

The title is presented in a playful, layered style. 'PARENTing' is written in a black, outlined, sans-serif font, with 'PARENT' in all caps and 'ing' in lowercase. This text is set against a light green rectangular background with a torn-paper edge. To the right of this rectangle is a large, multi-lobed orange shape resembling a flower or a cloud. Below the orange shape is a white oval containing the word 'with' in a simple, lowercase sans-serif font. Further down and to the left is a large yellow oval with a jagged orange outline, containing the word 'Perspective' in a black, cursive font. To the right of the yellow oval is a blue speech bubble shape, and below it is a purple speech bubble shape, both containing parts of the word 'Perspective'. The entire composition is decorated with various colored rays: blue rays at the top left, yellow rays at the top right, orange rays at the bottom left, and green rays at the bottom right.

PARENTing

with

Perspective

Kim Meyers



PARENTing  
with  
PeRspecTive

Kim Meyers

Foreword by Rev. Dr. Leanne Hadley

 invite  
PRESS

Plano, Texas

# Parenting with Perspective

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MANUFACTURED in the UNITED STATES of AMERICA

# Dedication

This book is dedicated to first and foremost my husband, Dan,  
who helps me be the best parent I can be.

Our son Cody, who made me a mother.

Our son Dylan, who completed our family.

---

I am so thankful for the people in our lives who continue to help us  
do life. These people are too numerous to list, but you know who  
you are.

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## FOREWORD

The day my youngest child walked across the stage during his high school graduation, I let out a huge breath of relief and felt my shoulders completely relax for the first time in over twenty years. Until this moment, I had not realized that parenting had been so stressful. This surprised me for many reasons. First, I had loved, and still do love, every moment of being a mom to my kids! Second, my kids, besides being sassy teens and driving too fast and too confidently in snowstorms, had been easy kids. They had done well in school, and we had a great relationship, so I had no huge reason to worry about them. Third, I was entirely unaware of the stress I was under. But when my son walked across the stage, I felt myself relax, and I realized that the stress I had felt was not because of anything my children did or did not do. It came from a deep place inside my soul in which I had secretly wondered everyday of their lives, “Am I a good mom? Am I doing this right? Am I messing my kids up?” This vein of self-doubt had rooted itself deep inside of me ever since I became a mother.

On the outside, I had been confident and getting along just fine. The stress I felt did not lead to depression, nor did it affect my day-to-day life, but when it left me on graduation day, I realized just how uptight my constant self-questioning and worry had made me.

Now, when a child graduates from high school, believe me, it is not the end of the parenting journey. Parenting is a life-long gift. But for me, in that moment of my son’s milestone, I thought, “I guess I am pretty good at this parenting thing, because I have raised three kids, and they are doing just fine!” At that, I relaxed.



I share this story with you, because when I read this book, I kept thinking of how much I had needed a book just like this when my kids were younger! I did not need any more books about brain development, proper nutrition, or how to communicate better with my kids. I had all of those books already. I needed a book that named my fear of not being “enough” for this huge job of parenting and that reassured me that I could do it!

I hope this book will be as affirming for you as it was for me. Read it and accept the truth that is found in it. Parenting is complex. You will be unsure. You will not be a perfect parent every day, and your kids will not be perfect every day. But know that you are enough. God gave you this child. God is with you in your parenting. And no matter what happens in your parenting journey, you are not alone.

Reading this book reminded me that there are no perfect parents and no perfect children. There is, however, perfect love. The love you have for your child mirrors the love God has for you and for all of us. We are, while imperfect people, surrounded by the perfect love of God, and because of that, we can be the parents God has called us to be.

I pray that this book will be a companion for you to remind you that you are enough, that God is with you, helping you every step of the way, and that your child is blessed to have a mom or dad who loves them as much as you do!

**Rev. Dr. Leanne Hadley**

## Preface

This book is not a how-to book about parenting. My bookshelf is already full of those resources. This book is a friend when you need one because parenting is hard. This book is about allowing yourself to trust your instincts and knowing when you need to seek guidance from others. This book is oozing with grace because we all get it wrong sometimes, but we need to keep going. Parenting is one of the hardest things I have ever done in my life. Parenthood brings me the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. It makes a mundane Tuesday a little more unique and a whole lot messier.

My parenting journey started with disappointment from lost pregnancies, fear while on hospital bed rest, and all before even having a child. I will never forget the drive home from the hospital. We prayed, cried, and worked toward being parents, and now we have a tiny human. At first, we were ecstatic. Then things became real. The dog eats the diapers. The child does not nurse. The amount of laundry is insane for something so small. But, in the moments of crazy, there are giggles, snuggles, and a love that I have not felt before.

