Bonnie- Coaching

Sarah: [00:00:00] Welcome to the Peaceful Parenting Podcast. I'm your host, Sarah Rosenzweig, mom of three young people, Peaceful Parenting Coach, and your cheerleader and guide on all things parenting. Each week, we'll cover the tools, strategies, and support you need to end the yelling and power struggles, and encourage your kids to listen and cooperate so that you can enjoy your family time.

Sarah: I'm happy to say we have a great relationship with our three kids. The teen years have been easy and joyful. Not because we're special unicorns, but because my kids were raised with peaceful parenting. I've also helped so many parents just like you stop struggling and enjoy their kids again. I'm excited to be here with you today and bring you the insight and information you need to make your parenting journey a little more peaceful.

Sarah: Let's dive into this week's conversation.

Sarah: Hey, Jonathan and Bonnie, welcome to the podcast.

Bonnie: Hi, good to be here.

Jonathon: Thank you. Yeah.

Sarah: For full disclosure, Bonnie, you and I have spoken before I think probably about two or three years ago we spoke briefly.

Bonnie: We've been following you since our [00:01:00] kids were little, attempting peaceful parenting since they were born.

Sarah: Oh, that's so great to hear.

Sarah: So why don't you just give us a quick intro of of your little family?

Bonnie: Absolutely. We have Eloise, our daughter, who's six. She's a firecracker, very strong willed, very creative, innovative, a problem solver. She's a leader. And then we have Lucas, who's four and he also is strong willed. And so now we're trying to, you know, navigate two kids who are very strong, very emotional and just needing some help.

Sarah: All right. And six and four are not

Sarah: easy ages.

Bonnie: No, we're in the trenches still.

Jonathon: And when they're together, they're compounded.

Sarah: So two feels like seven

Bonnie: when they're together. Yes, it does. And I think, what am I doing wrong? Is it easier for everyone else? Two really feels like a million.

Sarah: Yeah. No, you know what? I mean, we'll, We'll see if there's anything you can tweak as I, as we talk about what's the challenges are.

Sarah: But I think one misconception about peaceful [00:02:00] parenting is people think, well, if I'm doing it right, then I should have these perfectly well behaved children who don't cry and don't have tantrums and don't have big preferences. And that's just not true, right? Like, even if you're doing everything quote, right, small children are.

Sarah: You know, they, they don't have much life experience, they don't have much emotional maturity or, or impulse control and life can still be messy with, with intense small children, even if you're doing everything quote right.

Bonnie: That's so helpful. I feel like I get discouraged often as a mom, like, Is any of this working?

Bonnie: I know we're not working is not the main goal, right? We're trying to have a long term vision for their emotional health and their well being, but not seeing much fruit of what we're trying to do. It can be discouraging at times.

Sarah: Totally. I hear you on that and you're right. It is a long game. So why don't you just give me a little bit of a sense of, of what your challenges are and how I can support you today.

Bonnie: Okay, I think it's around the word [00:03:00] obedience. We're trying not to use punishment or consequences, but it feels like our kids really don't want to go along with anything we suggest. And many times it's like we need to get in the car and leave someone's house. It feels like there's pushback for everything, Sarah, whether it's like buckle your seatbelt in the car.

Bonnie: You know, we have to do it. It's the law. There's just I'm waiting and waiting. And then I'm assisting and they're four and six. And, you know, I'm trying to discern, am I having too high of expectations? I try to be patient. I'm not, we don't have a busy schedule. We're not in activities yet. Like we have a lot of downtime.

Bonnie: Our kids get a lot of attention from both mom and dad. But yet there's still, like you said, these huge emotions, more fighting with each other than we've had before. Our daughter started kindergarten, so she's gone seven hours a day. And then the little guy's home with me, my four year olds with me 24 seven.

Bonnie: And so he seems like he's always upset at me. I'm always ruining his life like 20 times a day. He has big language about how he [00:04:00] hates everything and I'm a bad mom. I'm trying so hard to rise above. and not take it personal but their words really do hurt me. I think one of the questions I have for you is like when they're saying mean things and we try not to react big or not yell and oh you must be upset, you know, we try to have an empathetic response.

Sarah: All right. Let's start with obedience. I like to reframe that obedience doesn't really have a place in the peaceful parenting world.

Sarah: But what I like to reframe that as cooperation. Right? Yeah. So it's like, how can we work together to get where we need to go? And it can be quite literally, like in the car, we work together to get the seatbelts buckled and get where we need to go. Because obedience is something that is actually like, that would be really convenient if you had an obedient four year old and six year old.

Sarah: But obedience isn't necessarily a character trait that you want your children to have when they're older. Right? Right. Because it won't be you they're obeying when they're older. 14 and 16. [00:05:00] It'll be their peers, right? It'll be somebody else. It's not going to be you. It's so obedience is really the wrong goal.

Sarah: And, and obedience is also, you know, it can get people in trouble too when somebody is telling them to do the wrong thing. And that they, you know, they just go along with it. So I think if we can agree to sort of take obedience off the table as a as a goal and replace that with cooperation, how does that sound?

Bonnie: That sounds better because they're not doing the obedient thing anyway.

Sarah: Yeah, and obedience is really like a lot of obedience comes from fear. You know, I better do what they say or else. And it's just, it's not the, You know, that's not really one how we want to raise our kids to be afraid of us.

Bonnie: Yeah. Well, they're not obeying. So they're not afraid of us. So maybe that's good news. Well,

Sarah: there's actually a really great New York times piece by somebody that I had on my podcast. Her name is Melissa. Now her last name's escaped me, but she Melissa Wenner [00:06:00] Moyer, I think is her name. Anyways, we'll link to that podcast, but she wrote a book called how to raise kids who aren't blankety blanks.

Sarah: And she had an article how I found her. She had an article in the New York times that was like, why your rude child might be a little bit of a good thing. And she talked about how, you know, sometimes when you do raise kids to not be afraid of you, but to be. speak their mind and stand up for themselves.

