

Untamed Chaos

**A Parent's Guide to Improving Communication, Resolving
Conflict, and Restoring Peace in Your Home**

**REAL Important
Takeaways**

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REAL Important Takeaways



Chapter 1

The REAL in REAL Peaceful Parenting

Following are the five first steps in each category of REAL for you to implement in order to cultivate resilience, empowerment, autonomy, and quality of family life.

Resilience

1. Take care of yourself first. It is essential, and it is not selfish!

Get plenty of sleep, practice deep breathing, nourish your body, participate in activities that you enjoy, and find ways to connect. The analogy of putting your oxygen mask on first may seem counterintuitive, especially in a crisis, but if you don't start with yourself, you risk making panicked, emotional decisions that won't serve your family system in the long run. After all, you can't pour from an empty cup.

2. Learn from experience (yours and others)

Learn from your experiences and the experiences of the people around you. Take time to reflect and introspect. Think about how you handled scenarios in the past and the consequences of those choices and decisions. Did you react rather than respond? Did you act impulsively (react) out of fear, or did you stop, take a breath, consider strategies, and then answer (respond)?

3. Don't ignore your problems.

Little problems just become bigger problems. Take the time to figure out what you need to do, how to do it, and then action those strategies to solve your problem (see react versus respond, above). Remember: It's okay to ask for help. In fact, it's imperative.

4. Keep the faith and remain hopeful.

While you can't change what has already happened, you can change how you responding the future. There is always another chance to try again.

Everyone is perfectly imperfect.

5. Accomplish at least one thing every day.

It doesn't have to be big; you just have to do something from start to finish. One way to begin your day with an accomplishment is to simply make your bed. Task one ... complete!

Empowerment

1. Be respectful and nonjudgmental.

Think about how you want to be treated. You certainly don't want to be disrespected or partially/incorrectly judged.

2. Build relationships:

Build relationships where you and your family can be vulnerable with each other and feel comfortable enough to talk openly about feelings without the fear of letting each other down.

3. Focus on your strengths and abilities

Focus on your strengths and abilities as well as others' strengths and abilities. Teach yourself to recognize when you or others are struggling. Identify the signs of overwhelm. Ask for help ... offer help. Sometimes help is not through words or by proffering a solution. Sometimes it is the act of being there and letting someone know that you have their back.

4. Support and encourage everyone

Support and encourage everyone, especially children, in decision making. By doing this, you foster independence, improve communication, build trust, and encourage a sense of ownership and responsibility. This helps children, in particular, develop the skills and confidence needed to become responsible and capable people.

5. Respect the decisions

Respect the decisions everyone, especially children, makes about their own life. You don't have to like or even agree with the decision. When you allow children to make their own decisions, you help them develop their decision-making muscles, build self-confidence, take ownership of their choices, and enable them to be self-reliant individuals.

Autonomy

1. Give everyone, including yourself, time, space, and grace.

2. After your children make choices and decisions, offer positive attention or support of consequences. An example of positive attention is giving specific praise for their behavior or for something that they have done. Rather than saying, "Good job," say, "I really appreciate that you folded the laundry today." Supporting consequences is helping your children understand the reason behind the consequence so that they can learn from it. For example, if they break the rule of no phones at the dinner table, the consequence could be taking the phone away. But rather than taking the phone away without an explanation, reiterate why the rule is in place. Doing this without anger is very important.

3. Allow your children to share what is on their minds without retaliation; to tell you when they are uncomfortable; and to have command over their own bodies.

4. Encourage your children to be self-motivated.

One way is to set achievable goals, which allows for a sense of purpose and direction. Another way to encourage self-motivation is to model setting goals for yourself, pursuing your own interests, and having a positive attitude even during challenges (difficult, but a valuable life skill to practice for both you and them).

5. Provide your children with age-appropriate responsibilities.

As they succeed, allow them more responsibility. Setting the table, feeding the dog, and putting their clean clothes away are good starting places.

Quality of Family Life

1. Respect one another.

2. Love one another unconditionally.

3. Be humble and have empathy. Say sorry when you're wrong.

4. Take responsibility for yourself and your actions.

5. Tap into spirituality.

It doesn't have to be religion. It can be creative expression, meditation, practicing gratitude, or mindfulness just to name a few. Overall, nurturing resilience, empowerment, and autonomy in children requires a combination of support, encouragement, and opportunities for growth and learning. By helping your children develop these qualities, you can help them mature into confident, capable, and successful people!



