



Dealing with Change: Ambivalences, Regression, Anxiety

March 10, 2021



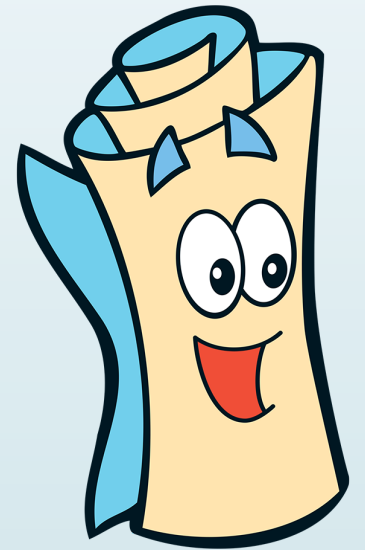
Overview

- Where are we?
 - Uncertainty and ambiguity
 - Starting to see some pathways
- Where are we going? How can we get there?
 - Making decisions and doing our best
- Surviving and thriving on the journey
 - Strategies
 - D34 Supports

Breakout Discussion Groups

Metaphor of a Map

- We're on a journey in this time of COVID
- When we look at our map, we want to know
 - where am I now?
 - Where am I going?
 - How can I get there?
- Where are we now?
 - For many families, we are experiencing...



Ambiguity and Uncertainty Fatigue

- Lots of important questions and few clear, easy answers
 - When is this going to end? What does this mean to my child's education? When will kids get the vaccine? Are there more variants? What's the long-term impact to our economy? For my job?
- Ongoing pressure to reassess, adjust, and recalibrate,
 - Our standards and habits (parenting, work, education, friendship, family, activities)
 - Balance (effort and rest, work and fun, self and others, basic needs and building for the future)
 - Plans, hopes and expectations
- Feeling both lost and found—
 - We know what we can know...but there's a lot we don't know



Worry

► Lots of worries

- What's next? How are we going to handle this? Can I handle this? Am I ok? What happened to my kids? Are the kids going to be ok?

► Ambivalence

- Going back and forth between engagement (work, parenting, learning, planning) and disengagement (tuning out, shutting down, rest, Netflix binging)
- Wanting to return to “normal” and feeling nervous about change and our ability to take up old tasks, habits and responsibilities (do I really want to drive to work every day? Am I ready to talk to all day long? Do I have the energy to get from class to class rather than clicking on a Zoom, am I ready to see all the people at my school?)

**Worrying
works! 90% of
the things I
worry about
never happen.**

Mind-Body-Spirit

► This takes a toll

- Bodies—many people can feel the weight of stress in their tight muscles, energy levels, and need for comfort
- Mind—thoughts and feelings may be more negative, frustration tolerance may be lower, motivation may be lower, worries may be prevalent
- Spirit—may be more difficult to find meaning and purpose

► Regression

- Kids express the toll by reverting to habits, needs, abilities of their younger selves.



Regression

- Regression
 - Tantrums, toileting accidents, baby talk
 - Intense, unpredictable emotions
 - Refusal to do school work
 - Hyperactivity and/or sleep difficulties



Normal, and a natural part of development. Children are naturally motivated to move forward in their development.

Approach the situation from a place of compassion, rather than in a punitive way. Its OK to respond as if your child is younger.