Sarah: It can really look like rudeness in a small child, right? But we do want to raise kids with, as you said, that long game of like, how we want to raise kids who aren't afraid to say what they think, who aren't afraid to go for what they want. It just is like, frankly, it's inconvenient when they're four and six.

Bonnie: Yes, it feels like it's all against me. You know, I have to try to take it personal like this is good in the long run

Sarah: Yeah, totally. All right. Well, why don't we start with looking at some situations where you're having a hard time getting cooperation? And look at you know, what might be going on? So do you want to give me you know, you mentioned yeah friends houses or getting car seats but cars [00:07:00] Yeah,

Bonnie: just yesterday we w house.

Bonnie: We have been there playing in their home and forts and moving couch cu obstacle courses, having I gave them a warning lik

Bonnie: And then when it was time to go, I said, okay, we got to get our shoes on. It's time to go. And they're like, run, hide, hurry, you know, like escape, let's do another thing. So they make it like a game to escape and to not come. And

I'm like, dad's ready. We got to go eat dinner, you know, and I'm telling them over and over.

Bonnie: So then I'm getting worn down. Like, why do I have to tell them over and over? And they're not listening. I'm trying not to get angry, but inside I am, you know, and My, you know, my friend is there and I'm like, this is embarrassing. And then they'll say, I hate you. Like Lucas will say, I hate you or whatever.

Bonnie: Cause he doesn't want to go. So I'm trying to say, I know it's hard to leave. This is so fun. I hope we can come back, you know, but we have to go right now. It's time. And so then [00:08:00] finally, at some point after all these asks, they come up and we're getting our shoes on and then we go outside and instead of getting in the car, they want to run across the street to the park, they don't.

Bonnie: Yeah. Luckily, but sometimes in the past they have run to the park and then I have to literally pick them up, you know Four and six and I'm just I get real exasperated

Sarah: Often

Bonnie: and then I feel a lot of shame and a lot of guilt like have all this anger Towards my kids and I really want to enjoy them and I really want to be Like to live well right now in my life and not just like hate this season or not be weeping every day, you know, bonnie So yeah, yeah Yeah,

Sarah: well a couple of thoughts.

Sarah: One thing that I used to this is such a common problem of childhood I think everyone can relate they're not wanting to leave a friend's house, right? And one thing that I would say to my kids is part of being a good guest is going home when it's time to go. If we're not good guests, our friends are not going to want to invite us back over to their house.

Sarah: And I [00:09:00] think you can you so it sounds like maybe having a talk like that before you go. So for your next playdate, I've been thinking about how hard it is to have to leave. And you know, it's a little bit I think it's probably a little bit annoying for our friend's mom when they want to have dinner and you two are still running around trying to play and you won't leave.

Sarah: And you know what? Then you can say part of being a good guest is leaving when it's time to go without a big fuss. And so if we are going to go to their house, I need you to have, I need you to to try to be good guests. And what does that look like? And get them to repeat that back to you. So this is called like setting the expectation.

Sarah: Right. So do we ask,

Bonnie: like, can you do that? Do you think you can do that when it's time to go?

Sarah: Yeah, sure. Ask that. And and maybe you can even practice it at home. You can say like, okay, let's pretend that we're over at, you know, Billy and Sally's house and it's time to go and you really don't want to go because you're having so much fun, you know, and you can tell them it's okay to be upset about going.

Sarah: I'm [00:10:00] not, I'm not saying you can't be upset, but you do need to come when it's time to go and I'll give you the five minute warning. And then it's going to be time for us to go. So really setting that expectation about being a good guest. And I, and I actually, I would not feel bad about leaning into the, she's not going to invite us back if we're really, if we are poor guests, she's not going to want us to come back because that is that's a limit that people might actually set like, Oh, I'm not going to have them over there.

Sarah: They turn into holy tears when it's time to go. Right. I don't know if your friend would actually do that, but we don't need to tell your kids that. Right. Yeah. So that is part of like teaching social norms. And it's okay to be upset, but it's not okay to go and run away from me. And if you do that, when we go over there today, we're going to have to think about maybe not going over there for a little while.

Sarah: Right. And so in some people listening might be saying like, Oh, that sounds like a punishment. And if she says, you know, we're not going to, we're not going to go there. if you can't leave nicely. And I'm not, again, I'm going to lean [00:11:00] in. I'm not saying they can't be sad or upset or even cry or even say, I hate you.

Sarah: As long as they're leaving, right? Like, I don't, I actually don't mind. I know it's hard for you and we'll talk about this. I don't mind if Lucas says, I hate you. You're the worst mom ever. As long as he's putting his coat on and walking

out the door. Right. So some people might say like, well, how come that's not a punishment?

Sarah: So a punishment is to. to make kids feel bad or to scare them that they will feel bad, like a threat or a punishment, so that they'll cooperate with you, right? And so we are often we're, we're angry or, you know, otherwise dysregulated when we're making those threats or saying like, you know, that's it, no TV when we get home or whatever the punishment's going to be.

Sarah: So we're, we're dysregulated. So our tone is You know, not good, not compassionate and warm. And often when we're doing, if we're doing a punishment, it's to make them feel bad, to scare them, to manipulate their behavior, right? But what differentiates that, what we're talking about here is a limit. So the limit is [00:12:00] if you can't leave your friend's house, when it's time to go, even if you're upset and calling me the, you know, saying I hate you, then we're not going to be able to go there anymore for a little while.

Sarah: So that's the limit. And the difference is the tone is kind and compassionate. Oh my goodness, you're having such a hard time. We're going to have to take a little break. You know, going over to our friend's house. That's our tone and our intent is just to help reinforce the limit.

Bonnie: That's helpful.

Bonnie: Thank you. And the buckling the seat belts feels like a struggle every time we get in the car.

