

ON THE OTHER SIDE

INTRODUCTION

How can we get to the other side of our parenting dreams and desires? King Solomon leaned into this discussion and said that when it comes to parenting, we must “start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it.” How do we know which way our kids should go? Where do we start? What do we do? Perhaps one of the best things we can do, no matter how old our children are – or how old we are – is cultivate worthiness.

PART 4

VIDEO NOTES

Brené Brown, in her parenting guideposts, shares that worthiness is the idea that we are enough, no matter what we’ve done or not done. Our worthiness is actually a “Godright” because we are made in His image and while we were still sinners, Jesus died for us. When we believe we are worthy, we believe that we are capable of giving and receiving love, which results in a sense of belonging.

Oftentimes, the belief surrounding our worthiness comes from our parents. If our parents used shame to get us to behave in a certain way, it is likely that we use that tactic with our own children, either knowingly or unknowingly. But shame is the greatest enemy of worthiness. If we want our children to feel worthy (and honestly, if we want to learn to feel worthy), we have to understand shame and commit to rooting it out of our lives.

This doesn’t mean that we don’t discipline our children (or that God doesn’t discipline us), but it does mean that we use guilt language instead of shame language. Shame says, “I am unworthy of love and belonging.” Guilt says, “I am worthy of love and belonging. I simply did something bad.” Shame-prone kids think if they mess up, they *are* a mess up, that if they make a bad choice in life, they *are* bad. This means they will struggle with their identity, worth, are more prone to engage in high-risk

behaviors. With guilt-prone kids, you find the inverse of those outcomes, so the more you can use guilt over shame, the less those outcomes are.

The more you dig into this research on shame and guilt, what comes up time and time again is that parenting is one of the strongest predictive variables on whether someone will grow up being guilt or shame prone. What do we do, then?

First, have the shame talk with yourself. This looks like being honest about your own struggle with feeling a deep sense of love, belonging, and worth. It may mean having a shame talk with a counselor to walk you through where your shame came from so you can begin to take steps toward healing.

Next, sit down with your kids and share honestly, in an age-appropriate way, about how shame has played a role in your life. Consider asking this question to your kids: Are there any conditions of worthiness that I have knowingly or unknowingly handed down to you?

Finally, choose guilt language over shame language. When you see your son or daughter do something, reinforce who they are, and remind them of their choice. For example, "You are my son/daughter. I love you, but you have made an unwise choice."

Remember, it's never too late to have these conversations.

"What we are **teaches** the child far more than what we say, so we must **be** what we want our children to **become**." – Joseph Chilton Pearce

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. How would you describe your childhood? Best memories? Hardest memories?
2. Read the quote by Joseph Chilton Pearce in the box above. How have you seen this play out as a child and as a parent?
3. One of the greatest things we can do as parents is cultivate a sense of worthiness in our families. What prerequisites for worthiness have you knowingly or unknowingly handed down to your children?

4. There is a big difference between shame and guilt. How do you characterize the differences? Stepping back and honestly reflecting, do you feel you tend to use shame in your parenting? What impact do you see in your kids with shame? With guilt?

THIS WEEK

Take some time to think about shame. How does shame manifest itself in your life? In your parenting? What would it look like to shift from shame language to guilt language?

"But God **demonstrates** His own **love toward us**, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8