Lori

[00:00:00] Welcome to the Peaceful Parenting Podcast. I'm your host, Sarah Rosen, sweet 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.

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.

Let's dive into this week's conversation.

Hey everyone. Welcome back to another episode of the Peaceful Parenting Podcast. Today my guest is Lori Sugarman Lee, and she is she's a parenting coach and an author and somebody who helps families make the [00:01:00] domestic load more fair. She is trained in Fair Play, which you will hear her talk about a little bit.

But she really decided that change is gonna start with the next generation. So she focuses on helping us help our children take more responsibility within the home. And this was so in, in line with peaceful parenting and what I teach parents in terms of raising helpful kids.

I think you'll be really interested to hear Lori's ideas and her strategies. And we talked about really, it's not about, you know, as I always say, you can force somebody to put their plate in the dishwasher, but that doesn't make them into a helpful person. So we really talked about how to do that and the experiences that Lori's had in coaching families and her own family and really that you'll have some great takeaways from this episode.

I. I also wanna encourage you to check out the website of our sponsor, yo Oto player. Yo Oto is a screen free audio player for kids.

You can either buy books from [00:02:00] Yoko they come on cards. So you can either buy cards that are prerecorded with, you know, the classics that you might

have grown up listening to, or some of more newer books, and they. Come in all age ranges or you can make your own audio content from podcasts or from MP threes that you have or from music that you own.

So it can be a music player, it can be an audio book player, it can be a podcast player. And the best thing is it's not connected to the internet, so no one's listening in on your kids. They're not making contact with anyone you don't want them to make contact with, and there's no screen. It's really such a great tool.

Corey is the one who told me about this. She said that it's one of the most important pieces of equipment in their house. I think actually each of her kids have one. My niece recently got one, I bought her one for her birthday and I just really wish these around, were around when my kids were growing up.

So please check out the Yto player. You can go to reimagine peaceful parenting.com/yo to, and really just check it out. It's. It's a really great tool, helps kids [00:03:00] play independently and you know, I think what I would've used it for a lot is. Partly the independent play. Maxine listened to a lot of audio books when she was playing when she was little, but of course I had to set it up and it was pretty much a pain in the butt to ha to make that happen in an easy way.

And if she had yto player, it would've been a lot easier. But also I think when she was falling asleep or when my kids, any of them were falling asleep to have something to listen to that was on a sleep timer. There's just so many great features, so check out reimagined peaceful parenting.com/yo oto player.

Okay. I wanna introduce you to Lori now, and I think you'll find this conversation really great. Please make sure that you are following the show so you don't miss an episode. And please rate and review us wherever you listen to this podcast. It really helps us to reach more people.

Sarah: Hi, Lori, welcome to the podcast. Thank you so much. It's a pleasure. Yeah. So why don't you start out by and we just started to chat [00:04:00] off, off before the recording, and I'm like wait. Like, let's stop. This is really interesting. Let's just dive in. So why don't you introduce yourself and we will dive into our topic.

Lori: Super. I'm Lori Sugarman Lee. I am a family coach focused on equity and domestic labor, and I say that I'm sort of like WD 40 for families, helping them get unstuck when they feel overwhelmed by sort of the stresses and pressures of

daily life. I also speak to corporate groups and women's groups about family wellness and I'm also the author of.

Children's book, our Home, the Love, work and Heart of Family, which I wrote to be a conversation starter for families about the power of how we care for one another and the space that we share. And a rebranding of chores into expressions of gratitude for those with whom we share a space.

Sarah: Nice. And what I had started to ask you about 'cause I noticed that you were a fair play instructor maybe do you.

Steve Rodsky was on our pod [00:05:00] podcast a while ago, but talking about unicorn space and not fair play, but maybe just quickly give like what Fair Play is and then I'll lead into what my question was gonna be. Sure.

Lori: So Fair Play is a book and also a deck of cards that act as a guiding system and framework for families who are seeking to balance equity in domestic.

Labor, so who are feeling really off kilter and for whom it is impacting the wellness of their family and they are seeking a better language and a better for framework for division of labor. It's super duper helpful.

Sarah: Yeah. It's like a way of concretely seeing what. Each person does in a way of dividing, dividing up the household tasks, right?

Like in the service of, in the service of making the domestic and mental load more fair between partners.

Lori: Exactly. And also not only focusing on the work, but also achieving [00:06:00] equity in rest, equity, in joy, equity, in personal pursuits, creative pursuits, athletic pursuits, whatever nourishes your soul beyond who you are as a parent, a partner, and a professional.

So it's a really holistic approach to. Balance and wellness in the family.

Sarah: Boy, do I wish that was around when my kids were little. I was having right kids in the early two thousands and my husband and I talk about it now and he, I think he feels a lot of regret for how sort of things went down. I was a stay at home mom.

