**Discussion of:**

**All Joy and No Fun: Why parents hate parenting**

By [**Jennifer Senior**](http://nymag.com/nymag/author_78), published July 4th, 2010

Perhaps the decline in "happiness" with parenting reflects the general trend in society over the past few generations to become more focused on individual happiness rather than on giving of oneself to others. Past generations did not have the luxury of focusing on their emotional state but with all of the technological and industrial advancements, the "work" of every day life has been reduced, giving us much more time to navel gaze, analyze ourselves & others, and complain about our circumstances ... maybe selfishness is what's making us unhappy & not our kids!

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It's all a mind set-if you choose to be unhappy about having children, then you will be unhappy. If you choose to be HAPPY, then you will be HAPPY. Stop dwelling on the negative, and start living your happy life. Your children will certainly thank you for it!

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When considering to have a child...and your resulting "happiness" the first thing I think of, and yet I never hear discussed...is what are YOU like?    I am a solitary sort, I like to read, I like order, I like quiet. I have very close friends...but I would not consider myself particularly social.I also have projects that so consume and delight me that I never find myself sitting around wishing for "a more fulfilling life and sense of purpose." I feel like I am bursting at the seams with sense of purpose, and this does make me very happy. The "flow" that you so often hear about. And most importantly, I crave time alone.I LOVE it. I really rarely feel bored or lonely...and when I do a cuddle from my husband, a run with my dog, a phone call from a friend seems to sort that right out. And to bring me into touch with empathy, compassion and self sacrifice any number of charities I am impassioned about will gladly accept as much time from me as I can give. And that is immensely fulfilling to me too.    So where would a child fit into that? The answer is...  It wouldn't.     My core being, my not so secret self would hate the chaos, the mess, the tempers, tears and need. I appreciate why people have children...trust me, I get it.    But the people around me who are finding parenthood a source of happiness are also the ones very different from me. People who are extrovert, love noise and excitement and chaos, people who wander the house in tears when it is empty because they love people so much. People who seem to suffer loneliness more than I do, people who sometimes don't already (before children) have a deep passion that gives them a sense of achievement. Not always...but often enough.    Are you like me? Do you like long monk-like silences? Find being touched constantly irritating and invasive? Feel comforted around order and tidiness? Then think about that, you might really hate the full on invasion of a little being into your life. Or do you crave touch and sensation and feel the need to be busy all of the time? Like being in a noisy chaotic situation? Then kids might make you happy beyond your wildest dreams.    The point I am making is that "happy" is not a one size fits all word. "Happy" means very different things to people, as well as "purpose, achievement, satisfaction."     A breakdown of what those things mean to you, and how you would bring them into your own life might make the "Kid issue" a moot one. It depends on what brings you joy in the first place.

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Having my child was the worst decision I ever made. It was the divider in my life. It cut through everything. There was everything before then everything after. I'm not saying I was uber happy before, but at least I was free. And I am definitely unhappier and unfree now. What I've come to realize is that not everyone should have kids. We are guilted into it. And when the big uh-oh comes we are shamed into seeing it out. Most of us types make great "crazy uncles" and the older we get, the more we should remain. To those that have kids and love it, God bless you. I wish I would have not had kids and you would have had one more as that is the way it should be.

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I think people always want to think they're 'better' or 'happier' than the next guy. People are very competive about this, which is funny considering... it's not a sport, it's not business, or high school - it's YOUR LIFE. Stop comparing yourself to everyone else! Breathe, and be at peace with who you are.     The more I remind myself how blessed I am, the happier I feel. Do I have stress, am I tired? Sure. Doesn't mean I don't also feel very happy, a good percentage of the time. The more I live in the moment, absorb and appreciate what's going on around me, the happier I feel.     I have had moments in my life that were deep wells of sorrow; horrible fear, loathing. I have felt deep loss, and aching lonlieness. But I know that these feelings will not kill me... so when they come (when horrible things happen) I experience them, as fully as I can, knowing there will be light and joy, again. And then, with time, there is.     Children, spouses, jobs, houses, cars, money - nothing can 'make' you happy. A happy person is happy, no matter what life throws at them. An unhappy person -if they were given whatever they 'want', whether it's a house full of kids, or a billion dollars - would still be unahppy.     This article is interesting, but ultimately there is no lesson to be learned from the studies, or the kids/no kids argument. Children don't make people happy, and they don't make people unhappy. People make themselves happy or unhappy.

