

Part 1. What we are doing now

1. Keeping them safe and sound
2. Providing opportunity
3. Being there for them
4. Succumbing to the college admissions arms race
5. To what end?

Part 2. Why we must stop overparenting

6. Our kids lack basic life skills
7. They've been psychologically harmed
8. They're becoming "Study Drug" addicts
9. We're hurting their job prospects
10. Overparenting stress us out, too
11. The college admission process is broken

Part 3. Another way

12. The case for another way
13. Give them unstructured time
14. Teach life skills
15. Teach them how to think
16. Prepare them for hard work
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20. Listen to them

Part 4. Daring to parent differently

21. Reclaim your self
22. Be the parent you want to be

How to raise an adult was published in 2016. The author's name is Julie Lythcott-Haims. She served as dean of freshmen and undergraduate advising at Stanford University. She is an American educator, author, and public speaker. But most of all, she is a great mother of two kids, a boy named Sawyer and a girl named Avery.

Because of her job as the dean in Stanford University, she has plenty of experiences dealing with college students. As a mother of two kids, she has a similar journey as us in parenthood. She was often surprised to find out that things have changed so much over the decades. This book is composed with a lot of individual stories. While I was reading those stories, I was so relieved to know that I was not alone. There are a lot of other parents who make the same mistakes as I did. Luckily, I found this book and I appreciate this learning process. When my 16-year-old daughter was 3, I went to a seminar with some of my friends. The seminar was called "Becoming love and logic parent" While I was reading Julie's book, what I learned 13 years ago flashed back and I realized good parenting requires love for our children, and the logic to achieve this love for them.

This book has 4 parts. Julie talked about what we are doing as parents and why we are overparenting, then she talked about the damage the overparenting can cause and that's why we have to stop overparenting. In the third part, Julie compared 4 different parenting styles and what the parenting style can shape our kids for their future lives. At the end of the book, Julie encouraged us to sit back and relax. Being a parent doesn't mean losing yourself during the process.

The world has changed a lot over the decades. It feels more dangerous. We heard about those bad things that happen to children everywhere. For parents, the first priority is to keep our kids safe and sound. Therefore a lot of things we used to do when we were little are forbidden for our children nowadays. I remember when I was in elementary school in Shanghai, I used to walk back and forth between school and home alone. Go inside with the

key hanging on my neck and do homework with my brother who is 2 years older than me, waiting for my parents to come home after work. Nowadays, we don't let our kids walk alone in the street, they are not allowed to play outside in the neighborhood alone, because it is too dangerous outside. Kids under 12, some places 14 are not allowed to be left alone at home.

Because it is such a dangerous world, we can't help but overprotect our children. The word "bully" is used excessively. When two boys got into trouble. One grabbed the toy away from the other, scratched his skin during the process. The teacher separated them, talked to them, and the two boys made up and played nicely afterwards. After the school reported to the parents. The boy whose toy got yanked went to the principal's office, insisting their son was Bullied, requesting the Bully be expelled from school... When the parents overreacted too often, the kid would get used to the idea of victimization. He was constantly reminded that he is a victim, he is always a victim. He will lose his interest to play with others. He will not have the ability to deal with conflict in life and he will lose his confidence to handle any situations. He will eventually become a real incompetent victim.

We all want to raise confident children, therefore, we believe their feelings can not be hurt. We change the rules for every game. There is no longer a winner or loser, everyone gets a trophy for participation. By the time they enter the real world, they have too much confidence they don't deserve. They feel defeated too often and too easily. Because they are never given the opportunity to experience failure and they don't know how to handle it. They are like the indoor orchid, very beautiful and very delicate.

