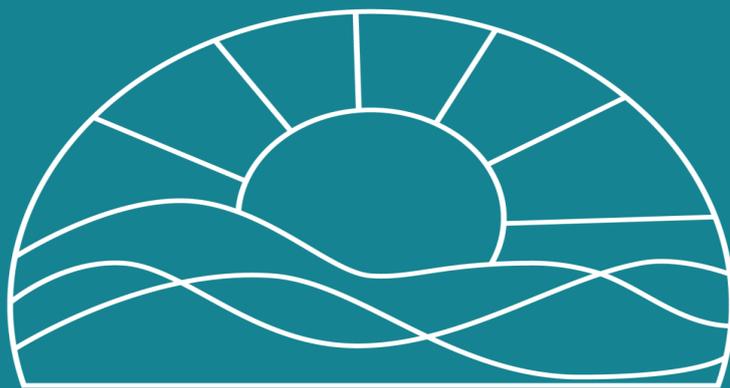


A Parent's Guide to
Surviving Exam
Results & Launching
Your Teen into the
Wild



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Hi, I'm Michelle – empowerment and NLP coach, hypnotherapist, and mum to two fabulous (now fully-fledged) humans.

I can still remember those summers of exam results *far too* vividly. The tension! The walking on eggshells! The snacks!

August became a blur of whispered pep talks, strategic fridge-stocking, and trying desperately to be the calm in the chaos – while quietly freaking out inside.

Having just a two-year age gap between my two kids sounded like a great idea at the time (and it mostly was)... right up until we hit the conveyor belt of exam summers.

GCSEs. A-Levels. University launches. Rinse and repeat. Over six years, it felt like we were permanently braced for impact.

So I get it – really, truly get it.

And that's why I've put this guide together for you.

To help you ride out the storm of results season – from the emotional landmines to those “how on earth do I talk to them about this?” moments.

A little less stress. A little more support. And yes, probably still snacks.

You've got this – and I'm here to help, if you need a little more personal support just drop me a message or book in for a free discovery call at <https://calendly.com/contact-michelleturpin-coach>

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Surviving Exam Results & Launching Your Teen into the Wild

A Guide for Parents with Feelings

Introduction

So here we are. You've survived the GCSEs, A-Levels, or whatever acronym they're using now, and you're about to enter the next parenting boss level: **Results Season + Launch Mode**.

It's emotional. It's chaotic. And yes, you're allowed to want a gin at 11am.

This guide will walk you through:

- The *stressy week before results*
- The *actual results day drama*
- The "What now?" zone
- The "We're actually packing bags" bit
- The "They've gone so what now?" bit

With checklists, conversation scripts, and a guide to wave around like a magic wand.

The Week Before Results Day: The Tension is Real

Your teen is brooding. You're refreshing UCAS Track (don't). No one's sleeping. The fridge has been opened 4,392 times in 24 hours.

Tips for Surviving:

- Keep routines going — normality is your anchor.
- Do *not* ask “how are you feeling about results?” more than once. They'll let you know. Trust me.
- Model calm, even if you're Googling “what to do if my child fails everything” under the table.

Conversation Scripts:

If your teen is spiralling:

"Hey, I know this week feels like it's looming over your head. It's OK to be nervous. Whatever happens, we'll deal with it together, one step at a time."

If they don't want to talk:

"I'm not going to keep asking, but if you *do* want to talk or rage or scream-sing Olivia Rodrigo at the wall, I'm around."

If you are stressed but trying not to show it:

"I'm feeling a bit twitchy too, to be honest. Not about *you*—about the whole system. So, I'm going to do what I can to stay calm. Want to join me in some baking / stomping around the block / watching a dumb movie?"

! Reminder:

- ✓ You don't have to fix everything
- ✓ You just have to be steady
- ✓ Cake and compassion go a long way

Results Day: Keep Calm (ish)

Whether you're in the kitchen making nervous toast or camped outside their bedroom like a Labrador, this day is... a lot.

