

Haley coaching

Sarah: [00:00:00] Welcome to the Peaceful Parenting Podcast. I'm your host, Sarah Rosensweet, 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 everyone, welcome back to another episode of the Peaceful Parenting Podcast. Today's episode is a coaching episode with Haley. Haley is a single mom, the mom of a four and a half year old, intense, big feelings, little guy, and she [00:01:00] is brand new to peaceful parenting. You'll hear her mention My course and my membership and we'll put links to those in the show notes if you're interested in what she's talking about.

Sarah: We're here for you. And Haley is really diving in full on with Peaceful Parenting and it's really, it was really great to support her and then both, then to talk to her again a month later and hear how she had progressed and what she was discovering about Peaceful Parenting and about herself and how things were going with her four and a half year old.

Sarah: And if you found this inspiring and you would like to be on the podcast, please reach out to me. I'm always considering new parents to come on the podcast for some coaching. So you can email me, Sarah at Sarah Rosen sweet.com. If you're interested in coming on the podcast for some parent coaching, and if you're interested in.

Sarah: some private parent coaching. You can also find everything you need on my website to set up a free short consult if you're interested in one on one coaching with me or with Cori. That's at reimaginepeacefulparenting.com. [00:02:00] Everything you need is there. So let's go ahead and meet Haley

and as I said, be sure to stick around and find out how it went as I supported her through the main things we talked about were her son's big emotional outbursts, her questions about limit setting and her sort of feeling unsure about peaceful parenting as she didn't really, doesn't really know anybody else who's doing it and was feeling a little bit judged.

Sarah: And you know, we also touched on her difficult childhood when she was definitely not raised with peaceful parenting. So let's meet Haley.

Sarah: Hi Haley. Welcome to the podcast. Oh, thank you. So good to be here. Yeah. So tell us a little bit about who you are and just introduce yourself for our listeners.

Haley: Okay. My name is Haley. I have a four and a half year old boy, very strong-willed. His father and I separated when he was 18 months [00:03:00] old, and so I have him 50 50.

Sarah: Okay, so how can I support you today?

Haley: Well I'm running into a behavior with my son that has been going on for about six months now, and I'm kind of just feeling really unsure about how to handle it and how to support him with it. He tends to, when he is triggered, say, really mean hurtful, unkind things to me, his mommy.

Haley: And I really don't know how to handle it anymore. I've tried different techniques. I've tried conventional parenting. I've tried gentle parenting. I've tried, you know, talking to him about it when we're connected. And just recently we were in a car ride [00:04:00] together. We were taking My son to train town, which is an amusement park, small for little kids, and there was another adult in the car and Augie got triggered by something the other adult told Augie that we weren't going to listen to his favorite song 10 times in a row.

Haley: And so that was what triggered him. That's what triggered him. Yeah. And so he starts saying, you know, my mom's the worst. I hate my mom. I want a new mom. I want my dad. And just for context, I'm not the worst mom in the world. Of course not. But he's just as like very relentless about it. I just knew that the other adult in the car was like, wow, is she really going to let her son talk to her like

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Haley: And so I'm feeling like some uncertainty of what approach to use with him. [00:05:00] There are times when, you know, he'll be so relentless and I like break down and cry in front of him. And,

Haley: I guess I'm starting to, like, lose faith that, like, a positive approach is effective with him. His dad is very conventional, and in his parenting, you know, he does threaten, like, spanking, and he does yell at him. And he's much more behaved at his dad's house. And he's very well behaved at school.

Haley: And so this is, like, really a behavior that really I'm seeing.

Sarah: Aw, I'm so sorry. This is so hard. So, you said it's been going on for about six months. Did anything different happen six months ago or he did start TK about five months ago, so I [00:06:00] started to see it before he started school.

Haley: But it's definitely gotten worse over, you know, these last

Sarah: few

months.

Sarah: What was he doing before he started school?

Haley: Was he was in daycare, yeah.

Sarah: Okay.

Haley: So he was still in full time daycare. And a lot of his friends that he was at daycare with and that we live in a really small town. So he did know quite a few kids already in his class and at his school but it still was a pretty big transition for him and transitions are really hard for him.