Sarah: Yeah. So what typically happened? Well, let me just, let's just like tie up the loose ends on the other, the other part. So next time you're going to a friend's house, you, I want you to prepare earlier in the day or the day before talking about the expectations about being a good guest.

Sarah: Practicing what that's going to be, getting them to make a deal with you, right? Like pinky swear, we're going to try our hardest to leave when it's time to go. And maybe you even tell your friend to say something like, [00:13:00] Hey you know, I, I'm really, let me think about this for a second. Get her in on it somehow to say like, I am so looking forward to seeing how, what good guests you two are today or something like that.

Bonnie: Okay. Or I need you to go.

Sarah: Yeah, sure. I need you to listen to your mom. That's what I would say. Like you want to keep, you want to keep being, you want to be the person who's the leader, but I'm looking forward to you listening to your mom when it's time to go. Cause we have, when it's time to go, it's because we're going to be eating dinner or whatever it is.

Bonnie: That's good. Thank you, Sarah.

Sarah: Yeah. Yeah. So I, I think sometimes we get caught up in thinking that You know, kids listening also includes them not being upset. So I just want to make sure that you're clear on they can be upset just as long as they're coming into the car.

Bonnie: Okay. Yeah. That'll be big progress.

Bonnie: If we see

Sarah: some, okay. So, so the seatbelts, like what typically happens with the seatbelts.

Bonnie: It's mostly Lucas, he's four, and I don't know if, like, his car seat is harder than the other car seat, like, [00:14:00] legitimately, because he can buckle the top, but it seems like he can't buckle the bottom, but he used to be able to buckle it, so I don't know if he's just needing me to be nurturing in that moment, in like, Well, what's the problem with doing it yourself?

Bonnie: I usually get in the car and then I'm like, okay. And then he's like, mom, and then I have to get back out. So when, when my, when my oldest

Sarah: son was little, when he was like five, every single night he'd get, we'd get him ready for bed. He'd get into bed, teeth brushed, everything tucked in. And then he'd call downstairs.

Sarah: I'm hungry. I want some cereal. And it was driving me crazy. And I was talking to my dad about it. And I was like, every single night, he wants some cereal after he's already all ready for bed. And my dad said, Why don't you just give him some cereal before he brushes his teeth and gets in bed? And I was like, Oh, that's such a good idea.

Sarah: And so we started to bring cereal into our, you know, his bowl of his bedtime snack into our nightly routine. And the problem was solved. So I'm

seeing [00:15:00] maybe you could do something similar to that is before you get in the car. You just put Lucas in his car seat and do up his seatbelt.

Bonnie: Okay, I'll do it. You make it sound so easy and I'm like, I have

Sarah: all these frustrations.

Sarah: Well, this is the problem. You have, there's I know you can see me, listeners can't, but I'm holding up my hands up, you know, a foot away from each other. What's that we have on the one hand, we have our expectations. Your expectation was that Lucas gets in, buckles himself in while you're getting in, right?

Sarah: Then you have the reality over here. which is that he's not buckling himself. He wants you to do it for whatever reason, and he's only four. And as you know, you just said this, kids sometimes experience us doing things for them as nurturing, right? Even though he can do it for himself. I'm sure that your husband can make his own coffee, but I bet you make him coffee occasionally.

Bonnie: He makes mine every day. Okay,

Sarah: so you can make your own coffee, Bonnie, but he makes your coffee for you. Right? And that's like, what if I said to him, you know, you should never do anything for your wife that she can do for [00:16:00] herself. That's terrible, right? That would not be good for your relationship. No, not good for your relationship.

Sarah: So sometimes we do things for people that we love because we're showing nurturing. So for whatever reason, He wants you to put a seatbelt on him. So just do it. Right. So anyways, that gap between expectations and reality. Sometimes we can get stuck in thinking like my expectation is right. So we always want to look at it like, okay, well, maybe my expectation is off.

Sarah: And it, and it could be that sometimes we decide my expectation is fine, but my child still needs support to close that gap between expectation and reality.

Bonnie: And is it pretty normal that they just want help with everything? Whether that's, I need water, I need a rag, I need this. Do we kind of do all those things for them?

Bonnie: Sometimes one of my frustrations is like, golly, I just want to sit down and eat my food. I'm getting hungry. And like, they're just needing, needing, needing, you're just, you're

Sarah: totally allowed to say, sweetheart, I'm eating my, I'm eating, I'm going to eat my soup while it's still hot. If you still want me to get in.

Sarah: [00:17:00] So say he can get his own water and he wants you to get him water. I'm going to eat my soup while it's still hot. I'll get you the water after or you can get it yourself right now.

Bonnie: That's helpful. Yeah, because I feel like there's a ton of those things where I'm like, I'm doing it for them but is this like teaching them that I'm just going to do everything for them, that there's not responsibility.

Bonnie: Can we kind of shift a little bit to helping around the house and responsibilities? My kids are very creative and they make big messes, but you know, they're allergic to cleaning up.

Sarah: So it's such a great question. And I have such a different view for being so much further out, right? Because I can just, I was just thinking, I, I keep meaning to like make some videos about this.

Sarah: But. The other day, I realized, I always tell this story about how my daughter, when she was, I think, six or seven, we were heading out to the bus stop, and she, I was carrying her backpack. My husband happened to be leaving at the same time, and looks at me and says, why are you carrying her backpack for her?

Sarah: You know, she's seven, she can carry her own backpack. And I was like, yeah, she can, but she likes me to carry it, and, [00:18:00] you know, I, I don't mind carrying it. It's, it's fine. And I knew that because kids have such a strong natural drive for independence, that she would be carrying her own backpack soon. And, you know, by the next year, she would be like, Mom, I can carry my own backpack.

Sarah: I'm not a baby, you know, and I was thinking about that. So she's 16 now. She'll be 17 in a few months. She will not let me carry a single bag. Like anytime we're, we're like walking from the car or, you know, we walk to the store, she's like, mom, mom, let me carry those. Like, even if she's totally weighed down and I am carrying nothing, she will not let me carry a single thing.

