



Amber Scotchburn BSW BEd

Part of the *Success...With A Twist* Series

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“... Let’s discover the magic in getting to know your child, and fall back in love with them at every age.”

- Amber Scotchburn



Congratulations!

You have taken the first step to mastering your family's happiness and success by simply committing to reading this book. You are well on your way to creating confident, resilient, and empowered children who are prepared to deal with whatever life brings them by being success-ready. By success-ready we mean that your children will be hopeful, engaged, thriving, self-sufficient, and prosperous. Through reading this book and doing our hands-on activities, you will become the parent you've always wanted to be.

Why do we want our children to be success-ready? Because being success-ready is significantly related to school performance—influencing outcomes such as grades, credits earned, achievement scores, likelihood to stay in school, and future employment. Research shows that people are best prepared for the rigors of life when they have high hopes for the future, are deeply involved in and enthusiastic about school, and feel emotionally and physically well enough to take advantage of learning opportunities.

Do you sometimes feel like you don't want 'to parent,' you'd rather curl up on the couch and simply zone out? But then you realize that you have two eyes starring at you, depending on you to feed them, clothe them, give them love, make them feel safe, help them with their homework, remind them that they should brush their teeth and the endless, exhausting list goes on! While children don't come with an instruction booklet, we've created this book as a manual to help you 'to parent.'

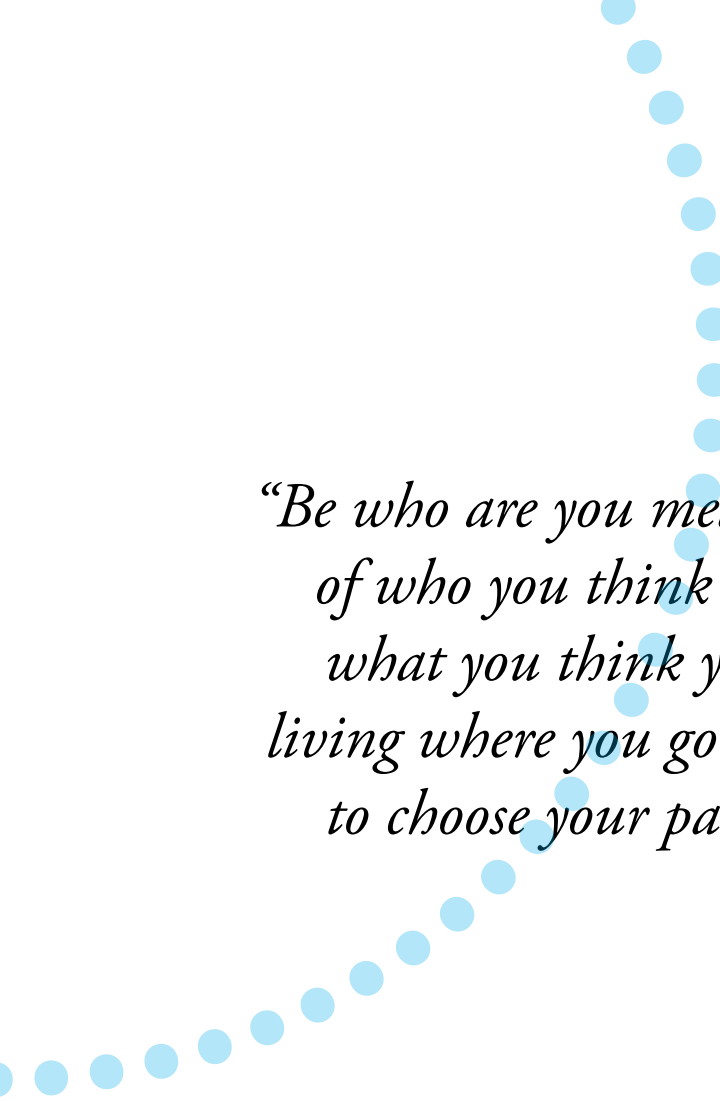
I'd also like to thank you on behalf of your child and all whom they will encounter in their lives. You are doing something to ensure their success! Also, remember this is just a moment in time. By doing something about it, you are consciously aiding them to form habits and behaviours that are going to be life altering. Enjoy this moment in time and know that you are making a difference.

We understand that there is a lot of intense pressure on parents to produce a successful child, teenager and young adult. Often this pressure starts from even the mere thought of having a child. Let us walk you through this journey and relieve some of your pressure.

As a social worker, teacher, tutoring agency CEO, bestselling author, and nationally sought-after parenting expert, I'm here to help YOU be the parent you've always wanted to be.

As an everyday parent, you will be able to do your own Parenting Skills Assessment through reading this book. And then, place your trust in our Signature Success...With A Twist system to help you transform the knowledge gleaned from this skills assessment and from the 'hands-on' and 'interactive' experiences found throughout the book to empower you to discover the positive parent within.