Haley: Typically when I'm seeing this kind of behavior, it's. Added transition. And when we were in the car, even that was a transition for us.

Sarah: Yeah. Well, we, I mean, it would be nice if we could like pinpoint you know, why this is happening, but it's so hard to tell what's in the mind of a four and a half year old and why this is happening.

Sarah: I mean, [00:07:00] you know, it could be that daycare was just a little bit easier and he, you know, felt maybe more comfortable there and he didn't get you know it was a little bit easier to sort of manage himself. And now managing himself at school, he's using up most of his. his, you know, his restraint in terms of like keeping his emotions in check and that you're getting more of that, that compressed time period of when you're with him, he's already used up most of his restraint.

Sarah: And then I imagine, you know, at his dad's too you know and the thing is that he still is at the age where he has little to no impulse control when he's upset or excited. And you know, some might say, well, how's he going to keep it together at school or keeping it together at his dad's house?

Sarah: And, you know, often at school, kids will. As I said, use all of their restraint that they have to be, quote, good and, you know, [00:08:00] follow the rules and, you know, they don't want to get in trouble by the teacher or whatever. That's really common.

Haley: And,

Sarah: you know, I think also when you have a parent who is practicing conventional parenting, there's a lot of fear, right?

Sarah: So the fear can trump. The lack of impulse control, that fear of not wanting to get in trouble or not wanting to get his banking or get yelled at. And so what that means is it's like the time that he's with you, he really lets it all hang out. And so you're, you know, getting this, you know unpleasant behavior of getting yelled at and called the worst.

Sarah: And I'm really sorry that's happening to you.

Haley: Thank you. Yeah. I suspect that a lot of it has to do with what's going on at his dad's house, you know, and that's really hard because I have no control over that and I have really no way of seeing the dynamic there. But I know. I used to live with [00:09:00] his dad and he was not an easy person to live with.

Haley: And so I think, I do think that like emotionally when he gets to me, he like has a lot to unpack.

Sarah: Yeah. Like we talk about in peaceful parenting, my mentor's metaphor of the full emotional backpack, and he's got all those tensions and stresses that he's holding onto, cause he doesn't want to get.

Sarah: at his dad's. And so when he comes to you, you're a safe person for him. And all of that comes, all of that. unprocessed emotion and tension and stress comes out when he's with you. So a couple of things that I'm, that I think might be helpful. One is to recognize that clearly this is hurting your feelings.

Sarah: I understand that. And it's not personal. Right. He really you know, in some ways you can think of this as like, wow, he feels so safe with me that he doesn't, you know, he's not, [00:10:00] he doesn't feel like he has to kind of tamp, tamp all his feelings down and keep it all together when he's upset that you won't play his favorite song 10 times.

Sarah: Right. So it's kind of like a strange backhanded compliment that he feels so safe with you that he can relax and his feelings can come up to the surface. So. So I think in those times, a lot of self compassion will be really helpful. You know, wow, this is, you know, just talking to yourself.

Sarah: Of course, this is hard. Nobody likes to be yelled at. Nobody likes to be called the worst mom and said that, you know, say that. That he hates you. So just like really trying not to take it personally and remembering like he's acting like a child because he's four years old, you know, he's only been my daughter was working with kindergarten kids.

Sarah: And at one point she said they've only been on the planet for four years, which is really helpful to keep that in mind, right? Like, he's only been on the planet for four years and he's [00:11:00] really immature. He has that that brain development that's, that hasn't come online yet in terms of that, that impulse control and it's really he's being overtaken by those big feelings and he's not in his thinking brain and none of the stuff that he's saying, you know, it's not true, right?

Sarah: So just really taking care of yourself in those moments. And this is not about me or whatever mantra you might find helpful, you know, giving yourself some love. So if you're familiar with a phrase that I often use, which is even though my child is screaming at me, I'm still worthy and lovable. Right, because it's that shame trigger that when we are getting yelled at by our child, and this is something that's so important to you, like I can tell just from the short time of talking to you that being a mom is like really important to you, and that you want to do a really good job, and that you know, want to be the best mom that you can be, and so it's hard when you're working so hard at something to have someone, you know, telling you're crap at it, which is basically what he's saying, but he's, he doesn't, you know, he doesn't [00:12:00] mean it.