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Sometimes the hardest part about being a parent can be letting go. Check out this awesome documentary from filmmaker Doug Block as he learns this the hard way when his daughter is about to leave for college! The Kids Grow Up on DVD today is definitely worth checking out!

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My parents enjoyed raising us, even through the difficulties inherent to nurturing children. However, it seems like there was so much less anxiety about child-rearing when I was growing up (late 60's to early 80's). We were not scheduled to to the hilt, we were not being molded into AP/SAT machines at school; we had fewer bogeymen (like child-murderers and school-shooters); our parents could be human (having a glass or two of wine, for better or worse); children weren't zombified by technology, which I imagine made us more interesting little beings to talk to (I think our regimentation of children has made them dull); it was easier to be spontaneous because parents in our community could drop us off at a neighbor's without as much advance planning; they didn't feel compelled to spend hours upon end negotiating with us over whether we would turn off a television as if we were equal players in our rearing. Without romanticizing the past, we have to ask ourselves how and why parenting became so labor intensive.     We also have to ask ourselves whether the kids we raise now are better off. Are they smarter? Kinder? Happier? Braver? More Ethical? Conscious? Self-sufficient? Imaginative? Creative?

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I think something that isn't discussed or thought about is also the fact that your child may have a totally different, or incompatible personality to you or your partner.    I was, (and am) an introspective, rather introverted personality that likes quiet, being alone and entertaining myself, and I never enjoyed being touched as a child. I was otherwise normal, and not abused...just sort of diffident. Think housecat.    My Mother is neurotic, very touchy feelie, very noisy and social and involved in everything. Think hyperactive noisy terrier.     We made each other nuts. We still do. From day dot she wanted to cuddle, and smootch and hold me all of the time, I hated it and would push her away and hide from her to be left alone (and this was when I was still an infant I am told. I remember this feeling even as a toddler). She wanted to know my friends, my life, my business, spend every waking second with me...normal mother stuff...I was secretive and didn't want her anywhere near my personal life, even from a super young age. She has resorted to breaking into my social networking accounts and emails last year to feel like she knows what I am doing. I had to resort to changing all of my passwords.Again. Her noisiness, my silence, her need for constant company, my need for solitude, her tactile nature, my detest of being cuddled or touched by her in any way...it's like I was born from a stranger. ( I am married and in my late 30's now...our relationship has never changed or improved.)  It has caused her a lifetime of sorrow and a feeling of alienation, and me a lifetime of frustration and paranoia...but clearly something about our core natures are very different. I am not like my Father either. I have a few friends who are raising small-ish kids right now, around 5 or 6 year olds, and they feel this disconnect too...like they love them, but they don't really LIKE them.As though they don't know this person,and this little person doesn't like them either.     Why is this never talked about? I see it rather often...and my friends repeat stories from THEIR friends..it's actually more common then people seem to think. And that is something potential parents should think about, because all of my girlfriends who are eagerly anticipating having babies seem to think they will have a gorgeous little carbon copy (or 50 / 50 mix) of themselves and their partner. Like "Little Satsuma will LOVE ballet just like I did! And my Hubs is taking down his ball mitts from the loft!"

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@jenniferjen - I totally agree with you! And there is now a lot of information about how people of different personalities have different needs and how this translates into parenting. Books I like include "Nurture by Nature" by Paul D. Tieger & Barbara Barron-Tieger and "The Developing Child" by Elizabeth Murphy. I do a lot of work with people who were parented the "wrong" way and also with parents who are wanting to parent their kids how the kids need to be parented, not how the parents would like them to be parented! Anyway, thanks for your comment!

