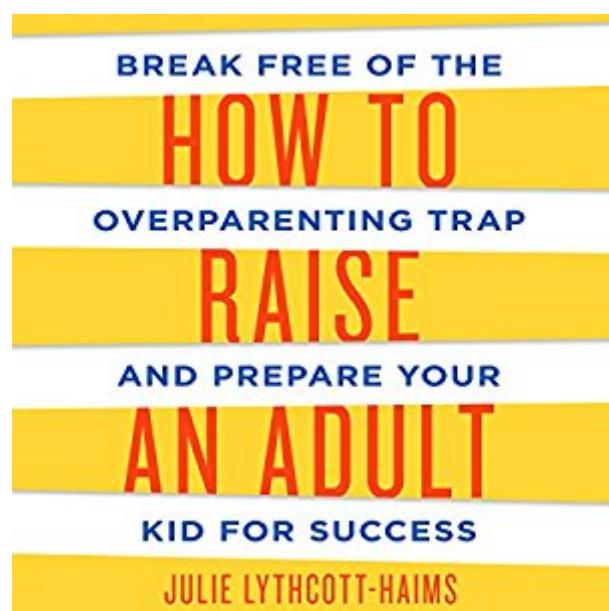


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# How To Raise An Adult: Break Free Of The Overparenting Trap And Prepare Your Kid For Success



## **Synopsis**

A provocative manifesto that exposes the harms of helicopter parenting and sets forth an alternate philosophy for raising preteens and teens to self-sufficient young adulthood. In *How to Raise an Adult*, Julie Lythcott-Haims draws on research; on conversations with admissions officers, educators, and employers; and on her own insights as a mother and as a student dean to highlight the ways in which overparenting harms children, their stressed-out parents, and society at large. While empathizing with the parental hopes and, especially, fears that lead to overhelping, Lythcott-Haims offers practical alternative strategies that underline the importance of allowing children to make their own mistakes and develop the resilience, resourcefulness, and inner determination necessary for success. Relevant to parents of toddlers as well as of 20-somethings - and of special value to parents of teens - this audiobook is a rallying cry for those who wish to ensure that the next generation can take charge of their own lives with competence and confidence.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I want to make a response to a particular charge about this book - that it only refers to the 1% who can send their children to Harvard or Stanford. It is true that the author's world is that of the privileged elite and that her book speaks primarily to parents in this socio-economic class. However, many of the issues she describes are applicable across all social and economic strata if in slightly different ways. I worked for many years at a nursing school that admitted students who were solidly middle class, not members of any elite. Because our tuition was less expensive than the universities that surrounded us we also had a fair number of students who would generally be classified as poor but ambitious and upwardly mobile. My experience with the majority of our students was fine. They

worked hard and succeeded according to their abilities. However, there was an appreciable number of students [25-40%] who would have fit very well in Ms. Lythcott-Haims book. I remember vividly one student (21 years of age) who came into her interview with her mother. The mother refused to leave the interview and answered every question for her daughter. The daughter simply sat there. Whenever I asked the applicant a question she looked at her mother and said nothing. This situation was not really that uncommon. Parents frequently showed up at interviews. If they didn't come to the interview - many called. Mostly these parents told me how wonderful their child was, how caring and well suited for the nursing profession they were. Every year you had students who filled out their application to the program saying they wanted to be a nurse because their mother told them it was the right profession for them. All too usual were the students whose parents threatened legal action because their child failed a course, and the ones who brought lawyers to the school because their child failed out of the program. There were students who thought they were entitled to good grades because they did well in high school, and ones who thought everything that happened at the school was about them and their wishes. If they got a bad grade it wasn't because they didn't study, it was because the teacher didn't like them, or the test was unfair, or it was raining outside. Nothing was ever these kids faults. Then you had the ones we all regretted - kids who would have made great nurses, but who gave up because they couldn't accept any grade less than an A and so they just walked away. You also had plenty of kids who had great grades - they could do anything you asked academically, but when you put them in a clinical setting they froze. Some of these students had to be told over and over again what to do in the clinical setting. They never took any initiative; they never had any confidence. They always had to have an instructor holding their hands. Some of these students grew up in clinical; some of them quit school because the stress of having to act in the clinical setting was just too much. The problems described in *How to Raise an Adult* are found in all levels of society now and my fear is that the problem is growing. The issues of immaturity that are common in elite schools are becoming ever more common all along the educational ladder.