Sarah: You know, you started off by saying for the record, it's not true. So I know that intellectually, you know, that's not true. And just reminding yourself, he's just totally dysregulated right now. And he's saying the worst things that he can think of. Show me the depth of his upset and pain and not to take it personally.

Sarah: Give yourself that compassion. And I think there's another level too. You mentioned in the questions that you answered before coming on that your mom yelled at you a lot when you were growing up. And so I think that it's probably triggering your like inner child too. Right. Of like bringing up that being yelled at.

Sarah: Is a traumatic thing to you, you know, even though your mom did the best she could with the tools and resources she had is traumatic to get yelled at a lot as a child. And so there's probably that sense of like, You know reliving that being yelled at by someone you love that's really hard for you And another level of having a parent, you know growing up with a parent who's yelled at you a lot Is that you probably worked [00:13:00] pretty hard as a kid to try not to get yelled at right?

Sarah: So there's part of you when Augie's yelling at you That recognizes that as quote dangerous behavior for a child Like if you know if you do that bad things are going to happen, right? Even though that's your inner child and not His reality.

Haley: Yeah. I definitely I'm like really sensitive to noise. And I also noticed that like when a tantrum is coming on, I like slide into permissive parenting because I want to avoid like noise

Speaker 3: of

Haley: a tantrum and like the yelling.

Haley: What does that mean to you? Slide into permissive parenting. I'll just give in like I'm exhausted. When there's a limit that like, I think I wanna set, which to be honest, I'm [00:14:00] struggling to like really know what limits and rules I want in my house right now. But I will give into something that like, normally I'll want to set a boundary around, like, can you give an example?

Haley: Like, I typically. Would prefer it if we ate dinner at the table, my son likes to eat all of his meals on the couch in front of the TV. And on some nights

on like some mornings, I just don't have the energy or like the bandwidth to like support him during a during a tantrum. And so I'll just give him,

Speaker 3: okay, well, you

Haley: can eat spaghetti on the couch, you know, like I tried to be flexible with him when I can, but I, you know, it's I don't know.

Haley: I guess I'm having a hard time knowing, like, with this approach, are there rules? Like, do we enforce rules? How are limits different than [00:15:00] rules?

Sarah: Yeah that's a good questions. And I would say in general You know, you gotta respect the amount of bandwidth that you have. And if you don't have the bandwidth to you know, stand firm on a limit that you want to set, it's probably really good to check in with yourself before you set that limit.

Sarah: Like before you say you know, we're not gonna sit on the couch and eat. Check in with yourself and, you know, Say, you know, am I going to, if he has a big meltdown, am I going to be able to follow through on this? And if the answer is no, just right away, like, okay, fine. We can sit on the couch and eat our dinner and watch TV.

Sarah: I mean, and the other thing that I would say is if you're worried about the mess, can you sit on the floor on a picnic blanket and you know, then you at least won't be worried about your couch upholstery, getting spaghetti sauce on it or putting a, you know, putting a blanket on the couch or something, but finding some way that if you know that you're not going to be able to.

Sarah: And stand firm you stand firm about we're going to eat at the table with no TV. How can you make it work for you? And how can you preemptively do [00:16:00] that so that you don't feel like you're, you know, worried about the couch getting spaghetti sauce on it, and also that you're not saying, you know, Yes, after you've said no.

Sarah: Because there's, you know, in general, I don't think children are as manipulative as adults give them credit for being. Like, I think generally we over, we overestimate how much they're being manipulative versus just upset about something. But I do think that you can kind of train a child to turn on the tears if they know that's going to get them.

