

10 Steps to Becoming a Happy Parent

Several weeks ago, a friend of mine posted an article about motherhood on a social media account. The article went on to explain how fun child-rearing actually is. A number of young moms were quick to jump on to her post and agree that despite the challenges, motherhood is fun and one of the best things that can happen to a woman.

So why is it that so many young women only hear how horrible motherhood is? Why is it that so many young moms often share how tired they are, how difficult their children can be, and how thankless the nature of their daily tasks?

The answer to this is simple: motherhood is all of those difficult things and more and it's easy to never look beyond these difficult things.

But what if more mothers (and fathers) did just that? Is it even possible to go through parenthood with joy and happiness?

New York Times columnist KJ Dell'Antonia believes it is. In her new book, [*How to Be a Happier Parent*](#), Dell'Antonia lays out 10 simple ways parents can go through life choosing happiness even while in the throes of diapers, soccer practice, and rebellious teens. These ten items are paraphrased below:

1. Don't take the easy way out – “In parenting, you mostly have to go the long way,” writes Dell'Antonia. Doing this is daunting, but it pays off in the end because it teaches children to become responsible adults, an outcome that should make any parent happy.

2. It's not as bad as it seems – It's easy to look at every bad situation as a catastrophe. Dell'Antonia encourages

parents to avoid this mentality and instead push through with a positive attitude.

3. This too shall pass – “People, including children – especially children – change.” Remembering this makes life easier when a child is going through a stage that makes a parent miserable.

4. Don't let others pull you down – Because parents spend so much time with their children, it's easy to be influenced by their life struggles, no matter how small. The key, however, is to make sure their struggles don't negatively influence your life as a parent.

5. Pick your battles – “If you see something, don't always say something,” encourages Dell'Antonia. Sometimes it's best to let children work things out on their own, without having mom interfere.

6. Don't compare – We all know this... but it quickly runs out of our memory door the minute we go on Pinterest, attend a PTA meeting, or watch our friends juggle life in a seemingly effortless manner. A simple life is better for your children – and will make parents a lot happier and relaxed in the process.

7. Don't let your children control your emotions – “You can be happy when your children aren't.” Children run the gamut of emotions in the space of a minute. If we try to keep up with them in this, we will quickly wear ourselves out. Dell'Antonia encourages parents to show sympathy without living in a child's rollercoaster drama.

8. Follow through – According to Dell'Antonia, it's easy for parents to waffle back and forth between giving into their children and standing firm. But instead of giving into this continual up and down, she suggests parents take time to make a decision and take a stand, and then hold to that commitment, regardless of the cost.

9. Mistakes happen – “You don’t have to get it right every time,” writes Dell’Antonia. The key is to recognize this fact, and then pick yourself up and keep going when you do make a mistake, instead of continually beating yourself up over it.

10. Enjoy the little things – Delighting in small joys and looking for ways to be grateful brings a ray of hope to even the most rotten days. By “soak[ing] up the good,” Dell’Antonia explains, we “build... a reservoir of happiness for when things feel bad.”

There’s no denying that parenting is tough work... but are we making it a lot harder than it needs to be? Could parenting be infused with a lot more joy by implementing these simple items into our daily interactions with children?

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