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I think people need classes to be parents. There are teachers that hate teaching, yet when you look at their classrooms, they have no idea how to control them and create a peaceful learning environment! That's their fault, not the children's. You have to do the work upfront from the very beginning. You can't be lazy, or it will bite you in the butt down the road. Those who hate parenting might have started out ignorant or lazy. I feel sorry for them.

Liked By ailleengrace

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Bottom Line: "Happiness is Overrated".   Like having Dogs & Cats - Children is not for everyone.  Folks without a unique, significant hobby or interest in life - are usually good with children.  Those who are in the mist of it, can't possibly enjoy the sufferings of babbling, mindless, pooping, screaming beings.   Those who can hire 8 nannies, 3 cooks, 5 housekeepers & 2 drivers- a chalet at the mountains, all to themselves, while they save the world & make movies (e.g., Angelina Jolie); are 1 OF A Gazillion & HIGHLY unlikely to be YOU.   So. Those who have children & regret it, we applaud your honesty.  But you ought to know, that child, won't stay a baby forever.   He/She will be your cause & effect. Be kind. Love. You will get in return.  :)

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I am a homemaker of 2 going on 3 in August. I always get more depressed when pregnant and there is no question that parenting is HARD work. I doubt soldiers on the field are happy in the moment either, or firemen when they are in the midst of the fire, or blocked writers, or Dr.s who are facing a patient they can't cure--anything worth doing is hard and sacrifices momentary pleasure. And the differences between those jobs and parenting is that parenting, in some ways, lasts forever. But now whenever I am not acting happy, I have a little girl who says, "Mommy, can you please be happy?" When we work together with our kids instead of opposition to them we can find a way. The tension/unhappiness comes when we tell ourselves we deserve more and this applies in any field. For a realistic, awesome perspective on parenting go here: enjoyingthesmallthings.blogspt.com

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I'm probably one of the very few who will admit that I regret having kids. I've lost my economic power & all sense of myself. I spend my days being screamed at and acting as the referee between pointless bickering. I hate this life and I certainly would turn the clock back if I could.

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At the heart of the debate for me is not day-to-day happiness, but growth and fulfillment. My son has been an incredible inspiration for me to be a better person, to set a good example, to examine and question myself and my life and my values. Yes, he can be maddening. Yes, there are days when I wonder what I was thinking having a child. Yes, my life is less carefree and arguably less "fun." Of course! Any major life decision has these moments.    But I liken the whole experience of having a child to running a marathon (I ran my first marathon three weeks ago, incidentally). It's hard; it's painful; it's miserable. Most people think you're out of your mind to even try it. It takes practice, dedication, time and enormous self-sacrifice. And the satisfaction of finishing--of completing something really, really hard--is one of the greatest feelings I've ever had.     Our cultural obsession with "easy" and "fun" instead of "rewarding," "fulfilling," and "significant" is ultimately what makes so many of us hate parenting, I think. But I love parenting--even when it stinks.

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@animily - But why can't other things be a factor of growth and fulfillment? I appreciate that your son achieves this for you...and you sound like you have really thought it over...but many people do things that are not "fun" or "easy" and are also not parents.    I pose the question that the Dalai Lama probably doesn't feel like he should have had a few to give his life meaning and purpose.    You can live a full and purpose filled life with OR without children.

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Page 6 perfectly demonstrates the phenomenon the author spent the first 5 pages writing about. She cannot close w/o saying parenting makes people happy. Because, as a parent, she has to think that. Otherwise, . . . .    And that business about regretting what you haven't done? Well, duh. You don't really know what it would have been like to do it--you can't know--so it's easy to idealize it.