Tips for Results Day:

- Let them lead. They might want space or want you hovering with snacks.
- Don't react *first*. Wait for them.
- Celebrate *them*, not just the grades.

Conversation Scripts:

If the results are good:

"I'm so proud of you—not just for the results, but for how hard you worked, even when it was tough."

If the results are disappointing:

"I know this isn't what you were hoping for. It's completely OK to feel upset about it. But this doesn't define you, and we've got options."

If they didn't get into their chosen course or university:

"This really sucks. And I know how much you wanted that. But this isn't the end—just a plot twist. Let's figure out the next steps together."

! Reminder: What NOT to say

-  "At least now you know"
-  "It's not the end of the world"
-  "If only you had studied harder"
-  Don't compare them to a sibling, cousin or friends kid

What Now? Cheers, Tears & Next Steps

Now's the time for:

- Clearing and alternatives
- Gap years, apprenticeships, re-sits
- Eating chips and regrouping

Practical Checklist:

- ✓ Check UCAS, college or sixth form site
- ✓ Look at alternative options
- ✓ Call schools or unis if needed
- ✓ Take breaks between tasks
- ✓ Talk through feelings (yours and theirs)
- ✓ Celebrate surviving the day!

Conversation Scripts:

If they're panicking:

"There's no rush to fix everything in one hour. Let's make a list of next steps, then go for a walk. Or eat cake. Or both."

If they're re-evaluating life plans:

"Plans can change, and that's not failure—it's growth. You're allowed to change your mind or take a new path. We'll figure it out."

! Reminder:

- ✓ You don't need to have all the answers
- ✓ You can be their calm in the chaos
- ✓ Yes you can have a cry in the car later

Preparing to Launch: The Leaving Home Bit

You're packing duvets and pretending not to cry over Tupperware. It's happening.

Whether they're heading to university, college, an apprenticeship, or a flat share with four strangers named Josh—this is big.

Leaving Home Checklist:

- ✓ Uni/college admin (accommodation, ID, banking)
- ✓ Packing list (yes, they'll forget socks)
- ✓ Life skills (laundry, boiling pasta, emotional regulation)
- ✓ Conversations about boundaries and independence
- ✓ A good hug. Or ten.

Conversation Scripts:

When preparing together:

"Let's make sure you've got the boring stuff sorted so you can focus on the exciting part when you get there."

When they're feeling anxious about leaving:

"It's normal to feel a bit scared—it means you care. But remember, this next chapter is *yours*. And I'm still here, cheering you on."

When you're feeling anxious about them leaving:

"I might get a bit emotional, not because I don't want you to go—but because I'm proud and I'll miss you. But I'll be OK. And so will you."

! Reminder:

- ✓ Yes, they will pack at the last minute
- ✓ Yes, you'll cry in the car
- ✓ You will be proud in a way words can't describe

? And They've Gone: What Now?

So, the bags are packed, the car's been unloaded, and you've managed the long drive back with only minor emotional whiplash. Maybe you cried a bit. Maybe you cried *a lot*. Maybe you were halfway home before you realised you were still clutching the IKEA receipt and their timetable.

Either way – they've gone.

And now it's just... you.

The house might feel too quiet, too tidy, or weirdly unfamiliar. Like you've walked into someone else's life – one where the fridge still has food in it and the laundry basket is coping just fine without the usual avalanche.

You've spent 18+ years with some part of your brain permanently tuned to *them*. Their timetable, their moods, their whereabouts, their bloody sports kit. And now that frequency's gone a bit fuzzy.

This is totally normal.

You're adjusting to a big shift – practically and emotionally. Here's what might be helpful in the first week or two after they've left.