Sarah: So it really is like, it goes further than independence to like kids who want to help you. Right? Who want to do things for you because you've modeled that. And I'm not saying that you need to be a martyr, Bonnie, and that, like, you need to, you know, get up from your lunch every 30 seconds to get something for somebody.

Sarah: But if you can do it, and you don't mind doing it, then do it. If you don't want to do it, and you say, I can do it for you after I finish eating, if you want it right now, then do it. You can [00:19:00] get it yourself, honey. Right? You can do that also.

Bonnie: And then just put my earplugs in for the big meltdown.

Sarah: Or, you know, just, just, I know you, I know it's hard to wait.

Sarah: I'll get you that water. And, you know, that example is a little bit silly because you know, you might, you might rather get the water than have him crying for the whole time that you're eating your soup. So you'll have to decide what you want to do. Right? But, you know, you get the idea.

Bonnie: Yes, we don't.

Sarah: We also don't want to be rigid about it because there's also a point where he might realize, well, she could really easily do this thing for me.

Sarah: And now we're just in a power struggle because, because she won't, you know, so you, it's more of an art than a science. You, you don't have to do everything, but also like use common sense. If it seems a little bit silly that you're refusing to do something that's easy.

Bonnie: And then like with chores and responsibilities at home, how do you begin teaching that?

Sarah: Well, I do have a whole podcast episode about that, that we'll link to in the show notes [00:20:00] about raising helpful kids. But the big idea is that you want to invite them to join you in. You know, tidying up also watch for when they want to do something, make sure that you're letting them do it. Like if they want to carry something, even if you think it's too heavy or they want to sweep, even if they do a bad job, make sure you're letting them do the helping, even if it's not the exact helping that you want.

Sarah: because you what you really want to do is when they are being helpful, you want to really make them feel good about it. So like, Oh my goodness, thank you so much for carrying that. It was so heavy. Or wow, you swept the floor. Look how nice it looks in here, even if they missed a whole bunch of spots.

Sarah: So people help. because it feels good. You could force somebody to clean something up, but that's not going to turn them into a helpful person. So really like watch when they are being helpful, reinforce that, invite them to join you. And when, when my kids were little, they hardly did anything in terms of that, you know, I couldn't say like, [00:21:00] okay, everybody clean up the room.

Sarah: And it was like clean however many minutes later, but I would say, all right, time for a 10 minute tidy. We'd put some, that's what we called it, a 10 minute tidy. We put on a timer, we put some music on, and probably I did most of it, but still it was like a family thing that we did.

Bonnie: Yes, we try to do that.

Bonnie: Eloise made a chore chart the other day with three pages and all these columns, and she said she needed to do a chore every day. And her and Lucas, so she started telling them what they were doing. And I was like, we haven't done chores. Like, do we need to, but I do sometimes get overwhelmed with the mess in the house.

Bonnie: So I probably just need to set limits in advance. It's like, if you get this out and I say that, like, if you guys take all these cushions off, you have to put them back, but they always lose their energy when it's time to put those cushions. Well, you might have to do it together.

Sarah: Yeah.

Bonnie: Right. Always.

Sarah: Yeah.

Sarah: Yeah. And that's still, that is still a totally reasonable expectation for six and four that you still have to help them with those [00:22:00] things.

Bonnie: Okay. That's helpful. I just feel encouraged getting your perspective from someone who's done this, who can like, you know, see like even your daughter's story and see like, okay, it's not going to be forever.

Bonnie: I'm not just enabling them to take advantage of me, but I'm not going to a slave forever.

Sarah: Yeah. Well, that was really hard. I mean, I had another story too of my son, my 19 year old son was coming home from work. And I asked him to go to my favorite takeout place to get my favorite jerk chicken.

Sarah: And it took him about, He was, let me put it this way, because of where we live and traffic, he was home an hour later because he went to get me and my jerk chicken that I love. And he didn't mind at all. I was like, are you sure you don't mind? He's like, mom, I said, I would like, it's fine. And you know, I thought back to like all of the things that I did for him when he was little.

Sarah: And I think it really does work that way. Like there's this great article that we love called model graciousness, which is basically like, be the person that you want your kids to be right. And it does take time for you to see those things. [00:23:00] That

Bonnie: is beautiful. It is hard to, like, work on ourselves and our reactions and try to stay calm.

Bonnie: What advice, like, would you give me as I'm still in these young ages to not get, I don't know, so angry or exasperated or take care of myself, you know? Well, give me an example that might make you feel angry or exasperated. I guess the noise level. I do use headphones a lot. Good, good. He's in a screaming and growling phase, and then sometimes, like I said, they'll come at each other with those mean words, like, I'm not your sister, or, you know, I'm not your brother, or just kind of the meanest thing they could think of in their minds to each other, and that kind of gets me fired up.

Bonnie: It's one thing if it's that mean, and I'm like, oh, he's lashing out, he's, you know, in his lizard brain, he doesn't mean it. If it's at your sibling, I'm like, you can't, we don't call names. So besides saying like, we don't call names, there's no name calling. You can say you're upset, but they keep [00:24:00] doing it. So yeah, it's kind of an

Sarah: unenforceable limit unless you like pull out the duct tape, which of course I'm not, I'm not suggesting that.

Sarah: And so what do you want to do is just keep on trying to model and reinforce, like, hey, I hear you're really upset with your sister. Is there another way you can tell her that? What else could you, what else could you say instead of calling a name? So I would, you know, I would work on that and just keep, you know, it just, they're still, they still have very little impulse control.

Sarah: Sounds like they have big feelings. I mean, you might want to look at what what's causing all of the disagreements or why do they get so upset with each other.

Bonnie: Yeah, and sometimes I don't know which kid to go to. So if they're being loud and angry at each other or fighting over whatever, if I go, if someone hits someone, like, do I go to the kid that was injured or the kid that's kicking and hitting?

