

SNEAK PEEK



SECRETS TO



PARENTING

WITHOUT GIVING A



F[^]CK



**The Non-Conformist Playbook To Raising
Happy Kids Without Public Meltdowns,
Power Struggles & Punishments**

SUE DONNELLAN

SECRETS TO PARENTING WITHOUT GIVING A F^CK

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By Sue Donnellan

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INTRODUCTION

Your Child is the Result of How You Parent

"The trick is to care about everyone while not caring what they think."

~ Laughing Buddha Cafe

The material shared in this book originated from the trenches. I'm a real Mom, living real life, navigating real parenting challenges, just like you. I'm somewhat of an unconventional thinker when it comes to parenting. I'm sure my nonconformity is a result of having an enthusiastic interest in sophomoric comedy, swearing like a sailor, unapologetically speaking my mind, and tuning into the big picture when the daily grind bears down on me. These attributes have saved me from having a nervous breakdown on numerous occasions. Don't worry, though. Even if you don't have those traits, you can still stop the overwhelm and learn how to save yourself from parenting stress.

With a gaggle of kids in tow, I was now the Mom whose kids some teenager might want to trip in a restaurant. In fact, many times when we walked into a restaurant with all six of us, other diners groaned loudly as they saw four little kids about to be seated near them. How satisfying it felt when those same groaners came to our table after dinner and accused us of drugging our kids because they were so well behaved.

Over the past two decades, there were potential catastrophes in every event with four kids so close in age. I did get my ass kicked on occasion, but gradually I became more in touch with the natural parenting instincts I had no idea I possessed.

As those instincts became further refined, eventually friends began asking me for advice. I found myself in the unlikely position of being the go-to person to share tips, techniques, and parenting solutions. And I loved it. I happily and willingly dropped everything and carved out time to help guide a fellow parent through the challenges of raising kids. Through my natural evolution of helping friends, and friends of friends, and even strangers in supermarkets, I found my calling. Me, the one who never wanted kids, had become a parenting mentor!

As my clientele grew, what was a side-hustle became a full-time mentoring venture. I've worked with many parents whose stories will be throughout this book (names changed) and now I have the pleasure of mentoring parents every day through my Ask Mom platform.

The tactics I developed in the trenches are time tested. These are common sense practices, yet new revelations to the parents I work with. Every time a parent comes to me with their current huge problem, or a seemingly insurmountable chasm between them and their child, we go over a few questions then develop simple steps to solve their situation. They usually walk away from me a little skeptical that my often contradictory suggestion is going to work. Then, soon enough, those same people come back with their exciting story about how quickly and easily their situation has changed. One of my favorite pieces of parent feedback is – “I took a risk in going against what I thought I was supposed to do, and that’s when the magic happened.”

At some point we’ve all said, “No one ever hands us a book on how to raise kids.” And yet, bookstore shelves are lined with stacks of them, each with its own set of do’s and don’ts. ***Secrets to Parenting Without Giving a F^ck*** promises to impart reliable secrets, examples, and practical strategies so you can stop feeling parental overwhelm and develop happy humans.

My intention is to help you create your own style of parenting based on the tenets taught in this book. You will be able to raise your child successfully from ages 2-20, or any place in between. This material transcends the generational issues of the moment: gaming, the tech explosion, social media, and any future unknown trend kids will latch onto. The underlying approach is relatively the same for all situations; it’s the primer from which all your parental responses and decisions will originate.

Secrets to Parenting Without Giving a F^ck takes practice. It takes a conscious willingness to ignore the noise and listen to your instincts.

Believe it or not, getting your mind to a state of give-less-of-a-f^ckness is where you strike that balance of being willing to learn while also staying committed to what you believe in. It takes grit, but you’ll experience a rhythm once you get there and your kids will be on their way to becoming well-adjusted, independent thinkers.

Your first step toward parenting without giving a f^ck is being willing to change yourself. That may seem illogical: if you are not supposed to give a f^ck, why should you be the one changing? But know this: **Change Yourself and Your Child Changes**. When you change, kids respond.

Your child is the result of how you parent! There has always been one revelation about rebellious kids that has stood out like a blinking beacon: **Parenting is not about your child; parenting is about YOU.**

I’m teaching parents how to change *their* behavior; not *fix* their child’s. Read that sentence again. The relationship you have with your child is up to you. As parents tweak their actions, their child’s actions are affected. It takes some time to realize: *You are not reacting to your child, your child is reacting to you!*

You set the tone, you determine how your home is run, you decide how you react to your child’s behavior, and you craft what kind of role model your child emulates every day. This is the mindset

for parenting. You are in the parental driver's seat. You are the family CEO! With that VIP title comes the bonus that you are the leader and you own the culture of your home. Whichever way you veer, your family will follow. Flipping the switch to adopt this way of thinking requires that you buy-in to the basic philosophy that you want to raise a mentally resilient, self-sustaining child: a child who will thrive enthusiastically on his own, a child who will work through disappointment, fear, and mistakes without your constant intervention.

