

Facilitating Success

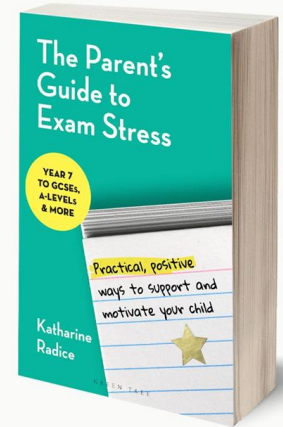
Helping your child make effective decisions and build a healthy and resilient attitude to school work

Henrietta Barnett School
5th March 2026



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A high-achieving context

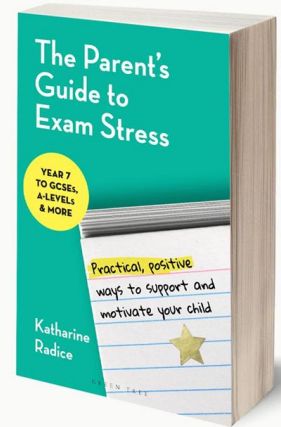
- *I never feel that I've done enough*
- *There's always more that I could be doing*
- *I'm worried I'll let myself down*
- *My parents keep telling me to push for the extra percent*
- *I'm so worried that I won't get my grades*
- *I always doubt my decisions*

Key question: does the relationship with success create healthy, sustainable, constructive work-habits?



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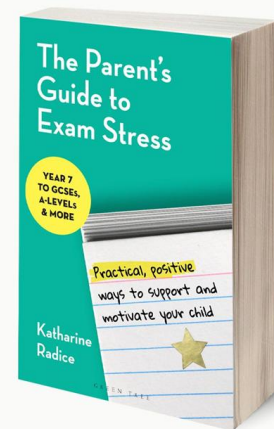
Why this focus today?

- Progress = aptitude x attitude
- Difficulty making decisions leads to perfectionism and / or procrastination
- Difficulty making decisions slows progress down
- A healthy relationship with work requires balance and boundaries
 - this can be very difficult for ambitious students to achieve
- Resilience = knowing that disappointment is survivable
 - are students focused only on success?



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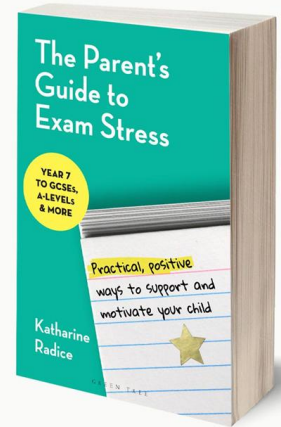
Understanding the barriers

- Why decision making can be difficult
- Factors which can cause an unhealthy relationship with school work
- Factors which can limit resilience



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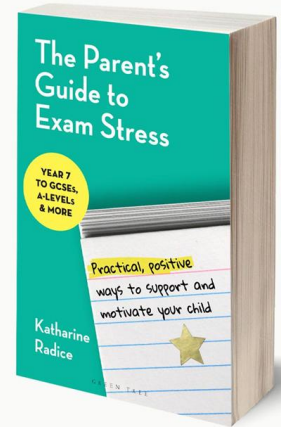
Difficulty with decisions

- GCSEs create a rigid template for 'getting it right'
 - Reduced opportunity for making decisions
- *Is this the best choice?*
 - *Perhaps something else would be better?*
- Reactions from others: *Are you sure ... ?*
- Reactions from parents: *But don't you think ...?*



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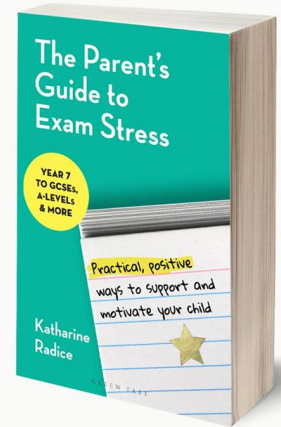
Unhealthy work patterns

- Ambition & *wouldn't a bit more be better ...?*
- Reality of today: *here's where I need to stop*
- Worry about letting others down
 - *It's the disappointment I fear*
- Difficulty in tolerating the interim stages
 - *This isn't yet as good as I think it should be*



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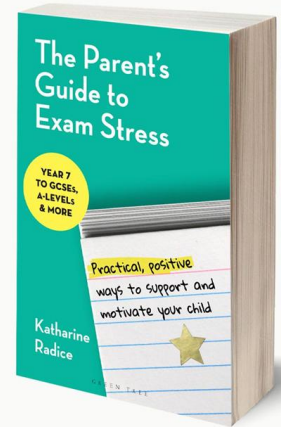
Impediments to resilience

- Imbalance in conversations
 - *Here's what you need to do to succeed*
 - *Here's the route path through disappointment*
- Working hard = high investment
 - high investment = risk of significant disappointment
 - are teenagers practised in handling this risk?