Lemons and Lemonade

Both this

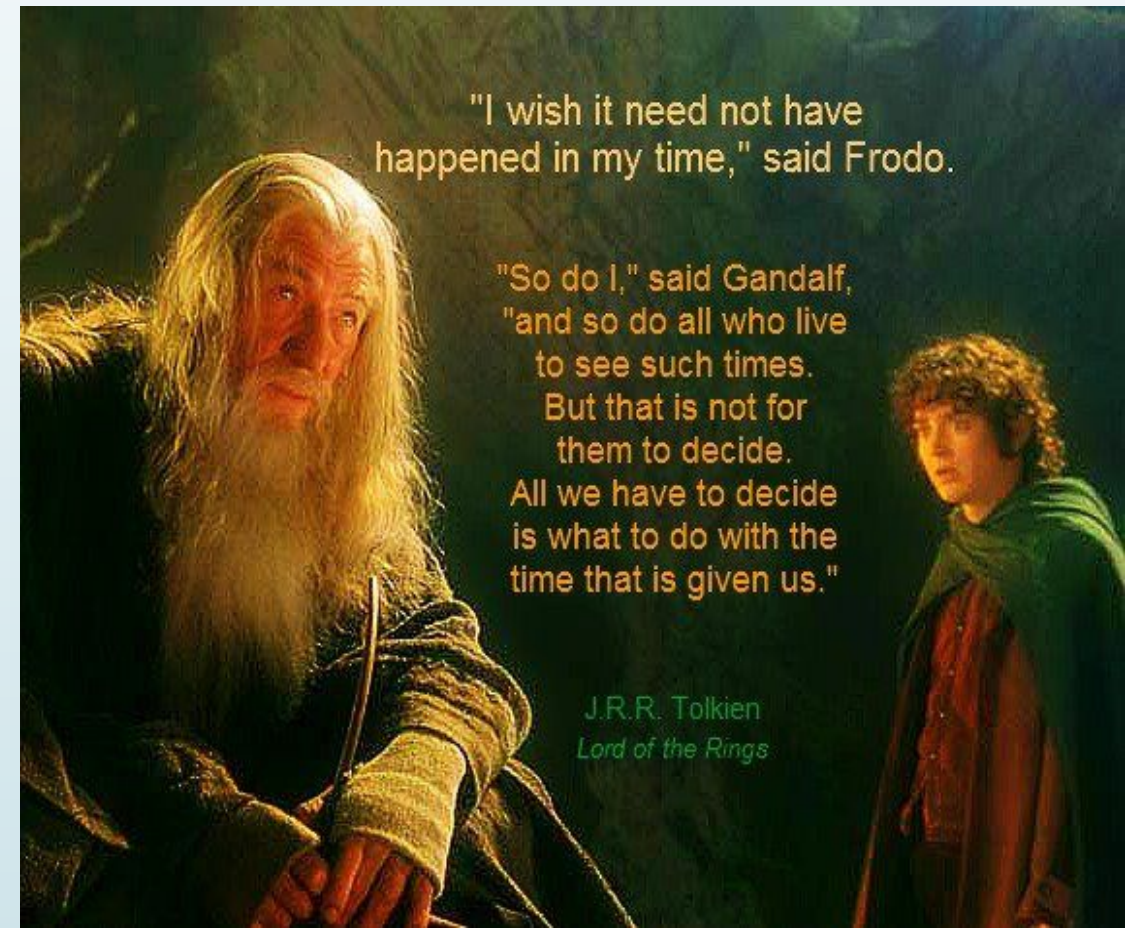
- Loss / Disappointment
- Danger
- Activity
- Guilt
- Anxiety
- Isolation
- I didn't train for this!
- Nervous
- Loving extra moments of family togetherness

And that

- Opportunity / Pleasant surprise
- Safety
- Pause
- Gratitude
- Grace
- Freedom
- I have skills!
- Eager
- Craving moments of solitude

Our Task as Parents

- We don't need to pick a side, life has always been (and will always be) both
- Acceptance
- Living with complexity
 - Modeling how to cope with both
 - Caring for ourselves and others
 - Partnering with D34



SELF-COMPASSION

I Don't Have To Feel Better Than
Others To Feel Good About Myself



Where are we Going? How?