Sarah: their way, right? Like you can train somebody that a meltdown gets you your way. And so but I don't want to overestimate how much that happens, but I, but because that can happen, I want to say it's better to just say, yes, we'll sit on the couch and watch TV. Before the meltdown rather than after if you know that you're not going to be able to stand strong

Haley: Yeah, I think that's something that I could definitely improve on is like [00:17:00] giving myself some time to respond to him Rather than like making the decision right then and there

Sarah: Yeah, I love the phrase, let me think about that for a minute.

Sarah: And I remember when my kids were little and they'd be like, no, you have to answer right now. And I'd be like, well, okay, then the answer will be no, if I answer right now. And they'd be like okay, you can think about it. But like, just giving yourself a minute to think about it and check in with yourself.

Sarah: And I think that, you know, we also have to remember that There are these ideas that we think of as quote good parenting and one of them is we eat at the table and maybe that is what you want to do and maybe you don't mind that you don't eat at the table. You know you get to decide that for yourself.

Sarah: You don't have to follow what somebody else's playbook is about what works for your family. Like really, like, you know, I can't tell you how many times I've told parents you don't have to give your child a bath every day and they're like, what? Like, we don't have to, the bath doesn't have to be part of the bedtime routine, like, no!

Sarah: Somehow we've gotten this [00:18:00] idea that, you know, you have to give a child a bath every single day as part of the bedtime routine. You don't have to do that. Like, if they're not dirty, or if it riles them up too much, you can, you know, You can change that. And you know, I do think the thing that people talk about with the family dinners is that it's nice to have the connection time, but there's probably other times in the day that you're connecting with him and start to think about it like that.

Sarah: Like, what is the underlying reason why I want him to sit at the table and eat his dinner? You mentioned one, you know, you don't want your couch to get dirty. Okay. Maybe there's a solution to that. Maybe another reason is that you want to. Not have him have so much screen time. So maybe his screen time is only at that time.

Sarah: Maybe another reason is that, you know, what I mentioned about the connection. When's another time that you can connect? So I think you started by saying, you know, I get confused about what limits to set. I think those are all things to think about. Like what, why am I setting this limit? Is there another way that it can be that I can get what I [00:19:00] want out of why I wanted to set the limit.

Haley: I really like that. I've noticed that I'm in a relationship with a man we've been together for two years. He has two kids nine and 14 and his parenting is very conventional and kind of hard edge. And I noticed that like, I compare myself a lot to like, His kids, their behavior, they're obviously a lot older.

Haley: But they're like conventionally very well behaved and they have a lot of manners. And I think that like, I really second guess myself and like my own values because I'm comparing myself to them and that's confusing for me.

Sarah: Yeah. Yeah.

Sarah: I totally get that. You know, when you look at the [00:20:00] research about different parenting styles the, One that's most closely, so psychologists talk about permissive parenting, and you know, when I think of permissive, it's not the same as flexible, which is sort of what we just broke down of like, how can we be flexible about the, you know, the question that you brought up about where does he eat his dinner, right?

Sarah: And permissive is more like you just throw your hands up because you can't deal and that's why I say you want to be thoughtful about it, right? And you want to preempt it permissive. I think of it's just more like overwhelm and then you just give up. That's what I see as permissive, right? So the very The outcome can be the same in terms of he's eating his spaghetti in the living room, watching TV, but how you get there can be different, right?

Sarah: It's this sort of intentionality and then another one of the parenting styles is authoritarian, which is that more conventional fear based parenting and what psychologists call authoritative is more closely aligned to peaceful parenting, which is [00:21:00] that You know, kind, firm limits with lots of empathy that we talk about, although if you heard a podcast episode I did recently, we're trying to sort of move away from the word limits because it can get tricky and it can kind of be a slippery slope into a more You know what we're calling sugar coated control.

Sarah: However, for the purposes of this conversation, what the research really shows is that the outcome for kids with authoritative parenting is the best in terms of their mental health, their you know, levels of success in the world, lower levels of aggression, higher levels of mental, healthy mental health.

Sarah: And so, you know, I have no idea if your partner's kids, you know, You know, how they're going to turn into as adults. But I can see how you would doubt yourself when you see these two quote, like really well behaved kids and your kid is screaming at you that you're the worst mom ever.