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lol my life is always fun for me, and I love children too. I also don't hang on stuff like losing sleep to be there for someone, and I embrace what's happening in the moment, and their outcomes. If i make a sacrifice, it's because i choose to, and maybe it's easier for me to make these moment something intmate, and enjoy them.     If you're not ready for the responsibility of children, then don't have them, because it'll be like any other responsibility inflicted on a person that doesn't want a certain responsibility -> misery. Wait until you're ready, and want what you're getting yourself into.

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When people are stuck in something which they did not expect, do not like, and cannot change, they only remnant rationalization is to claim it rewarding and altruistic. OK, fine, if one can temporarily feel better.

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"if i say it enough times, maybe she'll listen", my mama admonished.

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my wise little mama taught me, "the day you have that first child is the day you give up your freedom".

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to be selfish or not, to be responsible or not, decisions decisions. when you think in consequences you are an adult, and when you dont think in consequences you are a child. unfortunately many of us on here werent thinking in consequences, we were thinking in the moment and with our hearts when we decided to have kids and get married. We made these childish immature decisions with not much thought or plans, because life is too short and we were living in the moment, in our happy joyous state of mind. i think there should be a mommy island somewhere. Where mommas can get away from their kids and their husband, and just take a little vacation. call it mama island. then when we feel we had enough relaxation and miss them ( is that even possible, jk, i would miss them) just go back home to them and everything is back to normal, like nothing ever happened. or you could just never get married and never have kids.

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Dont get me wrong. I love my children. There are great parts of being a parent just as there are great parts of being married and not such great parts. The first time we werent planning on having our first baby, and shortly after our first baby, i got pregnant again (not planned the 2nd time either, i warned my husband I can still get pregnant again really fast without being on the pill, he didnt believe me). I remember a night not so long ago. My youngest daughter who was turning 1 was crying in her room for a min. ( i always check the clock bc my husbands seems to exagerate the time) So after a minute of her crying my husband says to me, punching his pillow " whats wrong with her, arent you going to get up and get her, its been 10 mins" I laugh, i say "no, ive been taking care of them all day and i would like to sleep" ( i also read babywise, and their teqniques worked on our first daughter). So after arguing for 15 mins with my husband (the other baby who was crying for 15 mins lol), I caved and went to go check on her because listening to 2 babies is worst than listening to one, and nothing was wrong. after 5 mins of putting her back to bed. I came into bed in a bad mood because of our arguement. my husband then says " who ever told us to have kids, who ever told us this was a good idea, that its great?" I had no comment. while we were arguing and while we were losing our sleep, our almost 2 yr old daugher slept in the middle of us peacefully(mastered climing out of crib at 15 months) while she kicked us all night. I did actually get a warning before i got married. An older couple gave me a kind of warning in an elevator as my mom happily said "my daughter is getting married" they said" good luck" i shoulve taken it.

Freitag, 31. Dezember 2010, 07:19:48

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happiness is something to love, something to do, and something to hope for.     kids can give you all three of those things. but you can find answers to those blanks in other places too.

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MOST OF US CAN'T RECONCILE WE WOULD ALLOW OURSELVES TO GO THROUGH ALL THAT PAIN - THEN BELIEVE IT WASN'T WORTH IT?

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After reading several hundred comments, it seems that the discourse is not really about having kids vs. not having kids. The "kids" question seems more of a proxy to a larger question about life values in general. THAT discourse is decoded as "is it better to be 'responsible' or is it better to be 'selfish'." There is so much cross-talking among the contributors because those attributes are conflated with the opposing sides of the kids debate. The "pro-kids" advocates would likely not have much issue with the "childfree" people whose decisions are rooted in responsibility rather than in selfishness. The childfree advocates do not critique the pro-kids people as much as demand that they be allowed to make their own choices. But this only brings things back around since the pro-kids camp was never truly focused on the decision to have kids, per se, but on the motivation behind that decision: no kids for responsible reasons, OK; no kids for selfish reasons, not OK. The crux of the argument for the pro-kids side is really "selfishness is a negative trait that leads to a worse world for everyone." The childfree's argument is that "free choice is the most important thing, regardless of the motivation, and less of it would be a worse world for everyone." This a philosophical question about what makes for an optimal society. The question of "kids" really has nothing to do with it.