And I have to say, I had. I realized when I was reading Fair Play a couple years ago, I had really inter internalized the capitalist system of, oh yes, if you're not making money, you don't have any right to say like I deserve. And I'll say what now I see it boils down to is who has more free time?

Right, that's, it is like, like who has more free time? And I had zero free time. Because I felt like my job was just like all the time, kids house, cooking, laundry, that's [00:07:00] it. And my husband was working and it, and I think we both bought into this idea that he deserves free time because he's making the money.

Right. A hundred percent. Yeah. And I didn't have a way, I knew it didn't feel right, but I didn't have a way to talk about it, you know? Right. I would just say like, why? Like we would get in these big fights and I remember when my son was little, he said, why can't you both agree that Dad's job is harder, but Mamas takes more time? Or something

like that. Like he was trying to Oh, he was really ahead of his time with that. Yeah, he was trying.

Sarah: Yeah, he was trying to find a way that we could find this common ground.

So you started to tell me before we started recording, why you have shifted to work more with the children rather than partners.

And maybe you could explain about that. Well, first of all, I.

Lori: I do wanna touch on what you raised because it, it is the, such a critical element, if not the nucleus of all of this, which is that, you know, women's shoulder, 75% of the [00:08:00] executional labor that is care. Not to mention the mental and emotional load and I say women, but we see this trend in girls as young as eight.

In addition to this women have, as you exactly articulated, women have five fewer hours of leisure time per week, and it is impacting wellness. 80% of autoimmune diseases are diagnosed in women twice as many, you know, stress, anxiety, and depression related disorders as men. And it is. Absolutely and directly correlated to this load that we bear because we have been believing these societal definitions and norms that you know, that motherhood and caregiving are one in the same, and that if we are a good mother, we will be in service of our families.

From dawn till dusk. And it's not sustainable. And what I recognize when I came to this [00:09:00] work and the backstory is kind of interesting, but when I came to this work, I was actually thriving in the care economy doing unpaid work as a full-time stay-at-home mother and someone who was very involved in my community and my kids' schools.

And I was made aware with a very bubble bursting moment. That I had with an insurance agent who refused to insure me for disability insurance because I was quote unquote, only a housewife. And because quote unquote, if something were to happen to me, there would be no loss. He said to me, of course, because he was focused, loss of income, right On a loss of income, but there was no acknowledgement of all of the unpaid work.

And of course. We who have, whether you're a stay-at-home mom full-time, whether you're, you know, balancing work in the home and work out of the home. We know as women like the scope and the weight of this work. But what I recognized was that it was so. [00:10:00] Invisible otherwise. And so I really wanted to be a part of the conversation that would bring value and visibility to this work.

And I found, as you said, Eve Rodsky and Fair Play, which was like a huge light bulb moment, game changer for me. And I recognized that if I wanted this work of care that I was so, passionate about and entrenched in to be perceived as work. I really had to begin to speak about it that way.

And

Lori: the first thing I did was to go and create a LinkedIn profile for myself as a stay-at-home mother, acknowledging my contributions, you know, recognizing my growth and all of the ways that I was participating in society and having an impact. In this unpaid work and I wrote an article. I love that pushback.

Sarah: I just wanna like call that out for a second. Okay. The pushback. Okay, great. Of creating a LinkedIn profile for your home, say at home, mom, I just love that so much.

Lori: I think the biggest aha for me was what's visible [00:11:00] is valued. And as a mother at that stage, I really internalized not only that.

All of that work of home and Care belonged to me. And I, I was, I say I, I agreed to that. Right? Because you don't realize when you're getting into it, like how absolutely all consuming it is, but like I agreed, as you said, my husband

would generate the income and I would do. Everything else, we, we literally articulated it that way.

Yeah. And so, you know, once I recognized that work beyond my little bubble wasn't visible, I had to be a part of that conversation. And, but I didn't have like a platform for impacting government policy or corporate policy or whatever. And I thought, well, what can I do from this position that I'm in as a stay at home mother whose involvements are primarily.

In my children's community with children's charities, and I thought, okay, let me create a resource for [00:12:00] kids. And it's really a book for families because women tell us that, you know, getting, number one, getting their kids involved in the work of home and care feels like another weight on their shoulders and a conversation that's really hard to start.

And I thought, okay. What can I create that can facilitate that conversation that the whole family can, you know, be involved in? And it's one thing to take off of the list of moms, which is. Convincing my children that this work is important and valuable.

Sarah: So did you when you sort of shifted more towards focusing on kids, was there a part of your brain that was like, it's already, this is so dark, but like it's already too late for this like, generation of, you know, we've seen so much of like the you know, that, that inequality, like, let's work with the next generation, or am I being too cynical about it?

