

# How to be a parent

1. Read the following poem.
2. Notice any feelings that arise (fear, sadness, curiosity, etc.).
3. Never *ever* shy away from those feelings again. (We've been doing that our whole lives. How's *that* been going?)
4. Write an alternative final stanza for the rest of your life. (Feel free to write more than one final stanza.)
5. Show me your progress from time to time!
6. Be kind to yourself and your children.

Love,  
Bobby

## This Be The Verse

by *Philip Larkin*

They fuck you up, your mum and dad.  
They may not mean to, but they do.  
They fill you with the faults they had  
And add some extra, just for you.

But they were fucked up in their turn  
By fools in old-style hats and coats,  
Who half the time were soppy-stern  
And half at one another's throats.

Man hands on misery to man.  
It deepens like a coastal shelf.  
Get out as early as you can,  
And don't have any kids yourself.