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I forwarded this article to several people. Some have kids and some do not. I really liked the article and find the ending to contain the most sage advice, reference or whatever you want to call it:    "Martin Seligman, the positive-psychology pioneer who is, famously, not a natural optimist, has always taken the view that happiness is best defined in the ancient Greek sense: leading a productive, purposeful life. And the way we take stock of that life, in the end, isnâ€™t by how much fun we had, but what we did with it."    Yes, the guy has 7 kids, but that is not the point.    Being "on purpose" with one's life happens in different ways for different people and does not have to involve having kids. Sure, having kids (I have 3) gives you a different perspective, but so does climbing Mount Everest.     Anyway, I think we all need to periodically stop and question whether or not we are "on purpose." If you are and don't have kids, great! If you are and have kids, then great!     If you are not on purpose and are unhappy, then keep searching! Perhaps this is the real point of the article?     PS - If you Google "Father and Son Complete Marathon (Read Description First)" you can find a moving (to me) video my brother-in-law sent me a few years back. It shows a person being as selfless as one could be. It is more about one human being doing for another something meaningful rather than a Father-Son relationship.

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It's interesting the assumption people make that having children is selfless and mature.    If anything it's the reverse (speaking in evolutionary terms). You are simply responding to a biological urge. It isn't selfless because everything you do for your children is to further your own genes.    Still, it does give me a good giggle that people are so ignorant when it comes to their own species and can kid themselves that they are truly selfless just for having kids.    To be selfless means to help people when there is no benefit to yourself (i.e. not someone who shares your genes, and most definitely not your children). To be mature means not being jealous, not competing with others about lifestyle, not using emotional blackmail with your children etc etc. I have met many parents in my life and very few of them are truly mature, in fact the tendency towards emotional blackmail is high and a clear sign of immaturity.    The fact is that we can all be happy with whatever choices we make. Children won't make us happy unless we have the biological urge to have them and not having children won't make us miserable. What having children does do for certain though is put marriages through hell and, as a result, you are more likely to divorce if you have children? Does that really mean you are happier with children? I'm not so sure.    The parents can continue to kid themselves as much as they want about knowing true love and all that nonsense. Some of us actually know about biology, child development and parental manipulation.    I was blessed to be born without the biological urge to have children. I was also blessed to be born an identical twin. Now THAT truly is the greatest love of all :-)

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i always compare having kids as been a persons supplier. they only love you as long as you supple them with what they want.by the time they realize they love you you're over trying to please them.i have found being a mother is like being in high school all over again.the insecurity- does everyone like you ,whats next ,the feeling of being inadequate. the only people that tell you ,you should have kids are people with kids. they want you to be as miserable as they are.please give mothers the right to vent.

Sonntag, 21. November 2010, 05:05:03

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@cris3 - My friend was trying to explain what it feels like to have a child and described it as such:    "It's like your worst most awful first true love crush."    Meaning, you love them wildly, and pant with anticipation for affection from them, and yet they can be ever so casually brutal... and brush you off for better things, like a gameboy. Or a doughnut. (true story.) She said it felt like heartbreak much of the time. Like having your love mean nothing to the person you love the most. Like when your first true love treated you like total crap in high school. She loves her son desperately, would die for him...kill for him.     And he is sort of, "meh, I guess I'll call my Mom. She has the wallet."    Or he will intentionally say something so cruel, and so personal, it makes me want to cry for her. And he is so CASUAL about it. Like you would kick aside a piece of garbage on the street and not even think twice about it at all. Like mean girls. But worse...way worse.    It's sad. And she is no pushover...I wouldn't parent this kid any different if I had to give it a go. I can't see where she is going "wrong". Or his Dad either. This boy / tween is just a mean little shit. Nasty. And I see it all of the time from really good parents who try hard to teach the right things. Babyhood is hard. Toddlerhood is harder. But it sounds like the tween / teen are brutal to a persons self esteem beyond making it all worth it.    I see your point about the kids, and I am really glad Mom's have a place like this to vent. Stay strong!