Instead of using punitive measures as your first line of discipline, let's discover the magic in getting to know your child and fall back in love with them at every age. Let's learn why it's important for your child to say "no" and even lie to you. Let's explore not allowing school grades to define your child. Let's understand all of your child's behaviours, especially the ones that drive you the most insane.



*“Be who are you meant to be, instead
of who you think you should be,
what you think you can’t be, or
living where you got stuck. YOU get
to choose your parenting path.”*

- Amber Scotchburn

How To Read This Book

Do you have a favourite family recipe card that looks scruffy and has food stains on it from it being so well-used? That is how I want you to treat this book. So fold the corners, keep it accessible for use, write all over it, and get stains on it. I want this book to be as well-loved and used as that recipe card.

There is a Japanese word, *tsundoku*, which means buying books and letting them pile up unread. Please don't *tsundoku* this book—it's not meant to be 'shelf help.' (You've already learned something new but that doesn't mean you can already put the book down.)

Guidelines

Follow these guidelines when reading the book to make sure you get the most out of the experience. I 'pinky-promise' you that by using the knowledge in this book as a guide and through doing the exercises that accompany it, you will transform your parenting world.

- Do your best to schedule some uninterrupted time. If this isn't doable for you, do it while your child is doing homework or is doing their daily reading. (Yes, your child needs to be reading every day. Anything—even if it's just the cereal box.) Scheduling is important, just as you'd schedule a doctor's appointment or an activity for your child, to ensure it gets done.
- Be aware of what point in the day is best for you to read and schedule time to read then.
- Get comfortable. Get yourself a beverage or a snack. Snuggle under a blanket. Go out into nature. Hang out in your favourite coffee place. Find your happy reading space!
- Gather the tools that will help you retain information and things that resonate with you: a highlighter, writing material like a pen or pencil, paper, stickies to make notes in the margin and/or a notebook to record your thoughts.
- Please make a note of how to connect with us, as there are key moments in the book where we suggest that reaching out to us is imperative to your growth.

- Choose an Accountability Partner. This is an ally who helps you work toward your goals. Someone who is encouraging, compassionate, emotionally resilient, willing to give constructive feedback and see the greatness in you. You can connect regularly in person, by phone or Skype or even emails. If you don't have someone like this in your life, connect with us and we will do our best to find you one through our Parenting... With A Twist community.
- I invite you to use your agenda to write down when you began the book and when you plan to finish it. In making this plan, you will need to take into account the time it will take to read the chapter as well as do the reflection questions at the end of each chapter. Other common words for agendas are calendars, planners, and day-timers. This tool will play a key role in this journey so ensure you have one!
- Next, I'd like you to share this plan with your Accountability Partner. Invite them to go on this journey with you! It's okay if you have to adjust your timeline, just be honest with yourself about it. Share your targeted deadline with us.
- Write down any questions you may have as you go through this book and connect with us to have them answered.
- For those readers that would like more of a hands-on approach through this journey, connect with us to learn more about our Parenting... With A Twist Workbook and video series. The Parenting... With A Twist Workbook contains the Parenting Skills Questions found in this book. The bonus is that the Workbook gives more of an in-depth look into why we are asking those questions and what you can do if you get stuck, as well as the physical space to write the answers down. We know this journey can be tough and we also know it's one of the most important ones you will ever take, so we created the Parenting... With A Twist Video Series to offer the option to be coached through this journey by one of our team members.

We are invested in your success, so please remember to connect with us if you run into any difficulties or need any help with these questions.

You can connect with us at our *Parenting... With A Twist* Facebook page at [Facebook.com/parentingwithatwist](https://www.facebook.com/parentingwithatwist), or click to parentingwithatwist.com

Our Success... With A Twist System

Our Signature Success System has been helping families for over two decades reach their chosen accomplishments. It's the foundation of the work we've done with students, teachers, parents, families, community agencies and individuals. For the first time in print, we are sharing this system with you. The best aspect of this process is that it's repeatable to any area of your life, once you understand it. It's based on having a goal or something you want to change in your life and the mindset and actions you need to reach that.

You will see these different icons throughout the book that represent a mindset that we, at Parenting... With A Twist, would like you to start being conscious of. These icons make up our Signature Success System that will help you on your parenting success journey. Spend some time studying and reflecting upon each icon's meaning and remember that when you get to that icon in the book, you can always flip back to this page to remember the deeper meaning behind them. Also remember, once you master this process for your parenting goal, you can use the same steps to work on other areas of your life that you'd like to change!



Star: Hopes, Wishes, Dreams & Desires

Think of your dreams, goals, wishes, hopes and desires as represented by stars. Our journey together will be to help you reach those stars.