Lori: You've got it exactly right. I was, when I was searching for my place in this work I [00:13:00] came upon a quote that said, if we seek to change adult behavior, let us show our children a better way. And that has been my mantra the whole time. And I think that, you know, if you look at like other ways that we have evolved as a society or are evolving.

When you speak to grownups about those topics, whatever they might be, you'll see that the grownups are still in like a state of evolution in like what they believe and understand about it when you speak to kids, like they're all in. Right? And so it's just. It felt so much more sort of like natural and made so much more sense to me to start from the ground up and create a future of equity in domestic labor, and an understanding for the next generation that this is not women's work.

This is not mother's responsibility, but this is how a family loves and cares for one another and expresses gratitude for all that they have. It's not gendered

work. [00:14:00] Right. And it's definitely not work that, that kids are not capable of or can't make space for. They are hugely important providers.

Sarah: Yeah. I wanna come back to your anecdote about the insurance. 'cause there's something I wanna say about that. But I also, you know, when I was staying at home, I really worried as. As a feminist who chose to stay home with the kids. 'cause that was an important, you know, value for us. I did worry though, about my kids seeing my husband going off in a suit in a briefcase every day and me not, you know?

That's right. For sure. Sure. Like I worried that I was sending them messages about like, what women can do and what men can do, and really tricky. It was really tricky and I, yeah, you know, I tried to balance that out as best I could, but it is hard when you're actually. Doing the stereotype that you don't want your kids to think is the reality that it has to be for their lives,

Lori: and that's why it's so critical for two pieces to come into that, which is number one, that.

The work of, you know, giving care that you were [00:15:00] doing has got to have an elevated value in our society. Yes. And also children need to see men participating in that. I love that. Right. So much so that it's not like, it's not like that's yours and it's like, you know, wiping crumbs off the floor while dad is like dressed up going to something more important.

It's like. No we all participate in the elements of care for this family. Here's what they all are, but like, they co-exist. They co-mingle. That's what makes us thrive is everybody's participation in all of it.

Sarah: When you so I listened to you on another podcast. So I heard you tell the about, you know, your husband saying when you were trying to get the disability insurance and the insurance guy saying, you know, sorry, what you do doesn't have any value, quote value, but I remember in the anecdote when you told it before that your husband actually had said like, we need to look into this because.

Anything were to happen to you, I'd have to go on leave [00:16:00] from work. So it sounds like your husband already value, already saw the value of the domestic load and the work that you're doing. How, is that something that you taught him or did he grow up already knowing that or, you know, that, that strikes me as pretty evolved for for some men today.

Lori: Wow. So I will definitely give him credit for being. Evolved and for really embracing this concept that I think even before my connection to fair play into this work, I definitely, I. Spoke a lot about the impact and the value of the care and community work and he did see me doing a lot. I mean, I was one of those women who raised my hand for absolutely everything.

You know, the head of the parents association and the chair of the committee for the fundraiser and all of the things. So he saw that for me, it really was. A [00:17:00] full time, full energy effort. And also that I was applying my skills and my passions and, you know, my high standards from my previous career, which was paid as a marketing strategist to this work.

So I think he was very aware of its value. But I will also say he grew up with a mom who was. Not only a full-time professional, but she was the head of the pediatric emergency at Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. So she had a major job and I think she was sort of less involved.

So he, he saw like sort of less of that growing up. So it was really fascinating for him actually to, you know, to embrace. But this was the agreement that we had. And I think. I was definitely very outspoken about the value of the work. That said, I will acknowledge something that I probably would change if I had the [00:18:00] chance to go back, which was I put a lot of pressure for myself to do all of this work.

Not only perfectly, but also like. After he left and before he got home, so that when he got home, it was like everything was perfect. Right? Yeah. Right. And the mistake that I made there was it became invisible to him. The details right. The details of the tasks. And I think.

Again, what's visible is valued. And so, I have had the chance to evolve into the work of care that I do now. I do much more sort of loudly and in connection with my family so that they're not only aware of all the things that need to be done, but the specific details of the tasks and the standards to which, you know, our family agrees to perform 'em, so, that's a great education for family in real time.

Sarah: I love that. Okay, so shifting gears a little bit more to like the nitty [00:19:00] gritty I thought it would be fun to share with you sort of what I teach about chores and brilliant. And helping, and then you tell me what your system what your philosophy would say like.

Yeah, that's great. Or low, add this or Definitely don't do that. How does that sound? Super. I'm screaming this let's,

I'm screening this on you. Pop quiz. Let's go. Okay. So,

Sarah: I mean, just like an abbreviated abbreviated way that we look at the approach is like that we're raising kids who are helpful rather than kids who are like.