I've worked around college-aged kids my entire career. Like the author, I've increasingly become concerned about a large population of kids who appear to lack the ability to mature into full-fledged adults. I've assumed the cause was the growing trend of overprotective parenting (what many call helicopter parenting), but other than short articles in newspapers and magazines, I never taken the time to read anything more substantial. I hoped this book would provide me with that opportunity and it did very nicely! Lythcott-Haims' book

book is an excellent overview of the problem and a thoughtful collection of ideas designed to remedy the situation. The book crosses genres: it's both an in-depth research-journalism treatment of the problem, as well as a how-to guidebook outlining specific ways to help resolve it. The first third of the book covers the problem from all angles: historical, sociological, cultural, psychological, and economic. Although there are extensive bibliographical notes at the end, the book covers these concepts in a style that demonstrates good journalism more than in-depth academic research. Well-educated readers will find the book easy to read, entertaining, and compelling. But it's important to note that Lythcott-Haims is not a sociologist, nor is her book meant to be an academic treatise. She should probably be considered a concerned academic administrator who saw a significant problem in the college-aged population she served and it worried her enough (both as an administrator and as a recent parent) to investigate it further on her own and write a book about it. The book is definitely aimed at well-educated and affluent parents. As you will learn in the book (and I certainly do not have the time here to explain it further), helicopter parenting is a phenomenon that primarily effects the high-end of the socioeconomic ladder. In the first third, she outlines the problem, focusing both on the various cultural and sociological phenomena that have caused it, as well as the societal, economic, and psychological damage that it is causing. It is this first section that interested me the most. In it, the author gathers a great deal of evidence to support her ideas. These trends have been playing out slowly in virtually every facet of life in America over the last three decades, pushing us toward this new style of parenting. What I found fascinating about her analysis is that this is almost exclusively an American phenomenon. It is not happening in other highly civilized Western-style cultures. The problem is ours and the damage (to our children and society at large) is our own. The author makes a strong case for this and backs it up with extensive bibliographical notes and interviews. She approaches evidence more like a lawyer than an academic. She relies heavily on interviews with experts. Perhaps she does it this way because she is a lawyer. After graduating from Stanford, she earned a law degree at Harvard and practiced corporate law. Then she left her law career to return to Stanford where she served in various administrative positions including Dean (and later Associate Vice Provost) of Freshmen and Undergraduate Advising. It was in that position where she became alarmed about the growing number of Stanford freshmen who appeared incapable of maturing into adulthood. It is also at that time that she became a parent herself and felt the intense pressure to conform to helicopter-style parenting. In the last two-thirds of the book, the author discusses steps that parents can take to raise a child who should have no difficulty mastering adulthood when the time comes. This is the "how-to" sections of the book. The course that is outlined is brave, reasonable, and

creative; however, parenting outside the cultural norm will always be an enormous struggle.[As a side note, it is interesting to know that in June of 2012, Lythcott-Haims left Stanford to enroll in a master of fine arts program. Her goal was to prepare herself for a new career in writing. This is her first book since she switched gears to become a writer.]

Living in Silicon Valley, this book really resonated with me and I find myself quoting it when in discussions with like minded parents. As a parent, I believe it is my job to help my children build character and life skills. Of course, I want them to do well academically and will encourage them to do so but not at the cost of their childhood or independence. Some of the things I read in here (parents doing their children's homework, children not having any of life's "soft" skills after leaving the home because they were never called on to do anything for themselves) made me sad and frustrated. Unfortunately, at least where I live, this is sadly true. It is easy to step into helicopter parent mode and I think most parents who do so come from a very good place. Indeed, we all want to give our children the best advantages in life and help them wherever we can. However, this book illustrates the fine line between parenting and overparenting and explains how the latter will actually hurt our children in the long run. The book was well written and researched and there are many helpful tips for parents.

Great book! It is one that you read a bit and come back to later. I also enjoyed the pages on what chores the children can be doing at different ages. Sometimes as a parent we don't remember that things we were able to do at that age so this was a great reference.

This is a well written and researched book, with lots of relatable examples. Great advice to find the correct matching university rather than the "top rated", especially coming from a former Stanford dean. One note is the reader in the audio book becomes quite monotone while reading the text in odd rhythm (reading chunks of words as if getting tired).

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