

Life Skills for 18 Year-Olds

Julie Lythcott-Haims, former Stanford dean of freshmen and best-selling author, speaks with empathy and clarity about the importance of providing a loving safety net while still allowing your child to benefit from the natural lessons learned. Lythcott-Haims recognizes that many educated, well-intentioned parents, by focusing from an early age on their child ultimately gaining admission to a highly selective college, are motivated by the desire to provide the best possible future for their child. In the process, parents may find themselves unwittingly engaging in behaviors that actually limit their child's ability to build resilience and self-reliance.

Lythcott-Haims refers to [certain life skills](#) that we all would want our children to gain: navigating interpersonal problems, coming back from failures, prioritizing tasks and managing time well, contributing to a household, and choosing appropriate risk taking. The hard part is allowing children to “fail” along the way and for parents to tolerate the discomfort of watching our children worried, unhappy, and even lonely. If our goal is to nurture adults who can survive the inevitable uncertainties of life, a key step is to acknowledge our own concerns about our children's futures.

We encourage you to consider reading Lythcott-Haims' book, [How to Raise an Adult](#), this short [article](#), or watching her [TED Talk](#).

The Staples Resilience Project is an ongoing endeavor by the Staples Guidance Department aimed to promote the well-being of our students and foster a positive, inclusive school community.

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