This book will help you see that your family is unique and special. You have your own rhythm and quirks. You are different from your parents, your neighbors, and your friends.

This book is what you pick up when the moments are too much: the toddler tantrums have put you over the edge or the teenage angst is just too thick at the dinner table. This book will remind you of the love that is still present in those moments, that it might just be time to adjust your perspective, to know that the sun will rise tomorrow and that bedtime will come soon.

The book is divided into three parts:

- 1) Who you are as a parent. We must recognize who we are and our gifts, passions, and quirks to understand where we will need guidance and where we will soar as parents.
- 2) Who your child is. This is a difficult thing to do as a parent, to recognize who your child is and not who you envisioned them to be. This is constantly growing and changing.
- 3) How you can work together as a family unit. Parents, children, family, and friends are all going to be coming and going in your life. You need to be able to find a rhythm that works for your family, and you will.

The other intentional part of the book is that each section starts with scripture and ends with a prayer. Scripture is how I keep myself and my family focused on who we are in our core, children of God. Some days you might turn to a chapter and the Scripture may bring you the clarity you need. This was done with purpose and intentionality. Some days you might need to turn to the chapter about kids and read the prayer because that is just what your soul needs to pause and gain perspective. The prayers are written by my people, the people I just could not do life without; some are pastors, some are friends, some are family. I also asked different experts to add Parenting Perspectives in each chapter. This helps add dimension and diverse viewpoints to each section. I am deeply thankful for all the voices who helped make this book happen. I hope that this book brings you some joy, grace, peace, and ultimately some perspective.

**Kim Meyers**

Frisco, TX

May 2021

## Parent's Prayer

**God**, as I navigate this journey of parenting, remind me that I am good enough. On days when I feel riddled in self-doubt and exhaustion, remind me that I am good enough.

Remind me that on the messiest days there is great joy in a paint-covered table, in a smelly tweenager who refuses deodorant, or in a moody child. Still there is great laughter to be found around the table or on a couch together.

Remind me that at the very core of everything I do, community matters most. Whom I surround myself with will teach my children whom they need in their lives too.

As I take a deep breath, bring peace to my heart, laughter to my soul, and love to each part of my day. Keep me grateful for the endless grace that is given to me on this adventure.

Bless the food on my floor, the dishes in the sink, and the decorations that have stayed up well beyond Halloween. Bless the little hands doing homework, the laughter on the playground, the mismatched clothes, and the newly independent drivers.

Remind me of the sacredness of parenthood and family—in all its many shapes and forms. May my children always know how loved they are.

Help me to remain their greatest cheerleader and greatest advocate. Amen.

As you read the pages of this book, I hope you feel seen, celebrated, and loved—just as you are.

**Jennifer Ward Kloeppe**

CEO of Showers For All, and a mama of 3

**Part one**

Let's Talk About

**You**

---

*For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.*

Ephesians 2:10

---

## The Perfect Parent Does Not Exist

When my kids were young, I bought a coffee mug (one of my shopping weaknesses) that said “World’s OKest Mom.” I loved this mug. It made me laugh, but it also resonated with what I considered to be realistic expectations of myself as a parent. I will volunteer, but I probably won’t be “homeroom mom.” I will listen with a soft ear, but I may scream sometimes. I love Jesus, but I don’t always have the patience of Job. I will make your lunch, but I may substitute a Lunchable at least one time a week. I would be an “OK” parent. When my six-year-old saw that mug, he was angry. He would not accept “OKest” as a description of his mom. I had to put the mug away until he became a teenager when the mug became funny (and some days true).

I tell you this story because when it comes to parenting, perspective is everything. There are days when you think you have it all together and end up leaving your high school freshman standing outside the field house waiting for a ride to play in his football game, as you are busy inside the field house and forgot he needed a ride.

Some days, you will think you are the worst parent ever, and then in a moment, your child will remind you of something you said that made the day better. Reminding yourself

that you are good enough will be necessary. You need to believe this to get through each day.