Making even the most miniscule adjustment to what you are doing now will result in fundamental and far-reaching improvements to your child's behavior. All it takes is being willing to learn this new approach and shake up your routine a bit.

Your perspective and attitude are something you have control over. Everyone can do this. Whoever you are, whoever your kids are, you can do this. This information is applicable no matter your child's skills, gifts, or needs. What you will learn in this book is suitable to all kids and to all people who care for children, not just parents—foster parents, teachers, guardians, and grandparents.

One of the most significant thought shifts you will experience from this book is: Kids are **“adults in training.”** This parenting philosophy is woven into the fabric of every strategy, concept, or approach I teach. Recognizing your child as an **adult in training** provides a safety net from afar but does not solve your child's problems or punish your child for mistakes. As a parent, you want to create a simulated real-life environment in your home. This means telling your child phrases like: “Life isn't fair,” “I'm sorry that happened to you,” “How do you think you will handle that?” or, “Wake up earlier if you wanted that last Pop Tart.” Parents should provide guidance, emotional support, and leadership when it's really needed, but we don't exist to swoop in to soothe our child's every discomfort. Kids are in training to become self-sustaining adults.

Introspection Prior to Changing Ourselves

Before I knew anything about being a parent, I had the instinct to consider my past and give thought to the kind of person I have been, and want to become, as a parent. I realized I would have some kind of influence on my child and so I put thought into the person my child would get to know as his mother. It was obvious that person might want to spruce herself up a bit.

When I became pregnant, my friends were scared for my unborn child. “Sue, you better clean up your act. You can't swear so much and have your infantile sense of humor with a kid around!”

Leaving the hospital with our first baby, it struck me that I held this little bundle of a blank slate who depended on me to guide, love, discipline, and advise him. It felt frightening and like tremendous pressure.

Of course I wanted to be a good parent and role model, but how much would I need to change myself to achieve parenting goddessness? Did I want to spend my life being a phony vanilla version of myself just because I now have a child? If I have to become bland and uptight to be considered a good parent, then where will it end? Should I also not participate in the magic of Santa, the Easter Bunny, or the Tooth Fairy because we can't live a little white lie?

I proudly decided I'd approach this new frontier as my bold, trash talking, crazy self. This child will know me for me and all my mistakes, past experiences, and embarrassing blemishes. No hiding, faking, or pretending. I will be my authentic self. That was the beginning of my unwitting venture into mindful parenting.

You get to attentively, consciously determine the kind of parent you want to be, and then become and be that parent daily. You will find a way to strike that balance between being truly you and being open to change where needed. Your influence is everything to your child and your changes directly result in your child's changes. You write the playbook and they adapt it.

So when the time came for my kids to question me about my stress-relieving foul mouth, I said, "Those are adult words. You may use them when you are an adult." That actually worked! At least until they were thirteen, and by then I had so many other landmines to avoid I didn't care if an occasional swear word slipped out.

In fact, allowing a tactical swear word was a parenting technique I used as incentive during extenuating circumstances. Specifically, I remember the time we all had our bellies full from a huge pancake breakfast and decided to go hiking directly after eating. Tim suggested beginning our climb up the steepest part of the hill (typical military guy,) and, predictably, a quarter of the way up the kids were doubled over with cramps. With four little ones complaining and crying, I redirected by allowing each one a swear word of their choice to repeat until we got to the top of the hill. You can't believe how useful that idea proved! Not to mention inappropriately funny.

Even though I decided to keep some of my more controversial personality traits, I also realized a few things about me needed to change. Being a mindful parent forces you to ask yourself the hard questions: "Why did I do that or say that? What previously held beliefs caused me to react that way? Am I happy with the result? If not, I have the power to choose different reactions with better results." I've learned that when I changed myself for the better, my kids changed for the better. Allowing for introspection, you will have the ways and means of having beautifully functioning relationships with your kids.

Having a great childhood myself likely helped prepare me for being a parent, but I still needed to do it all my own way, a bit differently than my parents. I had to create the mindset I needed to make life run the way I wanted it to.

I came into this parenting gig with some baggage of my own. For example, I lied all the time to my Mom, about everything. I thought deeply about why I lied so much. I recalled being punished quite a bit and forced to write, "I will not lie" 250 times while being grounded in my room for several days (it was the 70s).

