

Enneagram Parenting Tips During Quarantine

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Type 1: You know that you will need areas of control, structure, and productivity. Try to schedule these times when you are NOT parenting. Create zones during the day where you can cook, clean, deal with finances, work, or organize—when children are on their screens, doing schoolwork (on their own), or are being watched by your partner, roommate, spouse, grandparent, online babysitter, or in bed. Instead of trying to fight against your gifting and real need for order, work WITH it! Set aside “parenting time” where you as the adult understand things with kiddos will get messy, chaotic, loud, and unpredictable. After your parenting time, make sure not only are you allowing yourself productivity, but also that you’re physically exerting any emotions stored up during the day. Box in the garage, run on a treadmill, scream into a pillow (we all need this sometimes), practice yoga, or dance to a raging good song! Additionally, please add in times of pleasure: read a book, drink wine, listen to music, talk to a friend on the phone, order something online, draw, craft...whatever brings you joy!

Type 2: Be aware of your need to be SO helpful to your kiddos while they are home and adjusting to homeschool, lack of social connection, and generally being stuck-the-heck indoors! Also, there’s the whole germ-y thing that they’re trying to process. It’s weird and overwhelming for you all. However, make sure you don’t overwhelm THEM. Give your children some space to connect with their teachers, therapists, and friends online, and resist the urge to ask them about it. Give them space. While this space is being taken, please use it to look inward. Ask yourself what YOU need and then provide it if you can. If you’re living with a partner, spouse, or parent, ask them to meet some of your needs. Ask them to listen to your feelings. There are so many feelings. You’re dealing with an ultra-focus on immediate family, while also worrying about all the other friends and loved ones in your life. Trust that they will still be there, and allow yourself to relax. Meditate. Take a bath. Work out. Journal. Paying attention to you will help the whole family structure become even more healthy.

Type 3: Being home and in quarantine with your kiddos is going to test you, even if you’re a stay-at-home parent. Your need is to do and achieve. This isn’t possible when parenting during a crisis situation in which you’re all stuck together in one space. Make room for the rage that will emerge. Plan for it. Create a physical space that you can vent the inevitable frustration that arises when dealing with kids who have tons of energy, wills of their own, and are dealing with as much change and upheaval as you. How can you succeed? You can create work, home, cleaning, grocery shopping, exercise, or mental health goals to accomplish. Focus your main thrust of energies there, so that when it comes to parenting, you can relax more and go with the flow. Resist the urge to turn off and disconnect. Instead, think about ways you can help your children flourish. What does the team need right now? Ask your partner, roommate, spouse, parents, or other parent friends for advice when you feel overwhelmed. Remember, your super-strength is authenticity. Be you, that’s what your kids truly need.

Type 4: Fours under stress move into Two energy, which means that you have a high likelihood of going into “superparent” mode during a quarantine. At first, it might feel good to meet everyone’s needs, be warm, helpful, giving, loving, and serving...but after a while this modality will take a toll. It’s okay. Expect that you will blow up with frustration and unrequited needs at some point. If/when this happens, allow yourself space to be. Withdraw like your Four self requires and allow a spouse, partner, parent, or the TV to watch your kids for a couple of hours. Use this time to walk, sit in the sun, write poetry, draw, scream in the car, whatever you need to do to take care of yourself. Create a schedule to complete your work, as well. Your job is just as important as your parenting. Love on you, and resist the urge to think you can never be enough. You already ARE enough. Bring back to your kiddos a sense of beauty in the mundane and creative ways to endure and find fun amidst a strange, bewildering time.

Type 5: Quarantine sounds like it’d be the answer to a Five’s social prayers except for two things. 1) We NEED people. 2) If you’re a Five parent you will get way too much people for a while. Lovingly accept your energy limitations and plan for them. Kids (of all ages) will suck more from you than you will ever have to give. Create spaces during the day where you can be totally off. Let another caregiver take over and hide in your room, closet, car, shower...anywhere you can have uninterrupted alone time to think and refuel. Again, if you’re a single parent, ain’t nothing wrong with letting a screen be your babysitter for a while! If you can, create separate space to do your job. Fives need time to think, time to work, and time to parent—all separately, or you burn out fast! Your Five parent superpower is attention, so pay attention to how your kiddos moods and energies shift, allowing non-attached space for the day to morph according to their needs. You’re great at disseminating information to kids in age-appropriate ways, and right now kids need to have real talks with facts and data, tailored to what they can understand. Find moments of true joy and enjoyment with your kids, these will become memories you’ll cherish for a long time to come.

