

# PARENTING OUTSIDE THE LINES

## Week One/Lesson Two: Parenting Myths Debunked

Welcome back to Parenting Outside the Lines! I hope you're enjoying this first week of lessons, and digging into everything about behavior. Today, we're going to talk about parenting myths. I'm going to debunk all of them and show you exactly why they don't work. I love this lesson because I think so often as parents we get caught up in these ideas of what a parent should be. We look at our friends "perfect" lives and ask our parents how they survived. We ask for their advice and try to follow it the best we can.

Most of us have never taken a parenting class. Some of us may have read a parenting book or two, or read some articles on parenting, but we've never had any formal education on parenting. Parenting is by far the most difficult and most important job that we can ever have. Raising another human is crazy! The fact that we aren't trained on these things is insane to me! One of the biggest reasons why I love teaching these lessons are because this is where we can get in to all the things that are damaging the way you parent right now. I'm going to help relieve the stressors that you're probably fighting right now. I'll show you why those methods aren't working, and why they absolutely are not true. Remember, your reaction to any event is determined by your interpretation of it.

### WHAT AM I DOING WRONG?

Right now, you're probably stressed, frustrated, confused, and wondering what to do about your child's behavior. When they start to "act up," you probably react with fear and frustration. It's no wonder your patience is thin. It's easy to slip into yelling or other negative habits when nothing is working out right, and it's not your fault. That's why we're going to work mostly on mindset. I don't want to change your reaction by telling you to react differently, I want to change your reaction by making you less reactive. The five daily practices that we're working on each week will help you be more proactive and that's going to help you gain a deeper understanding of what behavior is. Before we do anything else, let's look at what doesn't work.

### MYTH #1- YOUR JOB IS TO CONTROL YOUR KIDS

This one lights me on fire. One of my favorite books, "Loving What Is" by Byron Katie, talks about three types of business in the world. There's my business, your business, and God's business (or anything that is natural and out of human control). The only thing that we ever have control over is our own business. The only thing we can control is ourselves. We can never control another person. If we follow Byron Katie's logic, the idea that parents have to control their kids is absolutely impossible and ends up

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hurting us. We decide that we need to stop that tantrum and somehow prevent our kids from freaking out. We need to make it so that they are absolutely, positively respectful in every situation. That way of thinking goes into trying to control another person's emotions and it's just not possible.

Instead, we need to teach our children to control their own emotions. They need to know how to deal with their own emotions through learning different skills, learning different ways of coping and learning how to fix things on a daily basis. It's not about controlling our kids; it's about teaching them the skills that they need to be able to control themselves.

### MYTH #2- TIMEOUTS, BEING CONSISTENT AND LOVING YOUR CHILD ARE THE MAIN TOOLS YOU NEED

Think about it. Just for a second. How many times have you been given one of these things as advice about parenting? Probably more than once, right?

You need to be more consistent with the timeouts, ignore their bad behavior, and love your kid. The problem is that none of that advice is working, and that's why we're all going crazy. These all might address the behavior itself, but none of these are going to get to the root of why the behavior is happening. Again, that's exactly what we are going to do in this course. We're going to look deeper into the root, and get to why those behaviors are happening and find some ways to address them that are way more effective.

### MYTH #3- IT'S JUST A PHASE

I overheard some people in church talking about their daughter who is nearly four years old, and is still drinking from a bottle. I'm not one to judge on whether it's ok for a child to drink from a bottle. Knock yourself out. Whatever you do is what you do, but their reasoning for it was because their child refuses to eat anything else. They said things like, "Oh, it's just a phase," and "She's just extending her terrible twos."

First of all, that is a really long "phase" and second, it's not just a phase. Their daughter has some very clear roots that are not being addressed here, and because her parents are just waiting for the phase to pass, they're not looking any deeper for any other hidden meaning behind the behavior that's

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happening. Next time somebody says, “Oh it’s just the terrible twos,” or, “Oh, it’s just the terrible threes,” think to yourself, “No, why is this happening?” It’s not just a phase. It’s never just a phase.

### MYTH #4- PARENTS DON’T NEED ANY FORMAL TRAINING

We all have problems with this one, right? Honestly, this is the approach I had with parenting for the first five to six years of my parenting life. I had my Master’s degree in special education, I had my Bachelor’s degree in early childhood education, I thought I had it all figured out. I thought, “I don’t need any training. I don’t need any books. I’m just going to do what my parents did, and my kids will turn out awesome.” Right??

There’s nothing farther from the truth. We all need someone who gets it, if nothing else. We all need a community of people around who are willing to be realistic and give us a shoulder to lean on when things aren’t going fantastic. Social media doesn’t do that for us. Everyone has cute kids that are always smiling and dressed perfectly with a perfect pose. That’s not reality. Reality is a messy house with cheerios all over the floor while your kid freaks out and throws huge a tantrum. That’s reality. It’s not fun, but it doesn’t have to be that way. That’s why we need the formal training, we need to know how to deal with these things.

### MYTH #5- IF YOU LOSE YOUR PATIENCE, SNAP, OR YELL, YOU ARE A BAD PARENT

Being a parent is hard. It’s draining. I have never given so much of myself in my life and I’ll probably never will be asked to give so much of myself as I’ll do being a mother. Do I lose my patience and react negatively? YES! That’s part of being human. One of the most powerful things is that on those rare occasions when I do lose my patience and snap, I come back and I tell my kids, “Look guys, I’m sorry, I got frustrated and I’m going to ask you for forgiveness. I should not have said that; I should not have done that.” I ask my kids to forgive me. That is so much more powerful than denying that I lost my patience and had a meltdown, or judging myself because of it. If we let go of the idea that we have to be a perfect mom who never yells, it feels so much better. Not to say that I give myself permission to yell all the time, I don’t; but when I do, it’s not the end of the world. Sometimes I need to take a step back and look at what caused this behavior in me, how can I turn it around, and how can I address it.

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### MYTH #6- IF YOUR CHILD CRIES, WHINES OR THROWS A FIT, YOU ARE A BAD PARENT

This one actually relates to myths 1 and 5. We can't control other people's reactions, we can't control their feelings, and we can't control their thoughts. All we can do is teach them the skills to be able to deal with them. If your kid loses his patience over something small, it's not your fault, you're not a bad mom. If your kid whines in the middle of the grocery, it's not your fault. You are not a bad mom. You are doing the best you can and your child is doing the best he or she can.

### PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

We're all in this together. We're all learning new skills. To put this into practice, I want you to let go of the myths that are holding you back and causing you all that stress. Let me know in the Facebook group if any of these myths have been part of your daily life. If there's anything in your head that says, "When my kid freaks out it's my fault. When I lose my patience, I'm a horrible person". Let me know how it changes things to let go of these ideas and to think of something different.

In our next lesson, we're going to go into your role as a parent. We've discussed all the things that are hindering us, let's look at what our role is exactly. Where do we show up and how do we start helping our kids?