When Both Options Feel Hard: Changent Webinar Offers Guidance for Parents Facing Tough Decisions

Parenting is full of hard choices—those moments when no option feels clearly right, and every path carries some risk or discomfort.

Changent recently hosted a special live webinar to help parents navigate exactly those moments. Partnering with Emily Oster, renowned economist, bestselling author, and Founder and CEO of ParentData, the event "*When Both Options Feel Hard*" offered practical guidance, reassurance, and a sense of community for parents facing tough decisions every day.

The session welcomed current and former clients of Changent's programs, Child First and Nurse-Family Partnership®, and home visitors, offering a space to explore evidence-based approaches, ask questions, and hear real stories from parents facing difficult choices.

During the live webinar, Emily shared strategies to help parents make thoughtful decisions amid today's overwhelming advice. Additionally, two of Changent's Parent Ambassadors joined the conversation, sharing their own experiences with difficult choices.

Emily began the session by discussing her article, "*There Is No Secret Option C.*" She explained that many of life's hardest decisions are often met with delay. "*Instead of just making a hard decision, we just wait*," she said. The risk is that eventually, the decision is made for you. The phrase "*there is no option C*" serves as a reminder to actively engage with the choices in front of you.

Emily encouraged parents to ask themselves: "*If I know I must choose between these two hard things, which one do I prefer?*" Careful consideration can reveal ways to improve a choice, and sometimes the path you select turns out better than expected. "*It is something I come back to in my own life and something I bring to my kids a lot*," she said.

Panelists shared powerful, real-life examples related to making hard decisions. Al-Nisa Murray, a Changent Parent Ambassador, recounted moving herself and her two children 800 miles away to rebuild their lives in a safer living environment, despite having no job or support in the new state. "Nothing was coming to save me," she said. Facing the "lesser of two evils," she chose the hard option of relocating. Three years later, she has no regrets.

Amber Hill, a former Changent Parent Ambassador, shared a postpartum moment when she was struggling with depression and faced the choice: "*Do I stay in bed today, or do I get out of bed today?*" She chose to rise, taking a walk while crying, and encountered a garden with a sign that read, "*Stop and smell the roses*." "I burst into tears – I was meant to see that in this neighborhood, today," she said. That choice marked the start of her journey toward hope and healing.

> **Decisions are hard. Parenting is hard. And you're doing great.**
>
> **-Emily Oster**

Renowned economist and author Emily Oster offers research-backed insights to help parents make informed choices.
Photo credit: Aisha McAdams

Changent
Programs with Impact. Healthier Futures.

t: 866.864.5226
changent.org

> **Balance is hard. I practiced ahead of time, treated myself daily, and reframed my mindset to focus on gratitude and boundaries.**
>
> **-Al-Nisa Murray**

Emily shared practical strategies to help parents make thoughtful decisions and navigate today's overwhelming advice:

- **Set boundaries around decision-making:** Create a timeline, gather information, and commit to your choice. This helps reduce stress and prevents constant second-guessing.
- **Seek trusted voices and balance with evidence:** Turn to peers, family, or community members whose experiences and cultural context you trust, and combine their insights with reliable sources such as doctors or research-backed guidance.
- **Be aware of information overload:** Much advice is pushed through social media or trends rather than actively sought.
- **Lean on evidence-based programs:** Programs like Child First and Nurse-Family Partnership provide data-driven guidance parents can rely on.

During the live chat portion of the session, questions addressed specific parenting challenges. When asked about vaccines, Emily emphasized the long-standing safety and strong evidence behind the CDC's childhood immunization schedule. She noted that this guidance is consistent with recommendations from leading expert organizations and aligns with Changent's guidance, which recommends families follow the clinical guidance of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), and the Society for Maternal and Fetal Medicine (SMFM). "Vaccines do save lives," Emily said.

When asked about returning to work after maternity leave, Al-Nisa shared how preparation and self-care

Changent Parent Ambassadors share real-life stories of navigating difficult choices and finding hope during a webinar. Emily Oster offers practical strategies for making tough parenting decisions.

helped her regain balance. Before officially returning, she rehearsed her mornings—getting her older kids ready, preparing bottles, and setting up at her desk to ease back into the rhythm. "Balance is hard," she said. "I practiced ahead of time, treated myself daily, and reframed my mindset to focus on gratitude and boundaries."

In closing, Emily offered encouragement: "*Decisions are hard. Parenting is hard. And you're doing great…A lot of these decisions seem hard in the moment, and when you look back at them, you will feel good about them—or may even forget you made them—because things that seem important in the moment tend to fade later. You are doing great.*"

Changent's webinar with Emily, Al-Nisa and Amber offered both practical guidance and reassurance, reminding parents that intentional decision-making, support, and community are invaluable tools on the parenting journey.

As a perk for attending, participants received a free one-year ParentData Plus subscription courtesy of ParentData. The platform offers evidence-based guidance with over 1,300 articles, customizable newsletters, and an AI librarian to support every stage of parenting.