Any time you start to feel discouraged as you read through the book or if you have a particularly challenging parenting moment, this image will remind you that you can reach your stars.



Circles: Different Lenses We Put On

When you see the icon above, we are inviting you to become aware of the perspective you see the world through and to question thoughts and patterns that could prevent you from reaching your life dreams. Yes, you can be the parent you've always wanted to be.

As you encountered different experiences through your life, (see the Heart icon below) you formed different ways of being in the world. These ways influence how you see the world. The lens icon represents what particular lens you are 'looking through' in various experiences.

Staying calm in a parenting situation versus losing it in a parenting situation, will all depend on what lens you are looking through. This is why parents can have completely different reactions to the same behaviours in their child. And think of the times when you don't even truly understand why you've lost it; you are simply reacting based on your lens.

I invite you to start being aware of the lenses you wear that cause you to act, think and feel the way you do. The way in which this book is written will give you the guidance to start reflecting upon which lens you are wearing. We want you to be aware that you can choose which lens to put on.

For instance, it's very damaging to respond to situations with the word "can't." Some examples of this are: "We can't afford that." "I can't be the parent I've always wanted to be." Start to catch yourself when you are using that word as it shuts down other possibilities. When it's an automatic response, you are still seeing the world through an old lens.

How can you replace automatically using the word "can't" in your sentences? Recognize that it's a choice to do or not to do something in this moment, but that is different than saying: "I can't do it." And if you want to do it but are feeling you have to make a different choice, examine why. Are there circumstances you can affect change in? If so, why not strive towards making those changes. If, right now, it is something that is beyond your control, still make note of it. You never know, once you've acknowledged something, what opportunity might present itself.

Another word to be aware of is 'should.' When it feels like you 'should' be doing an action, examine this feeling. Are you making a conscious choice to do whatever the action is? Or is there an emotion driving you to doing this action? "I should call that person back." "I should really make a healthy dinner tonight." Be mindful of how many shoulds you are thinking in relation to parenting as this will gauge how consciously you are parenting.

When we frame our thoughts using the words can't and should, we are giving our power away. It's much more powerful to make a conscious choice to do something or not do it.



Clapperboard: Miss Take versus Mistake & A.C.T. (Action Changes Things)

Shift your mindset to change the spelling of "mistake" to "miss take" so that you can live without fear of making an error. Embracing each moment that life offers to love, to learn, and to be grateful. Yes, you've not messed up your kids...yet!

When you see a clapperboard, it reminds you to replace “mistake” with “miss take.” In movie making there are a million miss takes along the way to the big screen, to get it just right. Directors adjust the lighting, the music, the script, the costumes, the setting, etc. for the take to be exactly the way they want it. Along the parenting path with your child, you will make miss takes, but your child and you are worth all the takes it takes to get it right. Imagine yelling, “Plot Twist” in your head when things aren’t going exactly as planned. Or, imagine the clapperboard giving you another opportunity to get it right. We will help you make the adjustments you need to direct your parenting life as you want it to be!

View miss takes as what your imagination creates as opposed to what is actually happening. When a child is learning to walk and they fall, our lens may tell us that something went wrong. However, what we know to be true is that anybody who is just learning to walk is going to fall as part of their natural progression to actually walking. Therefore, seeing the act of falling like a mistake, is really our perception of something gone wrong as opposed to what actually is. If you look at the act of falling like a miss take, all that happened is that they fell and next time would do something different to not fall. When your child is learning to walk, you expect failure to happen. So why not expect failure in other aspects of your child’s life, as well as your own life? Be cautious if you think of failure as something negative instead of something that is necessary on the path to success.

When your child is learning to walk, you expect failure to happen. So why not expect failure in other aspects of your child’s life, as well as your own life?

Let’s think about the terms used in the making of a movie, like, “Act 1, Scene 1.” Now think of the acronym A.C.T. meaning, Action Changes Things. As you make your miss takes, you will need to take action in order to make the necessary changes. These actions will tweak something in order to get you closer to where you want to be because...A.C.T.



Heart: Life Experiences that Shape Us

When you see the heart icon, realize that while it’s our heart that keeps us alive, it also holds a collection of everything that has happened to us in our life and what shapes us into who we are today. It’s important to note that not all the events that have shaped us are happy ones. If we hold on to our life events and let them dictate how we move forward in life, we aren’t living consciously and we aren’t going to be able to make significant changes.

Separate yourself from your ‘story.’ Be who are you meant to be, instead of who you think you should be, what you think you can’t be, or living where you got stuck. YOU get to choose your parenting path.

The heart questions are specifically designed to bring you to living in the present. This means, they will allow you to release the past and look forward to the future you are creating! We want you to understand that YOU can do this, no matter what's happened to you in your life. You, and only you, are solely responsible for your reactions and moving forward! So, let's create the best parenting heart EVER!

