

#### RAISING KIDS TO BE SUFFICIENT

As parents, it was so fun to watch our kids develop more independence, to become more self-sufficient, and to gain the confidence to problem-solve and figure things out on their own. I had to laugh when one day my daughters decided to go out for lunch together, all on their own, because “they had a taste for split pea soup at the Lynden Dutch Bakery.”

It was even cooler to watch them navigate relationships that, for the first time in their lives, were not supervised or mediated by a parent or teacher. They had to learn to resolve their own differences, develop leadership skills, learn how to compromise, apologize when out of line, and make their own decisions. And they did, without our involvement.

They need the freedom to make mistakes and the freedom to learn that actions have consequences, and that ultimately they are responsible for the choices that they make. Because the alternative is kids that turn into entitled and helpless adults who can't fend for themselves out in the real world. And who wants that?

#### CORE BELIEF #1

#### FREEDOM COMES WITH RESPONSIBILITY

Here's the thing—we all want freedom. We want to be free to say what we want and do what we want and watch what we like on TV, to wear the clothes that we want to wear, to have religious freedom and the freedom to make our own decisions about life.

Freedom is awesome. And it's a really, really, really big deal. Because you guys--freedom isn't free. It was never free, not for anyone. Not for you. Not for me. Not for any of us. And that's why it is important for all of us, but ESPECIALLY for our kids, to understand that with freedom comes responsibility. You can't have one without the other. You just can't. They have to go hand in hand.

Their only real rule all summer long was that before they could head out for the day to play or to wander the shops or visit their cousins and auntie, they needed to complete their daily list of chores. We explained that as long as they lived up to their responsibilities, we would

pretty much let them come and go as they pleased, but that they had to continue to prove to us that they could be responsible, or their freedom would be taken away. And you know what? The freedom went straight to their heads.

#### CORE BELIEF #2

#### MONEY COMES FROM WORK

Now, keep in mind that knowing my why and connecting to a higher purpose didn't make losing the weight any easier. I still had to actually do the work of watching my calories and working out, even when I didn't feel like it. I still had to put safeguards in place, like hiring a trainer to hold me accountable and signing up for a meal delivery service that made choosing healthy options a whole lot easier. I still had to choose to stop eating Doritos.

Your own larger purpose might not have anything to do with yourself. Your motivation might be driven by a sense of responsibility or obligation to your family, or to your friends, or to a cause that you believe in deeply. Maybe you feel called by God, and that your purpose is really just to be obedient. Maybe your motivation is wanting to be financially independent so that you can finally feel free. Maybe you just want to make a difference in the world.

#### CORE BELIEF #3

#### SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO LET YOUR KIDS FAIL

And believe me—this one is the hardest one of all to follow through on. It doesn't matter if we're talking about toddlers learning how to walk or feed themselves for the first time, our kindergartener learning how to tie their shoe, our grade schooler learning how to navigate the social waters of elementary school, our teenager figuring out how to manage their homework or get their first job, our college student going out into the world for the first time, or our twenty-something entering the workforce.

Sometimes—and I would even dare argue most of the time—we have to let our kids figure out these challenges all on their own. We need to let them struggle a little bit, to have to push past obstacles and to overcome frustration, and to realize that they might be capable of a more than they even knew.