Chapter 2

The Power of Words and Positive Attention

Resilience

Positive attention plays a critical role in building resilience by establishing strong relationships built on respect, which support families during the good and the challenging times.

Empowerment

By giving and receiving positive attention, you build a relationship where each member of the family feels comfortable enough to discuss their feelings and wants. They are empowered to make choices and decisions as well as understand the consequences of those decisions. By focusing on strengths and abilities rather than challenges, you maintain positivity and remain solution oriented. Of course, you shouldn't ignore challenges, but you can and will have the skills to look for a positive way to address them.

Autonomy

Positive attention builds confidence, self-esteem, and self- image. When children feel good about themselves, when they feel confident enough to say what is on their minds, when they are empowered and resilient enough to make decisions, they become independent and self-reliant ... autonomous!

Quality of Family Life

Giving positive attention to your children will generally give you more positive results. When you give your attention and recognition to positive actions, your children are more likely to repeat them. Likewise, focusing only on the negative will result in more negative behavior and a more challenging family life overall. Respecting your children will empower them to feel valued and worthy. And children who feel valued and worthy respond by showing you respect. It's a cycle that will improve the quality of life within your home by fostering a supportive environment where everyone has room to grow and develop.



Chapter 3

With Big Choices and Decisions Come BIG Emotions

Resilience

By allowing children to make decisions and choices, you help them develop the problem-solving skills that are important for resilience. When children are given the opportunity to make decisions, they learn how to thoughtfully look at all their options, weigh the pros and cons, and make informed choices. Thus, they can better navigate the challenges and setbacks that will occur in life.

Empowerment

When children can make decisions and choices and have control over their person, they feel more empowered. They know that their opinions, ideas, and preferences matter and that they have a say in their own lives as well as the life of the family. It increases their self-esteem and confidence and helps them to develop a sense of self-control.

Autonomy

Allowing children control to make decisions helps them to become autonomous. When children have control over part of their lives, they practice their decision-making and problem-solving skills. They become capable of making informed decisions and navigating mistakes. And as they approach their teens and young adult years, they are prepared to make bigger and better decisions.

Quality of Family Life

Allowing children to make decisions and choices creates a sense of cooperation and collaboration within the family, which builds trust and opens up communication between you and your children. This fosters a supportive family environment.



Chapter 4

The Good, the Bad, the Reality: Understanding and Accepting Consequences

Resilience

When your children understand and accept the consequences of their actions, they are more likely to take responsibility for their mistakes and learn from them. This, in turn, fosters resilience and enables them to practice recovering from the consequences of poor decisions (i.e., let them fall down and figure out how to get back up).

Empowerment

When children understand and accept consequences, they feel empowered as individuals because they are more in control of their own choices. They can take responsibility for their actions and behaviors instead of blaming others. The best part is they are learning from their mistakes. This is true for you too. Let me say it once more: Fall down, get back up, try again.

Autonomy

By allowing your children to make choices and decisions, you are giving them the opportunity to experience the consequences of those decisions in a safe space (because you will always do your best to support them). They have the safety and the space to experiment, explore, and make sense of their choices and the consequences.

Quality of Family Life

Giving your children positive attention and the freedom to make choices and then helping them to understand the consequences of those choices demonstrates respect and trust in your children. You are also giving them the opportunity to trust you. They can trust that, no matter what, you will have their back. You can't simply rescue them from their predicaments, but you'll be there to support them where you can.



Chapter 5

Strike a Pose: React or Respond

Resilience

Responding effectively to challenges models the problem-solving and coping skills that build resilience. Being calm and thoughtful encourages children to develop that skill themselves. By modeling socially appropriate actions and behaviors and being a good example, you positively influence your children's behavior.

Empowerment

Allowing your children to make choices and have some control over what is going on around them can help them feel empowered. Responding to your children in a way that validates their input, ideas, and perspectives encourages empowerment.

Autonomy

Knowing how and when to react versus respond empowers your children to make choices and decisions for themselves. When your children have the space and opportunity to make their own decisions, they cultivate their feelings of independence and build their decision-making muscles and problem-solving skills.