Bonnie: Mm

Sarah: hmm. Usually, I mean, our, our sort of guideline is to go to the injured person first. Mm hmm. However, if the person who's done the kicking and hitting is super dysregulated, and you [00:25:00] need to tend to them first, you could just do a quick tend to the injured one, oh my goodness, I'll be right with you, looks like your sister needs a little bit of help or, or whatever.

Sarah: That's again, it's one of those things like the situational like put what fire is the biggest.

Bonnie: Yes. That's what I'm trying to do. And it's hard to know, like, do they need more time apart? I think Eloise is pretty jealous of Lucas because she's at school all day. She misses being home with mom. She misses the attention, you know, maybe just the relaxation of being home all day and she's working hard.

Bonnie: So after school, she's exhausted and she has some big feelings and it seems like she'll come and just take something from him or instigate something, and then, then it kind of begins, you know, you know,

Sarah: Yeah. So you always want to remember trying to intervene in a neutral way if possible. And I would also go back to the root of that.

Sarah: If she's, you know, you said she's jealous of him and she misses you. Is there a way that you can do, I mean, I don't know what Jonathan's schedule is like if he's not around after school, if you [00:26:00] two can do like the divide and conquer sort of thing or.

Bonnie: He's not home really till dinner. We try to do their special times, like in the evenings, but it's, And the times I've gotten her right after school and said, like, I have something special, just you and me, it's made a world of difference.

Bonnie: Yeah, yeah. But not really doable because usually Lucas is always with me too, so I don't really get to, like, pour into her special cup until later. When he's home,

Sarah: right? So you might want to just find some little like you can find little ways to connect, like even, you know, just giving her like a big hug.

Sarah: I missed you so much when you were at school today and whispering something sweet in her ear. And, you know, trying to just reconnect that way every day when she comes home so that she just feels special. And even if you can't get time away from him, I don't know, are your kids allowed to watch, watch screens?

Bonnie: We're doing it now and this is a big privilege. We only do about 20 minutes a day.

Sarah: Yeah,

Bonnie: because they just, I feel like they get pretty dysregulated [00:27:00] and I just would rather them be doing other things.

Sarah: That's totally fine. I was just thinking, I mean, four is right on that cusp of like, he's probably too little to leave you alone if you try to do special time with no backup.

Sarah: However, you could save his screen time. You know, you have to decide which is worse, but you could save his screen time for when Eloise gets home and he can watch a show while you have some. 20 minutes of special time with Eloise. You could try that.

Bonnie: Yeah, she would just want to watch the screen.

Bonnie: Okay. All right Well, maybe that won't work then Yeah, I think even the words of like I missed you and you're at school I can't wait till we have special time tonight. What are you gonna make like looking forward? She likes to do art. Yeah, you know, it's like, oh, I can't wait to see what we're gonna make together or something.

Bonnie: Perfect. Yeah, just

Sarah: making her, you know, really just trying to connect with her and and making her feel special when when she gets home.

Bonnie: That's good, that's so helpful. Do you have anything, honey?

Jonathon: One thing that I've been thinking about is, Lucas is a [00:28:00] morning person, and he's up very early. He's up to the tune of 5.

Jonathon: 30 ish, and Eloise has a hard time going to sleep until

Sarah: Oh, the worst of both, worst combination.

Jonathon: 8. 30, I mean, the last I don't know, a week to 10 days. She's been like 830. She's still coming out of her room and whatever, which ends up meaning we have very little personal time or even time together because you know, he's up first thing in the morning and she's up late at night.

Jonathon: And I think The evening time is the most difficult because we've started trying to back their bedtime up to where he's basically exhausted and crashes. And we always divide and conquer when we're both home, which is usually like six nights a week. But then it's like, she won't go to sleep and keeps coming out of her room and we lay

Bonnie: with her for a long time.

Bonnie: We will

Jonathon: have been [00:29:00] in there for 45 hours. And we're like, Dude, we have, we're about to fall asleep and we've done nothing for ourselves or with each other. Like, how, how do we, how do we manage this? Cause I think the evening time is going to be more malleable than early in the morning.

Sarah: Yeah. You can't make people sleep in really.

Sarah: Have you ever thought about, first of all, do you think she's getting enough sleep? Even if she's has a little bit of a later scheduled, like, Or do you want her to go to sleep earlier? I

Bonnie: mean, we don't wake her up for school. We just let her wake up. She doesn't do an alarm. Okay, good. So sleep till like seven.

Bonnie: Okay.

Sarah: Do you, one thing, sometimes kids have trouble falling asleep because they still have a lot of pent up energy from the day. Maybe try roughhousing with her before, like, as maybe your special time with her. Try some roughhousing. I know that sounds counterintuitive, but my experience is about 90 percent of kids do much better when they've had a chance to get out the last of their physical energy and get [00:30:00] regulated.

Sarah: So that's one thing that might help her fall asleep. Like, maybe before you do the jammies and brush teeth so it's not the very last thing that she's doing, but do some good laughter and roughhousing with her before bed.

Bonnie: That would be awesome. Cause she has some, both of them have so much energy from the moment they wake up, they wake

Jonathon: up at a hundred miles an hour.

Jonathon: Both of them.

Sarah: It's like you're giving them coffee or something. The other thing that I was thinking of is if she has trouble falling asleep. And it might be that she's staying and keeps getting up because she's bored, right? Like, there's nothing worse than lying there. Like, I can't sleep. There's nothing to do.

Sarah: It's dark. I mean, not that I've had that feeling since I had kids. I fall asleep like, you know, in 10 seconds flat. But what I find really helped my two of my kids who had trouble falling asleep was listening to an audio book while they fell asleep. So I don't know if you have a way that you can put an audio book in her room.

Sarah: And of course not that she can access the screen, like you play it on Bluetooth or something like that. It's not a

Bonnie: screen. It's just [00:31:00] the listening.