✔ Checklist: First Week Without Them

- **Do nothing big**
Now is not the time to book a silent retreat, sell the house, or take up skydiving. Let the dust settle.
- **Keep something small of theirs unwashed for a bit**
Yes, really. Their hoodie. A pillowcase. It's comforting. (And slightly creepy. But mostly comforting.)
- **Resist the urge to text them constantly**
You will want to. You will have questions. But give them a little space – and yourself a little practice at breathing without their schedule in your lungs.
- **Start noticing what you *don't* have to do**
No packed lunches. No pre-dawn drop-offs. No last-minute costume construction for school events. Clock the quiet wins.
- **Watch for grief in disguise**
You might feel flat, irritable, or weirdly emotional at random times. That's not you being ungrateful – it's just your nervous system recalibrating.
- **Don't rush to "redefine" yourself**
There's no rush to suddenly become a pottery-loving Pilates guru (unless you want to). It's enough to just notice who you are when you're not parenting on high alert.

Conversations with Friends (or Yourself)

These don't have to be deep and meaningful. Just real.

- "I feel strange. Like I've finished a marathon and now I'm wandering around with a banana and no idea what happens next."

- “I’m proud. And also slightly unhinged.”
- “I didn’t realise how much of my day was wrapped around them.”
- “I think I miss their mess. What is *that* about?”

Gentle Suggestions

- **Make one plan a week that’s just for you.**
A walk. A film. A catch-up. Something *not* connected to laundry or logistics.
- **Start a “Things I Like” list**
Not things you *should* like. Not things you *used* to like. Just see what bubbles up. You don’t need to act on it – it’s just data.
- **Put your phone down now and then**
Especially if you’re hovering on WhatsApp hoping for a “miss u 2 x”.

If You’re a Partnered Parent

You might suddenly realise that the person across the kitchen table is someone you haven’t spoken to properly in a while. Try a gentle check-in that’s not about the bins.

You could start with:

- “How are you doing, really?”
- “What do you miss most?”
- “Do you want to go for a walk or just sit near each other and scroll in peace?”

No pressure to reinvent the marriage overnight – just a reminder that there’s a “you two” still here, even if you’ve both been running a co-parenting tag-team for years.

If You’re Parenting Solo

This part can hit differently. The quiet might feel extra quiet. You’ve held so much – now you’re holding space for yourself.

A few thoughts:

- Reach out. The instinct might be to retreat, but connection helps.
- Be kind to yourself about how *weird* it all feels.
- Let someone else hold you (emotionally or literally – both are good).

And Finally...

You’re not failing for feeling strange.

You’re not clingy for missing them.

You’re not selfish for liking the quiet.

You’re not broken if you feel a bit lost.

This part isn't about getting over anything – it's about getting to know the new shape of your days. You're still *you*. Just with more fridge space and possibly more time to think. (Dangerous.)

Take it one cup of tea at a time.

You've got this.

! Reminder:

- ✓ Yes, it will feel weird
- ✓ Yes, you'll feel like a part of you is missing
- ✓ You will probably feel a little lost
- ✓ Be kind and gentle to yourself
- ✓ Take time to ease into this new way of being, don't rush it

✔ Checklists

Week Before Results Day: When Everyone's a Bit... Extra

✔ Checklist for Sanity:

- Keep a stash of snacks, tissues, and low-stakes distractions.
- Avoid too much speculation (and doom-scrolling).
- Make a rough plan for Results Day morning.
- Encourage some sleep, even if it's at weird hours.
- Repeat daily: "My job is not to fix it all. My job is to love them through it."

Results Day: Whatever Happens

✔ Checklist for Compassion:

- Be awake, available, and non-judgmental.
- If they want you to take them, take them, if not wave them off cheerily.
- If receiving results online don't hover – let them do it.
- Let them read the results first – in their way.
- Don't jump into problem-solving mode unless they ask.
- Take a break from your own feelings if needed – they can wait.
- Understand that they will probably want to celebrate with their mates.
- Celebrate effort, not just outcomes.

The Aftermath: Next Steps, or No Clue Yet

✔ Checklist for Clarity:

- Encourage them to breathe, they will need time to come to terms with the results.
- Help them list what decisions need to be made (and what can wait).
- Research together or offer to do it for them if they're overwhelmed.
- Break big tasks into small next steps.
- Encourage rest – not every hour needs to be productive.
- Remind them (and yourself): Uncertainty isn't failure.
- Don't panic when they declare they are off to travel the world or getting a job in the local fast food chain – encourage them to take time to think about what they really want to do.

