



GROWMIND

FREE GUIDE • PARENTING COLLECTION

5

SIGNS YOU'RE A
Better Parent
THAN YOU THINK

Five research-backed reminders
for the hard days.



Research-
backed



Written for
real mums



One small step
for each sign

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BEFORE YOU START

A different kind of list.

- ✦ 5 signs, about 5 minutes.
- ✦ One small thing to try for each.
- ✦ Tick the ones you recognise.

If you're reading this, you care. A lot.

Maybe it's late and the house is finally quiet. Maybe you're replaying a moment from today: the shouting, the rushed bedtime, the screen you handed over so you could get dinner on.

It's easy to keep a running list of everything you got wrong. Hardly anyone keeps a list of what they got right.

You don't need to be a perfect mum. Children do well with a "good enough" one, and that's a standard you're meeting more often than you know.

This guide is the second list. Five signs, each one backed by research, that you're doing better than you think. Each comes with one small thing to try.

Read one now and one tomorrow, or all five tonight. Then turn to the last page and tick the ones you recognise in yourself.

You are not the sum of your hardest days.

SIGN 01

YOU WORRY ABOUT GETTING IT WRONG

01

The mums who worry most are rarely the ones who need to.

You replay the shouty morning. You wonder if they're watching too much telly. You google things at 3am. It feels like proof you're failing, but it's closer to the opposite. Worrying about how your child is doing means you're paying attention to them, and paying attention is most of the job.

TRY THIS

- 1

NAME IT

Say to yourself: "I'm worrying because I care." It sounds small, but it turns a verdict into a feeling.
- 2

SORT IT

Ask: is there one thing I'd like to do differently tomorrow? If yes, write it down. If not, the worry has already done its job.
- 3

SET IT DOWN

Give worry a 10-minute window earlier in the evening. If it turns up at midnight, tell it you'll get to it then.



WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

Paediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott introduced the idea of the “good enough mother” in 1953. Children don't need a parent who gets everything right. They need one who is mostly there and mostly responsive, and who gets it wrong in small, survivable ways.

Source: Winnicott, D. W. (1953). Transitional objects and transitional phenomena. International Journal of Psycho-Analysis.

SIGN 02

YOU SAY SORRY AFTER YOU SNAP

02

Getting it wrong, then putting it right, is how trust gets built.

You lost your temper. Again. Then later, maybe at bedtime, you knelt down and said sorry. The guilt fixes on the first part. But the second part is what your child takes away. A repair shows them that mistakes can be survived, that big feelings pass, and that your relationship holds.

TRY THIS

- 1

KEEP IT SHORT

"I shouted. That wasn't fair on you. I'm sorry." No long speech, and no "but you were..."
- 2

RECONNECT

Follow the sorry with something small and warm: a cuddle, a story, a minute sitting together.
- 3

LET IT BE FINISHED

Once you've repaired it, the moment is done. You don't have to keep paying for it.



WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

Developmental psychologist Ed Tronick spent decades studying parents and babies. Even in healthy, loving relationships, he found they're out of sync around 70% of the time. What mattered wasn't avoiding those moments. It was repairing them.

Source: Tronick, E. & Gold, C. (2020). The Power of Discord.

SIGN 03

YOU NOTICE THE FEELING BEHIND THE BEHAVIOUR

03

Seeing the “why” under a meltdown is a skill, and you already use it.

Your child melts down over the wrong-coloured cup, and somewhere under your frustration you think: she's shattered, it's not really about the cup. That moment of noticing matters. It's the first step of what psychologist John Gottman calls emotion coaching: spotting the feeling, naming it, and helping your child through it.

TRY THIS

- 1

GET LOW

Crouch to their eye level. It slows you down and tells their body you're not a threat.
- 2

NAME IT

“You're really disappointed it's the blue one.” Putting words to a feeling often helps a child start to settle it.
- 3

THEN HOLD THE LINE

“You can be cross. You can't throw the cup.” Every feeling is allowed. Not every behaviour is.



WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

In Gottman's research at the University of Washington, children whose parents coached their emotions, rather than dismissing or punishing them, had fewer behaviour problems and longer attention spans, and did better at school.

Source: Gottman, J. (1997). Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child; University of Washington Department of Psychology.

SIGN 04

YOUR CHILD SAVES THEIR BIG FEELINGS FOR YOU

04

The meltdown at pick-up is often a sign of trust.

They're an angel for their teacher and fall apart the second they see you. It can feel personal, as if you're the one doing something wrong. Many child psychologists see it the other way round: children often hold it together all day and let go with the person they feel safest with. That person is you.

TRY THIS

- 1

EXPECT THE WOBBLE

Plan for the first 20 minutes after school or nursery to be quiet: a snack, water, closeness, fewer questions.
- 2

CHANGE THE STORY

When it starts, tell yourself: "This is trust, not a verdict on me."
- 3

BE THE CALM BASE

You don't have to fix the feeling. Staying close and steady is the help.



WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

Attachment research, going back to John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, describes a secure parent as a "secure base": the person a child explores the world from, and comes back to when it all gets too much.

Source: Ainsworth, M. et al. (1978). Patterns of Attachment; Bowlby, J. (1988). A Secure Base.

SIGN 05

YOU'RE LEARNING TO BE KINDER TO YOURSELF

05

Self-compassion isn't letting yourself off the hook.

You picked up a guide called 5 Signs You're a Better Parent Than You Think. Part of you is ready to go a bit easier on yourself, and that's worth taking seriously. Being kind to yourself after a hard day isn't weakness or making excuses. It's linked to calmer, more present parenting.

TRY THIS

- 1

TALK LIKE A FRIEND

Say to yourself what you'd say to a friend who'd just had your day. Out loud, if you can.
- 2

TRY THE THREE-LINE PAUSE

"This is hard. Lots of mums feel this. I'm doing my best." (Based on Dr Kristin Neff's three parts of self-compassion.)
- 3

DO ONE KIND THING

A cup of tea while it's still hot. Ten minutes outside. Bed half an hour earlier. Small counts.



WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

In a 2016 study of 333 parents, those with more self-compassion were more mindful in how they parented. Mindful parenting, in turn, was linked to lower parenting stress and a warmer, more consistent parenting style.

Source: Gouveia, M. J., Carona, C., Canavarro, M. C. & Moreira, H. (2016). Mindfulness, 7(3).

YOUR FIVE SIGNS

HOW MANY DID YOU SPOT?

If you saw yourself in even one, you're doing better than you think.

- ☐ I worry about getting it wrong
- ☐ I say sorry after I snap
- ☐ I notice the feeling behind the behaviour
- ☐ My child saves their big feelings for me
- ☐ I'm learning to be kinder to myself

Keep this page somewhere you'll find it on a hard day. The list in your head of what you got wrong is never the whole story.

WHERE TO GO NEXT

-  **Parenting Without Guilt**
For the 10pm replay. Quiet the inner critic and let go of mum guilt.
-  **Mindful Parenting**
For the meltdowns. Stay calm in the moment and coach big feelings.
-  **Raising Confident Children**
For their self-belief. Build resilience, confidence and a growth mindset.

Each guide has about 15 pages, 10 research-backed techniques and a 30-day plan. Get all three together in **the Growmind Bundle**.

 growmind.store

This guide is general information, not medical or psychological advice. If you're struggling, please talk to your GP or a health professional.