Sarah: Yeah. So maybe just have her listen to an audio book and say, you know, daddy and mommy need some time together. And we're going to be Don't make it sound too fun.

Sarah: Maybe actually, maybe you say you have work to do or you have to do the dishes or something. You're tired. Yeah. Something that's not like, Oh, I'm missing out if I don't keep coming out. But you know, you're, we'll lie with you and then it's your job to stay in your bed. Again, we're coming back to the setting expectations, right?

Sarah: And you need to get your sleep so that you are happy and that you grow. Did you know? That you grow while you're sleeping. And that's actually true, right? The growth hormone is secreted when people sleep. So you have to get a big night's sleep so that you can grow up to be big and tall. And I know it's hard to lie there.

Sarah: So what we're going to do is give you an audio book that you can listen to. So you're not bored. So you don't need to come out.

Bonnie: She will love that. And she'll love the growing thing too. She's so tiny.

Jonathon: Yes.

Bonnie: She thinks if you're taller that you're older, you know, and she wants to be, she wants to be the boss and the leader.

Sarah: Yes. Totally. When my [00:32:00] sister, my sister's always been, she's younger than I am. She's always been taller. And when we were younger, she used to always say, guess who's older, guess who's older. Cause they would always say her cause she was taller, but she stopped doing that. I think in our thirties. She doesn't want anyone to say she's the older one.

Bonnie: That is cute. When Eloise was four, she's like, Mom, I feel older than I am. Oh my goodness.

Sarah: That's

Bonnie: hilarious. How old do you feel? She's like eight.

Sarah: That's so funny. If she's an old soul, it sounds like.

Bonnie: Yes. Well, thank you. This is so helpful, Sarah.

Sarah: You're so welcome. And so just remember that setting the expectations piece.

Sarah: And if you find that, say you do that, all of that for leaving the friend's house and they still don't leave. You know, you might say, we're going to have to take a couple of days break and then we'll try again, right? It's not to make anyone feel bad or punish them. It's just like, you know what, we'll try again in a few days and then don't let it be too long.

Sarah: Like you don't, you know, we're not like artificially trying to like stretch it out, but, and then say, okay, you think you can try, can we try again? And, and [00:33:00] practice it. It's, it, I have had people tell me that it has immediate success, but I also don't want to like set you up that it's going to necessarily work on the first time, but it might, but just keep trying that.

Bonnie: I think if they have the buy in, you know, beforehand, like, can we do this? Yes. You know, I think it will work.

Sarah: Good, good. All right. Well, good luck. And we'll talk to you in a couple of weeks and see how it goes. Thank you, Sarah.

Sarah: Hi, Bonnie, welcome back to the podcast. Thank you, Sarah. Thanks for having me. So, how have things been since the last time we talked? Well, I have good news on bedtime. Okay. I think I told you before that our son Lucas was waking up really early in the morning, and then Eloise, our daughter, was like not going to bed until pretty late.

Bonnie: Right, so you had like the, on both ends. No, no time for yourself. And that was giving no margin for my husband and I. So we started roughhousing like very intentionally every [00:34:00] night. Like sometimes our daughter, she would want to draw or something, but we've just really been engaging her with roughhousing.

Bonnie: And we've seen how that has helped so much with her being able to fall asleep quicker. We tried the audio books and it seemed for her like it was keeping her awake. Maybe they were too busy. Too engaging of stories, you know, I got like longer classic novels and she was just wanting to finish the next chapter.

Sarah: You know what, actually I have a tip about that and actually I should have said that before. Maybe have her listen to things that she's already listened to. Like because she won't, it won't be, because you're right, it is engaging if you're listening to something that you really like and you don't want to fall asleep because you want to know what happens next.

Sarah: But maybe if she, I don't know if she listens to audio books when she plays or anything like that. I don't know. But maybe there's something that if she already knows the story or something that you've read or anyhow, you could, if it, if, if the roughhousing has been enough to fix it, great. But if you still feel that she needs to stay in bed, have her listen to something that she's already listened to or music.

Bonnie: Yes, we do music. So that's, [00:35:00] that's a beautiful, you know, reminder, like something she knows by memory, a story she knows that she's not like curious to find out what happens next. We'll definitely try that if she's just wide awake one night, you know? Okay. So the roughhousing is help though. Yes, it's helping so much.

Bonnie: Good. Yeah. That's awesome. My husband, like he's usually here in the evenings, but even when he's not here, I try to do it. And I love housing because I'm not as rough as dad, but I'm still trying to get them giggling. I think you mentioned that even like with Lucas, because it seems that he has a lot of rage and he wants to scream and cry.

Bonnie: And even like yesterday I was noticing he's laughing like so much. And I think that's. Like a way that we forget that he is releasing those emotions. Maybe a hundred

Sarah: percent. Yeah, a hundred percent. That's amazing. Yeah. Because a lot of times kids will you know, like grownups, like we don't like to feel, you know, the hard feelings.

Sarah: Right. And we sort of kind of avoid them, but then our backpacks get so full and [00:36:00] they end up like, you know, we ended up being more explosive. Right. So if you can. Like get the top layer of those feelings out of the backpack, then it's gonna make him less explosive, right? For sure. And you know what? I love that you're saying this in a public forum because I can't tell you how many times I recommend roughhousing to people or Corey does.

Sarah: And I don't think people do it because I don't think they think it's going to make that big of a difference.

Bonnie: Yeah, it does. And the laughing with him really does. I get so serious or just so like on task, you know, like get through the routine, have the dinner, but when I can allow myself, even if it's five to 10 minutes to just be over the top, silly, like something in them gets so released.

Bonnie: They think it's just hysterical that I am being this goofy, you know, character or whatever. And it's actually fun for me too. It helps me to not take stuff so

Sarah: seriously, you

Bonnie: know?

Sarah: Yeah, that's awesome, because I think you're right, it does affect us too, like, of course, because you have a backpack, you have a backpack with feelings and tensions and stresses in it, so it's helping you [00:37:00] get all of those feelings out too.