Sarah: However, as you mentioned the age difference [00:22:00] and You know, I think that if, even if your partner's kids would never have done that when they were little, those feelings have to go somewhere, right? And they, I think they can go underground when they're, when a kid has to stuff their feelings down because they're afraid of what will happen if they, you know, let that meltdown come out.

Sarah: So I think emotionally it's much better to just have this approach where there's, you know, room for your son's meltdowns, where there's room for his, and I'm not saying we want to, you know, it's great that he's yelling you and calling names and maybe that's where we can go next, is how can you how can you respond to him in a way that he might not feel so aggressive or that he might not, you know, it might not change anything, but we'll have to see.

Sarah: Before we move on to that, I just, how does that land for you in terms of the you know, looking at the difference in age and approach and in terms of feeling doubtful?

Haley: It makes sense to me. You know, [00:23:00] while I'm going through this part of what I'm saying, like saying to myself to get through it is this is just a phase

Haley: part of

Haley: his brain development, you know, he's four and he's acting like he's 16. But maybe when he's five, he'll act like he's five, you know, I'm like really, sometimes I'm thinking like, wow, this is him when he's four, like, what is he going to be like when he's 16?

Haley: But I think that I just need to like, trust this process and trust like the science behind it.

Sarah: A hundred percent. You know? And, you know I think he's acting like he's four, he's perfectly acting like he's four,

Speaker 3: you

Sarah: know, that sort of bigger feelings low impulse control, as we've talked about, and you're his one place where he can just let all of that hang out, you know?

Haley: Yeah, I think I agree. I need to like really bolster my own self regulation, you know, realizing that like, I'm the one place [00:24:00] that he feels the most comfortable doing that and that it's healthy for

Sarah: him. Yeah. And he really like, he just, he's dysregulated. And when people are in that fight or flight, the, that All of their logic and all of their the impulse control just goes out the window.

Sarah: And it's like I heard someone say once when you're, caught up in the fight response, the person in front of you looks like the enemy, right? And it's not, I think we've all felt that way before, where after we feel better, we're like, Oh man, like, I can't believe how angry I felt, you know? And when you feel calm again, it feels like you're not even, you weren't even yourself.

Sarah: And that's what he's going through. Because he just feels so upset. And of course, you know, the example that you gave, I think is so funny because it's one of those perfect, small things like, Oh my gosh, he's freaking out because we don't want to listen to his favorite song on repeat. What's his favorite song, by the way?

Haley: It's Believer by Imagine [00:25:00] Dragons.

Sarah: Okay. It's so cute. So you know, small kids have small problems, and that's appropriate. Like, this is how he's learning resilience. It's like, as he gets older, his problems will get bigger. And right now, the worst thing in the world that he can think of is that he can't listen to his favorite song ten times, right?

Sarah: And to us as grown ups, it just seems so ridiculous. But that's awesome. That's a real problem for a four year old and disappointment and frustration and powerlessness like when he's a grown up, he can listen to his favorite song as many times as he wants, but he's got that awareness of like, Ah, I don't have any control over this, right?

Sarah: That these big people are not letting me do what I want to do. So it's so many levels of frustration for him that are coming out in that moment. And Yeah, it's just, he's not in his, he's just not in his thinking brain. So really remembering just to review that self compassion piece, you know, even though he's yelling at me, I'm still worthy and lovable.

Sarah: And you talked about being embarrassed in front of [00:26:00] the other person and remembering who's your loyalty to, right? Your loyalties to him, not to the other person. And do you really want to be that another person in his life who shuts him down when he's upset?

Haley: I'm just, I guess. Thinking back about the car, like I was feeling a lot of pressure to deal with it in the way that like parents are supposed to deal with it. And we just, I mean, the other adult took my lead, you know, and we just tried to redirect him. We were kind about it.

Haley: I didn't yell. Good, you know, I'm thinking back on like how I would have wanted to do it differently. Like I thought, maybe I could. If I was driving, pull the car over and say, [00:27:00] we're not going to continue until you can use nice words. I don't know. I'm like kind of at a loss.

Sarah: Well, you got to remember that.

