

20 Life Experiences Every Child Should Have

A few years ago, the British-run Ordnance Survey [released a list](#) of 20 basic skills which were nearing extinction among today's young people. Among the disappearing skills? Reading a map, making bread, and tying a knot.

Unfortunately, these 20 items aren't the only "basic skills" that are disappearing from the consciousness of the next generation. Perhaps more alarming is the disappearance of fundamental life disappointments, such as being excluded from a group or being bullied, which were once the childhood training ground for adulthood.

According to Stanford University dean [Julie Lythcott-Haims](#), these disappointments have disappeared because many of today's parents have been overcautious, interfering when their children were threatened, in danger of failing, or about to make a terrible mistake. Such interference, she notes, fails to prepare them for the real world, where they are sure to meet with multiple struggles and setbacks.

Quoting psychologist Michael Anderson and pediatrician Tim Johanson, Lythcott-Haims presents the following list of 20 experiences every child should encounter at some point:

1. Not being invited to a birthday party
2. Experiencing the death of a pet
3. Breaking a valuable vase
4. Working hard on a paper and still getting a poor grade
5. Having a car break down away from home
6. Seeing the tree he planted die
7. Being told that a class or camp is full
8. Getting detention
9. Missing a show because she was helping Grandma

10. Having a fender bender
11. Being blamed for something he didn't do
12. Having an event canceled because someone else misbehaved
13. Being fired from a job
14. Not making the varsity team
15. Coming in last at something
16. Being hit by another kid
17. Rejecting something he had been taught
18. Deeply regretting saying something she can't take back
19. Not being invited when friends are going out
20. Being picked last for neighborhood kickball

Granted, no parent should purposely set up these life experiences for their children. But are we doing our children a disservice when we fail to step aside and let them happen naturally? Would we see a stronger, more capable generation of adults if parents let their children navigate the school of hard knocks a little more often, instead of stroking their egos and breeding a sense of entitlement?

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