Bonnie: Yes, I think what I noticed since my last talk with you was just my own personal health. Like I was struggling with some fatigue and exhaustion and I needed to, you know, really take care of my health. And I know you have some podcasts on it, but that's been a huge help for me with parenting, like taking note.

Bonnie: Of what I need and really not apologizing. If I need to lay down, like whether at the park and I don't want to play in that moment saying, no, my body's tired. So I'm going to sit right here and watch you or whatever that is. And not like feeling guilty, but really taking notice of my needs and I guess just tending to myself a little more has given me more margins, you know, to give back to my kids.

Sarah: That's huge. I love that. You know what else, Bonnie? Oh, well, first of all, I'm going to tell you a funny game that I, that I just read about yesterday. And I had heard of this before, but I was, I saw it on someone's feed yesterday. It's called what's on my butt or bum in Canada, as we say. And you like lie on the couch and you have in close your [00:38:00] eyes and have your kids like put something on your butt and you have to guess what it is, but think about it.

Sarah: You're lying down on the couch the whole time or on the floor on your bed or whatever. So So it's a great game that you can play when you're tired. You can just like lie on the couch. So what's on my butt. The other thing I wanted to say though, was that I think last time after we hung up, I thought, Oh, I didn't really get to address this, what she's talked about in the beginning, which is how hard you are on yourself.

Sarah: And so that I love that you're sort of being more aware of your wellness and your needs because. You and as we said before, I have talked to you before

and I know that you do tend to be extremely hard on yourself and it's so important to not, you know, feel like you have to be perfect or you know, and to feel like give yourself a little bit of grace.

Bonnie: Yes, I even like got with a friend this week and she stays home with her five kids and we just had coffee and we encouraged each other like we're doing good, you know, we're, we're doing hard things and it's important and [00:39:00] just, we don't hear a lot of encouragement if you're a parent. is home and you're working day and night, like nobody's thanking you for all the sacrifices and just all the meals and the diaper changes or whatever you're doing.

Bonnie: It's so hidden and it can feel discouraging. So even just like encouraging myself, you know, like, okay, like focusing on the good moments, like even so simply the other day I hit my head like really hard. I was in the closet and I came up and it was a. It was a not for several days. So I'm like hollering and crying.

Bonnie: Both of my kids came running to me, mom, do you need an ice pack mom? And they're hugging and kissing me. And, you know, I need to take time to like savor those moments where, Hey, they're like showing signs of empathy and compassion, like. Those are no small things for a four and six year old to be able to care for someone else, right?

Sarah: Yeah, the beautiful thing is that the things that you do with your kids when they're little, as, as they, I mean, and I'm on the other side of that, right? With like grown up or [00:40:00] almost grown up kids. And you do see all of that kindness and you know, the kindness modeled back to you. It's really, it's really lovely that is what goes around, comes around.

Sarah: But you know what, just to go back for a second of what you said about the hardness of being at home with kids. Not only is it hidden, everything that you do in a lot of ways, but I used to try to explain it to my husband and I was like, I Imagine if you're at work and all of your performance reviews are just bad.

Sarah: Like, I hate this food. Why are you so mean? Why can't we do this? It's like, you know, when you're, when you're working at a job, you often get a lot of positive feedback, right? Oh, you know, good job on that report that you did, or, you know, the customer was really happy or whatever. But when you're at home with kids, it's often really negative, all the stuff that you hear.

Sarah: So it can be really downtrodden. Yes, so what are your recommendations if we do just hear how we're ruining their lives ten times a day, you know? I used to try to just appreciate myself more. You know, [00:41:00] like try to get a sense of like the bigger picture and what I'm trying to do and just like try to appreciate myself.

Sarah: And yeah, you know, they might not, they might think the food that I made is gross. But, yeah. You know, I enjoyed the food that I made, or I know that it's providing them energy. You know, they mostly would eat what I made, but you know, they, of course, they would have rather had like chicken fingers and whatever.

Sarah: But I would just try to appreciate myself a lot more. You know, I, I. I probably, you know, if I, if I had it to do over again, I might've tried a little bit harder to get my husband to, you know, have the domestic, the domestic workload and emotional workload be seen a little bit more. Because I don't think I did a very great job at that.

Sarah: But you know, I don't know. That's, we're going into another territory here. I want to, you may need to do a podcast about that, but I think I just would appreciate myself more. That's good. That's huge. We don't take time to do [00:42:00] that maybe as much as we should, you know? Yeah. And I think also I always used to, I've talked about this before on the podcast, but I always used to think about like, okay, when the kids are older, things will be easier or when they're sleeping through the night or when this or when that, and I think I was really future focused and Maybe 10 years into my mothering, I had kind of this like, like a bolt of awareness of like, this moment that you're living in right now could be like your last moment, right?

Sarah: So I started to tell myself, I had this slogan where I would say, this is it. Like, this is the life that you're living and stop looking to the future for things to be better and try to find something about the moment that you're in to appreciate. And that helped a lot too.

Bonnie: I love that. Yeah. I'm like, I have this burning desire to enjoy like my actual life, like right now, not if anything changes or if anything was different, you know, it's hard.

Bonnie: It feels like there's, you know, discouragement or like you said, being at home and hearing what they don't like. [00:43:00] What can I focus on or be grateful for or, or notice and just like savor that goodness, you know, each day, a

small cup of tea or something, you know, the sun, the sunshine or being able to be at the park or something.

Sarah: Totally. And also I think when you are at home with kids like you mentioned that you have a friend who has kids you know, try to, if you can give each other breaks like try to not lose sight of you and what you like to do. I think you play guitar, if I remember correctly.

Bonnie: Happier when I get just 10 minutes to play the car at

Sarah: a point in the day or even so make sure you don't lose sight of the things that make you like, who is body?

Sarah: What do you, what did you like to do before kids try to, you know, obviously our lives are different after kids, but try to think of like who you are outside of a mother.