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A famous quote: "Don't trust a statistic unless you have manipulated it yourself" (or something like that).  Sure, there are always folks that are unhappy with kids, I'm sure. If you watch some parents disciplining their children, it certainly makes me wonder if they wouldn't have been better off with contraception.   However, I find that the situations leading to stress are not due to our kids (two) but due to limitations of our own behavior. Hey, that's an opportunity to learn about yourself that you will definitely not get doing housework, shopping or exercising!  Goal of having kids shouldn't be the day they leave the house. The goal should be to experience what I call a complete reset of everything you've believed and done up to that point.   To sum it up: if I had the chance of not having to work at a stressful job (anyone want to donate?), I would take it in a heartbeat. If one asked me if I'd turn back the clock to "no kids" if I could, my answer would be "heck no!".

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How come the study didn't look at families where the mother stays home? Because when mom stays home a completely different family dynamic is created. She isn't there with the kids only after a previously exhausting day at work, her kids ARE her life and work. It IS most definitely hard work, but there is so much joy to be had too. I really feel like these people are missing out. You have the time to just gaze at your baby and kiss her neck and tickle your three year old and watch your 5 year old dance. And yes there are constant chores, but this is life people!

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@Jamilyian - sorry, but I have been reading a lot of these posts and blogs lately, from a few pages like this...and most ARE coming from SAHM's. I think it can be hard for some people no matter what.    Different strokes I guess.     ----------------------------------------

A great article - that actually made me feel better about being a parent on a rough evening. I have three children under 6 years old, a 5 year old and twin 3 year old boys. Until recently I was a full time mum, 24/7, and many times have felt like I have completely lost my identity. Every aspect of my life revolves around the needs of my family. The older I get my ambitions pursued pre-kids seem more and more un-attainable. Your old life and the old you goes into stasis looking back through rose tinted glasses. Yes times can be very trying, but after reading the article I feel more than normal - I feel like I must be doing an alright job. In many aspects my relationship with my husband is closer than before. Allies on the same battlefront. A unifying camaraderie. The bitter sweet irony is that now all the children have started school - it's like loosing my old job and embarking into the scary yet exciting realm of who I was before I became a mother. Parenthood is definitely not a job for everyone. It takes more patience that you could possibly imagine ever having - and then some. But you really can only appreciate the rewards once you have your own children. No matter what you read or what people say, you really don't realize the "rewards" thing until they are there and you can feel it. It can't be explained. One final comment I will make is that I can undeniably say that my best parenting days have been ones when I have refused to let anything get to me. I have tried to stay peaceful and calm all day. Did not raise my voice, no rushing, no stressing. Needless to say at the end of the zen-like parenting day you (& the kids) feel pretty good - the hard part is trying to make every day like that. If only.

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What a great article! It fits in so great with my soon to be published book, Complete without Kids: An insider's guide to childfree living by choice or by chance. See my website: completewithoutkids.com. I interviewed adults who are living the childfree life and was pleased to find that they are having full and rich lives- even without the "greatest and most important" experience of one's life (according to so many parents). Our culture has brainwashed us into thinking that a critical life experience is that of bearing and raising children, but now many of us are speaking out and saying that we haven't done this and are able to do so many other things instead. An interesting fact is that it takes almost 8 hours a day to raise two children to the age of 18. Those of us who don't have children have an abundance of free time that we can use in so many ways!   Ellen, author of Complete Without Kids

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@ellenlwalker - I am childfree too, and happily married. I am happy you wrote a book about this, as I sometimes feel belittled by parents who don't feel the need to recognize the great achievements... and the deep reward felt when accomplishing them by my childfree friends and associates.     I can only speak personally, but I have achieved so many intense and difficult goals that I feel so good about, life changing ones even...It would nice for that to be acknowledged too. I don't begrudge my kidded friends for what they perceive as huge life goalposts, I am joyous for them...as parents or as individuals, so how about some high fives over here on the happily kid free team too! :)

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Beautifully written. I'm getting gelded first thing in the morning. Ugh, no, perhaps I'll send the wifey in instead...

