

Don't coddle your children (or adults)



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When I was growing up...

- As a child, on Saturday mornings I often left the house in the morning, explored Five Mile Creek during the day, and returned at supper-time.
- A bully at school intimidated me on the playground. I worked through that, unassisted by adults, and learned a lot.
- In middle school I would take the city bus to the YMCA in downtown Dallas to take karate lessons, returning by bus after dark. I encountered all types of people, learned how to navigate the bus system, got lost a few times, but lived to write this post.
- In high school three of my friends and I decided at the last minute to go to Mexico for Christmas. We drove 38 hours straight, through the interior of Mexico to Acapulco, then camped out on the beach for five days and drove back. Perhaps that's why I love to travel and know how to navigate

complicated trips.

Were my parents uncaring and neglectful? No. They simply allowed me to experience things that strengthened and shaped me.

We often over-protect and over-supervise our children, which is stunting their mental, emotional, and social development.

I just read *The Coddling of the American Mind* by Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt. I highly recommend it. They present a compelling case that we are harming our children, college students, and fellow adults by constructing “too-safe” environments. Our coddling is counterproductive.

In June 2017, John Roberts, Chief Justice of the United States, gave the commencement address at his son’s graduation from middle school. (Note, not Yale or Harvard...middle school.) Here is an excerpt from his speech.

“From time to time in the years to come, I hope you will be treated unfairly, so that you will come to know the value of justice. I hope that you will suffer betrayal because that will teach you the importance of loyalty. Sorry to say, but I hope you will be lonely from time to time so that you don’t take friends for granted. I wish you bad luck, again, from time to time so that you will be conscious of the role of chance in life and understand that your success is not completely deserved and that the failure of others is not completely deserved either. And when you lose, as you will from time to time, I hope every now and then, your opponent will gloat over your failure. It is a way for you to understand the importance of sportsmanship. I hope you’ll be ignored so you know the importance of listening to others, and I hope you will have just enough pain to learn compassion. Whether I wish these things or not, they’re going to happen. And whether you benefit from them or not will depend upon your ability to see the message in your misfortunes.”