Going to you know, you have to do this, but like, raising kids who wanna be part of the family team. Like, that's what I always talk about, like talking about the family team and how can you help out the family team and starting from when they're young. And this is something that that I read about later, which really in, in the, do you know the book Hunt Gather parent?

How she talks about like involving your kids in like the daily life stuff, when they wanna help when they're little and they're not so good at it. Right, right. For sure. For inviting them to do all of the cooking with you [00:20:00] or the, you know, laundry or whatever you're doing, even if you have to, you know, set aside your standards a little bit or it takes longer or whatever. But like, it's inviting kids to be with you and do things with you, right? Inviting them to help and also to make it fun, you know, put some music on and make the chores fun. And then showing appreciation and drawing attention to results so that they internalize a sense of like, I'm a capable person who just made that space go from messy to.

Neat. You know, and look how good it looks now. So really like building that intrinsic motivation to want to be helpful because it feels good and it feels like a, you've got a sense of accomplishment. And then when they don't wanna help, and this is the part where I'm curious about what you would say is to model graciousness.

You know, like say you're you know, they're. You say, you know, bring your plate to the kitchen and they're like, I don't want to, and, you know, fall down on the floor, like, okay, I'll bring your plate for you today. Maybe I'll do it next time. Right? Like [00:21:00] being the person, the helpful person and gracious person that you want 'em to be, and to not get into power struggles over.

You know, I always say you can force somebody to put their plate in the dishwasher, but that's not gonna make them a helpful person who wants to be part of the family team.

All

Sarah: right. So I just distilled like. Something big into like two minutes. So give me your thoughts.

Let's take a quick break to hear about the Yo Oto player. Yo Oto is a new sponsor of our podcast. I only promote products that I really believe in, and yo Oto is a great product. I wish they were around when my kids were growing. Yo Oto is a screen free audio player for kids. It uses physical cards to play stories, music, podcasts, and other audio content, encouraging independent listening and play.

You can buy the cards for your favorite books from the classics like Charlotte's Web or Raw Doll, or newer books like Captain Underpants. You can also make your own cards of podcast stories or music from MP three files. Yto also creates original content like radio and podcasts for kids. The possibilities [00:22:00] for listening are varied and endless.

Yto also features a nightlight and okay to wait clock and other functions like white noise and an alarm. It's not connected to the internet, so kids can't go where you don't want them to go, and no one is listening in on them. And did I mention it screen free? I learned about Yto from Corey. Here's what she says.

The Yoko player is by far my favorite parenting tool that I've ever purchased, and I recommend them to everyone who has kids. They're an amazing screen-free audiobook player that have been an absolute lifesaver for teaching my kids to play independently. Both my kids carried their yo Oto players around the house, listening to books while drawing, doing Lego, and even relaxing in their rooms before bed.

We also take yo Oto players everywhere with us, short or long car trips, sporting events, restaurants, and even doctor's appointments. On a recent vacation, their yo Oto players got them through an eight hour drive and were used every evening in our hotel to help my kids relax. After very busy days, yo Oto has an impressive and ever-growing collection of books you can buy and have absolutely helped inspire [00:23:00] a love of reading in both my kids.

Thanks for the firsthand recommendation, Corey. And I also just wanna highlight that you don't have to buy their books. You can buy blank cards and record your own content. To learn more, visit reimagine peaceful parenting.com/yto. That's reimagined peaceful parenting.com/yto YOTO. I hope

you check them out and I'm just so happy to have them on as a sponsor for the podcast.

Let's get back to the podcast.

Lori: Well, first of all, I love absolutely everything that you said, and I was like furiously taking notes and just circling things in stars and hearts and like, you know, so much of the, what you just articulated is exactly how I like to support and guide families.

And I'll just reinforce a few of the really important concepts that you raise. First of all this idea of it not being about, you know, you have to do this because I said so but rather starting from a place [00:24:00] of. Families. And I love that you called it family team 'cause that's exactly how I refer to families too.

Having all of your agreements centered in your shared family values is such a huge opportunity. And I've heard you talk about values so often and I feel like even the littlest of kids have something meaningful and important to say in a conversation about family values. It's such a great starting point to sit down and say.

We can make our life whatever we want it to be. In our little family, in our cocoon, in our home, we make the rules. We decide what's important, we decide what's not important, so let's talk about it. Is that your starting pace? It is, yes. Okay. I love to, to encourage families to just start at this point of connection, which is.

What feels important to us, and there will be some places where they overlap and they have sort of [00:25:00] agreements as a family, and there will be some things where they differ, right? Because they, people even within the same family are wired differently, right? We feel different about different, we thrive in different spaces in different ways.

And so I love this idea of sort of pushing to the side this notion that parents. Dictate, no, you have to do this. But rather it comes from the ground up as like sprouts from family values and agreements and yes, the family as a team is so critical. And as well you articulated that this is not about.