Bonnie: I love that. And not feel guilty

Sarah: for date

Bonnie: nights or time alone. A hundred percent. Things go a long way, at least for me personally. You know, just a little time out shopping, even though I'm trying to be on a budget.

Sarah: I haven't fact checked [00:44:00] this, but I just heard on a podcast that a predictor of a child's like mental health and wellbeing is the happiness of their mother.

Bonnie: Wow. That makes me want to be so happy.

Sarah: Yeah.

Bonnie: Oh my goodness. That's so cool.

Sarah: So if taking care of yourself is not selfish, like you're, if, if the only reason you do it is to raise your kids who are happier and healthier, then let that be your inspiration.

Bonnie: That's going to be my mantra. Now I'm going to be like, I'm doing all this, you know, self care

Sarah: for you,

Bonnie: honey.

Sarah: Exactly. I'm taking time away from you for you.

Bonnie: Yeah. That's, that's a beautiful reminder. Cause we do feel guilty for all sorts of things that we shouldn't, you know, taking care of ourselves is. is so important.

Bonnie: So thank you for helping me to see that again.

Sarah: Yeah. And now you're going to have a recording of yourself saying that, so you're going to have to do it. You'll remind yourself. Okay. So before we started recording, you told me that one of the main things that we talked about, which was leaving friends houses, you actually haven't had a chance to [00:45:00] try that out yet.

Sarah: So I guess that's something that. You know, if you, if you let me know if you, if you do end up trying it, well, I don't know, add a little postscript onto this podcast or something, but is there anything else that you wanted to catch us up on or anything else that that you still are, are finding challenging that we talked about?

Bonnie: I asked my husband this morning, you know, is there anything last minute questions? And he was saying like, it just seems that our kids push back on every single suggestion. I was like, she'll probably say that's a healthy sign.

Sarah: Yes. Yeah, I mean, when you, when you want to shift away from your goal is not obedience, right?

Sarah: Your goal, and I think we talked about that. Your goal is, yeah. Or even,

Bonnie: you know, like, you suggest it and you never want to go

Sarah: along with it. Our goal, like, we want to shift away from obedience and compliance. Our goal is cooperation. Right. Teamwork and cooperation. Like that's the huge shift of peaceful parenting is that compliance and obedience are not what our goals [00:46:00] are, but our goals are teamwork and cooperation.

Sarah: And so, yes, pushing back on things is you know, shows kids who aren't afraid of you. Which is really great. Shows kids who are gonna like think about when they're when they're teenagers and grown ups and they're not going to be afraid to speak their minds and say what they want and say what they need and if somebody suggests something that they do that they don't feel comfortable with they're going to be like I don't know about that right.

Sarah: So this is really it really it's inconvenient when they're little but as they get older it's such a good character trait and such a powerful strength.

Bonnie: So if we need them to do something, whether that's leaving, you know, a friend's house or leaving the park or whatever that is, is it changing our language to that more cooperative invitation for them or?

Bonnie: Well,

Sarah: I think it's trying to help them understand the big why. Like remember last time we talked about, we're going to leave like good guests because we want our friends to invite us back, right? Yes. Or we are, we need [00:47:00] to get to bed so that our bodies get enough rest so that we have energy for tomorrow and that we grow, you know, because we grow when we're sleeping.

Sarah: And so that mom and dad can get a good night's sleep so that we are not cranky mom tomorrow or cranky dad. I used to say that to my kids. I'm like, if I don't get enough sleep, I'm going to be like cranky mom tomorrow. And if you want like happy, fun mom who wants to play with you, you need to go to sleep so I can go to sleep.

Bonnie: That's good. And even like picking up the house, I feel like they have been more cooperative. Maybe because we were putting that time in with roughhousing, you know, or being silly and it doesn't feel like such a demand. It's like, okay, we're all going to do this so we can do something else. Like pick up this room so we can rough house.

Bonnie: Like we can't rough house if there's little Legos on the floor, you know? So maybe they're, maybe that's helping them to be cooperative because they see. Like, what's going to come after that? Yeah, the big why. And also, you know, while, while connection is not a magic wand that makes kids [00:48:00] instantly do everything we say, it, when kids feel connected, they do feel like more cooperative.

Sarah: They do want to cooperate with you more. Yeah. And then we've been buckling Lucas in his car seat. We've not really asked him. We're just doing it for him. Great. Oh, that's right. That's something else we talked about. Right. Was you were like, why does it, I'm like, just buckle it. Yeah. So we're playing him and both my husband and I, and that's been going great.

Bonnie: We're not having any issues there. And then after school, I try to like, whether it's pick up Eloise or just tell her like how much I missed her, because I think we talked about sometimes she instigates and like, she's really out of source after school. And I don't have just one on one time with her because I have both kids for a while.

Bonnie: So I try to just kiss on her, love on her, and tell her how much I missed her, or I want to do something special with her later, you know, for special time. That's making a difference. It really is. It seems so small. It seems like it wouldn't, but it is. Yeah, that's the whole thing with delighting in a child or delighting in whoever you're [00:49:00] delighting in, is it's so easy to do and it makes such a huge difference.

Sarah: Like really the hardest part is remembering to, to do it, right? But you can do it without any extra energy or time, like just building it into your daily routine of that, as you said, loving on her. I just love it. Yeah, thank you, Sarah. I'm feeling encouraged. You are so welcome. Thank you for the update. And please let me know the next time you go to a friend's house how, how it went.

Sarah: Okay. I will. Okay. Thanks, Bonnie.

Bonnie: Thanks.

Sarah: Thanks for listening to this week's episode. I hope you found this conversation insightful and exactly what you needed in this moment. Be sure to subscribe to the show on your favorite podcast platform and leave us a rating and review on Apple Podcasts. Remember that I'm rooting for you. I see you out there showing up for your kids and doing the best you can.

Sarah: Sending hugs over the airwaves today. Hang in there. You've got this.