

Every day is not an #Instahappy day

One of the most ignored aspects about parenting a differently abled child is that while we rightfully talk about the child, what support she needs, and how to deal with it — the parent is side-lined.

We speak of super mums who manage everything effortlessly, but not enough on how much it takes to wear that 'super mum hat.' It is far easier to fall into that deep, dark abyss of anger, rage, and gloom than it is to climb back up again and search for sunshine.

As a parent, it is common to put one's own emotions and health on the back burner, while focusing on the child's needs. This becomes even more pronounced when parenting a child with special needs. On top of the stress and fatigue of all the typical responsibilities of parenting, such as feeding, bathing, clothing a child, there is the added responsibility of dealing with the additional needs of the differently abled child and all the other challenges that come with it — isolation, guilt, financial strain, and worst of all, hopelessness.

Our love for our children compels us to stay active, but sometimes to stay healthy, it is important to accept you may be broken, only so that you can allow yourself to heal again.

Far too often, I get asked how do I stay positive always. Truth is I do not, and that also is okay.

There are good days, there are bad days, and then there are days which are so bad that I need to forget them. There are days my four-year-old daughter cries the entire day and refuses to touch her walker, and crawls on the floor the whole day. Those days I survive.

There are days I hide because I do not have the energy to face the world. The simple realisation that I cannot even go to the grocery store with my daughter in her walker without being stared at, exhausts me. Those days I shop online.



There are days when I resent my child. I spend hours and hours teaching my child often simple tasks such as drawing a circle and get frustrated and lose it when she does not sometimes even appear to be trying. I lose faith. Those days, I cry from guilt.

There are days I get angry at the wrong people: that lady rummaging in her bag to find her wallet when I am behind her in the grocery queue; that stewardess with the system malfunction spending far too long to give me my requested seat; those commuters standing in the designated wheelchair spot, because there is no place to stand in an already packed tram. Those days, I lose my cool, I rant, and I swear at that unaware person.

There are days when endless nights of interrupted sleep beat me down. I have called my daughter's school and lied to take sick leave, because even four cups of coffee were not doing its usual magic on me.

Those days, I have parked my children in front of the television and taken a midday nap.

Truth is that in the worst of times, I have often given up and questioned how I will survive.

Truth is that I often give up.

Truth is that I go through at least one sad moment every single day when I think of all things my daughter will miss out on due to her cerebral palsy.

However, truth is also that no grief can overshadow the joy and the pride I feel in being my daughters' mother. The feeling of frustration arising from seeing my four-year-old child going through hours of therapy is nothing in comparison to the happiness I get when she learns something new, when I see her face beam with pride. But by allowing myself to grieve, get angry and frustrated from time to time, I give my own emotions recognition, I allow myself to heal.

I feel there is too much pressure to pretend that parenting is a total joy, that we need to embrace and enjoy every moment of it. That we regard parenting a special need child a blessing. It is further perpetuated these days when we feel the pressure to lead a parallel online life.

I am guilty of portraying a 'photoshopped' version of my real life online. In reality, against every smiling photo, there are tears and frustration on a daily basis. And by not talking enough about it and only portraying a polished, happy, side, I too help in manifesting an unrealistic expectation on motherhood and more specifically, on parenting a child with special needs.

So, here is the deal. There is a definite effect of raising a child who is differently abled, and it is certainly far from being all good. However, you are almost certainly not alone in feeling this. And know that while it is okay to delay the gratification of your own very basic needs because undoubtedly your child needs more attention; it is okay to come out and say when it is not okay, to get help because 'you too' need it.

Ultimately, our wellbeing is crucial in ensuring that we are fit to take care of our children. By acknowledging and dealing with our own issues, we can help ourselves be the best version of ourselves who can help our children become their best selves.

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