Off to University: Gulp

✔ Checklist for Launch:

- Most unis have really good information packs for what your kid will need to take.
- Start early with packing lists and logistics.
- Let them take the lead on shopping and planning (with gentle guidance).
- Work together on some simple easy to cook meals so they are not eating just pot noodle!
- Talk about emotional stuff *before* move-in day (if possible).
- Talk about homesickness – it happens to us all.
- Talk about keeping themselves safe.
- Write them a note for their suitcase or bag (yes, even now).
- Make a goodbye plan – hug, cry, drive away, repeat.
- Make a plan for keeping in contact – it make only be a weekly text or chat.
- Make a plan for visits – them coming home or you going to see them – be led by them.

And They've Gone: What Now?

✅ Checklist: The Week After They've Left

🧑 Emotionally Speaking

- Let yourself feel *weird* – emotional, floaty, flat, even unexpectedly fine. All valid.
- Cry in the car, the shower, or over the cutlery drawer – wherever it hits.
- Avoid judging your reactions. This is a Big Deal (capital B, capital D).
- Name what you miss – even the annoying stuff. It helps.
- Don't rush into productivity to fill the space. Sit in it a bit.

📱 Communication Check

- Text them once. Maybe twice. That's enough for now.
- Let them contact you first sometimes (even if it nearly kills you).
- Turn off the "last seen" setting if you're obsessively watching their WhatsApp.

🏠 Around the House

- Leave one thing of theirs as it was. Their room doesn't need a makeover yet.
- Notice what's *easier* now (without guilt).
- Play music you like, just for you. Loudly, if you dare.
- Reclaim one corner of the house as yours.

💬 With Others (and Yourself)

- Have at least one honest chat about how you're really doing.
- Say "I miss them" out loud, even if it makes your throat wobble.
- If partnered: check in with each other. No agenda, just connect.
- If solo: book something nourishing. Coffee, walk, wine, whatever works.

🌱 Gently Moving Forward

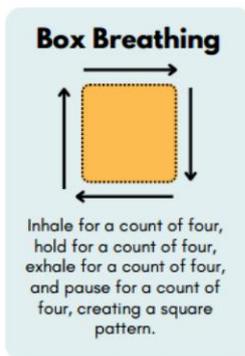
- Make one small plan just for you this week.
- Start noticing what *you* want – without having to ask anyone else.
- Write down three things you've done well (yes, really).
- Give yourself credit: you raised a human who could launch.

Useful Emotional Regulation and Grounding Exercises

Breathe

When you want to scream and it is all getting too much or you are simply overwhelmed with it all – now is the time to do a few minutes of deep calm breathing:

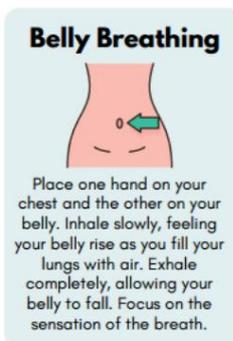
Box Breathing



Repeat the cycle of box breathing several times during a 5 minute period.

It may help to visualise tracing a square with your breath, inhaling, holding, exhaling and holding again.

Belly Breathing



Belly breathing is a good way to ensure that you are breathing properly and not just in the top part of your chest.

This exercise is best done lying down but you can do it sitting or standing.

Three Minute Breathing Space



Set aside a 3 minute breathing space.

During this time consciously bring your attention to your breath, sensations and thoughts.

Be present and centred and concentrate on mindful breathing

Grounding

Grounding helps to bring ourselves back to ourselves. It is especially helpful when emotions are running high or thoughts are starting to spiral.

Shoes and sock off

Take yourself outside onto the grass and take your shoes and socks off. Stand barefoot on the earth and really feel yourself connecting, feel the grass or soil beneath your feet and between your toes.