► Decisions

- We have lots of practice and habits—gather information, talk to friends and experts, follow directions, pros and cons, using values and principles
- D34 Resources, options and information
- You know yourself, you know your children

► Decisions during COVID

- More difficult
- More unknowns
- More variables--individual and community



Decision Making Lemons

- ▶ When making decisions in uncertain times...
- ▶ Name it to tame it
 - ▶ Remember that there is a lot of ambiguity and uncertainty
 - ▶ You weren't trained for this—a pandemic is not a typical stage of life, child development or education
 - ▶ You can't predict the future and things may change
 - ▶ You can't know all the pros and cons
 - ▶ It's not your fault, you didn't cause this
 - ▶ Buyer's remorse—you may be ambivalent about or even regret your decisions



Anticipatory Fear

- The fear of something is very often worse than the thing itself.
 - Anticipating and worrying is more difficult than responding, adapting and doing

**"And the day came
when the risk to
remain tight in a
bud was more
painful than the risk
it took to blossom"**

Anaïs Nin





Decision Making Lemonade

- Making peace—allow that you are doing the best you can with the information available to you
 - Give permission to notice the both ands
 - Let go of the need for mastery
 - Be gentle, flexible and generous with yourself
 - Use what you know about yourself and your family
 - Commit to knowing you did the best you could
 - Disconnect your self-concept from others' thoughts, behaviors and feelings
 - Expect and be gentle with the second guessing

Strategies

- Present Moment Awareness
 - Tune in--what am I feeling? What's happening? How's my body?
 - Name it to tame it, here's how it is right now
 - Now—often no trouble in the now, come away from past and future, turn away from pressure to solve
- Recognize purpose and meaning
 - How have I responded? What brings me joy?
- Start with yes...attunement...love



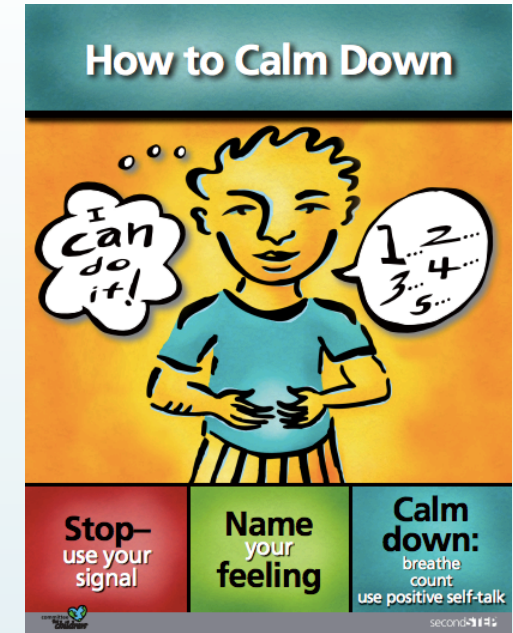


Strategy--Connect

- Bids for Emotional Connection
- Stress Reducing Conversation
- Reach out to trusted partners
 - D34
 - Friends and family
 - Community resources

Related Resources with District 34

- District SELebration!
 - Parent Night with Doug Bolton April 5th
- ParentConnect the Dots
 - First event week of March 29th
- Curricula
 - Second Step
 - Size of the Problem = Size of the Reaction
 - Growth Mindset
- Additional Resources
 - #BeWell34
 - SEL tips in Newsletters
- Connecting with D34 staff
 - Psychologist/Social Worker Office Hours



Partnering with Parents During a Pandemic



glenview34.org/bewell34/forfamilies

**Virtual Office Hours
for Parents with
Social Workers &
School Psychologists**

Surviving and Thriving

- **Offer permission and grace to yourself and your family**
 - Name it to Tame it...be honest
 - Here's how it is, acknowledge the complexity, uncertainty, expected thoughts, feelings, behavior
 - Feel your feelings
 - Allow and encourage positive self-talk
 - Allow gentle standards
 - Encourage gratitude
 - Focus on comfort, kindness, and love
 - Limit your scope of responsibility
 - Make peace with your decisions
 - Create fun family rituals
 - Zoom calls with extended family
 - Board Game night
 - Take turns cooking family dinners-let kids try recipes!



“

“The work will wait while you show
the child the rainbow, but the
rainbow won't wait while you do
the work.”

Erik Erikson

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PsychologyQuotes



Breakout Discussion Groups

- Discussion groups with D34 Social Workers and Psychologists facilitating
- Join the Zoom meetings, links are in the Chat
- Please join us!