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Finally...an article that makes me feel better about being childless when all of my friends have kids. I think I was actually beginning to feel guilty...I feel more liberated and justified today than I have in years!!

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As a parent coach, I see parents everyday who put themselves under pressure to be the 'perfect' mom and dad. Instead of wasting energy worrying about 'what you are not doing right, praise yourself for what you are doing right'. Remember, 'A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle' similarly parents lose nothing by being there for their kids.

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Interesting article. I am the married mom of 8 kids ranging in age from 12 - 28. I am incredibly happy! But, my happiness has nothing whatsoever to do with my kids or my husband......happiness is a choice. I chose to be happy and continue to choose to be happy. My happiness, or lack thereof should I so choose, is entirely up to me. Thus, if I do not choose happiness, that, too, is mine to own. I had kids on purpose, by choice, and am really glad I did.

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I am the mother of 25 children. 20 of those children I have adopted in the last 11 years. I also have 25 grandchildren. My youngest at home is 2 and I have 18 still at home. My husband and I love being parents. Yes everyday has its challenges and discouraging moments but it also has its joys. I love being a part of sharing this wonderful world with these incredible children. Someone shared that world with you! Annie Laurie Richardon - Author of "The Gathering"

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So when exactly were we supposed to be happy all the time in life in general?    I see life kind of like the game of Tetris. Most people, even if they don't fill up their screen with the same thing, will eventually be playing on a pretty high level with lots of blocks hurling down at them for them to organize and hopefully deal with properly.    Some people add children to their game (kinda like adding right and left squiggles).    Others add a very demanding career (like L blocks and such).    Still others volunteer, go overseas, etc (straight lines and squares for these people).    But no matter which way you cut it, all people are constantly dealing with that daily dance of filling their time with a variety of things and in the end, even those without children are filling their time to the brim (especially in American society, where even relaxation and play must be "maximized").    Whenever I find myself secretly thinking that everyone else has it better, or that my choices are worse, I realize that it's just me and the tetris screen that I put down. I fit my work into my commute into my living situation into my relationship with my husband into my relationship with friends and family into my relationship with how I parent my daughter.    All of these things interconnect as they flew wildly at me and I scrambled to interlock them into the big old block I call my life.    Yes, we make decisions, but quite a lot of our days is basically just damage control and keeping ourselves from "game over."    Life is not constantly fun. And I honestly don't think it ought to be anyway because that cheapens the moments of pure joy and happiness that we do feel.

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Chek out the post at the link below at the The Father Factor blog. The writer makes some interesting points.    http://bit.ly/b0cFYL

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Martin Seligman probably worked all day while his wife took care of the drudgery part of child-rearing. Somehow I don't think he was getting them ready for school, rushing to get to work nearly late every day, leaving work a little early to pick them up from school, etc. If so he probably would have said enough and stopped at 1 or 2 kids and not had 7. Ultimately having kids is a trade off...a trade off most of us are willing to make. But some people just have this notion that we should be happy all the time and when raising kids doesn't bring us the happiness we expected, we get depressed. Most of the time parenting is a pain in the arse and it's made worse today by a)our unrealistic expectations, b)2-income households forcing us to juggle schedules more, which results in less free time. I love my daughter, but I certainly don't "love" being around her all of the time. Perhaps my situation is unique but just getting my 6-year old daughter ready to do "anything" is usually 30-45 mins of fighting, arguing, crying, can't find her shoes and her favorite toy that MUST bring with her, etc. Even when it is something fun she wants to do like a trip to the zoo or whatever. And after all that, it's exhausting for the parents and you wonder why you even bother doing anything. It's an argument for being the Idle

  Based on this article it seems that most parents look at their lives with children as mostly unhappy/stressed. And the best you can hope for is boring/relaxed like the woman in the documentary from Namibia, in both cases with short moments of joy mixed in.

