



ALICIA FARRELL PHD  
COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGIST

Fourteen Core Messages to Counterbalance Today's Climate of Perfectionism  
(Deliver them to your children through your expectations, support and dialogue. Model them for your children through your choices and behavior.)

1. **Suffering is a normal part of life.** Avoid it, deny it or get stuck in it and you will not grow. Embrace it as normal and you can balance it out with moments of joy.
2. **Connection with others is the most powerful antidote to human suffering.** Being on social media is NOT true, meaningful, lasting connection.
3. **Most people are faking confidence** because real confidence is not knowing how to do something but simply having the courage to believe you CAN do it, you CAN handle it, and you are capable of influencing change in your life. Confidence is available to all of us right now. All you have to do is believe in your ability to handle what life is going to dish out. Then go for it!
4. **You always have a choice.** Your life will take unexpected turns – good and bad. You're responsible for life's outcomes whether you choose or not. Might as well take charge.
5. **Run your own race.** Don't settle for what other people think of you. Work hard to know your own strengths and weaknesses, your values, your goals and then apply everything you got to what you want. Take responsibility for yourself. Drive your own bus!
6. **Define a successful life for yourself** not based on fabricated societal expectations or standards. Think for yourself first! Be careful not to be overly influenced by what the crowd thinks.
7. **Fixed ability does not exist.** Everyone can strive to get better at something and not everyone has to be good. This mindset will help you stay more in the present during difficult times and better appreciate the journey.
8. **Bring your expectations back to the real world.** Likely they are exaggerated due to social media. Trust me. Try it. You will be more content!
9. **Use fear as a tail wind to propel you forward not a head wind to hold you back.** How? Accept that fear is normal; at times you will make mistakes/fail and it's not going to feel good. Believe that you can handle it. Pain, struggle, stress, anxiety, fear, failure, miss-steps – they pass.
10. **Stay flexible in the face of adversity and embrace that change is inevitable.** When you become rigid you lose power, resilience, grit and the ability to bend without breaking.
11. **Whatever you give time and energy to will grow.** Express negative emotions and then either accept the situation or do something about it. Remember when you can't solve a problem learn to paddle through it without creating more problems.
12. **Have courage to be curious without knowing the outcome of your interests or actions.** To ask questions even when the answer seems obvious. To challenge respectfully but with conviction. To learn for the sake of learning not for a specific intent.
13. **Forgive yourself and others.** Remember your ego is not your amigo!
14. **Find ways to laugh even in the most challenging of times.** Humor releases negative energy and promotes healing/relaxation.