



## **EXPERIENTIAL AVOIDANCE**

When things hit the fan, what do you most humans want to do? Lean in? Celebrate it? I don't think so. Human nature is to get the heck out of there.

It is a natural tendency to want to escape or avoid unpleasant feelings or situations.

It's no secret that I am not a fan of the phrase 'good vibes only'. Why? Because life just doesn't work that way! If you only want good vibes, you're going to live with your head stuck in the sand in a life of avoidance.

Reality means things get hard. We want to learn to stay present in the moment even when things are hard. Sound good? Okay- work on that.

Just kidding. Of course we will work on it together. If it were easy, everyone would already be doing it and I wouldn't see throw pillow with 'good vibes only' embroidered on them.

Let's start by noticing our own unique avoidance loops.

Avoidance loops are just what the name implies- behavior patterns where we just loop around and around getting nowhere, but avoiding whatever unpleasant or uncomfortable thing is going on in our lives right now.

### **Notice your own avoidance loop patterns.**

These are some common avoidance loops, but not an exhaustive list. Circle the number of any of these that are in your current mom life behavior these days. You can circle all or none. No wrong answers here (or anywhere in this book).

1. Numbing: overdoing it or restricting food, drink, exercise, alcohol, or other substances
2. Bracing your body: tensing up, holding muscles tight, in "fight" mode physically
3. Distracting: wandering mind, daydreaming, fantasizing, thrill-seeking, multitasking, doom scrolling, overusing technology.
4. Giving up: isolate, avoid, sleep too much, cancel on plans you were looking forward to, hide
5. Rushing: staying busy, overworking, saying yes to more tasks or responsibilities, talk quickly, moving quickly
6. Overthinking: ruminate, worry, replay things in your mind, constant mental problem solving, worst case thinking
7. Blaming: point fingers, judge others, look for a scapegoat

-Hill & Sorenson, 2021

# AVOIDANCE LOOPS

Now that you've notice your loops,  
go beat yourself up over them.

JUST KIDDING!

What are our next steps now that  
we've identified our patterns?



Now that we have our main avoidance loop(s) identified for what's going on in your world right now, let's do something about it. Let's work on our own behavior so we can stay present and be the parent we choose to be.

## Give it a name.

Name your avoidance loop. My example: "Here is Leanne in her Instagram scrolling avoidance loop again." Write yours here:

## Notice it in real life.

Use that sentence you just wrote when it happens in real life. Catch yourself in the act! That's it- just identify when it happens in real life and say that sentence out loud or in your head. After you tried your loop naming sentence in real life, what happened?

Based on an exercise in Hill & Sorenson, 2021