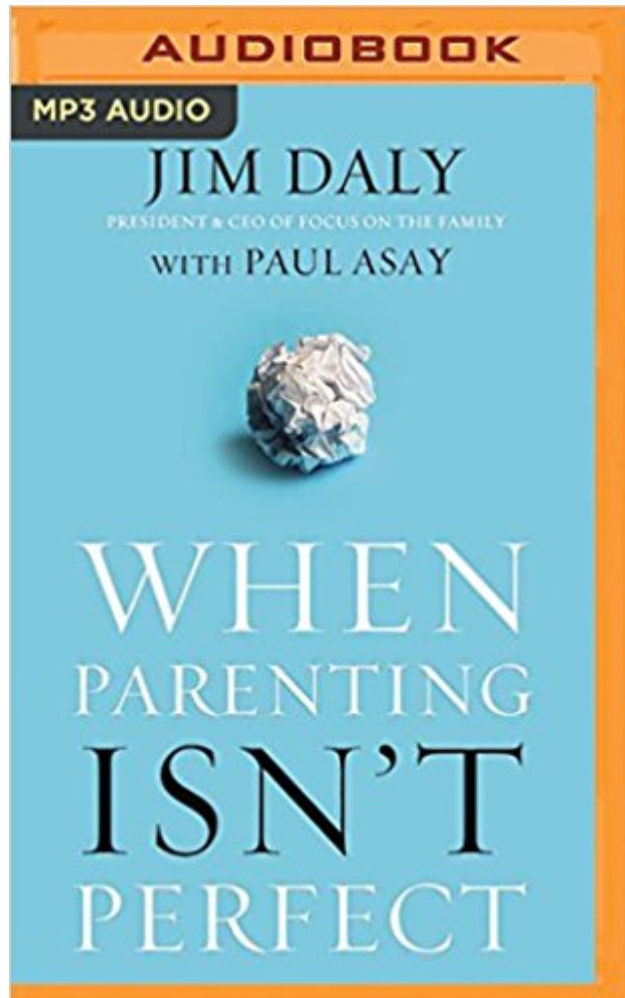




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# When Parenting Isn't Perfect



## Synopsis

Perfection is the enemy of parenting. Jim Daly sees and hears from mothers and fathers trying hard to pursue perfection. They listen to the best experts and read all the right books. When someone gives them a "World's Best Mom" or "No. 1 Dad" coffee mug, they want it to be true. And they want their children to pursue perfection, too. It's admirable for parents to be the very best moms and dads they can be for their children. But sometimes in so doing, they leave grace behind—both for themselves and their children. Jim believes that our quest for perfection, a quest that he believes is particularly strong among Christians, runs counter to God's own boundless gift of grace. We can become Pharisaical parents, quoting endless rules and holding everyone to impossible standards. But God doesn't want us, and our kids don't need us, to be perfect. As parents, we're called to simply do our best. And when we fail—which we will—we're called to try again tomorrow. Though he's the President of Focus on the Family, Jim does not promise that his book will be a catalyst for a perfect family. But it can help point the way toward a good family—one that feels safe and warm; one filled with love and laughter. This book will encourage mothers and fathers to embrace the messiness of parenthood and show grace to their own less-than-ideal children. Jim, through his own experiences, expertise, and array of stories, will lead both moms and dads to a better understanding of what being a good family is all about.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jim Daly has done a great job in reminding parents that perfection is not only unattainable but harmful in the journey of parenting. God's grace is available in abundance for good reason: we

