



Mummy Guilt

Part two
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In Part One of this series, I introduced you to the idea of **Mummy Guilt**...

...not that most parents/caregivers reading this will need much of an introduction to this guilt...!

In Part Two, I'm going to talk a little more about managing Mummy Guilt...

First, it's important to know that Guilt is a typical feeling that occurs when we have done something that deep-down, we know is wrong... being aware of feelings of Guilt can help us 'correct' our behaviour to match our deeply-held beliefs.

However, this is not **Mummy Guilt**...!

Mummy Guilt is a learned behaviour, supported by an ingrained habit of negative self-talk and beating ourselves up, often without us even really being conscious that we are doing it.

One of the tricks therefore is to become more aware of our thought patterns that feed our guilt.

Think about your thinking...

How often do you use these words / phrases related to your child?:

- Should... *I should / shouldn't...*
- Ought to... *I ought to...*
- Musts... *I must (must not) be / do...*
- If onlys... *If only I did /didn't...*



These words phrases when not used effectively WILL create guilt in you...

Become aware of them...

Challenge them!

Re-frame them

Re-write the script, omitting the guilt:

use helpful and positive self-talk such as:

My child generally eats a good healthy diet. Eating pizza tonight while I manage my headache will do them no harm and me the world of good

And instead of:

I shouldn't have told him off like that

Re-frame this to:

His behaviour was inappropriate and it's my job to let him know that.



Think of it like brain-training, to get better, healthier outcomes for ourselves and ultimately our family.

Furthermore, re-hashing what we wish we could do or wish we had done and feeling guilty about it is essentially wasted energy. That energy is better spent on the here and now. Putting that energy into healthy thinking and healthy thought modelling for our children to learn from.

Remember that although feeling guilty is a positive indication that we care, we are often our biggest critics.

Avoid comparisons.

There is no such thing as a perfect parent. It's a learn on the job role, that simply requires your participation and desire to be 'good enough'.

If you are struggling ask someone to help you recognise the things you do well. Write these down and keep the list. It will make for a worthy read when you are having a bad day and an attack of unnecessary guilt.



Alternatively, list the things you feel guilty about. Go through it, ideally with someone else, and strike off all those things that you are able to change your thoughts about, leaving only the things that truly implicate you to be a 'bad' person.

Your list will likely not hold up to much scrutiny, and as you review each item, you will hopefully realise that your guilt is merely a bad habit, not a reality. But, if you find you still have a list of 'bad' beliefs about yourself, and you just can't shake off the 'Guilt', take your list to a good Counsellor...to get an unbiased perspective.



Remember...we are all unique, we are all different in our situations and circumstances, our needs and/or desire to be working parents, stay-home parents, to single parent or co-parent.

I have friends who just love to work: it's part of what makes them thrive and feel fulfilled, and others who gain that fulfilment from being at home; friends who need to work financially but don't want to, friends who struggle to find a balance between the two.

Each family does what they do, whether out of choice or necessity...
...it's important to **look after you** in that.

Talk to friends and family, or perhaps work colleagues about how you are travelling in your journey through life at any given time. Check out how they are travelling in theirs. Help each other to gain perspective on your thinking.

Like me you may find a new routine to be uplifting – however changes in routine and establishing new routines can sometimes be challenging or tiring initially – but hang on in there!

Routines, whether we choose them or not, can provide us, and our children with a sense of security, we all crave them to some degree. Eat healthily, exercise moderately and make time for good sleep. And if you do find yourself feeling overwhelmed...there is *always* support out there.

To illustrate just how fluid our thinking can be, I will end with a bedtime quote from my 5 year-old announcing his dismay at realising the true implications of full-time schooling:

Ah, my life will never be the same again. I will now only ever have weekends...

and then five minutes later:

Mummy, I love my life

Do you want some support to deal with Mummy (or Daddy!) Guilt?
or any aspect of parenting or life in general?

Contact us at:

inSync for life Psychology: Bunbury and Perth
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