

## **Praise for Joanne Holbrook and *Your Passport to Parenting***

“What an incredible storyteller! Joanne provides enjoyable and adventurous stories with such insightful perspectives for parents, caregivers, guardians, etc. I appreciated the ‘Lessons Learned’ sections at the end of each chapter. I kept finding myself rereading them to reflect on their meaningful insights. As a parent of a daughter with Down syndrome, Chapter 6: Acknowledging Children with Special Needs and Their Parents, addresses possible ways for our world to become more inclusive. Bravo to Joanne for capturing how to enjoy and relish the honor of being a parent.”

— **Bernadette Miller, Mother, Virginia, USA**

“In *Your Passport to Parenting*, Holbrook challenges our fears about raising our children and pulls from the wisdom of parents and cultures across the globe to share lessons in child rearing. Parents of children of all ages will reap the benefit of Holbrook’s experience, engage on an adventure of parenting across cultures, and come away with a deep appreciation and desire to share the world with their kids.”

— **Anna Fitch Courie, Mother, and Author of *The Adventures of Cancer Girl and God*, South Carolina, USA**

“Joanne took me on a journey around the globe, and on the way, she taught me that being a parent is about learning and making mistakes. Her insightful words filled with love and kindness and her teachings through storytelling made me realize I am not alone—all around the globe, women face the same challenges. There are moments when she asks you to stop, think, feel, and learn through your own experiences. Thank you for this all-encompassing adventure through parenting.”

— **Olga Rosenburg, Business Owner, Mother, Sweden**

“Joanne captures the joys of parenting through personalized storytelling—taking the reader on a journey around the world, sharing memories, tips, and life lessons from parents far and wide. I hope there is as much fun and adventure in our family’s future as there clearly has been in Joanne’s.”

— **Diane Sequeria, Project Manager, Mother, London, UK**

“Like a good jigsaw puzzle, Joanne distils wisdom from around the world to weave a compelling guide for parents. The stories in each chapter gently lead the reader to explore the many ways different cultures raise resilient offspring who can become friends with one another and share your core values. Joanne highlights many fine human qualities, including curiosity, compassion, and kindness. She persuasively presents the merits of open communication and clear and consistent boundaries to build a sound framework for happy, beautiful children.”

— **Harry Armytage, The Learning Difficulty Expert™, Father, Canberra, Australia**

*“Your Passport to Parenting is the book every parent should read who is searching for a different idea or a better way. Joanne offers a positive approach, with forethought and intention, that takes advantage of her incredible travel experiences. The stories are thought-provoking and force you to pause and ask yourself several questions about your own methods, traditions, and approaches. Some concepts reinforced what I’ve been doing as a parent while others gave me new ideas and techniques to try with my children. Joanne’s approach for how I could speak to my daughter about the transition into womanhood utterly changed my life! This approach was exactly what I was searching for. If this book could reach every parent, it could very well change the world, one family at a time.”*

— **Melissa Venable, CEO, Mother, Virginia, USA**

*“A book that packs a real parenting punch, Your Passport to Parenting has so many aha! moments that I couldn’t help sharing with friends, and when I did, my friends exclaimed, ‘That’s so brilliant! Mind if I use it myself?’ So, if this book goes viral, it’s really no surprise! It’s an extremely fun and practical read that will inspire you, top off your parenting toolkit, and most certainly bless your family.”*

— **Candice Parsons, Writer and Communications Specialist, Mother, Perth, Australia**

*“Your Passport to Parenting is such a breath of fresh air among parenting books. Rather than offering clinical, cold formulas for cookie-cutter parenting, it’s full of relatable, sage anecdotes from around the world about every stage of child development, and it’s applicable to any parenting style. In short, it’s a collection of the best advice you’ve ever heard, wrapped into one source! I also appreciated the workbook format that lets you notate your personal connections to the material so you can easily recall them later, and the ‘Lessons Learned’ sections at the end of each chapter help summarize key points for later skimming and reference.”*

— **Alina Rozanski, Middle School Teacher, Mother, Bavaria, Germany**

*“As a new parent, I found Your Passport to Parenting to be a friendly guide, full of original information. Parenting can be overwhelming, so I was beyond thrilled to find such an easy-to-read, idea-packed book. This book has my utmost recommendation. I read it on a film set, in between intense filming, and I can assure you it reads like a dear friend. I can’t wait to share it with more parents.”*

— **Youssef Kerkour, Actor, Father, London, UK**

*“As a mom of two boys (one being non-verbal and in a wheelchair and the other neuro-typical), I have read countless parenting books, many of which contradict each other and have left me doubting myself and feeling inadequate as a parent. Your Passport to Parenting is proof of the old saying: ‘It takes a village to raise a child.’ It has definitely made me slow down, breathe, and enjoy this incredible journey of parenting by being present for my children every day. Thank you for the inspiration to keep pushing on, Joanne.”*

— **Twone Moreland, Business Owner and Mother, Bali, Indonesia**

“I have read a lot of parenting books, but this one is different. Holbrook gives parents the framework to feel comfortable and confident in their parenting while building lifelong bonds with their children. She takes the reader on a journey through all the best family and parenting practices she has witnessed through her extensive exposure to many different cultures. There are many pearls of wisdom in these pages. So, so good.”