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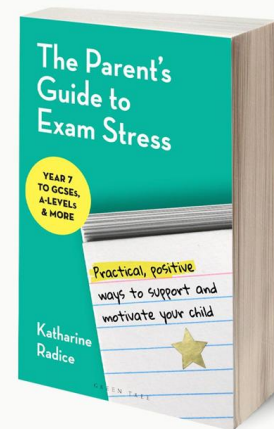
What can parents do?

- Facilitating decision-making rather than an individual decision
- Support with boundaries
- Establish the route through disappointment



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Facilitating decision-making

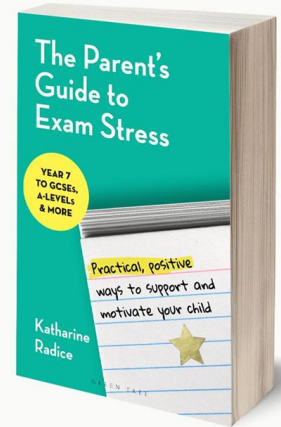


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decision - (outcome) - review - adapt

- Am I **facilitating or problematising** this process?
- Are you listening to respond or listening to understand?
- Are you encouraging your daughter to take their decisions seriously or are you encouraging them to doubt them?

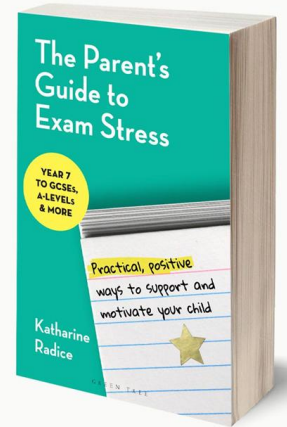




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Scenario #1: *I'll just revise by watching YouTube on my phone*



An iterative process

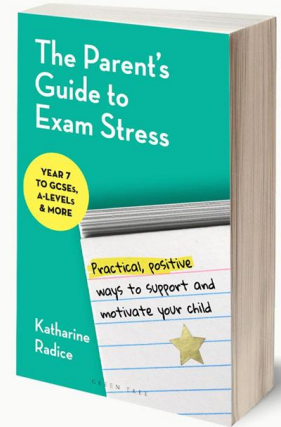
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Response #1: *I don't think that's a good idea; I think you should*



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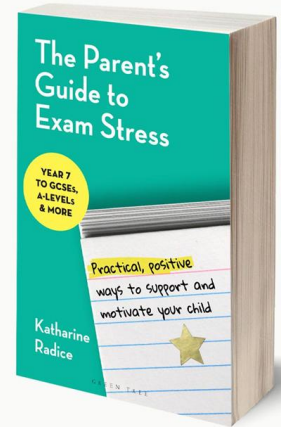
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Response #2: *Oh – things are different from when I was at school. Talk me through why this works for you....*



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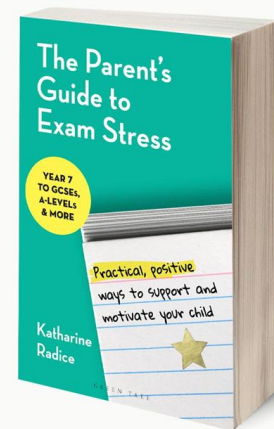
Response #2: *Oh – things are different from when I was at school. Talk me through why this works for you....*

What are the pros and cons of using a different method?



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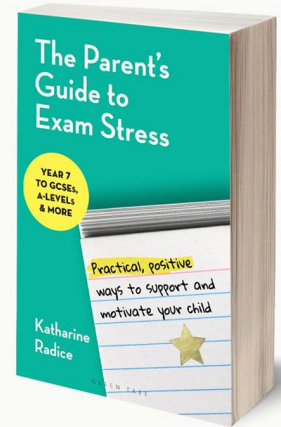
What are the pros and cons of using a different method?