How you define parenting will help determine the expectations you have of yourself as a parent, how your children see you, and most of all, how you see yourself. I hope you realize how amazing and special you are as a parent and that no one can be a better parent to your children than you. Parenting is not an easily defined set of guidelines you can follow in order to create a “perfect” home, but parenting is a path you forge. Each parent’s path is unique, special, and personally crafted. Parenting is an adventure in relationship-making. Your parenting style is molded and influenced by hundreds of different sources. In being a parent, you bring with you your childhood, your partners’ childhood (even if you are a single parent), the social media perfect parent and the social media hot-mess parent, your child’s specific personality, and the many factors that have influenced and continue to influence all of those mentioned above. The idea of a “standard” perfect parent does not exist. The “perfect” parent for your children is you. No one is perfect, but the fact that you are trying means that you want to be the best version of yourself for your family. That means that you are already good enough.

You have the skills to be a parent. Some of them will come easy to you, some you will need to work on. But you can do this. Some days you will have it all together, and parenting will be the best thing that has ever happened to you. Some days you will want to hide in your closet so your kids can’t find you. But you are good enough. You may not be the best parent. You are surely not the worst parent. But you can choose to learn and grow. Continue to remind yourself that you can do this.

Stop comparing yourself to others. You are you. Your par-

enting style is different from your parents, your neighbors, and the blogger that you follow. As you read, take what you can, make it your own, and keep on going. Books are one dimensional and black and white. But your parenting life is full of color. I always try to remind myself that humans have been parents for a long, long time. Even Jesus' parents lost him for a few days.

When you think about your parenting, know who you are. Understand your gifts, understand your weaknesses, and live into them. I know that I tend to overreact to situations. I respond strongly, and then when I gain perspective, I find myself in a sticky situation because of my initial response. I know I need to pause. I need to give myself some time before I respond as a parent. I have a husband who is much calmer when it comes to quick reactions. When we lean into each other's gifts, we typically have the best outcome. This did not happen overnight as parents. Understanding our personalities is something that we learned as the days, weeks, and years kept moving. We learned about and from each other.

We tend to put a lot of pressure on ourselves because parenting is a big deal. We are helping a soul live into whom God has created him or her to be. Yes, that is a big deal. But, if we go through each day worried about our decisions, overthinking our reactions, and not leaning into our strengths, stress will consume us. Parenting will eat us alive. Repeat this mantra each and every day: "I am good enough. I can do this."

## Trust Your Gut

One of the million things that makes parenting hard is that so much of it is a gut reaction. I don't mean that deep thought, knowledge, and research are not essential in the parenting



journey. They are. But when your gut tells you something to trust, you need to go with it.

Our culture has an expression that says, “when people show you who they are, believe them.” This expression is the same when it comes to parenting. We will do the research, ask our friends, do a poll on our Instagram stories mainly to confirm or deny our gut. I am a learner. It is in my nature. I love to read, and I love to research things. I love to process decisions out loud with anyone who will listen. When it comes to parenting, I do the research, and I ask my friends. I talk about parenting issues for hours with my husband. Ninety-nine percent of the time, I come to the same conclusion as my gut reaction. I craved confirmation.

A simple rule is that any decision made from intense emotion is typically not a good one. So, you need to give it some time. I am telling you to trust your gut, not run around always reacting to it. Listen, lean in, learn, and use your gut as a parenting tool. We have many different expressions for our gut. God’s voice in our lives, the power of the Holy Spirit, instinct, clairvoyance, feeling, foresight, or even hunch. No certain one of those makes for a sound parenting practice alone, but combined with prayer, research, and processing, that is parenting at its best.

We nearly always start with our gut. Often, when people say “trust your gut,” we mean trust the decisions that are easy to make:

- This daycare does not feel right for our family or child.
- That friend may not be the best influence in our child’s life. (Good luck with this as they get older.)

Some gut instincts tell us that we as parents must watch and

wait, keeping a safety net waiting for our children when they fall.

I believe fully that my gut reveals the power of the Holy Spirit living in my life. The Holy Spirit is the nudging voice that I feel leading me in the right direction. This feeling does not end when you become a parent but becomes even more robust (and tricky to discern) because of the love you feel for your children.

I love many things in this world: sushi, a nice cup of coffee or glass of wine depending on the time of day. But I don't have a passion or a deep, profound love for any of these things compared to my family's love. This deep love for our children and family, while beautiful and wonderful, can, however, make gut decision-making super hard. It can make us want to fix things for our children or can make us react to our gut instead of trusting it. Take a deep breath and use all the gifts God has given you to make wise decisions. Trust your gut. Then temper that trust with your gifts of discernment and knowledge. But above all, trust that you are your child's advocate and that you ultimately know best. Then breathe again, check your emotions, say a little prayer, and do your parenting thing.