Perfection. Right? It's not, and it's also not about unloading work onto kids. Let's acknowledge, yes, the work of home and care is a heavy load, but that's not what this is about. It's about empowerment and it's about trust and it's about

enabling kids to see what they are capable of and also to experience maybe things that are not the right match for them, right?

And so. [00:26:00] We don't care if the underwear is folded perfectly. We just care. Or

Sarah: even I heard you talking about that on a podcast and I was like, or if it's folded at all. 'cause like I used to just sort the kids' laundry into bins and then give them each a bin if they wanted to fold it and put it away they could if they wanted to live out of the bin.

They could do that also, right?

Lori: Like and that's, and that is your family standard and that is perfect for your family. And

Sarah: well, what do you do when your standard, okay, I, sorry, I'm interrupting you, but Yeah, no, this is great. No, I want to go back to your points, but what do you do when your standard is different from your kids' standard?

Lori: Yeah. So this is a great one. So I I will. Acknowledge very type A personality. I like everything just so surfaces are cleared off, everything's wiped, you know, very tidy. I have a 14-year-old who simply does not thrive in an environment like that. He loves to be surrounded by all of his sort of nostalgic things.

On every surface, like hanging [00:27:00] from every hook. He loves to look at things and remember and be connected to his past and Lego sets that he built. And you know, he has like this clock that he made in second grade with a drawing of a piece of cheese in the middle. Like just all these things that are special to him.

And he loves to see these things every day. And so for me to go into his space and say. Okay. Like this has got to go, you know? Like, we've gotta put all this away. That doesn't honor him at all. So I think when it comes to especially a child's like individual space, the best thing that you can do is to honor.

What they need to thrive and help them be the best version of that. So understanding that we start from a point of health and safety, always, right? We don't want like, you know, a pizza box under the bed because then we're gonna get bugs and who knows, whatever. But otherwise say to them like, okay, if you

wanna [00:28:00] keep all these Lego sets on top, probably you're gonna need to like lift them.

Whatever the frequency is, once every two weeks and just run a dust cloth underneath and then you can put it back down or whatever it is, you know, to enjoy your space the way you want to, but also to keep it safe.

Sarah: So, so that's a really, that's a such a funny example because my, so I hope my sister doesn't mind 'cause I'm gonna use her as an example.

I was visiting my sister in the summer, her daughter was seven. She had like a toy corner with all very similar sounding to, you know, shelves with all of her special things on the shelves and like. You know, magnet tile creations that she'd made that she didn't wanna break. That kind of thing. Yeah. Yeah.

My sister is very much like you type A, not wanting any dust or crumbs or whatever. And my sister said to her daughter you're gonna have to we're gonna have to like, clear all that stuff up so we can clean it. 'cause it's dusty, right? Yeah. And my sister's daughter at first didn't wanna like clear any of the stuff up.

And I said, why don't you just like, you [00:29:00] know, move the stuff like, just the way you said dust under it. And then my sister said that her daughter had to do it. And I was like, but it's not important to her. It's important to you. And like, why don't you just dust the stuff? Like, I, so a similar example of like, I didn't care if my kids made their beds, but sometimes I didn't wanna look at an unmade bed.

So I would go in and make the bed just because it was important to me and not important to them. So when you don't have the same standards. W where would you, like, if your son said to you, I don't care if my stuff is dusty. Would you say, well, it's important to me, so I'll go in and dust your room. Or do you see what I'm saying here?

Like Totally. So like when it's not a health or safety thing, and I guess if you're allergic to dust, maybe it could be a health thing. Right?

Lori: And so, right. And so I think when it comes to dust and stuff, you probably could argue that. That enters into like a health, I mean, my son is asthmatic, so it happens to be for him that is connected to wellness.

But that something like that would be like part of your foundational agreements for your home. There's a [00:30:00] difference between like having a clean and. Healthy space and having a space that is like decorated, you know, as you need it to be. And so that would be a part of your family agreement and helping her to be her best self to understand, because that is like a really foundational skill

that

Lori: she's gonna grow up to need at some point. I mean, at some point you have to clear the dust away or else it becomes. You know, un unsafe and risky. But you know, I think what you were talking about with the made beds, again, like that's a standard that works for your family that is not to be judged.

Like

Lori: it doesn't matter what anyone else does with their beds or what anyone else thinks about your bets.

You decide. And it's a great example because again, my 14-year-old. His morning routine doesn't have any space for him to make his bed. He needs all the time that he has to get, you know, for his grooming, his [00:31:00] breakfast and getting his books ready, the making of the bed just doesn't fit into that for him.

And so I. I don't request or require that at all. That being said, he is sometimes moved to make his bed, particularly before he starts doing some real locked in studying because he finds a connection between like, okay, I, in order for me to focus on my desk, like I need everything beside me to be orderly.