all need it. Perfectionism is slow suicide! (DR. KEVIN LEMAN, New York Times bestselling author of *Have a New Kid by Friday*) This book is long overdue. Many moms and dads today are beating themselves up because they are not perfect. This book shows parenting for what it is---imperfect. It highlights the beauty of imperfection and lets parents off the hook, so that they can focus on the tangible truths and realities of parenting. A must-read for every parent. My friend Jim Daly has not only nailed this topic; I've seen him live it out with his own children. (MITCH TEMPLE, licensed marriage and family therapist, author, and executive director of The Fatherhood Commission) As the president of Focus on the Family, Jim Daly lives and breathes parenting, and he truly understands the challenges parents face today. In *When Parenting Isn't Perfect*, Jim has written a book that all parents, regardless of their season of life, are and will be high-fiving about, since they all know it's true: perfect parenting is just not possible. (BRAD LOMENICK, former president of Catalyst and author of *H3 Leadership* and *The Catalyst Leader*) As a parent, I know it's easy to feel alone in your worries, shortcomings, and failures, assuming that everyone else has it all together. In this incredibly timely book, Jim Daly offers a much-needed shot of grace to stressed-out parents everywhere and reminds all of us that messy is often perfectly okay, and even beautiful, in God's eyes. *When Parenting Isn't Perfect* is an absolute must-read for families everywhere. (REV. SAMUEL RODRIGUEZ, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC)) --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

Jim Daly is the president and CEO of Focus on the Family. Daly has received the 2008 World Children's Center Humanitarian Award and the 2009 Children's Hunger Fund Children's Champion Award. He has appeared on such television programs as ABC's *World News Tonight* and PBS's *Religion & Ethics*; and has been featured in *Time*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today* and *Newsweek*, which named him one of the top 10 next-generation evangelical leaders of influence. Daly and his wife have two sons and reside in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Visit: [www.focusonthefamily.com](http://www.focusonthefamily.com).

Beautifully written...packed with insight, experiences and scripture....Jim Daly presents a realistic look at parenting. Yes, it's messy at times! Very helpful! I could have underlined the entire book...thanks for your honesty Jim. There are no guarantees in child rearing...

I absolutely loved this book!! I loved the transparency and I know that I'm not alone in my parenting struggles. Very practical tools to help parents!

Excellent and very encouraging. I plan to read again.

Amazing book with great direction!

Good book

This parenting gig is hard. Can I get an "amen"? I read almost any parenting book (reputable) I can get my hands on, but I really appreciate the ones from people I trust. Jim Daly, President and CEO of Focus on the Family, is one of those people I trust. I listen to the Focus on the Family podcast almost daily (when I workout) and I love hearing Jim's stories about his boys and his and his wife's parenting. They seem like people we could just hang out with. I have most of "When Parenting Isn't Perfect" by Jim Daly highlighted and notes in the sidebars. I had my heart opened to much of my parenting faults - looking for achievement, not character. How often do I get so angry with my boys when they misbehave in the grocery store (every time) instead of realizing they are little boys running a super boring errand and are trying to entertain themselves instead of thinking they are being rude - that's not their heart intent at all! They may not be thinking of others around them (including their mom) but not with bad intent. They aren't necessarily being selfish but just don't really have the immaturity to think outside of themselves all the time. Daly says, "We've somehow convinced ourselves that how we present ourselves outwardly, how close we can appear to approach perfection, is far more important than what's really going on. That's pretty rich, considering that Jesus taught us exactly the opposite." I have found motherhood to be terribly difficult for me, not a "natural" thing at all (like breastfeeding). It is wonderful but I have to work SO hard. I have wanted to quit many times, but Jesus always pulls me back to my family. Daly says it well, "I think children can make us better people too. They're so needy, which forces us to think of them before ourselves. They're so demanding which makes us consider limits, both on them and us. They teach us patience. Self-control. The art of forgiveness. The beauty of unconditional love. Or at least that's how it's supposed to work. I think that's how God designed it to work. Unfortunately, our children don't always bring out the best in us. Sometimes they bring out the perfectionist in us. And that's a problem." "God doesn't expect perfection from our families. And neither should we." But so often I do, don't you? Please say I'm not alone in this! I love my kids...but I think I've turned my thoughts of perfection into an idol of perfection (pg 41 of the book). I need to put aside that idol and embrace the beautiful mess of a family that my family is, that I am. I've been learning to be present, in their worlds

