

## Brave Parenting: A Buddhist-Inspired Guide to Raising Emotionally Resilient Children

**Krissy Pozatek**

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When it comes to parenting, being brave equals letting go, according to social worker Krissy Pozatek. She writes that “many parents are busy cushioning their children from any discomfort.” Pozatek invokes the Buddhist philosophy of “making our own moccasins” to protect our feet on the path of life rather than “laying down leather wherever we step so we don’t cut our feet.” Writes the author, “Leather laying makes our children more dependent and less resourceful and impedes their emotional maturation process.”

Pozatek brings her experience working in adolescent wilderness-therapy programs to bear in a book that is as much about tough love for parents as it is for children. She advises parents to allow kids to feel because “Struggle is not something to cover up or get rid of.” She encourages reflective listening, setting limits to make children feel safe, allowing children to experience consequences, and letting children do their own problem solving. All of this advice is meted out in text that gently but firmly guides parents away from living their children’s lives and toward enabling their children’s independence.

To illustrate her key points, Pozatek uses anecdotes about parents and children shaped by her own experience as a therapist. The exercises she recommends, such as free writing in a journal, are designed to help suppress any parental insecurities. Some parents may not feel entirely comfortable advising rather than sheltering their children, but Pozatek’s compassionate, mature way of examining contemporary parental behaviors—and demonstrating the positive payback of remaining objective—should ease parents’ concerns and help them master “brave parenting.”

**BARRY SILVERSTEIN** (Spring 2014)

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