Yes, college plays a very important role in our parenting. It seems even before a kid is born, the parents have already decided what college they should go to later. As soon as the baby is born, time to look for preschool. A good preschool leads to a good college. Is it because we don't have enough colleges for every kid? Absolutely not! There are over 4,000 colleges in the US. But, there are only a little over 1,000 colleges in the "ranking" and among

the big long list of “ranking colleges”, there are only a handful of “elite colleges”. In some parents’ minds, only those “elite colleges” are the “real colleges”. There are a lot to do to get their kids into those “elite colleges”

Therefore, our children become “checklist kids”. For everything they do, from homework to sports, music, arts, everything, we tirelessly examine and improve the checklist for them. It feels there is always more to add. Do the kids enjoy doing all these things in the checklist? I am not sure they know. They do it because their parents tell them to. And for parents, they take over the task of sending their kids to colleges. College admission is like the arm race between parents. On page 38-41, Julie told a story that a mother was drilling on two Stanford freshmen what their parents had done to send them to Stanford. The girls said their parents did not push them in high school. The mother didn’t believe a word the girls said. In her mind, their parents must have done something for them.

Grades are very important too. GPA 4.0 must be better than GPA 3.5. More extracurricular, the better. Don’t forget there is homework, science projects... If the kids are too young to do it by themselves, no worries, parents rolled up their sleeves and grabbed the glue gun. Kid is standing in front of the tri fold poster, presenting their perfect science project, puzzled, uninterested, indifferent, because he has done nothing to the project, he has his mom.

The children are not the problem, the parents are! We always feel we have to do everything. If we miss out on one, all our efforts go down the drain. We are always one step away from complete.

When parents get involved too much, our children aren’t given the space to struggle through things on their own, they don't learn problem solving very well. They don’t learn to be confident in their own abilities. They are afraid of failure and they have very low self-esteem. They get too comfortable with

their parents' company. Whatever happens to them, their first reaction is "where is my mom?" Some college students got a cold and they went to the ER. Later, they cried on the phone to their mom in the dorm, claiming they were dying... Those are 20 year old babies.

Part 2

Adulthood is not about age, it's about taking responsibility, establishing relationships, and being an independent thinker.

Here is the measurement for adulthood:

1. Accepting responsibility for the consequences of your actions
2. Establishing a relationship with parents as an equal adult
3. Being financially independent from parents
4. Deciding on beliefs/values independently of parents/other influences

Overparenting causes the delay of adulthood and anxiety for those college students. Most of the college students are psychologically damaged.

In 2013 the American College Health Association surveyed close to one hundred thousand college students from 153 different campuses about their health. When asked about their experiences, at some point over the past twelve months:

- 84.3 percent felt overwhelmed by all they had to do
- 79.1 percent felt exhausted (not from physical activity)
- 60.5 percent felt very sad
- 57.0 percent felt very lonely
- 51.3 percent felt overwhelming anxiety
- 46.5 percent felt things were hopeless
- 38.3 percent felt overwhelming anger
- 31.8 percent felt so depressed that it was difficult to function
- 8.0 percent seriously considered suicide
- 6.5 percent intentionally cut or otherwise injured themselves

When the stress level is so overwhelming, many college students, as well as some high school students are taking Adderall, some even got addicted to it. Students joke that Adderall is called “good grade pills, study drugs, smart drugs. No matter what reason is behind taking the drugs to have good grades, it is wrong.

When the kids are young, they need “helicopter parents”. Parents’ company gives the kids a sense of security. Because they feel safe, they don’t have separation anxiety. Later parents and their kids engage in a dialogue, the kids are empowered to act, if they fail, do it again. The parents intervene only when the kids need additional help. This is part of the “Authoritative parenting style” Julia talks about later.

Helicopter parents and Tiger moms

However, there is an inappropriate kind of helicopter parent. The parents are enmeshed in their children’s lives and relationships all the time. Some kids may enjoy this, most kids will develop anxiety, feel suffocated and want to escape.

When a young man got out of an Ivy league college, he found a very good job in some prestigious NY investment bank. 2 years out of college, he made a salary of \$250K. As a price, he worked long hours. His mother decided he worked too hard, so she called the boss to complain. What happened next was, he was handed a cardboard box containing her personal items from his desk, on top of the box was the note: Ask your mother.

A 4th grade girl’s mom was asking a question that her daughter was very good at writing, so the mother encouraged the girl to do some writing contest. However the girl decided she just wanted to write, but not for any contest. The mother was asking how she could make the girl do a writing contest. The suggestion was “let her write for the love of writing. Leave her alone”

Second generation Asian American nowadays hate their parents, because they think their parents have done “too much” for them. They set up a goal so high and they push the kids so hard. Many of Asian moms are called “Tiger moms”. Personally I do not like the name. So many times when my American friends asked me if I was a Tiger mom, I always told them I am a Hello kitty mom.

