

Homework

Part 1: Working Through our Failures

We will start by first identifying some examples of when you've felt like a failure and to identify some of the causes and how our society has failed us in this regard. You can do the following exercise as many times as you like with the various areas you may feel like you're failing.

Write out an example of a specific time when you felt you had failed at parenting and what you feel the ideal should have been:

Do any of the following considerations play a role in your inability to do what you wanted to do? If so, identify how:

New or changing relationships?

Rest and recuperation?

Lack of support for older child?

"Baby brain"?

Week 1: Welcome to the World of Guilt

Given the lack of support in our culture as a real problem, can you write out how you think this situation would look in a more supportive culture. Imagine you lived with an extended family or group that offered support both practically and emotionally - how would this impact this situation?

Can you now forgive yourself for this failure and see it as not being about you, but about the environment you find yourself in?

Part 2: Shifting Your Mindset

Once we have accepted our failures as not really being failures, we can turn to shifting how we think about them and what changes we can make to allow us to find that balance between our ideals and our reality. As you saw in this week’s lecture section, there are often many ways to compromise on our ideals and here you can compare various ways to help you decide what’s best for you. For each area, complete the alternatives and then you can decide which one you want to take on.

- Current expectation = what you currently want to have happen that isn’t happening or is causing undue stress
- Let it go = what would it look like if you abandoned the expectation altogether for a period of time (you pick how long)
- Limit change = change the limits you have around this so that you keep your expectation some of the time but not others
- Involving others = is there a way to utilize other people to help you stick with the current expectation

Current Expectation	Let It Go Change	Limit Change	Involving Others

Part 3: Meeting Our Kids' Needs

This is the practical part of the homework where you work towards building up those feelings of love and connection with your child. If you're feeling overwhelmed, you'll want to start slow so I recommend taking on each of these in order and only doing as much as you can. Get used to one stage before moving on to the next.

1. Set a timer to tell your child something you love about them every single day. Remember to be concrete about it and it shouldn't be tied to "being good" or anything like that - just love of who your child is and all the various things they do.
2. Set up special time every 1-2 days using the techniques mentioned in the lecture. Remember this doesn't need to be a long time, but you have to initiate it, make it known how special it is, and then try the trick for going a bit longer.
3. When you're frustrated with your child, stop for a moment and tell them how much you love them. This is moving us towards being the initiator of change which is positive for our kids and us as it helps us immediately move beyond the frustration and instills in our kids the idea that we love them no matter what.
4. Pick something to do for your child weekly. This can be different each week, but you want to start building up things you can do to help show your child your love away from time.
5. If your child is old enough, talk about the changes and how hard it can be for them. Having someone to listen and understand can be huge for our kids and we should always aim to be that person for them.

This is the end of the Homework for Week 1.