



Keep Your Bucket Full Series from Parenting Continuum

"I used to be so resilient," confides C-suite executive and mother of a 2nd grader. *"All balance is gone. We're just in survival mode"* confesses project manager and father of 7th and 9th graders. *"I'm exhausted. Now I am expected to be a teacher, executive assistant, IT support, chef, cleaner, friend, and mom."* shares mother of 4 school age kids spanning elementary, middle, and high school. Conversation after conversation with stellar leaders, role models, and parents all grappling with the same issue.

Grace and grit alone are not cutting it.

In this series, we will explore how to keep your bucket full as a parent during unprecedented times. In the Los Gatos/Monte Sereno Community, we are familiar with this concept of “being a bucket filler”.

Every time you focus on positivity (empathy, gratitude, curiosity, joyful creativity, calm, etc.) you fill your bucket. And every time you focus on negativity (stress, anxiety, frustration, anger, disappointment, shame, guilt, etc.), the bucket is depleted. When you have a full bucket, you respond and make choices that feel more like “the real you”. You are being the best version of yourself even when times are hard. But when the bucket is low, you respond in ways that hurt yourself, hurt others, and often make the situation worse instead of better. If you have noticed that your bucket feels lower than usual, here’s why.

Your bucket may be drained more frequently. Consider where you spend your time, what you see, what you hear, and what you discuss. You may be spending more time worrying (and at times even obsessing) about topics like your children’s education, the pandemic, social issues, political differences, and difficulties with work or finances. This is a sign that your bucket is being depleted more quickly.

Your bucket may not be filled in the same ways. Think of those things that bring you joy like dinner with a friend, yoga class, browsing a bookstore, swimming, taking a hike, travel, etc. You may not be doing them as frequently or at all. If you are, you may have needed to modify them like wearing a mask on your hike, doing yoga over Zoom, or assessing the health-and-safety risks of a location before a social-distance visit. Chances are you may be doing less of them and when you are, they may not fill your bucket at the same rate.

Your bucket may not be getting from or giving to your network in the same way. Consider a time in your life when you were having a tough time coping— moving, job loss, new baby, ended relationship, death in the family. Your friends and family leaned in to boost you up and add to your bucket. And you do the same for them. They may not be adding to your bucket and you might not be adding to theirs at the same rate. We are in this together.

Discover full your bucket is with the [Positive Intelligence \(PQ\) assessment](#). In our next segment, we will share strategies to “Drain Less” and “Fill More”.

About the Author: Erin McAuley is a leadership expert and change coach trained in neuroscience and positive intelligence (PQ). She coaches working parents, leaders, and teams to thrive in the now and achieve their “what’s next”. She and her husband Jeff live in Monte Sereno with their 2nd and 3rd grader who are attending virtual school at home. “Our kids are constantly teaching us lessons in self-discovery and change agility.” www.bechange.coach