....Thank you for telling me; I understand why you want to revise in this way.



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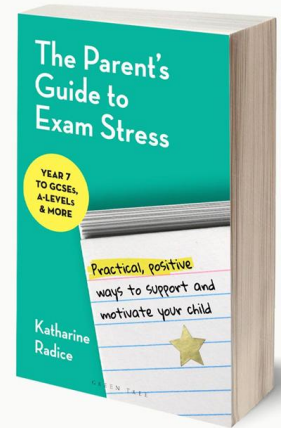


Scenario #2: *I think 4 hours is enough work on a Saturday*



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An iterative process

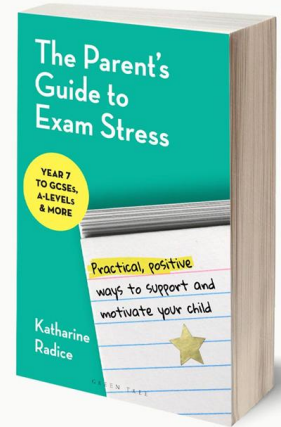
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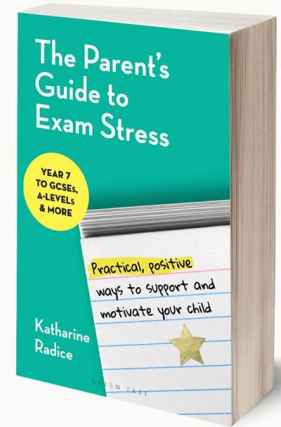
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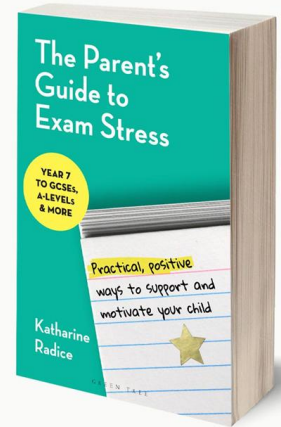
Response #2: *Ok; talk me through the other things you'd like to do on Saturday.*

Let's think about the balance. What are the pros and cons if this shifts?



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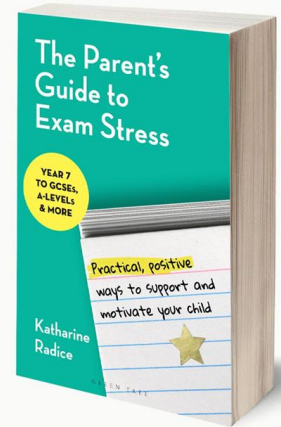
Response #2: *Ok; talk me through the other things you'd like to do on Saturday.*

Let's think about the balance. What are the pros and cons if this shifts? Thank you for explaining this to me. I think this is a good idea.



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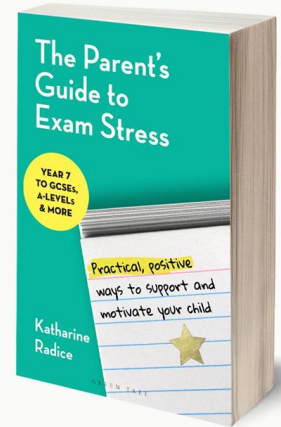
Supporting with boundaries

- Setting a time-plan **before** the to-do list
- Focus on **getting it done** rather than getting it right
- Reassuring that it is right to set limits for today
 - this is a necessary part of being ambitious for the future
- Discussing with teachers if the work-habits don't seem right



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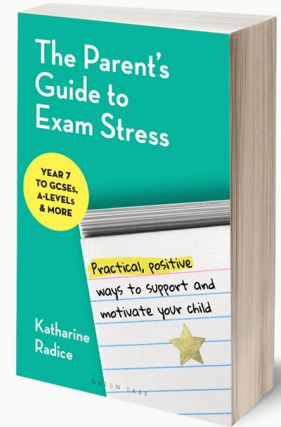
Route through disappointment



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- Creating space for disappointment to be understood
 - *I understand why you're disappointed*
- Remembering the iterative process
 - *Disappointment hurts but it passes*
- A balanced perspective: half-empty **and** half-full
 - *What are things that are still ok?*
- Creating the plan B; thinking through the *what-ifs*



Questions....?

For more information and age-specific advice, see *The Parent's Guide to Exam Stress*

1:1 consultations via
contact@katharineradice.co.uk



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