The three ways we might be overparenting:

1. When we do for our kids what they can *already* do for themselves;
2. When we do for our kids what they can almost do for themselves; and
3. When our parenting behavior is motivated by our own ego.

Part 3 Another way

Authoritarian parenting is an **extremely strict parenting style**. It places **high** expectations on children with **little** responsiveness. As an authoritarian parent, you focus more on obedience, discipline, control rather than nurturing your child

This type of parents train their kids like the military. There is no response between the parents and the kids. The kids are not allowed to ask questions, all the parents want from them is to obey, unconditionally. The parents control the kids rather than nurturing their kids.

Permissive/indulgent parenting is a type of parenting style characterized by **low demands** with **high responsiveness**. Permissive parents tend to be very loving, yet provide few guidelines and rules. These parents do not expect mature behavior from their children and often seem more like a friend than a parental figure

This type of parents love their kids unconditionally. They don't set limits for the kids and kids can do whatever they feel like doing. Parents can be very loving, however the kids' behavior stays at an immature level.

Neglectful Uninvolved parenting, sometimes referred to as neglectful parenting, is a **style characterized by a lack of responsiveness to a child's needs**. Uninvolved parents make few to no demands of their children and they are often indifferent, dismissive, or even completely neglectful

This type of parents neglect their kids completely. No demanding, no communication. The parents cut themselves off from the kids' lives. The kids might as well be off as an orphan.

Authoritative parenting style, the parents are **nurturing, responsive, and supportive, yet set firm limits for their children**. They attempt to control children's behavior by explaining rules, discussing, and reasoning. They listen to a child's viewpoint but don't always accept it.

This type of parents are like the Love and Logic parents I learned from the seminar 13 years ago. They love their kids, but they set limits. They give the kids an opportunity to choose, and explain the rules through consequences. They listen to their kids, communication plays a big part of their lives. But they don't comply all the time. They encourage the kids to think for themselves and make decisions. They offer their suggestions only when the kids are asking for it.

Playing is a big part of kids' growing up. It takes a village to raise a kid. Julie gives suggestions how to properly play:

age 152 - 155

1. Value free play.
2. Know your kid.
3. Create agreements with other parents.
4. Offer materials and equipment that foster imaginative play.
5. Let your kid decide how and what to play.
6. Work on creating space between you and your kid.
7. Develop a capacity to wince but not to pounce.
8. Create a culture of free outdoor play.
9. Get inspired.
10. Encourage changes in your community.
11. Model play.

BENEFITS FOR A LIFETIME

1. Play provides the opportunity for children to learn, develop, and perfect new skills that build *competence*;
2. Play is the child's natural mode to master anxiety from overwhelming experiences of everyday life, which builds the *capacity to cope with the environment*.
3. Play helps build the ego's capacity to mediate between unconscious and conscious realities, which enhances *ego strength*; and
4. Play repeats or confirms a gratifying experience that fuels a child's *investment in life*.

When talking about play, I have to mention Montessori school. My kids went to Montessori preschool, 2 years each, total 6 years. When I was looking for preschool for my daughter 13 years ago, I found Montessori. I fell in love with the way kids learn. I got a lot of books and even made some props at home.

I played with my girl and eventually sent her to Montessori school. Kids from Montessori school have something in common: They enjoy learning. They are looking for opportunities to learn voluntarily. If anyone has questions about Montessori school, I am happy to help later.

怎么样一步步在玩的过程中教授孩子生活技能

- First we do it *for you*.
- Then we do it *with you*.
- Then we *watch you* do it.
- Then *you* do it completely *independently*.

Different age groups have different basic life skills. On page 167 to 170, there are detailed lists according to ages. The 4 steps take a lot of patience. When they are learning, trying new things, we have to wait, to encourage and praise. Never interrupt a working child. Children, take your time is also a very good book to read.

Teaching children responsibility. Sports team example.