So he decides then I'm gonna straighten up my. Comforter. Mm-hmm. And so that kind of stuff is really all up to him. We have an agreement for basic cleanliness and the frequency of that. And so that is something that your sister and her daughter, I. Could maybe work through. Right. And you know, I was going to get to this when you talked about what, again, you gave this example when you, when they don't wanna help and modeling graciousness.

And one thing that I could add as a layer to that, that I [00:32:00] find really helpful and impactful with kids is not presenting this as a list of chores or a list of to-dos that just feel like. A weighty, annoying, dreaded, I mean, literally the definition of the word chore is dreaded, repetitive, unappealing work.

It's such an unfortunate word that we've applied to this work of like nourishing and nurturing and protecting our investments like our home and our car, and adhering to community and municipal standards, right? Like putting out the trash and whatever. But what I find really compelling is.

Explaining the why behind all of this work. Why do we believe we have to do all this? It's not as simple as saying like, Nope, like this is the list. We've gotta check them off before we can do anything fun. Well, let me tell you why do we do this? Right? And I remember asking my, again, my 14-year-old, he was 13 at the time, to strip his bed and [00:33:00] change his sheets.

And I mean, there is no more annoying task, right? Than that fitted sheet. And I recognized like, oh, yeah, he doesn't know why he's doing that. And so I sat him down and I said, like, buddy, you maybe don't realize it, but there's a direct correlation between sleeping on a clean pillowcase and having clear skin.

And suddenly as a teenager, he's like, oh. I get, not only do I get why I'm doing this, but this is for me. And suddenly they became a much more engaged participant in the work when they understand why we're doing this. I love to give the example also of keeping a clean car, right? For people who do a lot of carpooling and running to a lot of activities and jetting around, you likely have a delightful carpet of like granola bar crumbs, maybe a banana peel, a few wrappers, whatever.

And you know, as a parent you could [00:34:00] become frustrated that the car is always dirty and you know, scream at your kids to like stop throwing things on the ground. Or you could take a minute and explain to them the way that cars hold value. And as a family, you've made this investment into this car and maybe in five years.

You say you're going to want to trade it in or sell it or whatever the mechanism is there, and if you keep it well, it'll be worth X dollars. And if you don't keep it as well, it'll be worth Y dollars. And so the difference, let's say the difference between X and Y is $500. What is the meaning of that $500 to your family, and then you start to dream you.

You encourage them to dream. What would we do with $500 in five years if we keep the car clean together? Yeah. So it's just that context of like. Why do we care about this? Why do we make space for this? And how does it [00:35:00] come back really to, to benefit at the wellness of our family?

Sarah: Yeah, I love that. I mean, it's so in line with what we teach in Peaceful Parenting is like helping kids understand the why of, you know, why we're not gonna shout at grandma's house or in the library, or, you know, just helping them understand the why instead of just be quiet.

Right, right. Exactly. And it's like. Like building in that internal the intrinsic motivation to wanna do the right thing by understanding how your actions affect your environment and the people around you and your community.

Lori: That's

Sarah: exactly it.

Yeah. I think

Lori: we're so aligned. Yeah. And then the other thing that you said was.

What's so interesting is as it relates to the result, right? So, so not only that that their participation is helpful and that is sometimes a word that I encourage away from slightly because it sort of positions the work as belonging to the mother. And the kids are sort of waiting in the wings to be called in [00:36:00] to almost like.

Do like

Sarah: A favor, right. But if you had it, if you were talking about it in terms of the family, I think that would take a, that would be different wouldn't it?

Lori: If we are all positioned as helpful. Yes, absolutely.

Sarah: But I'd love to use, but I like that distinction you made. So I think just being careful about it's not helping me.

Not

Lori: helping

Sarah: me. Exactly. It's helping the family.

Lori: Right. And you did articulate it as being helpful not helping me. Which is exactly the way to go. An opportunity to bring in more language about, you

know, leadership, partnership, collaboration working together even, you know, even acknowledging, and it's so funny I have the words and the wisdom now to look back at my own relationship with my dad.

We spent a lot of time working around the home together. Whenever he had a big task, he called me in to do it with him. And what I realize now is that he likely had some kind of like really magical, beautiful neurodivergence that [00:37:00] prevented him from. Embracing and creating a plan for the task on his own.

Ha. He was body doubling with you. He was body doubling with me. Yeah. And he could see that was a skill of mine, even at a young age, and I felt so special. Right. That he always trusted me and empowered me and brought me in and we were so successful together. He made it fun, right? He always had either the Blue Jays game on or whatever, like we listened to a lot of CBC radio when I was growing up and it was such special time.

