

# THINGS MENTALLY STRONG PARENTS DO

By: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/>

Mentally strong individuals model both psychological and emotional strength and promote resilience in themselves and their children. Most parents are doing the best they can at any given time with the knowledge, experience, and resources they have at their disposal. However, we tend to gather what we learned in our childhoods and teach it to our children. For example, we may say “I don’t want to be like my mother,” yet discover we are behaving that way with our children. We also may repeat dysfunctional generational patterns because that is “what we know and what we do.” Therefore, it is important to investigate what mentally strong parents do and don’t do.

- Mentally strong parents are acutely aware of the importance of teaching their child an emotional vocabulary. They understand that recognizing and validating their child’s emotions are vital. They understand the delicate balance between validation and dismissing emotions such as “pulling yourself up by the bootstraps.” They may reflect feelings often to convey understanding – “you feel sad” or “it made you angry” – and then model effective distress tolerance skills to promote emotion regulation in their children. They also understand that their child is not being a “victim” by expressing emotions and they must be felt in order to be healed. They understand that not relating to their child’s emotions consistently may cause psychological harm which may lead to their own emotional roadblocks in adulthood.




Nurture



Structure

Healthy Parenting



- Parents don't teach that mistakes are wrong. They understand that "failure" and mistakes are a part of success. They know that to be successful or to learn a skill is a developmental process that takes place over time and that mistakes and failures are part of success. Just as we know and expect our kids not to stumble and fall as a process of learning to walk, mentally strong parents expect that mistakes are a part of learning. "Living and learning" philosophy promotes self-efficacy and self-compassion and can serve as a protective factor for perfectionism.

- Mentally strong parents don't "cave" when their children are upset with them for setting limits. They understand that part of effective parenting is being unpopular at times, which means their children may dissent, be angry, or upset when boundaries are instilled for their greater good. They also understand that boundaries, consistency, routine, and order promote psychological safety in their children.

- Mentally strong parents understand that their child's emotional and psychological safety is just as important as their physical safety. They understand that consistent arguments, emotional violence, substance abuse, and untreated parental mental health issues, etc. may have lifetime effects on children.

- Mentally strong parents accept their children as unique individuals who were born to contribute through their own unique gifts and talents. They don't live vicariously through their children by steering them in trajectories of their own agenda, ignoring the child's interests or explorations.

- Mentally strong parents don't shield children from painful situations and they don't model co-dependency but autonomy. They know that children must learn to tolerate distress on their own and that "saving" them may just be helping the parent's discomfort. They help their children navigate the difficult situations so they are able to build autonomy.

- Mentally strong people intuitively know and acknowledge that their success was derived from mentoring and modeling. It has been modeled for them by peers, mentors, and most importantly by parents and family. They teach, coach, and mentor their children and provide them the best tools possible so they are able to flourish in their own lives.