## 5-5-5 Rule

This rule is simple, yet it helps me time and time again. It has helped my five-year-old and fifteen-year-old alike. So, put it on a sticky note and place it on your bathroom mirror.

When something happens in your life or in your child's life that feels awful or dramatic, ask yourself, "What will this feel like in 5 days?" The answer is that it probably will still have a sting. What about in 5 weeks? Ninety percent of the time, the situation will begin fading into a memory. In 5 years? Most of

the time, this will be something you have grown from and put into long-term memory.

Let's look at it by example.

### **Elementary School**

It is 9:00 a.m., and you get a phone call from the school. A 9:00 a.m. call from the school is typically not a good thing. They sometimes call for awards, but not typically at 9:00 a.m. You wonder if it is the school nurse, the teacher, or the principal before saying hello.

“Hello?”

“Yes, is this Mrs. Meyers? I am Principal Smith. I need to talk to you about your son. He isn't hurt, but he did \_\_\_\_\_.”

- cut a classmate's hair.
- stole from the prize box.
- talked back to his teacher.
- pushed a classmate, caused an injury.
- stole from the café.
- lied to the teacher about \_\_\_\_\_ .

OK, now is the time to pause. Take a deep breath, because each of the items listed above brings various emotions to a parent, depending on your personality. Here is what happens if I am receiving this call: I start with anger. How in the world could he do something like this? Then I would begin judging myself. What kind of parent am I? Then I would be embarrassed that my child did such a thing.

Now it is time to listen to whatever situation happened at school. Respond with, “We will talk to our child about this when he gets home. Thank you for calling me.” Hang up. It is essential to recognize that in the moment of the phone call, the situation feels tremendous. At this moment, we must put

some perspective on our parenting.

Now, ask yourself: Will this be a big deal in 5 days? 5 weeks? 5 years? In elementary school, the answer is typically no to all three. This is a lesson you and your child can learn and grow from.

### **Middle School**

You are now in the fun stage of parenting where you no longer plan playdates. Your child is finding some pockets of independence, and you pray a lot more about your child's decisions, the ones he or she will make independently from your guidance.

Let's play out the 5-5-5 rule when it is not a discipline problem but a decision that has consequences. (Don't they all?)

Your child comes home from school after hanging out at the park with friends. He looks pale and nervous. You keep a watchful eye, and your gut tells you that something significant happened today. You keep going about your day, waiting for your child to reveal what is bothering him. Depending on his or her personality, it can happen quickly. Or not. Some children will hold onto anything that might disappoint a parent until they burst. Our family rule is please just tell us before another adult does. We don't like to be surprised.

Your child eventually says he needs to talk to you. At the park today, he played basketball with friends and put his school-issued band instrument on the side of the court. After the game, when he went to get it, it was gone.

OK, this is a big deal, but my son is safe. He did not harm others. In oversized deal items, I'll take it. Apply the 5-5-5 rule. In 5 days will this be a problem? 5 weeks? 5 years?

The lesson learned will help your child take responsibility for mistakes. It is essential to remind yourself that this is not your problem. This is your child's problem. You can guide him

or her with solutions but you must allow them to solve them. In the case of my son, the consequences are clear.

- He needs to talk to the band director.
- He needs to figure out how to work to earn money to replace the instrument.
- He will never leave the instrument unattended at the park again.

See how this helps put things into perspective?

### **High School**

I love teenagers. This can be something that people think odd about my personality, but the life of a teenager is full of emotions, growth, change, and it is a powerful and transformable time in your child's life. This is a time in parenting where you begin to see how they are growing into their gifts. You get to see how they fix their problems and seek your advice (at times). This is also the time where kids lean into their friendships for advice and mentoring. You begin to have to let go in ways you know are healthy but can still sting. In our house this is the time when dating started. Teen emotions can feel profound. So, let's use the 5-5-5 rule with a teenage breakup.

Your child comes downstairs with tears on her face about her breakup. Each child will react differently to stress or trouble, but ice cream and loud music seem to work with my children.

When she is in a place to listen, ask her if in 5 days, she will feel this strongly about the breakup? In 5 weeks? In 5 years?

The most important part of the 5-5-5 rule applied to teens is to wait until they are in a place to listen. In the height of emotion, listening to advice on putting a feeling into perspective typically will not go over very well. But, when they are

calm, help them learn how to see what this decision will look like over time. Gaining perspective is a life skill that you will want them to have.