The heart activities will ask you to:

-Describe a parenting event related to the topic in the chapter, that you feel shaped who you are as a parent and why. Examples of significant events could be: births, birthdays, vacations, moves, sports, awards, graduations, deaths, divorce, remarriage, work changes, relationships, religious/spiritual ceremonies, first experiences, pets, gifts, immediate family members' events, school, concerts, conferences, injuries, workshops, etc. Pause to reflect on what events come to mind.

Rate the event on a scale of negative ten (-10) to positive ten (+10). Negative ten being the worst possible thing that could ever have happened to positive ten being the best possible thing to have ever happened. The zero is neutral. We will ask you to rate how you felt about the event at the time it was happening and how you feel about the event now. If it's a different rating, we will ask you what has changed.

Assess: whether you were responsible for the event and/or the outcome of the event.

Discuss: if you would change any of the events if you could.

Evaluate: any links between why you parent the way you do and the particular life event.

Decide: knowing what you now know, if you would want to change the course of your parenting life.



Amber Highlighted Stop Sign: Use Caution When Proceeding

There are three things you can do when you approach an amber light while you are driving: you can choose to slow down; observe the traffic around you and decide if you can make the light; or increase your speed, focused on your need to get wherever you are going. Which choice do you typically make?

Your parenting path is a journey; and maybe one of the most important journeys you take. We want you to be conscious of which choice you are making as you approach different parenting situations.

We'd like you to get to the place where you treat each amber highlighted stop sign with care. Meaning, that you will slow down, observe yourself and those around you. One of the biggest regrets parents share is that they wished for their kids to hurry through a certain

phase of their life without appreciating what that phase offered them—time with their kids. We'd like to minimize your regrets and have you find appreciation in all the moments.

To help facilitate slowing down and appreciating each moment for what it is, each stop sign will offer some questions. Take some time to reflect on the questions and see where you can begin to make changes today, that will start correcting toxic behaviours in which you may be engaging.



Target: S.M.A.R.T. Goal Setting System

When you identify your most important goals, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals. This way of setting goals helps you understand that results are only going to come with action, and that there is a process.

Remember those stars you thought of earlier? Now think of the S.M.A.R.T. goal—setting approach like the bow that is going to launch your arrow to reach those stars!

Specific

Goals should be straightforward and emphasize what you want to happen. **WHAT** are you going to do? Use action words such as direct, organize, lead, coordinate, develop, plan, build, etc. **WHY** is this important to do at this time? What do you want to ultimately accomplish?

“I am going to read this parenting book and do the activities as I feel like parenting is the best and the worst thing that has ever happened to me.”

Measurable

If you can't measure it, you can't manage it. Choose a goal with measurable progress, so you can see the change occur. How will you 'see' when you reach your goal? Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that refuels you. “I am going to complete a chapter a month, including reading the book and completing the steps in the workbook.”

Attainable

A goal needs to stretch you slightly so you feel you can do it and it will need a real commitment from you. The feeling of success this brings helps you to remain motivated.

“I know that it's attainable for me to read and complete the questions for each chapter over a month time period. I will write this in my agenda at the beginning and end of each month.”

Realistic

This is not a synonym for ‘easy.’ Realistic, in this case, means ‘doable.’ The goal needs to be realistic for you and where you are at the moment.

“This is a doable goal because with my current work schedule, family schedule, and my own personal schedule, I can make this happen in the given time frame. I will ensure my family knows that it’s a priority for me.”

Timely

Set a timeframe for the goal: next week, in three months, by fifth grade. Putting an end point on your goal gives you a clear target to work towards. If you don’t set a time, the commitment is too vague. It tends not to happen because you feel you can start at any time. Without a time limit, there’s no urgency to start taking action now.

“I will have completed this parenting book and its activities by December.”



Happy Face: Happy...Just Because

The line of success is not straight and not without its intense moments. Sometimes it’s caused by our own actions and reactions and other times by things out of our control. Life is just like that. When you are thinking about reaching your parenting hopes, wishes and dreams, just remember, it won’t be smooth sailing. Be ready for some choppy waters along the way.

Think of this like a movie that’s just come out, that people have invested millions of dollars and years of time and energy into, and the reviews are awful. The designers, writers, actors, directors, etc. have a choice to have a ‘pity party’ or be happy...just because. You have this same choice in life. People aren’t going to always like you, including your kids and yourself, but you have a choice to live in that moment or not.

When you shift to being happy ‘just because,’ you won’t be waiting your whole life for something to happen, a whole list of things to be happy about, or for somebody else’s approval. You will be living life on your terms!

Yes, you have permission to be happy without having to accomplish or obtain the next ten things on your To Do lists.

Now that you understand what makes up our Success...With A Twist System, are you ready to get TWISTED with us?