— **Patricia Falcetta, The Family Joy Expert (TM), Mother, Canberra, Australia**

“In *Your Passport to Parenting*, not only will you learn international tools to help you become a stellar parent, but you’ll be helping your children learn how to create their own destinies by becoming secure, well-adjusted, and successful future adults. You’ll be amazed by the worldwide wisdom Joanne Holbrook provides here and be eager to apply it to your own family.”

— **Patrick Snow, Father, Publishing Coach, and International Bestselling Author of *Creating Your Own Destiny* and *Boy Entrepreneur*, Hawaii, USA**

“Joanne Holbrook has provided what every other parenting book has long overlooked: that many ways exist to be a good parent, and just because you do things differently, doesn’t mean you are doing them wrong. In *Your Passport to Parenting*, she provides tips from around the world about how to raise happy, well-behaved children without having to try to keep up with other parents. This is a breath of fresh air among parenting books.”

— **Tyler R. Tichelaar, PhD and Award-Winning Author of *When Teddy Came to Town*, Michigan, USA**

“This powerful and dynamic book is chock-full of stories and activities from around the world and a must-have for any parent interested in conscientious parenting. It guides you to develop a proactive plan for teaching your children the values to form a strong moral foundation for their life’s journey.”

— **Susan Friedmann, CPA and Bestselling Author of *Riches in Niches: How to Make it BIG in a Small Market*, New York, USA**

**YOUR  
PASSPORT  
TO PARENTING**

**Wisdom from Around the World  
to Help Build Happy Families**

**JOANNE HOLBROOK**

**Your Passport to Parenting: Wisdom from Around the World to Help Build Happy Families**

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Published by:

Aviva Publishing

Lake Placid, NY

(518) 523-1320

[www.AvivaPubs.com](http://www.AvivaPubs.com)

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ISBN: 978-1-950241-77-4

Library of Congress Control Number: 9781950241774

Editors: Larry Alexander and Tyler Tichelaar, Superior Book Productions

Cover Design and Interior Book Layout: Nicole Gabriel, Angel Dog Productions

Author Photo: Peter Driessel Photography

Every attempt has been made to properly source all quotes.

Printed in the United States of America

Dedicated to every parent around the world.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am blessed to have a tribe of people who have loved me for years and helped me through the process of writing and printing this book. In no particular order, thanks are due to:

My amazing husband, Deric, who saw this book in me long before I did. Thank you for enjoying this process with me every step of the way and always believing in me. I love you.

My children Kailey and Devin. Without you, this book and journey would never have happened. Thank you for choosing me; you are my heartbeat and my lungs. You both gave me the biggest gift I have ever been given—being your mom.

My dad, my biggest fan and biggest critic. Thank you for the fire. You were the one who taught me that the beauty in another person is in their story, and you were right.

My mom. Thank you for your continual love and support that helped me become the woman I am today. Thank you for always answering the phone.

Patrick Snow, my writing and publishing coach, who locked arms with me and was there for me through this whole process. Without your incredible guidance, this book would not be here.

My entire writing support team: Nicole Gabriel, Tyler Tichelaar, Larry Alexander, and Susan Friedmann. Your professional coaching, editing, designing, and publishing efforts have brought *Your Passport to Parenting* to life and were instrumental in its overall success.

Claudia, Diane, Wendy, and Mary, thank you for your continual support. You all have left your fingerprints all over this book, and it is better because of you.

Everyone who spoke to me, had coffee with me, and left me with the gift of their story or advice—I treasure you all.

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# INTRODUCTION

## AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNEY THROUGH PARENTING

*“Perfect parents exist...but they don't have kids yet.”*

— Unknown

I am going to assume you are busy and in a hurry. Even reading a book is a commitment you may have to think twice about, but I know you understand your role in your child's development is the most important role you will ever have. If you are overwhelmed, exhausted, and stressed about your child's success, development, and social and coping skills, and concerned that you may be doing too much or too little, then you are like most other parents around the world. I understand completely and know where you are coming from, because nearly every parent on the planet is going through the same thing. I have been and am currently in your shoes sharing these same concerns for my own children.

*Your Passport to Parenting* is going to give you international parenting viewpoints and concepts to help save you time, energy, and frustration. Each chapter covers topics you may be struggling with now or do not even know you will have to deal with yet, and nearly every page is filled with parenting inspiration and insights from around the world. My purpose is to provide thought-provoking ideas about values-based parenting for every age of childhood development to help you navigate your way through the parenting journey.