The 5-5-5 rule helps me as a parent, a leader, and a friend. It is a multifaceted rule. I believe that this rule works because it allows us to pause and put situations into perspective. It allows love and grace to seep into the problem. It enables us to breathe in the breath that connects us back to God.

The Bible verse that opened this chapter is Ephesians 2:10: “For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.”

In this passage, the author reminds the people of God that we are created for good. We are created in the image of God, not to be God but to be children of God, created for good. Parenting is hard, but it is also good. You are good. You are good enough!

### Parenting Perspective: Tara Tevis

#### ***Parent, Counselor***

I can remember when I was in my final semester of graduate school. I was preparing to lead a small filial therapy group with three to four parents participating. In the group, I would be teaching them some of the basics of play therapy so they could have a “play session” with their own child, a therapy that can really help a child to feel understood and accepted by their own parents. It’s a great way to strengthen a bond between parent and child that may have become fragmented. I was terrified that the parents I was working with would

have no faith in me. I was so afraid they would ask me, “Have you done this with your children?” And I didn’t have children. I was young, newly married, and still working on my education. I had no experience or perspective as a parent. Why should they trust that I could be of any help to them? Although I knew I had a good education (almost a master’s degree in counseling) and good training through my program, there was so much I didn’t know about being a parent!

Well, fast forward twenty years. I now am a mother of two, and I’m not sure I am any wiser about what guidance I could offer a new parent struggling with their child. I have learned that there is no magic formula, theory, strategy, or technique that always works. All kids are different and respond differently. But simply deciding to become a parent makes you ready for the job. You signed up. If you are invested in raising a human being with the intent of doing the best you can, then you are qualified for the job. You will do some things well and some things not so well, but you’ve got this. And as it turned out, none of the parents I was working with in my graduate program questioned my ability to help. They were willing to trust me. They were so thankful for the guidance. I was the only one who had a lack of faith in myself. I didn’t yet know that I could do it.

I have always held on to an idea that was presented to me by Dr. Garry Landreth, an expert in play therapy. I think this is one of the most liberating and useful concepts that I have used with my own children.

The basic idea is that it doesn't matter what you have said or done. What matters is what you say or do after what you have said or done. As a parent, you will mess up. You will lose your cool or make a bad decision or say words to your child you would never dream would come out of your mouth. It happens. But you can always make it better. You can go to them and say, "I made a mistake. I am sorry. I should have handled this differently."

I think this is so important for so many reasons. First, this gives all parents the permission not to be perfect. You are not expected to have the knowledge and ability to handle each challenging situation with your child perfectly. There. Done. You don't always have to get it right. Second, you can accept and admit when you have made a mistake. You are modeling for a child how to accept personal responsibility for your actions and demonstrate remorse. It is not always easy to admit when you are wrong, especially if you are really hot about something! However, it is a very powerful (and in my opinion, critical) moral lesson that we need to model for our children: accept responsibility for when you have made a mistake, and then apologize or try to make amends. It's not about dwelling on the fact that you blew up at your toddler or that you screamed and scared your five-year-old or that you forgot to pick up your middle schooler. It's about what you do after that. This is the piece they will remember and grow from.

You won't always get it right, and that is OK. You



aren't supposed to always get it right. But you can reflect on what you did or what you said and have a conversation with your child about it. You can explain that you were upset, emotional, and didn't handle things in a good way. You can promise to try to do better next time. Kids are very forgiving. Thank God for that.

*Oh Holy God; Love, Giver of Life, Redeemer,  
I need you. Make me aware of your presence . . . always . . .  
even right now.*

*Remind me when I forget,  
“My grace is sufficient for you.”*

*When I lose my temper  
“My grace is sufficient for you.”*

*When I fail today  
“My grace is sufficient for you.”*

*When I compare myself to others  
“My grace is sufficient for you.”*

*When I feel like I am not enough  
“My grace is sufficient for you.”*

*When I think I am right  
“My grace is sufficient for you.”*

*When I am critical  
“My grace is sufficient for you.”*

*When I don't take time to listen, to laugh, to be intentional  
“My grace is sufficient for you.”*

*When I don't have it all together  
“My grace is sufficient for you.”*

*“My grace is sufficient for you.”*

*And because of that, I am enough. Remind me of that today.*

*Whisper your love and grace to me so that I can speak  
and show it to others.*

*In your most holy and precious name, Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.*

Rev. Sarah Marsalis-Luginbill

If you enjoyed this excerpt  
of Kim Meyers's book *Parenting with Perspective*,  
visit **InviteResources.com** to purchase your copy.