Type 6: This is your time, you’ve been prepared, and now that it’s here, you’re both calm and terrified, probably in waves that push and pull at you with disorientating intensity. The great news is that kids will thrive under quarantine with a Six parent who knows what’s what and how to handle the intense things happening. You’re uniquely gifted to bring you children a sense of safety and readiness right now. Watch out for the tendency to discuss too much of the world’s crisis in front of your kids. It might feel good to talk, talk, talk about Covid-19 and the potential ramifications, but this anxiety can easily bleed into your children, causing them to feel terrified and possibly hide that terror from you. Be aware that in stress you push a little harder, become a bit more driven, and expect too much from your body. Temper this with family meditation practices, slow walks, relaxed homeschooling, and playful games.

Type 7: Oh, wonderful Seven parents from whom quarantine with your kids probably initially felt like someone was building a brick wall around you—a brick wall of inescapable torture! Your need for adventure, change, pleasure, and fun now has to be exercised in a limited space with limited people who, let’s be

honest, are sometimes less than fun! Here's the upside of being a Seven parent during quarantine, you're gifted at sucking the joyful marrow out of anything. You have a superpower of turning a house into an adventure, a backyard into a mysterious play land. If your kids are older, think of all the ideas you'll have to help them creatively attack their schoolwork, meeting virtually with friends, trying new hobbies, and investigating themselves. You're deep, loving parents who have a wealth of care and emotional space to offer your children during this trying time. Make sure to extend creative thinking to yourself, finding unique ways to get the movement, energy, and variety you truly need to be your best self. Take the dog for a walk, invest in a master class, read interesting books, learn new trades, build stuff, tackle the yard work, and vent your feelings to the good old clouds whenever you can! (No one can see you talking to yourself now!) If you're working from home, be aware that kids will test your propensity to inattentiveness, so carve out specific time to focus on and complete work tasks.

Type 8: Understand you're a ball of intensity with a molten heart of gold. While your protected innocence makes you an amazing parent and lover of kids of all ages, during this time where triggers and emotions are running high, you'll have to pay attention to your driven urges. Kids need space to be themselves; whether that means quiet, sad, joyful, funny, apathetic, withdrawn, or causing a ruckus. Metaphorically sit on your hands when you want to push them toward intent, purpose, betterment, and a drive they just might not share with you. Ask them questions about what they need from you. If it's a break, use that time to complete your work and don't worry that your kids are playing with mud or getting to the next level of a video game. It's okay to be you and get shit done, while your kids get lost in their own worlds. Your superpower is your soft heart, so use it to have cuddle time, lots of deep talks, hugs, and reassurance that you're there and you love your kiddos (of any age) fiercely. They need this so much right now, and Eights love like heroes.

Type 9: Quarantine with kids for a Nine will probably feel nice for a while, until it doesn't. Allow yourself space for this progression to happen. Soak in the wonderfulness of being together, all the family time and experiences that you're experiencing anew. Also allow yourself space for those kids to start to get on your nerves, ramp up your anxiety, and make you want to bust a hole in the wall and escape. Like the mantra of a Nine, it's all okay. Where you'll thrive during quarantine is one-on-one peacemaking/harmony. Focus your gifts on having chats with each child individually (again, any age) and really soak in their perspective, lending them your calm and understanding wherever they are. You'll want to refrain from trying to be a group peacemaker in this instance, though. Tensions will run high at moments, and while you can understand everyone's perspective, they might not. Accept that fights will happen and that conflict is inevitable. If it gets too much, ask a partner or other caregiver to step in so you can retreat and get some air. Take care of your body with exercise, healthy food whenever possible, and if you have a tele-therapist, utilize them to make sure you're paying attention to YOU. Additionally, if you're working from home, ask your partner or a co-worker to prioritize the day's work tasks for you

so that you don't get too caught up in family life; your job still needs to get done.

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