Close your eyes and really concentrate on the sensation of being at one with the earth.

During this time practice deep calming breathing.

Stay like this for as long as possible or until you feel yourself calming down and recentring.

Shake it out

This is one to help move emotions through the body. You know when you have had a strong emotional reaction to something and just have that icky feeling that hangs around afterwards? This exercise will help to move this through and out.

Do this exercise bare foot and if possible, outside on the grass.

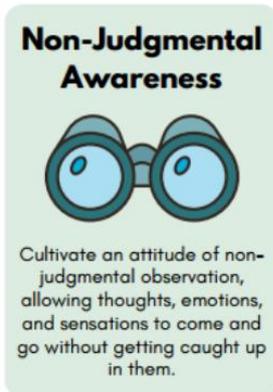
With soft knees you are going to gently bounce up and down keeping your feet in contact with the ground. You will find the bounce with travel through your feet, ankles, knees, hips and all the way up your body and your arms will bounce too.

Remember! Gentle bounce not vigorous flinging yourself around.

Do this exercise for 1 minute and see how much better you feel.

Emotional Check Ins:

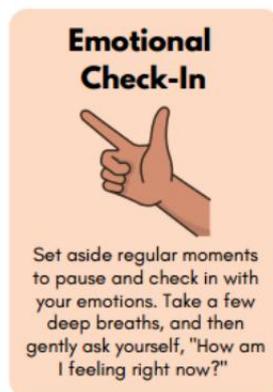
Non-Judgemental Awareness:



Set aside time to sit with your thoughts, feelings and sensations and be aware of them without judgment, simply accepting what they are and not become entangled in them.

They are thoughts, feelings and emotions and they do not define you.

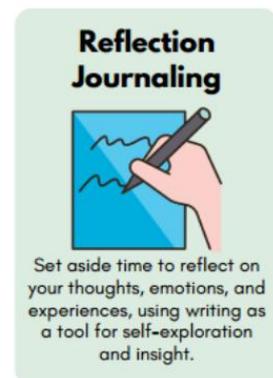
Emotional Check in



When you need to, pause for a few moments, ground yourself.

Without any judgement identify and name the emotions you are feeling at that moment.

Journaling



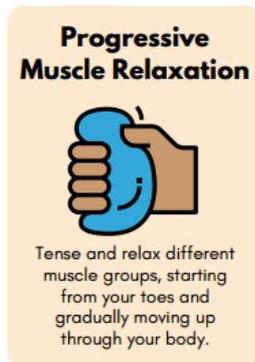
Find a quiet space and time to reflect on your thoughts, emotions and feelings then journal about what comes up for you and explore why.

Journaling is personal and not intended to be shared which gives to freedom to write anything and everything!

Relaxation

Needing to relax and you just can't? Try these for relaxation and aiding sleep

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

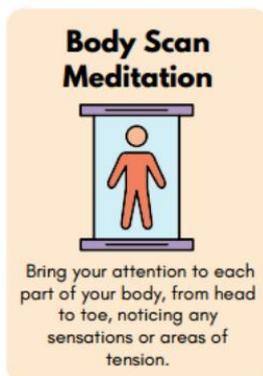


Tense and relax muscles groups.

Always start with your toes and work up.

If you get cramp it is perfectly normal and will pass.

Body Scan



Focus on each area of your body in turn, noticing the sensations that are there and releasing any tension as you breathe into each area of the body.

When things really spiral?

A good dose of grounding but if things have gone too far and panic is setting in then use the 5-4-3-2-1 exercise to bring yourself or your teen down and more relaxed and in control. It is not possible to panic when you are focusing and concentrating on this exercise.

5-4-3-2-1

Take 3 slow deep breaths.

Name out loud 5 things that you can see.

Name out loud 4 things that you can hear.

Name out loud 3 things that you can smell.

Name out loud 2 things that you can feel.

Name out loud 1 thing that you can taste.