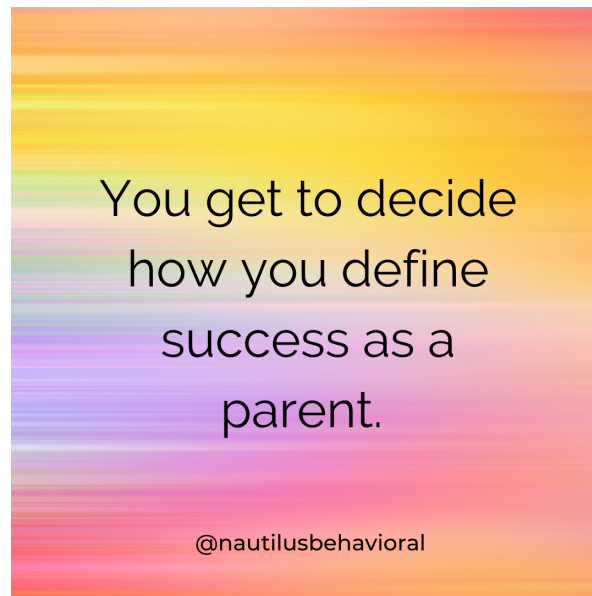


What's Your Metric of Success as a Parent?

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Sarah here. We hope that you found last week's blog on managing parent guilt helpful.

Whether your kids are triggering your parent guilt or you are, it's quite possible that your sense of guilt ties into your sense of success as a parent. So today, we're talking about how you define success as a parent.



Oxford Languages defines success in part as “the accomplishment of an aim or purpose.” Sounds straightforward, right? Maybe not. If we're talking about success as a parent, do you consider whether you accomplished a specific goal? Or do you evaluate whether you're accomplishing your general purpose as a parent? But then that begs the question...what's your general purpose as a parent?

Overall, most parents want their children to grow up feeling loved. Most parents hope to raise kids who become independent and (you guessed it) successful. But rather than focusing on how we define success or general ways *other people* talk about success, we wanted you to reflect on your own personal metric of success as a parent.

Read through the questions that follow and notice what comes to mind. There aren't "right" or "wrong" answers here. You don't need to "think hard" about the questions- these are things that you'll likely have immediate thoughts about, so just notice the first thoughts that show up. If you'd like, you can jot down your answers, but no pressure.

- Is your success as a parent tied to *how you feel* as a parent?
 - Is it about your feelings of love, pride in your children, or happiness? Maybe it's feeling a sense of peace or feeling confident as a parent?
 - Is your success as a parent tied to the feelings you *don't* have? For example, maybe success is about *not* feeling overwhelmed or uncertain, *not* doubting yourself.
- Is your success as a parent tied to *what you do (your behavior)* as a parent?
 - Is it about actions like spending time together in general or spending "quality time" with them? Maybe it relates to activities like reading to them, or giving them opportunities or life experiences? What about buying things for them- whether that means buying necessities or purchasing things they want?
 - Is your success about your parenting behaviors- how you manage your child's behavior, your discipline choices, how you speak to your child, whether you have challenging conversations with your child?
- Is your success as a parent tied *how your child(ren) feel*?
 - Is it about your child(ren) feeling generally happy, loved, or safe? Feeling happy or loved in a specific moment? Is it about them feeling at ease or being confident?
 - Is your success about the feelings your child(ren) *don't* have? For example, maybe it's about your children *not* feeling scared or stressed, *not* feeling upset or insecure?
- Is your success as a parent tied to *how your child(ren) behave*?
 - Is your success about your child(ren)'s actions in a given situation? About how they behave overall? Is it tied to them behaving or not behaving in a particular way?
 - Is your success related to your child(ren)'s compliance with rules? Maybe it's about how they respond to your authority or the authority of others?
 - Is your success tied to how your child(ren) manage their own successes and failures?



Think about whether the ways you currently define success as a parent are the only metrics that matter. Maybe you're so focused on your family feeling loved that you haven't really focused on how *you feel*. Maybe you've been so invested in your children being "well-behaved" that you haven't really considered how *they feel*. It may also be helpful to consider whether your metrics of success *actually matter to you*. Sometimes, we're so focused on what things *look like* from the outside (e.g., how our children behave), we don't consider what they *feel like* on the inside (e.g., you feel stressed and upset with your children all the time, you're constantly focusing on correcting their behavior).

Remember: success as a parent isn't a one-and-done thing. You will have moments of success, but overall, it's a long game. How you view yourself as a parent and how you define your success can and should change over time. As your child(ren) grow and develop, your role as a parent and how you view your own success will shift. For now, be mindful of how you're defining your success, focus on the short term as well as the long game, and notice and be proud of your successes, no matter how small.