Sarah: I mean, I don't know about your son, but a lot of kids, like if they're feeling really upset and then you talk, start saying like you're using unkind words, you're not being nice. That's going to be more triggering because that's kind of shame inducing, right? And he really is, just remind yourself, he's doing the best he can in this moment with his four year old brain and the, you know, low impulse control and self regulation that he has.

Sarah: And to put unkind on top of that or tell him he's being mean or anything like that is just going to make him feel worse. I mean, think about when you've been at your lowest If, you know, you are snappish with your partner or something like that think of how differently it would feel if your partner, like say you're super snappish with your partner and they're like, wow, Haley, you must have really had a a hard day to be talking like that.

Sarah: Do you want [00:28:00] to hug versus like, Hey, what's your problem? You can't talk to me like that. Stop being such a jerk. Right. I mean, how would Each one feel to you.

Haley: Yeah. Yeah. One would feel so much more triggering and like ammunition and the other one feels like a lot more peaceful. Yeah. And like a lot more like inviting

Haley: some connection maybe.

Sarah: Yeah. And if your partner responds to your snappiness with Hey, sounds like you've had a hard day. Do you want to hug? It's not going to make you think like, Oh, great. So now tomorrow I'm just going to come home and be a jerk again. Like, cause you don't want to be a jerk. Nobody wants to be a jerk to anyone, right?

Sarah: Like you don't, your son doesn't want to be a jerk to you. I'm sure he feels terrible afterwards when he, you know, realizes how much he's yelled at you and called you names. I'm sure he feels terrible. Nobody wants to be a jerk to someone that they love. So it's not like by tolerating it, letting it happen, [00:29:00] it's not like he's going to walk away thinking, I'm great, I'm going to do this more.

Haley: So instead of naming the behavior, kind of being curious about it or offering Some understanding and love.

Sarah: Yeah, just, you could, I mean, if you do want to address the behavior just saying something like, You must be so upset to be saying that. I hear you, honey. You really wanted to keep listening to that song.

Sarah: You just want to lean in with empathy.

Sarah: And like, This is so disappointing that you can't listen to this song. And, you know, and I don't even know if you want to, if this is something that happens a lot, if you can troubleshoot it with getting him is like some little earbuds or something where he can listen to his favorite song on repeat without annoying everybody else in the car.

Sarah: There's always that, you know, how do we deal with the meltdowns in the moment, but also how did we get here and what can we maybe do to not [00:30:00] to not get there. So this is, maybe this was a one off and this is never going to happen again, but if it is something that happens frequently, how can you solve that problem?

Haley: I mean, to be honest, when I'm driving in the car, I just let him listen to it 10 times in a row. Yeah. Because it doesn't bother me. And I love that he's loving the song.

Sarah: Yeah. And it was bothering the other adult? Is that what was happening?

Haley: I, yeah, I guess. And he just said, no, we're not going to listen to it.

Sarah: You

Haley: know, we had already listened to it twice, I think. And he just wasn't, willing to listen to it over and over.

Sarah: Yeah. So, I mean, I can imagine. I think that probably just getting told no like that was also a bit triggering for your son too, right? Like that, as I said, that powerless feeling

Speaker 4: and maybe

Sarah: even next time it could be like, okay, we'll listen one more time.

Sarah: And then it's like, And then this is the last time that might've been easier for him to like, knowing, like, okay, I'm getting a little tired of this song, buddy. We'll listen to it one more [00:31:00] time. And then we're going to listen to something else and you can choose, you know, the other thing that we listened to that might've felt a little bit better for him

Haley: just then, rather

Sarah: than this, like kind of arbitrary, you know, okay, that's it.

Sarah: We're done.

Haley: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I think I could have facilitated that better. And my son even said after that, like, while he was triggered, he says, I'm the boss. You know, he'll say that to me sometimes. Trying to like, Establishes dominance in the household, you know, or like when I'm talking to another adult will tell me to stop talking

Sarah: That's very normal for a four year old and it's very normal You know, I'm the boss also very, you know, you're not the boss of me is usually what kids say, right?