Quality of Family Life

By understanding the importance of consequences and modeling the appropriate reactions and responses, families build trust and mutual respect. When everyone responds from a place of control, there is less fighting and more intention.



Chapter 6

Routine Versus Flexible Schedule

Resilience

Both flexible scheduling and routine can help by providing a sense of predictability and structure as well as allowing for adaptability and creativity depending upon the ever-changing circumstances. When things don't go according to plan, children learn to bounce back and get creative in coming up with solutions and learning to anticipate change.

Empowerment

Routine is empowering because it allows children to establish healthy habits, while flexible scheduling empowers them by giving them more control over time and activities and encouraging creativity.

Autonomy

Routine fosters autonomy by establishing clear expectations and boundaries around activities, allowing individuals and families to plan and prioritize these activities. Flexible scheduling, in turn, allows individuals and families to make choices and decisions about how they will spend their time and which activities they are going to prioritize.

Quality of Family Life

Both routine and flexible scheduling contribute to the quality of family life by providing stability and predictability, which are beneficial for everyone (especially for those with very busy schedules!) and, at the same time, providing opportunities for exploration and creativity. Both can help to create a positive and calm family environment.



Chapter 7

Expectations and Consequences

Resilience: Realistic expectations can help your family manage storms and setbacks as you all are better able to handle the challenges and more confident in your abilities and the outcomes of your decisions. Unrealistic expectations lead to disappointment, feelings of failure, and a tendency to not want to try new things in the future. The same can be said for consequences. Anticipated/known consequences (positive, negative, or neutral) can reinforce everyone's ability to manage challenges. Unexpected, disproportionate, or unfair consequences can undermine their resilience.

Empowerment: When there are expectations that are clear and realistic, everyone feels more empowered. At the same time, unrealistic or unclear expectations cause confusion and a sense of powerlessness. Here again, known consequences foster your family members' sense of empowerment because they can aim to be rewarded for their efforts and their successes, which helps them feel capable and confident, while unfair consequences take away their sense of control and cause children, in particular, to attach their worth to their actions.

Autonomy: When expectations are clear and realistic, you and your family are more likely to feel that you have control over your lives. On the other hand, unrealistic or unclear expectations lead to feeling helpless and out of control, which, in turn, causes dependency on others. If one individual doesn't believe they're capable of making good decisions, they may rely on others to make decisions for them, which hampers autonomy. Known consequences reinforce everyone's sense of autonomy while unexpected consequences can make them feel like they are being punished.

Quality of Family Life: With clear and realistic expectations, you and your family will feel like you're working toward common goals and that your efforts and contributions are valued by each other. Unrealistic expectations are unclear and lead to conflict, anger, frustration, and dissatisfaction. Likewise, anticipated consequences tend to reinforce positive behaviors and attitudes while discouraging negative ones, which, together, naturally increase the quality of family life. Unexpected, disproportionate, and unfair consequences, however, cause stress and tension.



Chapter 8

8 Surround Yourself With Boundaries

Resilience

By creating a sense of safety and security, boundaries help families build resilience.

Empowerment

When individuals are permitted to set boundaries about what they will and won't tolerate, they're able to communicate their needs effectively, which gives them a sense of agency and control over their lives.

Autonomy

When individuals and families have clear boundaries around what is and isn't acceptable in their homes and in their individual lives, they are able to exercise their autonomy with their individual values and goals. They can take action independently and make decisions on their own.

Quality of Family Life

When families are able to set boundaries, they're more likely to experience positive relationships and have a greater sense of harmony and closeness within the family system. When you have clear and healthy boundaries, you have better relationships with the people who are most important and supportive and who have a positive impact on your life.



Chapter 9

Self-Care Is Not Selfish!

Resilience

Practicing self-care provides resources necessary to manage stress, regulate emotions, and maintain a positive outlook on life. With these tools, everyone is better able to handle challenges and setbacks.

Empowerment

Self-care enhances empowerment when families prioritize their needs and desires. You are deliberately taking action to support your physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Autonomy

Practicing self-care autonomously encourages each family member to prioritize their own needs and choices that support their own individual well-being. Each member is responsible for their own self-care.

Quality of Family Life

When family members take care of themselves, they are better able to take care of others who might need them. Prioritizing self-care means that families are better equipped to cope with challenges; they feel more in control; and the home becomes a more supportive and healthy family environment.