**The good enough parent**

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Ever since I have been a parent, family and friends consistently question me explicitly and implicitly at large if I am a good parent. My mother takes the lead here as she leaves no stone unturned to question how I am raising my children. In my case, as I am a working parent, she expresses even less faith in me as being a housewife herself, she believes that if I am not attending to my children 24/7, I do not get certified to be a good parent. In her defense it comes from a place of love.

For the longest time I found myself defending my position by saying that I have a very well-kept home. That I work for four hours a day only and I schedule my clients at a time when my children are in school or engaged with activities that do not include my supervision. Or since I have started working, I am able to financially support my husband more and afford some things for my children like a soccer club or a Zumba class that was initially a stretch due to increasing inflation and expenses etc. I found myself telling my mother for example, how well the children are doing at school or that other than work, my life mostly revolves around the children.

[Amazon files lawsuit against New York AG for trying to sue company over anti-COVID measures](https://nation.com.pk/13-Feb-2021/amazon-files-lawsuit-against-new-york-ag-for-suing-company-over-anti-covid-measures)

And then one day I decided no more. I realised that in my mind, giving all these explanations was to the contrary, making me feel that I am not a good enough parent. As seeking that validation was reinforcing the lack of faith in my own parenting as I looked for external validation. This process of accountability of if I am a good enough parent to her and to others has to stop.

Any parent in the world will vouch for the fact that parenting is tough. Period. It is one of the hardest jobs in the world and a 24/7 job for as long as you live. On top of that, giving space to others to question it is not acceptable when all parents question themselves time and again.

Parenting isn’t just tough because of taking care of all kinds of needs of these little human beings. It’s tough because it is so easy to lose our own sense of self as we fully invest in raising the child and putting him before us every time. It’s tough when we not only put our children’s functional needs before us, but all kinds of psychological needs also.

[Trump impeachment team seeks to obscure blame for riot](https://nation.com.pk/13-Feb-2021/trump-impeachment-team-seeks-to-obscure-blame-for-riot)

Even if I am having a low day and want a time out, the minute my child walks in the room I have to smile so I do not burden him with my feelings. And it’s an automatic inherent switch that gets installed in every parent once they become one. It’s not exclusive to mothers only, but fathers too as after bringing a child into this world, it is so easy to forget themselves.

And this is the real issue here—for us parents to make ourselves invisible in the name of good parenting and being available for our children all the time.

Donald Winnicott, a well-renowned psychoanalyst, coined the term ‘good enough mother’ a term for both parents normalising parenting and to defend against the concept of perfect parenting. He believed that it is not possible or healthy to be empathic, available and immediately responsive all the time. This concept also stresses on the fact that there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ that can be used across the board for what defines the way to parent. The assumption is that all parents have natural nurturing instincts that will for most part do the best for their children.

[US removes Yemen's Houthi rebels from terror list](https://nation.com.pk/13-Feb-2021/us-removes-yemen-s-houthi-rebels-from-terror-list)

Of course, this doesn’t mean that we don’t actively work on being better parents in terms of what kind of life we are providing for our children and more importantly, our relational stance towards our children where we consider them not a part of us but individuals who deserve love and respect and most importantly, free will. But what I am highlighting it is that it is not important to be available to children all the time and conflict and frustration is good for their internal growth.

So to all the parents out there, I invite you to learn a two letter word; ‘no’. Other than your partners, stop defending your parenting to anyone. Stop answering any so-called harmless questions or taking unsolicited advice. You know more than anyone else if you are being unfair to your child. Take ownership of that and fix it. If you are a good enough parent that is enough.