

Are Parents Today Too Scared? The World's Worst Mom Can Help | Top 5 | Dad Saves America

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SUMMARY

Lenore Skenazy, founder of the Free Range Kids movement, gained notoriety for allowing her nine-year-old son to take the subway alone, earning her the title of "the world's worst mom." In a conversation about parenting and societal fears, she emphasizes the importance of letting children experience risk and independence in a safer world than many perceive.

- *Society is overly fearful, restricting children's freedom based on exaggerated dangers.*
- *Crime rates are lower now than in previous decades, contradicting the belief that the world is more dangerous.*
- *The concept of "stranger danger" is misleading; children are more likely to be harmed by someone they know.*
- *Allowing kids to experience minor risks helps them build character and resilience.*
- *Parenting challenges are often influenced by societal pressures and legal concerns, not just individual choices.*
- *Children need to confront reality and understand that life includes disappointment and challenges.*
- *A balanced upbringing includes exposure to risk and the understanding that not everyone receives a trophy.*

(upbeat music) - I recently got to sit down with Lenore Skenazy. Lenore is the founder of the Free Range Kids movement. And she got there because she let her son take the subway when he was only nine years old. Now that doesn't scare me, but it apparently scared the world, because she became known as the world's worst mom. - Dubbed the world's worst mom. - World's worst mom. - [Man] With the world's worst mom. - Thank you very much. I am not America's worst mom.

- We made a short film about Lenore's story that we'll link to at the end of this video. So be sure to check it out. But first these are the top five things this dad learned from the world's worst mom. Number five, we have nothing to fear, but fear itself. Well, I think the first thing, and maybe the biggest thing about Lenore's story, is that we are being consumed by fear as parents. We're not lettin' our kids do things that we used to do when we were growing up.

We don't let them go outside. We're terrified that they're gonna end up like those kids on the milk cartons in the 1980s. And now we're being bombarded 24/7 by danger, doom and disaster scrolling across our screens. - And we'll be back with more tragedies after this. - The reality is that the world is actually much safer now. And that's even taking into account the events of the last few years. - My mom was a good and loving parent, so she let me walk to school at age five.

Today to be a good and loving parent, you would never let your kid walk to school at age five. And people explain it by saying, "Well, that was then. Everything was birds chirping and you know, sunshine. And now we're living in hell." It's like, well, I don't know, I'm a reporter. I look at some statistics. I look at the FBI statistics. Hmm. Crime has been higher in every decade (laughs) 'til now, right? Crime is back to the rate of the either '63 or '67.

- This is part of why "Dad Saves America" exists. to provide an alternative, to push back against the fear industrial complex, to say, no, not today. I'm gonna let my kids go outside. I'm gonna let 'em play. Number four, there is no stranger danger. - So stranger danger is this phrase that kids are taught that makes them think that everybody that they don't know is bad. - You know, during our interview, I remember Lenore gave this statistic.

And it's something like if you wanted your kid to get kidnapped, you'd have to leave them on the corner of your street for something like 700,000 years. That's how long it would take. They're gonna get hit by lightning two or three times before they get kidnapped by a stranger. - There was this amazing story in Utah, of a Boy Scout who got lost. But for three days, the town's folk were all going, screaming, "Jesse, Jesse!" Whenever he heard his name he would run and hide, because there were strangers. (laughs) Well statistically children are far more likely to be hurt by somebody they know than somebody that they don't know.

So stranger danger is not making anybody any safer. Most people are good. - All right, the number three lesson, let your kids get hurt. We're talking about the kinds of hurt, the kinds of pain that build character, that help you discover what you're capable of, that stretch your limits. One of the things that I think we're suffering from in the country today, is this increased aversion to risk taking. No, we're not talkin' about jumping off the roof.

Although I did do that when I was 10. (body thuds) (person yells) - A free society has to be one where people take risks. There's this great expression I heard which is that without risk, there can be no trust. A perfectly safe society is

also a perfectly-frozen society. - All right, everyone, chill. (water splashes) - We're a country filled with these brave risk takers, and now we're saying no more risk. Well that means no more America.

- Number two, parents,
this is not all our fault. - It's not your fault. It's not your fault. It's not your fault. - I know the last three, it sounds like we're
saying, "It's your fault. It's my fault." But the fact of the matter
is we live in a society, and we have a lot of other things influencing the way we parent
and what we're allowed to do. We've gotta worry about nosy neighbors and legal liability at the school yard and
somebody calling
child protective services if we let our kid walk to
school or go the park alone.

Seriously, this stuff
actually happens all the time. - [Newscaster] When 10-year-old Rafi and 6-year-old Dvora Meitiv
were spotted unaccompanied, separate callers alerted
police and child services. - [Newscaster] An Illinois
mother investigated after a neighbor reported her for allowing her 8-year-old daughter
to walk their dog alone. - Florida mother is facing
a child neglect charge after she allowed her son to walk to a local park alone this week. - These are very real
challenges
we face as parents today in the 21st century in America.

I think we have to come
together as parents and push back against this
system and this culture that's standing in the way
of raising free-range kids. - So many people tell me
that their favorite thing, "Oh, what did you love
when you were a kid?" "Oh my God, we'd get on our bikes. We'd ride 'til the street lights came on. We explored
caves. We made forts." They loved that freedom. You love your kids,
but you won't give them your favorite part of your own childhood.

- Before we wrap up, I wanna remind you to
hit that like button, and subscribe to the channel. And finally, number one, get real. This one's really important
to me, because I've actually been telling my son that the world doesn't exist to make him happy for a long time.
Our kids need to confront reality. They need to experience the fact that they're not always going to be good.
They don't always deserve a trophy. And if everyone gets a trophy, it isn't worth very much.

The world is a complicated place, and it is not always going to
live up to your expectations. But in order to succeed
in a complicated world, you have to be able to get

past your own hurt feelings. And the way you keep going, the way you put one foot in front of the other and make progress is by realizing that you can survive your hurt feelings. You're going to be okay. - I mean, you're brain comes into the world expecting wonderful experiences and happy things.

And it expects frustration, fear, risk. And if it never gets wired, if there's only the birthday parties and the ice cream cones and the trophies, it's leaving it undeveloped. There's giant holes where your kid is gonna fall in. (upbeat music)
- Ah! - [Man] I can't breathe! - I loved spending time with Lenore Skenazy. As you can see, she's just this big New York personality. She's also warm and loving. She's obviously a great mom, she's not the world's worst mom.

And if you're interested in her story, you have to check out our short film, "Off the Rails." You're not gonna believe what happened. There was actually a "Law and Order" episode inspired by her story, so check it out. (bold music) Thanks for watching this video. Remember to hit all the buttons and subscribe to the channel, so you can explore all the other videos we've got here at "Dad Saves America." I hope to see you again real soon.

(upbeat music)