The greatest fear I hear parents express is: “What if I don't do this right?” Although our parenting instincts are meant to kick in when a child is brought into our lives, the truth is we still lie awake at night wondering how to deal with certain behaviors, situations, or maybe a lack of connection with our child that we crave. We pray we do not mess up our children and this most important task, parenting.

So, what do we do? We ask others!

*Your Passport to Parenting* provides you with proven concepts from other parents who have wisdom to share. Instead of only raising your children the way you were brought up, it gives you insight into how other parents around the world have raised their children, thereby allowing you to bring in multiple international parenting philosophies and design your own way of parenting using proven and successful methods.

One of my most prevalent realizations, and a main driver behind writing this book, was that not all parents enjoy parenting. This epiphany came to me when one of my best friends who does not have children said to me, “Why would anyone want kids? All parents do is complain about having them?” Her words made me step back to assess myself. I started listening to how parents speak about their parenting experiences. I noticed it is normal for parents to complain or say, “I need a bottle of wine at night,” or “I just want to hide from them for a few hours.” As a parent, I

know these comments come out when we are overwhelmed. I also know every parent loves their children immensely. I decided then and there to have as much fun being a parent as my kids were having being children, and to find other parents who enjoyed parenting.

Thankfully, my life allowed me to experience different ways to parent from around the world. I started asking experienced moms and dads from different mindsets, marital situations, or cultures for their thoughts on parenting. What I found were literal gems: beautiful words of wisdom, life lessons, and stories from around the world. Learning these lessons and applying them to my life helped me fall in love with every aspect of parenting. Now when I have a glass of wine at night, it is because I want one, not because I need one.

Born in 1976, I grew up in South Africa during a terrible time in the country's history: the Apartheid (separation). The government controlled every aspect of the population, separating the country by race and tribe into different living areas. Being a privileged white child in a nation where we were not allowed to speak to anyone who was not "like us," I started to develop a singular life view. Nearly the entire world sanctioned South Africa in some manner. The government did not even allow TV to be broadcast until 1976 because it sought to regulate and control every bit of information coming into South Africa. Growing up in this incredibly controlled and segregated environment, I began noticing I was not living in a kind or connected place. Not until 1994, when Nelson Mandela became President and the Apartheid government was abolished, were we finally free from segregation. Then I vowed to learn as much as I could about other cultures in my own country and around the world. I wanted to learn everything I could about the people and cultures I had been restricted from knowing my entire life. I started to travel and learn more about how others around the world live.

Every place I have lived since leaving South Africa at age twenty-six has been a completely new cultural experience for me. My first cultural change was moving to England. I met my husband, a US Army Officer named Deric, in London. His job required him to move all over the world every two to three years. So, the changes and new experiences kept coming as we moved to new countries and learned completely new cultures. Our family has experienced eight international moves (so far). We have lived in five different countries and five different American states over the past fifteen years. And, as you do when living abroad, we have traveled and vacationed in dozens of countries. We've done all this while raising two active children, Kailey and Devin.

When you move so often and experience so much change, you always feel at a loss, like everyone knows and understands more than you do. So, the best way I could quickly empower myself at each new location was to ask questions about everything, including parenting. Each time I moved and learned a new culture, I could feel and see how each country had different rules, customs, and ways of parenting.

I want to share with you the wisdom, ideas, and parenting concepts I have gathered from all over the world simply because they are too fantastic not to share. Since I have experienced so many different cultures, I can act as a facilitator to help you see parenting from a different perspective. Sometimes if we are even just a little set in our ways, it is difficult to see another's way of parenting with an open mind. My background has allowed me to look at parenting problems and issues from multiple cultures. If you are given numerous good options as a parent, you automatically feel more empowered, and that is what *Your Passport to Parenting* can provide you: more options, more empowerment, and more understanding.

This is not a how-to parenting book. It is a conceptual parenting book, filled with ideas taken from parents around the world, consolidated in one place to help you. With these global parenting ideas, you may find a new outlook on how to raise your children to be strong, independent, and empathetic adults. You might find that parenting can actually be positive, calm, and enjoyable. Building a special bond with our toddler, young child, and then teenager is something we do not often take the time to think about holistically. But when we do, as you will learn to do in this book, the rewards can be endless. Our children are usually only dependent on us and available to receive our daily influence for about eighteen years, and that is if they are listening to us the entire time. After that, they are meant to fly away and start their own lives, trusting that we have given them all they need.

Are you ready to learn how others parent around the world? Do you want more options as a parent? Do you want to be a happier, better mother or father? Then grab a cup of tea, coffee, or your favorite drink, and meet me at the next chapter. Come with an open mind and a loving heart, and prepare yourself to see how others raise their families happily around the world.

Let's begin.

