



# Pity Party, Anyone?

Parents know, and kids should see, that disappointments ultimately make for a richer life

By Kelli Wheeler

I invited my husband to the pity party I was having. He refused to put on the party hat I offered.

Mr. Voice of Reason apparently had other plans. He also pointed out he's been invited to these downer-fests before and it's not worth the party favor (retail therapy). Plus, it always seems to revolve around my co-guest of honor, Monthly Friend, who does not get along with his wingman, Mr. Happy.

I had a great theme for this month's pity party, too: "I Don't Wanna." It was a hard choice between that and "It's Not Fair." As in, "I don't wanna" clean the house because I will never have the satisfaction of seeing it clean for more than 10 seconds, or, "It's not fair" I have to do 10 loads of laundry when my dirty clothes make up 1 percent of the bulk.

The other dilemma I had planning for this bring-your-depressed-friends party is how this would come across to my kids. After all, when they tell me

they don't wanna, I tell them, "I'm not asking you, I'm telling you. There are no options here."

Also, when they pull out, "It's not fair," I tell them, "Life's not fair. Get over it."

See where I'm going with this? My pity party theme was quickly morphing into "Do As I Say, Not As I Do."

Normally, I'm a big believer in picking yourself up by your bootstraps. I think having the ability to shake things off and move forward is an invaluable life skill. There is absolutely no way you can protect your children from every inevitable hurt or injustice they will encounter growing up. How they handle these tests of life absolutely shapes who they become. So, it's not that there is a no-wimps policy in my house, but a belief that life will keep throwing the punches, so you might as well learn to box.

In our house, Daddy has given the nickname "Dukes First" to our daughter. That's because when her older brother takes her out in the

course of overly rough play, she doesn't cry and go tell. She comes back at him dukes first, crying later.

Of course I don't condone this (we have a strict no hitting, scratching or pinching rule), but the point is the girl is both sweet and tough. Whether physically or emotionally knocked down by her peers, she lets it roll off her armor of confidence and pride. There is no retaliation because she knows you don't have to knock someone else down to stand tall.

---

**He knows a crash is inevitable, but how are you going to land that awesome bike jump or pull off that overgrown mop of hair as a hairdo unless you try it?**

---

My son is also coming along nicely in learning to roll with life's punches. In fact, parroting his daddy he likes to say, "That's how I roll." He is not afraid of falling, whether taking a physical leap or social dive. He knows a crash is inevitable, but how are you going to land that awesome bike jump or pull off that overgrown mop of hair as a hairdo unless you try it? Whether crashing and burning or coming off as the hero, he owns it. "That's how I roll," he'll tell you.

My husband and I both try to model overcoming life's setbacks. We let our kids see we are disappointed when things don't go our way. We let them witness our frustration. We don't hide our tears when life's gut checks are painful and devastating. It is important for them to see life is not fair or perfect, or without roadblocks.

It is also important for our children to see how we handle being knocked on our tushies by a one-two punch of life and living. I want them to witness and learn how to get back up and step up to the challenge of turning a negative into a positive. I want them to believe giving up is not an option and not to be fooled by the path of least resistance. I want them to know it is possible to climb out of that dungeon of despair and join the real-life parade already in progress.

I want them to see Mommy put down that batch of brownie batter and the biggest spoon from the drawer and hear me say again in triumph, "Kids, if life were easy, it would be pretty darn boring."

In the end, the pity party I threw on my behalf was brief and not well-attended. And I couldn't have been happier about it.

*Kelli Wheeler lives in Arden Oaks and is a mother of two. She can be reached at [kellimwheeler.com](http://kellimwheeler.com). Check out her weekly blog, *Most Smartest Mommy ITW (In The World)*, at [SacMomsClub.com/home/blog/kellimwheeler](http://SacMomsClub.com/home/blog/kellimwheeler). ●*