With the benefit of years behind me, I realized lying was about control. I didn't want to be told what to do. The only control I had as a child was to create my own environment by lying. The stricter my Mom acted, the more I lied. The more she punished me with grounding or snooped through my stuff, the more I became resolved in manipulating our interactions. Being punished reinforced my will and ability to lie even better to where I eventually put this skill to good use by having a marvelously successful career in sales!

It took a willingness for me to look inside, to be honest with myself, and not repeat the methods I knew wouldn't work. I had to change. I couldn't rely on the knee-jerk reactions of my upbringing.

In Part One, you will develop traits of your own to be a great parent without giving too many f^cks. You'll reconnect with your own self-worth, outside being a parent, and redefine your happiness through your own eyes. You'll learn how to parent with consistency, how to utilize personal discipline, and how to hone your ability to anticipate behaviors from your kids. Refreshing your relationship with yourself first allows you to become the parent your child needs you to be. Part One shows you how to leave behind old patterns and habits that aren't serving you as a parent.

Being agreeable to edifying yourself enables you to show up better for your kids. Doing self-work to have less ego, control, guilt, and shame will not only fortify you, but it will benefit you by leading you out of frustration and into fulfillment. When the adult is happy, the kid is happy. And the adult will be happy because the adult will be learning how to quickly, easily invite better behavior from their child in Part Two. You will be given the actual tools to raise well-adjusted, independent kids who love spending time with you and who add value to your life and to society.

If you can feel the possibility of your mind opening, then the first tenet of this parenting mindset is already working its magic. The days of public meltdowns, whining, not listening, lying, etc., will be in the past.

CASE STUDY

Your Child is the Result of How You Parent

Mom: Kate. 4 Sons: 10, 10, 6, 4

Kate was one of my earliest clients. She came to me for help over 10 years ago when she was at her wits end. She and her husband Jared had 4 active sons; twins Michael and Matthew who were 10, 6-year-old Jacob, and Adam who was about to turn 4. Kate felt like overall she was doing pretty well as the mother of super active twin boys, and she even felt like she handled things well when Jacob got added to the mix. Once Adam came along, she felt like she lost control. Kate, like many parents, relied on using time-outs to calm the boys when they became too rambunctious. Her standard parenting M.O. when the boys got a little too crazy, or started fighting with each other, was to call a time-out. This method worked well initially. Her home went from chaos to quiet instantly for a few moments of peace and quiet. Kate became pretty comfortable with this pattern of escalation -- time out -- peace and quiet -- reboot -- rinse, repeat.

Then along came Adam. He took rowdy behavior to a whole new level. He began throwing tantrums and throwing food. Suddenly, Kate became faced with the reality of a child in full blown meltdown mode. A time-out would not be nearly enough to help bring peace when her child is throwing his dinner at the wall. A time out doesn't clean a wall dripping with food. She hated herself for thinking Adam might just be a "bad kid."

The very first insight I helped Kate understand is, it's *her* behavior, not Adam's, that allowed the problem to persist. Her ten-year practice of relying on time-outs only bought her a few moments of no yelling and running around, it didn't result in *teaching* the boys not to return to the behavior. Kate needed to recognize the control she thought she had before Adam was just an illusion. It's not that her method didn't work with Adam, the reality was it had never really worked at all! Because no bad behavior truly changed, it just briefly paused.

The way around this was for us to address the authority Kate forgot she had. After giving Kate clear steps to address how *she* responded to the rambunctious chaos, she learned to embrace that the power was within her, and her new responses, changed her child's actions. In addition to getting new creative alternatives to use as responses when her boys' energetic behavior ramped up, she also began feeling more under control knowing her kids responded to her reactions. Kate quickly began getting results that became permanent changes to how the boys behaved in the house. Within three days of our first session, Adam's food throwing habit stopped, and within two weeks his tantrums all but disappeared. Parent-directed time-outs were never needed again. Kate became empowered in her approach and quickly found her life much less chaotic. Kate changed herself first and watched in awe as her kids changed.

About Sue Donnellan

Hi, I'm Sue and I'm so happy you're here! I am the author of ***Secrets to Parenting Without Giving a F^ck*** and the mom behind ***Ask Mom Parenting***.

As a one-time reluctant parent and reformed yeller, I understand the sheer stress that is parenting! I've created a results-based, no-nonsense program for struggling parents. My techniques evolved straight from 20+ years raising four kids, including surprise triplets, as well as from mentoring other parents through their overwhelm.

In the last 25 years, I've built and run two of my own full-time businesses, supported my military husband as he deployed five times, and run a family of six. If I can emerge unscathed and triumphant, so can you! And I'll show you how.

In my 'free time' I'm also a mom to two dogs, I've discovered a cure for hiccups, I'm the creator of a family recipe for sleep dust, I love the ethereal and timeless singer Sade, I appreciate great comedy and I'm passionate about living healthy.

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