



From Canada's bestselling
and most trusted parenting author,
a guide to parenting without
anxiety, guilt, or feeling overwhelmed



The Virtual Village Part I: It Starts With You

Thursday, May 14, 2020 @ 7:30 pm

**Presented by Erin Mills Connects
Featuring Ann Douglas**

Why this is such a challenging time to be a parent

- The situation is scary and uncertain. We're worried about the health and financial wellbeing of our families and other people we care about.
- We're dealing with a lot of added pressures as we attempt to juggle our work and family responsibilities.
 - This isn't a standard work or work-from-home scenario.
 - This isn't a standard home-schooling scenario.
 - This is pretty a worst-case scenario when it comes to role conflict.
- How to make an almost impossible situation a little more tolerable
 - Keep your expectations of yourself reasonable—whether you're talking work-related expectations, remote learning expectations, parenting expectations, or all of the above.
 - Maintain healthy boundaries between work/school/family and have tiny rituals to help with role switching.
 - Have strategies for dealing with interruptions so that they don't become a source of conflict between you and your child.
 - Know that you're not alone. Everyone is feeling anxious and overloaded. It's not just you. It's pretty much every other parent you know.

How to manage your own feelings of anxiety

- Accept the fact that things are going to be uncertain for a while.
- Acknowledge and accept your emotions.
- Draw upon the coping skills you've developed over the years.
- Identify those areas of your life where you still have some control.
- Recognize that calm is your parenting superpower. When your brain is calm, you're able to do your best thinking: to make conscious and deliberate choices about your parenting.
- Calm yourself; calm your child.



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How to feel less guilty as a parent

- Minimize the expectations gap (the gap between the expectations you are setting for yourself and the resources you have available right now to meet those expectations).
- Give yourself permission to be a gloriously imperfect parent—and your child permission to be a gloriously imperfect kid.
- Accept the fact that you're going to make mistakes. You're going to say and do things you regret because you're under a lot of stress. The good news is that you can recognize when this is happening and then pivot to relationship repair. Parents don't have to be perfect and neither do kids. We just have to keep trying to learn and grow together.
- Practice self-compassion. Tell yourself, "I'm doing the best that I can in a really difficult situation."
- Recognize and celebrate your own strengths as a parent. Look for opportunities to capitalize on each of those strengths.

How to parent in a way that you can feel good about

- Keep your big-picture parenting goals in mind. Thinking about that can help you to make more conscious and deliberate choices about your parenting—to parent in a way that you can feel good about, both today and for many years to come.
- Focus on what matters most (the lifelong connection between you and your child) and let go of all the rest.

How to safeguard the precious resource that is you

- What does self-care look like when you're quarantined at home?
- What is realistic and possible for you right now and how might you build on those efforts over time?
- How can you communicate your need for self-care to other family members and support their self-care efforts at the same time?
- How can you lose the guilt about self-care?

Ann Douglas sparks conversations that matter about parenting. She is the weekend parenting columnist for CBC Radio and the creator of Canada's bestselling series of pregnancy and parenting books, *The Mother of All* book series. Her most recent books are *Happy Parents*, *Happy Kids* and *Parenting Through the Storm*.