(not my world of cleaning and cooking and dinking around on Facebook), laughing with them (we enjoy America's Funniest Videos together, knock knock jokes, and laughing when faces get frozen in weird positions on "pause"), to actually practice the Golden Rule (how can I expect them to talk to me with respect if I talk so rudely to them sometimes?), to be consistent (rather than letting my emotions dictate), to be their role model (I have a very observant little girl who picks up on words...need to watch my tongue), to use my time wisely (which is why I write this during nap time), and to talk even when it's difficult (using kind words, not arguments or yelling). Daly talked about yelling, too. What do I expect to accomplish by yelling at my kids? It does not bring them closer to Jesus or better behavior. "But many of our deepest, most joyous moments need no words at all. Language is unnecessary. In fact, it's insufficient. By contrast, the things that tend to tear down our families bit by bit, the things that break us, overflow with words. 'You're a failure.' 'Why can't you behave?' When we look for perfection, we seek it through words. We instruct. We demand. We yell. We accuse. Even when we clam up, when we give our spouse or our children the silent treatment, our brains continue to work overtime, formulating our grievances, tabulating how we've been wronged...But when we look back at our most precious memories...how many are lectures or diatribes? How many involve someone telling someone else how badly they're failing? Not many, I imagine. In fact, I bet that lectures - ones we've given, ones we've received - often are the very things we'd most like to forget." "Are my children going to be better people, closer to Jesus because of my lectures? Does my yelling want them to play at our house or run far away? One of my kids told me the other day after a rough patch that they didn't feel like I liked them when I yelled at them. Hopefully by using the tools I've learned from "When Parenting Isn't Perfect" and the other hundreds of parenting books (including my favorite, the Bible!), I can grow into a better mommy (and I cannot grow myself, I know God makes all things new). One day, moment by moment. And hopefully, you can too. Disclaimer: I received this book in order to write an honest review. All opinions are my own. Others' opinions may differ.

I don't read a ton of parenting books, but this one caught my eye. My husband and I are both first borns and have perfectionist tendencies. It's a struggle for both of us to go with the flow and not focus on everything being perfect. Daly's words really spoke to my heart. He reminds us that perfection is the enemy of parenting and laughing, talking and connecting with your kids is so important. Parenting is messy and that's okay. Embrace it. He tells parents that kids just want us to be present and not perfect. I loved how the book was sectioned off and appreciated the wisdom he shared about building relationships with your kids. I appreciated his Biblical ties into his parenting

theories. He reminds us that we are God's children and we should take notes on how to treat our own children. His focus on boundaries, showing grace to those you love and being there to support your kids no matter what really stood out to me. Daly's kids are older than my young kids so it was great to hear him share wisdom he's learned through years of parenting. I loved his real life stories to help drive home his points. He addresses relevant parenting topics for kids of all ages and gives you lots to think about. All parents should read this book!

Well isn't this just fitting haha. Tripp got a hold of my book and tore the cover right off! This book had some really good insights. Growing up I think I definitely strived to be perfect. It was the goal for sure, to get all A's, never get in trouble, make the "right" choices. I think for me personally it didn't really bug me, I knew my parents understood I wasn't perfect and were just trying to push me to be better knowing full well I wouldn't always get it right. I can also see how that style wouldn't work. If you felt like u have to be perfect then you might just always feel like you weren't enough. I think this book highlights that. It teaches more to accept your child's best. That may mean B's in school instead of an A. Learning to encourage your children to do their best and not be perfect. Sometimes your child will throw those embarrassing fits in the middle of the store (this has definitely happened to me already) because they aren't perfect and learning to know life isn't perfect. In the same way there is sooo much pressure to be the perfect mom and dad. I think realizing you're gonna mess up and learning to just do your best and let the rest go to God is the only way to get through those tough times when you do make a mistake. Also learning to forgive quickly when your spouse does too. You are both human and perfection is gonna lead to a very disappointing outcome. I like another thing they said too. Family should make you think of : love, safety, encouragement, affirmation and peace. I think those words are so important in family, I think it's so important to have consistency. They know the boundaries but also know when you cross them you never lose love. It's impossible to not be good enough in this house.

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