

Confessions of the worlds worst parent

[Family](#), [Parenting](#)



The essay written by Jerri Cook titled Confessions of the World's Worst Parent, is based on the book Free Range Kids: Giving Our Children the Freedom We Had Without Going Nuts with Worry written by author Lenore Skenazy (Cook). Cook provides similarities about raising her son and uses Skenazy's experiences as they both point out the feeling of being judged by "good" parents because they gave their children the freedom to explore life without constant supervision. Cook shows the struggles between raising children the way she was raised and the way society wants them to be raised today.

Cook explains to the audience in a humorous fashion the questions that all parents deal with, children and their freedom to explore and the paranoia that they will be hurt or taken. Presently the planet is dealing with the age of too much information, along with this comes misinformation and overinflated imaginations. Cook mentions that life for children was different when she was a child; children were left to their own devices and the parents trusted them to do the right thing and it did not do any harm (Cook). Cook explains throughout her that society may be producing a planet filled with paranoid parents and children that cannot fend for themselves.

Should parents give their children more responsibility and trust to explore and acquire life skills on their own? The method that Cook uses to make her point to the audience throughout her essay is an anecdotal technique. She uses examples from her own life raising her son and quotes from Skenazy's book to find a personal common ground with parents raising children. Cook points out the criticisms that Skenazy faced when opening her personal life to the media and sharing her child rearing skills.

The use of Cook's anecdotal technique allows the readers to find a common ground with the author that is familiar and comforting. The humorous way that Cook invites the reader into her life can appeal to parents that might think they are alone with their child rearing fears about not being a good enough parent; this style of writing could comfort a parent to make them feel they are not alone. Cook uses her research to find valid reasons to why parents today are too overprotective and paranoid and shares this interesting information with the audience.

To begin with, Cook gives the audience an example of how her son " Josh told a classmate about throwing rocks at some beavers, and a teacher overheard" the school was " concerned that the children were 1) being made to work too hard in the garden and 2) that they weren't being properly supervised" (Cook). Cook mentions that she was confused by the concern, and wondered if she was expected to " get in the car and go get them? " (Cook). Unfortunately for Cook and her children, the experience left a lasting impression of guilt and that Cook never wanted to be seen as " the " bad" parent" again (Cook).

From that point on Cook was " constantly at their side" (Cook) even though it caused some distress to her and her family. Similarly, Cook mentions that Skenazy " was nearly devoured by the media and other parents" because " she let her nine year old son ride the New York subway alone" (Cook). Skenazy wrote a column about her son's adventure for the " New York Sun" (Cook) and it had caused her to be " criticized by every child safety " expert" (Cook) which in turn initiated an investigation of neglect for her son.

Cook uses this example to show the different methods of parenting that exist and that some parents still feel that their children are fully capable and intelligent enough to make good choices. On the other hand Cook explains the paranoid state of affairs that the “ good parents” (Cook) are inflicting on their children. As a result, Cook mentions that Skenazy started her own investigation into the actual facts and statistics about children and safety. Through Cook’s description of Skenazy’s investigations she learned that “ Not only is the fear irrational, according to the statisticians Skenazy interviewed, it’s based solely on perception.” (Cook).

This “ perception” (Cook) can also be altered by the “ issue of parentpeer pressure” (Cook). Cook quotes Skenazy by writing, “ Hell hath no fury like a self-righteous parent” (Cook). Furthermore, Cook explains Skenazy’s idea of the “ helicopter parent” (Cook) that hover over their children “ wasting their time, responding to threats that don’t exist” (Cook). Cook illustrates the idea about the old question of “ how many cases have there been of children being injured or killed by tainted Halloween candy? ” (Cook).

After doing some research and asking questions the answer to the question turned out to be “ none” (Cook). An “ urban legend” (Cook) that unfortunately began with a horrible incident involving “ relatives, in attempt to save their sorry selves, sprinkled some of the drug on the dead child’s Halloween candy after a child got into a relative’s stash of heroin and died” (Cook). This unfortunate incident has caused panic and concern for parents during Halloween for decades and to the dismay of children when a large portion of their candy was put in the garbage because it looked tampered with.

In conclusion, Cook wrote this essay to humorously explain with anecdotes the trivial nonsense guilt that the “ good parents” inflict on other parents that do not have the same views on the supervision of children. Cook tries to ease some of the guilt and inadequacy of being a “ bad parent”. Cook makes light about not following parental peer pressure and raising their children as they feel comfortable and in the best interest of their children.