

# The “Perfect” Parent vs. The Peaceful Parent

## Making a Conscious Choice

By: Cindy Charles

For as long as I can remember I have always wanted to be a parent; the “perfect” parent. You know, the one that doesn’t make the same mistakes your parents made. The one who is always understanding, always loving, always patient, always there for you. The homeroom mom, the school improvement council mom, the one who makes your birthday cakes from scratch, the one who takes you to dance and soccer and 100 other places weekly. The one who cooks all the meals and makes cute circle sandwiches with a sweet note in your lunch box each day, the one who picks you up in the car rider line daily, helps with homework and always let you have friends sleep over; The one who has the perfect house (never messy) and the perfect husband, whom which you never argue with; especially in front of the kids. Oh yeah, and a great, fulfilling career during the few hours the children are at school. Need I say more?

Perfection always seemed to elude me. The proverbial carrot on the stick – seemingly close at times, then disappearing – never lasting, very exhausting and depressing. During my quest, I met many others who seemed to be on the same journey. Many of which I watched carefully, often trying to copy, and enviously thinking they had the “carrot of perfection” I was seeking – only to later realize they didn’t actually have it – just a pretty cubic zirconium version of “perfection”.

This accidental value of perfectionism is a false mindset that can lead to chaos, hospitalizations, medications, children with symptoms of ADHD, OCD, depression, and other anxiety related disorders. It can also cost you your relationships with friends, family and even your marriage. Maybe you too know a “perfect” parent?

If you are lucky enough to become conscious of the insanity, then eventually, the desire to be a “perfect” parent will be replaced with an overwhelming desire to be a peaceful parent; a parent who values and allows their children to come through them not for them; a parent who is able to fully cut the egoic umbilical cord that frequently binds parent and child to much pain and suffering; a parent who is loving, grateful, trusting, and fully present and available; not attached to a cell phone, television, or Facebook page.

Ironically, choosing peace will make you a more “perfect” parent. The recipe is not complicated, but it does require conscious commitment, dedication, and perseverance:

1. **Choose peace over the chaos.** At every moment evaluate your actions and choose peace. If you are feeling good, then you are choosing wisely. God will provide the grace ingredient; you provide the love, gratitude, and faith.
2. **Choose to be a healthy, loving, gracious hostess to your spirit.** Love yourself always, especially when you make mistakes. Take care of your physical body. House your spirit in a healthy, strong fit body with a healthy mind that thinks loving thoughts. Your spirit is a most precious, important guest and should only receive the best accommodations and services.

3. **Choose your Core Values;** Live on purpose from these values. Core is latin for heart. What are your heart values? Do you only have head values? If so, you are allowing yourself to live accidentally. If you can't easily state the four to six core values that guide you and assist you in every choice and decision you make then you are most likely living a life filled with anxiety, fear, and frustration. One in which you are not the Director. These core values provide peace. They are where you go for help when the unexpected, uninvited chaos visits.
  
4. **Choose Gratitude:** Be grateful for the blessings of your children always; recognize and be grateful for their gifts and their talents; focus on the good-everything else will eventually pass; be grateful for the lessons your children teach you – most importantly patience and self-awareness. Be grateful for each day, because we have no promises of tomorrow. Love your children fully now, do not wait for them or yourself to be “perfect”, you may be too late.

Everything else is detail. As most of us have learned, you cannot easily change another person –especially your own child, but you can change yourself. You can change your thoughts, attitudes, and actions. You can learn to love yourself and stop loathing the actions of your children that mirror your own insecurities. The most difficult part is awakening to the awareness that you have a choice; a peaceful, less stressful choice.

I join you in celebrating the blessings of God's children. I am excited you are choosing peace over perfection, and I am blessed and delighted that you are sharing with me the hope, peace, love, gratitude and the true joys of parenthood. Happy Mother's Day and Happy Father's Day!