

WILLINGNESS

Answer yes/ no to these questions. Circle your choice.

- YES NO 1. Are you willing to suffer in order to help your children?
- YES NO 2. Are you willing to deal with hard truths in order to be the parent you want to be?
- YES NO 3. Are you willing to be honest with yourself to help you be a better parent?
- YES NO 4. Are you willing to try new things to help with your parenting?
- YES NO 5. Are you willing to put forth effort in your parenting?

Did you choose any "no" responses? In theory, we would walk over fire for our kids. We'd go to the ends of the earth for them! But what does that actually look like in regular, everyday mom life?

Are you familiar with the phrase "good vibes only"? How do you feel about this phrase? Try this. Say out loud "good vibes only in this household". What reaction did you have? What came up for you?

I am not a fan of the phrase "good vibes only". Gasp! Why- it's such a positive thinking phrase.

Is it, though? What happens when you have some negative self talk? What happens when hard things happen in your life? What happens when life throws all kinds of curveballs your way? Where are you good vibes then?

Revisit your reaction in the space above. Do you still agree with yourself?

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Answer yes/ no some more questions. Circle your choice.

YES NO 1. Are you willing to feel joy?

YES NO 2. Are you willing to feel sadness?

YES NO 3. Are you willing to build your confidence?

YES NO 4. Are you willing to fail?

YES NO 5. Are you willing to try something new?

Willingness isn't the same as wanting. Instead, acceptance or willingness is being willing to experience, without struggle, difficult thoughts and feelings in the service of our values.

Acceptance is being with rather than fixing.

Are you willing to be with the harder feelings without trying to fix them? Without trying to get rid of them to get back to your good vibes only?

That's easy to answer in a workbook. Of course, I'm willing! But real life....hmmmm....is it so easy?

Read this through once. Then read it again slowly and hold out one hand. Truly imagine what this might feel like.

Imagine extending your hand and having a feather placed in your open palm.

The feather is soft and pleasant and you can hold it gently.

Now imagine extending your hand and having a small cactus placed in your open palm.

The cactus is prickly and unpleasant, AND you can hold it gently.

That's willingness. Being willing to let the cactus be there, without struggle (you can imagine what happens when you struggle with a cactus!).



Just like you can hold a cactus gently, even though it's prickly and uncomfortable, we can learn how to hold difficult thoughts and feelings gently.

If you squeeze it tightly, the prickles will pierce your skin and you will experience suffering. However, if you just allow the cactus to sit in your hand and you observe it there, it is still prickly but it is no longer causing you harm. You can learn to hold your cactuses lightly.

Reflections/ reactions to the holding the cactus exercise:

A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a light beige background, intended for writing reflections or reactions to the cactus exercise.