I. 'cause he really let me do a lot of really important things. I mean, almost everything up until like, I think he stopped at the Black and Decker bandsaw. Like I wasn't allowed to use that. But everything and it's interesting. Like I felt so capable, I think was the word that you used and trusted and empowered and and that was really formative for.

I think the work that I'm doing now, I love that.

Sarah: Yeah. So what do you, going back a little bit to the, when kids don't [00:38:00] wanna do it you know, understanding the big why, this is why we're doing this as a family. And you know, and I did hear you talking about this before, like making exceptions for, you know, if you know one of your kids has a really heavy.

You know, homework night or something. Yes. There might be a time where you're just like, you know what? I'll clean up after dinner on my own tonight. I know you have a lot of homework that why don't you get your homework? That's right. Yep. So it's really about, there is some flexibility here of being able to Oh yes.

You know, model, you know, making exceptions for things. 'cause I think when. We wanna be careful about being rigid and not helping when, even if it's like a kid's job or something, because then that's just, is teaching the opposite of being helpful. Like, you know, being helpful is about seeing what needs to be done and seeing what people's needs are.

Right. But what about that, like, you know, the kids. I guess just that, you know, there's garbage on the floor. I actually hear this a lot from parents. This one particular example, there's garbage on the floor and the parents like, can you pick up that garbage from your snack wrapper? Or something like that.

[00:39:00] And the child says no. Do you do. You know, right. Then start talking about the importance of having, not having garbage on the floor or in the car, as you said, or do you, you know, you know what? I'll get it for you this time. Yeah. Maybe you'll get it next time. Like, like where's your balance with that modeling graciousness thing?

Lori: So I love this and I of course love the idea of modeling graciousness, and I think. Probably I wouldn't have one way of doing it that I would apply to everybody. I think every family is different. Every child is wired differently. You know what motivates your kid. You also know when the right time is to engage them.

But you know, a few kind of ideas that I wrote down as you were asking. One thing I might say is, okay when do you think you would have the time or the space to pick up the garbage? Like I, I totally, I see that you're busy right now, or I see that you're not in the mood to do it. I'm super happy to leave it here until you feel like you're ready.

Can you [00:40:00] report back to me and let me know when you feel like you have the, like, if you're gonna use the word capacity with an older kid, or if you have the time or if the space, or if you feel able. And very often, like a child will just like walk away, reset. And come back to it. I think the other thing is as a parent, I like the approach of saying, gosh, you know what I realize, like, I realize I might have missed something.

I may not have taught you the importance of picking up this piece of garbage. Like I, I use this with older kids all the time and just say like. I might have missed something along the way, and I recognize we've gotten to a point where you are. Like insulated or protected from a lot of this work.

And I recognize that may not have actually been the best thing for you. Because there is research that shows that children involved in the work of home as, as [00:41:00] early as three years old, actually see an increase in self-esteem and an increase in ability to approach and complete tasks and you know, later in life in their thriving academically and in personal relationships.

So it actually. It is important to balance the graciousness, but like maybe not completely absolving them or disconnecting from the task, but giving time, giving space or giving a more context for why it actually is so meaningful for them and important to them to engage with it.

Sarah: I love that. And I'm also thinking as you're talking, I'm hearing a lot of respect for children and for their process and I think sometimes that's what's lacking when we're wanting kids to be more part of the family team and helpful around the house.

Also helpful in terms of helping the family team, not just helping the person who's, you know, quote, job. It is. And I think that sometimes we forget that we wanna treat kids with respect like we would with our partner. Like [00:42:00] if you want your partner to do something for you or with you, you probably wouldn't bark at them.

That they have to stop what they're doing right then.

Right. And

Sarah: come and do the thing for you. Right. Totally. And often I think parents do that with children. Like they expect children to drop everything and come and do the. Do the thing. So I just love that seems to be really baked into your approach.

Lori: Thank you. Yes. I do feel so strongly about that. And that's why I love the involvement of children in conversations about family values and also about family standards. Because when you go into, say, a shared family space, and we didn't really talk about this yet. We talked about sort of individual spaces, but you know, to a point that you asked me about earlier, I.

It is not quite as straightforward when you're talking about a shared space and people have different standards, but that's where the family agreement comes into play and there are compromises, right. But when you speak to one another and say, okay, I. What can we agree upon as it relates to the kitchen?

Okay, [00:43:00] so if I as Type A mom, if I say, well, my wish would be that the sink would be empty, all the dishes would be done, everything's in the dishwasher, you know, et cetera, et cetera. And if my husband were to say to me, well. To be honest with you, like I'm the owner of dishes, but sometimes I'm exhausted and like sometimes I feel more energized to do them in the morning.

It takes me half the time because I'm up and at it, and I would rather just like let it sit in the sink overnight. I'll put a little bit of water in it so that nothing sticks, but like I'd rather do it in the morning. And that's where you, and that's where I would say, well, if he's owning it and if he's committing to that.

