



Our first of the year LIFE Parent coffee was a follow-up to the Common Ground presentation by Lisa Damour: *Making Peace with Discomfort - when is it okay to let kids struggle*. The conversation touched on issues that ALL of us parents have experienced.

**Here is a summary of the topics we discussed:**

- Parent/child struggles around screen time
- Balancing academics and extracurricular activities: how to honor your child's passions while being aware of academic priorities
- How can we cultivate balance for our kids and celebrate individual effort versus focusing on the product
- Toxic achievement culture and the struggles created - for kids and parents
- How do we give up control? How do we become the coach and not the player?
- How can we recognize when we are pushing our own agenda and our adult ideas of success versus understanding our child's personal and unique experience and needs

**Here are some valuable takeaways:**

- YES - let your child struggle! Maturation occurs in the context of things not going well, discomfort leads to change
- When we don't let our kids experience struggle, they lose a sense of freedom and confidence to deal with whatever the world throws at them, freedom and autonomy comes from learning how to manage discomfort
- When there is struggle, don't forget to focus on the *recovery* - our children need to learn *self-compassion* and we as parents need to as well
- Does your child know how to comfort themselves?
- Empathy is key and consistency, parents should be the stable energy
- Our kids really do value our "agendaless presence" - we don't always have to know every detail to be comforting and empathic
- What parents can say:
  - Is this uncomfortable or unmanageable
  - It must be awful to feel this way
  - How can I help, What do you want me to do
  - You and I both know that isn't true - but it must feel awful to feel that

As parents, we all share common experiences. The LIFE team's goals are to create a space for sharing stories and creating moments of reflection and learning from each other. We hope to see you at our next LIFE Coffee when we launch our book discussion of *Behind Their Screens: What Teens are Facing (And Adults are Missing)*. Reading is not required and we almost guarantee you will learn something new.

**Join us on October 18 at 8:45am at the Boynton Campus Cafe.**