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No generation has had more information about parenting and yet no generation has had more angst about it either. There is no "fair", there is no "happy", there is no "luck". You create what you have in this world. I agree with Martin Seligman when he says happiness is defined as leading a productive, purposeful life. Parenting is tough; so is marriage, work, friendships, staying healthy and fit, exercise, etc. I can't think of anything worth having or doing that isn't tough in some way. How egotistical and narcissistic are we as a society? Grow up world and realize what our parents know (knew) - the best in life happens when you work for it. If we look at our world through a clear lens, it becomes much rosier than you thought it would. I have three incredible children that show me the reality and the joy of life every minute of every day. Thank God for them!

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Thought-provoking article about parenting and how we measure satisfaction (very important to read the WHOLE article otherwise one can think the author is against having children, she's not). Yes, some studies show that parenting is associated with less moment-to-moment feelings of satisfaction (which the beginning of the article focuses on) but it is associated with greater overall meaning and purpose (the conclusion of the article). I like how the author provides a critical review of the studies she incorporates, but I think she could have got to these points earlier -- seems from general comments that readers aren't getting to the end of the article.

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I love being a parent and found this article very sad to read. My daughter is about to turn one and for sure it is absolutely the hardest and most difficult life experience I have encountered so far, but I wouldn't trade it for ANYTHING in the world. I grow, learn and experience life as my daughter does. I experience pure bliss each and every day experiencing the most normal mundane activities such as getting her ready for daycare or feeding her in the morning. Parenting requires less focus on the SELF and I've really welcomed that change

Liked By ailleengrace

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I don't see the problem with feeling "entitled" to happiness, as long as the burden of creating that happiness falls squarely on you. Not your kids, parents, or partner -- but you. We are all entitled to create our own happiness, whether that includes or excludes children. What we are not entitled to do is judge others' choices when they have nothing to do with ours!

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Great article, but we should all take some pointers from KellyMcMenamin and spend more time away from our kids. Also, someone else commented on Facebook that we shouldn't think of them as children, we should think of them as people we are bringing into the world. Its very true. Check out her blog: [http://www.pixiesdidit.com/todays-pixie-tip/2010/8...](http://www.pixiesdidit.com/todays-pixie-tip/2010/8/3/i-love-my-ch...)

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Thank you, SLISH528, for your coment. I completely agree! Additionally, I am so interested in the journey we have taken as a culture to the point where this paradox is even able to exist. I am speaking about the expectations that are held - entitlement, almost - that we are SUPPOSED to be "happy" (whatever "happy" means...) in all that we do. Why do we buy in to the ideas of children as our "projects" that need to be perfected, the need to achieve the huge house, relentless work schedule, etc. then wonder why we are so unhappy and dissatisfied with the way our lives are in comarison to the way they were "supposed to be and supposed to feel"????? I think every other western country besides the U.S. is much further ahead in this regard and has much more figured out than we do.

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While I by no means agree with the "i love every second i spend with my children and this article is rubbish" crowd, I am fascinated by how the comments page is dominated by an in-your-face "i was right all along to remain childless" attitude. I respect that decision, but that's not the point of this article. It's about the fascinating paradox that statistically speaking, raising children makes us miserable, but yet, the majority of us still willingly go forth and reproduce! And the author does an excellent job of delving into the why of that paradox. "Loving one's children and loving the act of parenting are not the same thing." Brilliantly put!

http://nymag.com/news/features/67024/