfilling those prophecies.

Trust more and your child will not want to betray that trust. Listen more and talk less and your child will feel heard. Simply be more and you and your child will develop a deep, heart-felt relationship.