

What to Do When Your Kids Make You Feel Guilty

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Lisa here. We hope last week's blog helped you find some clarity on your problem-solving style. This week, we're talking about a feeling that can challenge even the most confident parents – guilt. Even when you know you've made the right decision, parent guilt can rear its ugly head and make you second guess yourself. If you don't work through the guilt, you will struggle to be an effective parent.

Keep in mind that guilt is not necessarily a bad thing. Guilt is an emotion, and just like any emotion, its job is to alert us to something important. When we feel guilty, there is a chance that we have done something wrong. As a parent, it can be difficult to deal with feeling that you have done something you should not have. An additional complication is that children are very good at triggering guilt in their parents, especially when they figure out that guilty parents often give in.



As a parent, it can feel like you're always supposed to know the answer and that you cannot be wrong. However, that is far from the truth. Yes, you are a parent. But you are also a human being and human beings make mistakes. Accepting this goes a long way to reducing the amount of guilt you feel for your parenting decisions.

So what do you do? First, you must figure out when guilt is warranted and when it is not. Ask yourself why you are feeling guilty. Do you feel like you should have said yes? If you gave a knee-jerk response or if you reflect and legitimately change your mind (not because your kids are pressuring you), then that's fine. It's okay to reverse a decision if you realize you made a mistake.

However, parent guilt frequently misfires when it's triggered by other people, especially your kids. Do you have a hard time when other people are upset with you? Does it affect you when your kids are upset even when you know you made the right decision? If so, parent guilt may be a frequent occurrence.

One way to counteract this guilt is to parent with intention. When you have made conscious decisions about the kind of parent you work to be and your parenting actions are tied to your purpose/values, you have less guilt. Your foundation is strong, so it is harder for your kids to make you feel guilty for your parenting decisions.



That does not mean they will not try. Kids can lay it on real thick, especially when they sense you feeling guilty. In those moments, it's important to give yourself a mental reset and remind yourself of your reasons for your decisions. It's okay if your kids are sad, mad, or disappointed sometimes. That is part of life, and they have to learn to deal with not getting their way all the time. When you are able to recognize that your kids are pushing your buttons, it will be easier for you to resist feeling guilty for your sound, intentional parenting decisions.