How Investing in Your Own Growth Can Do More for Your Child Than Attempting to Change Them

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"True acceptance of our kids isn't a destination; it's a daily action we choose, showing up for who they are every single day."

Co-regulation strategies

One of the most powerful tools we have is our ability to co-regulate with our kids. It's really hard not to escalate right along with them, but we know that a dysregulated parent can't help a dysregulated child. So, you want to create an action plan ahead of time for how you'll de-escalate things that tend to be hard.

To start off, sit down and make a list of the 10 scenarios that tend to be the most triggering for your child and that have the potential to go wrong. Your goal should be to get in front of those things with a strong plan—like what are you going to do if this happens—are you going to take 3 breaths, count to 10, put your hand on your kid's shoulder, or just step away for a moment to collect yourself?

Inner work

Just like most parents, I, too, used to think that I could just be this kind of mom who could juggle everything effortlessly. But I quickly learned that my child was going to demand that I show up for them in ways I never expected. It wasn't just about doing things for them; it was about doing the deep inner work on myself to be the parent they truly needed.

When I get triggered, I want to control things. I want to make sure everything happens as planned. But now, I try to notice that and say, *'Oh, it's controlling Debbie again!'* Actually, I can't control this at all! The best thing I can do is to pause and ask myself what's really going on in my mind—what's making me anxious or frustrated—and then find a way to make peace with it.

The biggest struggle I hear from parents is the mismatch between what we expect and what's actually happening. We want to create a specific outcome, but reality doesn't always match up. I remind myself that my child is on their own journey, and while I can guide them, I can't mould them into something they're not.