

1

How to confront (and embrace) your fears

My daughter has been obsessed with death for most of her life, and it can get pretty intense sometimes. She doesn't know anyone who died; it's just that, when she began to understand the concept, it was really scary to her. I was always like, "Well, let's talk about death and get to the root of where your fear comes from." But what actually helped her was dressing up in her glow-in-the-dark skeleton pajamas, putting on all her glow-in-the-dark monster fingers and vampire teeth, getting in the closet, lighting herself up, and then coming out into the dark room and pretending to be Death. Embodying it didn't make her fear of death go away, but it made the intensity of it diminish.

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5

How not to hold back

I'm always noticing the way kids don't alter their emotions. The experience of, say, having a child nonchalantly tell you they love you, randomly throughout the day, the way a grown-up might say they enjoy coffee, can be overwhelming if you don't have kids, when you're not accustomed to trafficking in emotions so freely. I appreciate how children let themselves be so vulnerable and, unlike adults, don't try to contain their feelings. It can be really freeing not to worry what anyone else thinks.

GLYNNIS MacNICOL IS THE AUTHOR OF *NO ONE TELLS YOU THIS: A MEMOIR*. SHE LIVES IN NEW YORK CITY.

2

How to relate to other people, even when they seem different

My young readers remind me how similar we all are beneath the surface—we're all human. Instead of seeing my book *American Panda* as an Asian story, young readers see it as the coming-of-age story that it is, and they see the protagonist, Mei, as the American teen she is. In some ways, Mei does have a different background from many, but everyone can relate to having conflict with loved ones, feeling like they don't measure up, or struggling with where they fit in the world. Kids aren't as quick to assign labels, and I hope we can follow their lead more.

GLORIA CHAO IS THE AUTHOR OF *AMERICAN PANDA* AND *OUR WAYWARD FATE*, OUT NEXT MONTH. SHE LIVES IN CHICAGO.

3

How to find joy in the day-to-day

I was once running errands with my daughter. I parked the car and then let her put the money in the meter. She sighed happily and said, "I just love putting money in the parking meter." And she meant it! Everything is new to her. One of the pleasures of being around young kids is borrowing some of that wonder, and allowing more space to notice the joy in things that seem mundane—even a parking meter.

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4

How to make time for bonding rituals

My 2-year-old grandson remembers the little things we do together. One of our traditions is going to the playground, and he rides on my shoulders on our way there. After we spend a bit of time cracking acorns, swinging, or kicking around leaves, he'll say he wants to go to the coffee shop and get a muffin. It's our particular ritual, and we've been doing it for over a year. Each time he's at my house for the day, he'll bring this up. I'm struck by how deeply he knows me and how he's developed a set of things he does with me that he remembers. If I'm willing to follow his lead, it demonstrates to him that I'm there for him, and that our relationship is something he can count on. It's a way to build a secure attachment.

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