I have to just trust and give him that space to execute it in the way that he feels comfortable and let go my standard a little bit. Right? And it's the same with kids. And when the kids are able to say, you know, if you're looking at like the family room or whatever, if you say to the kids, okay, we [00:44:00] have like a blanket, we have a toy area, we have like a table with books on it.

Wh how, when do we feel the best about this space? I. When do we feel really comfortable? I might say, well, I like the blanket to always be folded and like over the edge of the couch, but my son might say, well, yeah, but if the blanket's always folded, like I feel so bad about unfolding it and I feel like I can never snuggle up into it.

That's so meaningful for me to hear. I want him to feel comfortable. I want him to feel safe and feel, you know, like they can use the spaces in the way that make them thrive. And so I'll say like, oh, okay. Yeah. We do not have to fold the blanket, just maybe have it off the floor

Sarah: so the dog hair doesn't get all over it.

Lori: Exactly. And that's the compromise. Exactly. And and when kids are heard and considered, you know, then. They feel really good about like their place in the family. And [00:45:00] they also will remember that we agreed not to have it on the floor.

Because they were considered and so then they consider the other I.

Sarah: Yeah. I love that. Well, this has been such a great conversation and I think that our readers will, our readers, not our readers. I think our listeners Oh yes.

Lori: Our readers. Our readers. We'll read

Sarah: your book, our home. We'll link to it in the show notes. But I think our listeners will get a lot out of, it's like a real nice fleshing out of some things that we already talk about and teach and some ways to get to that helpful family team position that I think is great.

And I always said that. You know, my kids didn't do that much when they were little, but by the time they were teenagers, they were super helpful and even on occasion would like notice that the kitchen needed cleaning and clean it without even being asked. So, yeah. Oh, it's

Lori: so brilliant. Yeah. When that spark hits and you're just like, ah,

it all fell into place.

Yeah.

Sarah: Totally

brilliant.

Sarah: Yeah. I love it. So, tell us the best place before I ask you our final question. Tell us yes. The best place for folks to go and find out more about you and what you do and we'll [00:46:00] link to these, we'll link to this in the show notes.

Lori: Wonderful. So my Instagram account is at our home, our Pride and my LinkedIn for anyone who's interested is at Laurie Sugarman Lee.

And my book, our Home, the Love Working Heart of Family is available everywhere. Books are sold. Nice. And

Sarah: your

Lori: website? Oh, our home, our pride.com. Thank you.

Sarah: Okay, great. Okay, so the question that I ask all my guests is if you could go back to your younger parent self, what advice would you give yourself?

Lori: Yes. I would tell myself that depletion is not a virtue. I love that And also Me too, also. Yes. Amen. Sister and also the part B is that motherhood essentially is my relationship with my children. And that is separate from the role of caregiving, which is not mine alone. Yeah,

Sarah: shout [00:47:00] out. I was gonna say this earlier and I forgot, but I had a friend we were both on mat leave at the same time.

Mine was my third child. And hers was I guess her second child. And she, and my mat leave was more permanent 'cause I was not going back to a paid job. Right. But she was, after a year, like she was, she worked for the cbc, she was going back to a paid job and she said, and I just thought this was brilliant.

She said that. The way that she considered it, and she, this is what her husband had agreed to, was that the children taking care of the children, physical care of them, watching them make sure they didn't run out in the road, giving them naps was her job. And the house was still both of their jobs combined.

And I thought, excellent. That is brilliant. Like when she brilliant, you know, like her, she stepped away from her paid work to take care of the children, but she hadn't stepped away to do everything else that they. You know, should share. Right. And I think that would, I think that's a really good it's sort of what you just said, right?

That the Yeah. That the mother mothering was the relationship Yes. And the care that, [00:48:00] that part of the care of the children, not everything else that needs to be done always in the home. I.

Lori: Exactly. And also that not everything needs to be done. You know, this idea that everything has to be, you know, perfect and finished and like, no, you know, I, this extension of graciousness has to come to ourselves.

Oh, I was good at that as anyone else.

Sarah: Believe me. My, my parents once said my parents were, are much tidier than I am. And they were visiting me once and they said, we were just talking about how great it is that you you know, spend time with the kids instead of cleaning your house. Like, I think that was, I think that was a backhanded compliment,

Lori: but honestly, it's so true.

It is so true. I mean, that's where the magic is. And bring them in to clean the house. Yes. With you, right? Yeah. And then it becomes the stuff that we get to do together. Right. And it takes on a different patina.

Sarah: I love that. Thank you so much, Lori. This has been a really great [00:49:00] conversation. It's been wonderful.

Thanks for having me.

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.

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