

# 20 Things Every Parent Should Hear

**Beth Woolsey** *Writer, humorist at the Five Kids Is A Lot of Kids blog*

1. You are a hero for your kids. You are. You're a go-the-distance, fight-the-dragon, face-the-challenges hero for your kids. Taking a beating makes that more true. Not less.

2. We all struggle. Every parent. Everywhere. We all second-guess ourselves. And we all want to quit sometimes. Hold the good times close, and when things are tough, remember, "this, too, shall pass."

3. Finding the funny may not save your soul, but it will save your sanity. Or maybe it's the other way around. Either way, look for the humor and embrace the crazy. Laughter is a lifeline.

4. Every day, you will feel like you have mishandled something. Like you've been impatient. Like you've misjudged. Like you've been too harsh. Like you've been too lenient. You may be right. Apologize if you need to and then, whatever. Seriously. Just whatever. Let it go.

5. The crazy, the crying, the cuddles. The screaming, the sacred, the scared. The minutes, the magic, the mess. It's all part of it. And it's all worth it.

6. Family is the best. Even when it's not perfect. And it's never perfect. Ever.

7. At the end of organization, at the end of patience, at the end of perfection, we die to ourselves. And then love rises from the ashes. It sucks. And then it gets better. And then it sucks again. Still, love rises.

8. You will never regret parenting. Except for the teeny, tiny tons of times when you secretly wonder if you maybe regret it just a little. But, overall, never. And overall is what counts in the end.

9. Parenting is like climbing the big mountain. Look for the base camp. That's where you rest, meet other climbers, take in oxygen and acclimatize. Base camp is what makes summiting possible.

10. You are not alone in this strange, vast, parenting ocean. Even in the dark of night. You are not alone. You're not.

11. Kids know the way to magical and they'll give you a free pass to come along. Breathe in the magic as long as you can, because that same kid is going to poop his pants in just a minute.

12. There's a very fine line between enjoying the chaos and barely surviving. Actually, there's no line at all. It's all mixed up together. That "fine line" thing is a lie.

13. If you pay attention, kids will teach you how to laugh loudly, how to love deeply and how to live fully. They will also ruin all your stuff.

14. Any number of kids is a lot of kids.

15. Look for joy. You'll find it in the middle of the busy. Or under the ridiculous. Or hanging from the overwhelmed in its underpants. Joy's like that. It's in the middle of everything. It's completely unpredictable. And it will surprise you when you're not expecting it. Like vomit and diarrhea, except good.

16. You will fall apart and do it all wrong. Forgive yourself. Ask your kids to forgive you. Set an example of resilient fallibility. Set an example of practicing the art of love -- both loving yourself and loving others. No one does this parenting gig right the first time. Or the last time. Or the times in between. Showing your kids how to keep going after getting it wrong is a wonderful gift to give them.

17. Kids are difficult, gross, confusing and awesome. So are you.

18. Parenting will bring you face-to-face with yourself. It may be terrifying. It may break you. But it will also rebuild you, and you will be stronger than you ever thought possible.

19. Balance is a myth. Parenting isn't a tight-rope walk; it's a dance. Strive for rhythm instead of balance, and trust yourself to move to the ever-changing beat.

20. Yes, you will have days where you wonder where the hell the capable and organized you went. Yes, you will sit on the floor of the main aisle at Target by the check-out area with a child who is thrashing, screaming and calling you names. Yes, you will have to tell your child that the dog is not a napkin and to put down the urinal cake. If you do not do all those things literally, then you will do them figuratively. And yes, you will also hold that child and rock back and forth and tell him you love him and tell him he's safe and tell him you're not leaving even though he will someday leave you. This is parenting. It is tragic and triumphant. Messy and magical. Sacred and spectacular. And it is, always, fiercely worthwhile.