

# Mentally Strong Kids Have Parents Who Refuse to Do These 13 Things

Give up the bad habits that rob kids of mental strength.

By Amy Morin

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[Raising a mentally strong kid](#) doesn't mean he won't cry when he's sad or that he won't fail sometimes. [Mental strength](#) doesn't make you immune to hardship and it's not about suppressing your emotions.

In fact, it's quite the opposite. Mental strength is what helps kids bounce back from setbacks and it gives them the strength to keep going, even when they're [plagued with self-doubt](#). A strong mental muscle is the key to helping kids reach their greatest potential in life.

But raising a mentally strong kid requires parents to avoid the common--yet unhealthy--parenting practices that rob kids of mental strength. In my book, *13 Things Mentally Strong Parents Don't Do*, I identify 13 things to avoid if you want to raise a mentally strong kid who is equipped to tackle life's toughest challenges.

## 1. Condoning a Victim Mentality

Striking out at the baseball game or failing a science test doesn't make a child a victim. Rejection, failure, and unfairness are a part of life.

Refuse to attend your kids' pity parties. Teach them that no matter how tough or unjust their circumstances, they can always take positive action.

## 2. Parenting Out of Guilt

Giving into guilty feelings teaches your child that guilt is intolerable. And kids who think guilt is horrible won't be able to say no to someone who says, "Be a friend and let me copy your paper," or, "If you loved me, you'd do this for me."

Show your kids that even though you feel guilty sometimes--and all good parents do--you're not going to allow your uncomfortable emotions to get in the way of making wise decisions.

## 3. Making Their Kids the Center of the Universe

If you make your entire life revolve around your kids, they'll grow up thinking everyone should cater to them. And self-absorbed, entitled adults aren't likely to get very far in life.

Teach your kids to focus on what they have to offer the world, rather than what they can gain from it.

## 4. Allowing Fear to Dictate Their Choices

Although keeping your kids inside a protective bubble will spare you a lot of anxiety--playing it too safe teaches your child that fear must be avoided at all times.

Show your kids that the best way to conquer fear is to face those fears head-on and you'll raise courageous kids who are willing to step outside their comfort zones.

### **5. Giving Their Kids Power Over Them**

Letting kids dictate what the family is going to eat for dinner or where the family is going on vacation gives kids more power than they are developmentally ready to handle. Treating kids like an equal--or the boss--actually robs them of mental strength.

Give your kids an opportunity to practice taking orders, listening to things they don't want to hear, and doing things they don't want to do. Let your kids make simple choices while maintaining a clear family hierarchy.

### **6. Expecting Perfection**

Expecting your kids to perform well is healthy. But expecting them to be perfect will backfire. Teach your kids that it's OK to fail and it's OK not to be great at everything they do.

Kids who strive to become the best version of themselves, rather than the best at everything they do, won't make their self-worth dependent upon how they measure up to others.

### **7. Letting Their Kids Avoid Responsibility**

Letting kids skip out on chores or avoid getting an after-school job can be tempting. After all, you likely want your kids to have a carefree childhood.

But, kids who perform age-appropriate duties aren't overburdened. Instead, they're gaining the mental strength they need to become responsible citizens.

### **8. Shielding Their Kids From Pain**

Hurt feelings, sadness, and anxiety are part of life. And letting kids experience those painful feelings gives them opportunities to practice tolerating discomfort.

Provide your kids with the guidance and support they need to deal with pain so they can gain confidence in their ability to handle life's inevitable hardships.

### **9. Feeling Responsible For Their Kids' Emotions**

Cheering your kids up when they're sad and calming them down when they're upset means you take responsibility for regulating their emotions. Kids need to gain emotional competence so they can learn to manage their own feelings.

Proactively teach your child healthy ways to cope with their emotions so they don't depend on others to do it for them.

#### **10. Preventing Their Kids From Making Mistakes**

Correcting your kids' math homework, double checking to make sure they've packed their lunch, and constantly reminding them to do their chores won't do them any favors. Natural consequences can be some of life's greatest teachers.

Let your kids mess up sometimes and show them how to learn from their mistakes so they can grow wiser and become stronger.

#### **11. Confusing Discipline With Punishment**

Punishment involves making kids suffer for their wrongdoing. Discipline, however, is about teaching them how to do better in the future.

Raising a child who fears "getting in trouble" isn't the same as raising a child who wants to make good choices. Use consequences that help your kids develop the self-discipline they need to make better choices.

#### **12. Taking Shortcuts to Avoid Discomfort**

Although giving in to a whining child or doing your kids' chores for them will make your life a little easier right now, those shortcuts instill unhealthy habits in your kids.

Role model delayed gratification and show your kids that you can resist tempting shortcuts. You'll teach them that they're strong enough to persevere and even when they want to give up.

#### **13. Losing Sight of Their Values**

Many parents aren't instilling the values they hold dear in their children. Instead, they're so wrapped up in the day-to-day chaos of life that they forget to look at the bigger picture.

Make sure your priorities accurately reflect the things you value most in life and you'll give your children the strength to live a meaningful life.

*Amy Morin is the author of [13 Things Mentally Strong Parents Don't Do](#) and regularly writes about parenting issues on [Inc.com](#).*