Sarah: Very normal, and I actually don't think it I can hear And maybe I'm reading too much into this, but I hear that for you, that's triggering like you think it's about your single parenting, that he's trying to, and it's, I think, [00:32:00] lots of parents who are, you know, lots of kids who have two parents still hear that.

Sarah: Okay. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. I don't think he's trying to be the man of the house. I think he's just being a four year old. Okay. Yeah. And I think you can say you are the boss about a lot of things. That is totally true, honey. And at the same time, there are some things that I have to be the boss about because I'm the grownup.

Sarah: So I think that, you know, that you can say, or, you know, sometimes you can say something like, you're the boss of you. And it's also my job to keep you safe until you're a grownup.

Haley: Yeah. Yeah. I think that oftentimes I worry that I'm not being like a sturdy enough leader for him, you know, I wonder if like this behavior is because I'm a one adult [00:33:00] household and I don't have like a strong male influence in my home.

Haley: But maybe this is just normal behavior that a lot of families experience.

Sarah: It totally is. It, so many people that are in my community have like the exact same kind of behavior in two parent households. And I imagine it's hard, but you don't have anything to compare it to. So, yeah, I'm sure you're grasping for any explanation.

Sarah: However, in my experience, it's, I don't think it's because you're a single parent.

Sarah: I think you

Sarah: just have a strong willed, sensitive, spirited four year old. Yeah. This is all very normal. So just remember that he's, when he does get upset and triggered,

Sarah: empathy is your place you want to go when he's upset and triggered. The more he feels understood, the faster he's going to want to calm down. However, we're not doing empathy [00:34:00] as a tactic to like control his emotions. It's just like, it's a nice side benefit that empathy does often make people feel better.

Sarah: People want to calm down because they feel understood. So do you see the distinction I'm making? Like, I don't ever want empathy to feel like somebody, like, we're trying to like, end the feelings because that's, you know, really, we want to welcome the feelings because that's what leads to, to resilience and good good emotional health is really welcoming feelings at the same time.

Sarah: It does have a side benefit of. You know, when you empathize with someone you really wanted to, and this is a hard example because I feel like I would have maybe thought, said to whoever you're with in the car, like, let's let him listen to it one more time. Like, I don't know if I would have held that limit.

Sarah: And obviously we're talking about in the past so that it did happen. But let's say that. You know, you already had the one more time and he still was having the meltdown. You know, I know you really wanted to listen to that and we just don't want to hear it again, cause we've already heard it three times.

Sarah: So [00:35:00] let's, we know, is there something else you want to listen to? And just really like, you know, leaning into the empathy of it's your favorite song and you love it so much at the same time we're done with it, you know, and I could see how hard this is for you.

Haley: Yeah. I think that would have helped. The other person that was in the car was my boyfriend.

Haley: And so we are starting to like, have conversations about, you know, like, do I want his support and parenting? And like, how do I want it? And I think that he wants to be really respectful of like, The boundaries that I am wanting to place for my son and the parenting style that I'm trying to like the approach that I'm trying with my son.

Haley: I just, at this point, I'm not really [00:36:00] sure how I want his support yet, you know, to him from his experience. Experience like from his point of view, it was hard for him to like hear Augie being so disrespectful towards me. And it was hard having him hear it.

Haley: Also.

Sarah: Well, I mean, I wonder if that might change, if you can change the story that you're telling yourself about the behavior.

Haley: Yeah.

Sarah: Right? Because he wasn't being disrespectful, he was being foreign upset. Right? I mean, disrespectful in the context that you're using it when, Parents talk about, you know, you need to respect your parents. They usually mean you need to be afraid to,

Sarah: Show your feelings. They're not really talking about respect because true respect is caring what the other person thinks.

Sarah: And that's not what we're talking about here. Disrespectful would is in this context is more like he [00:37:00] wasn't being afraid of you enough to not express how he was feeling.

Sarah: To stifle his feelings. Yeah. And maybe if you tell your boyfriend, Listen. You know, this may be, it may be helping him understand about, you know, four year old brain development and about what you're trying to do consciously.

Sarah: It's not that you're just quote, letting him talk to you like that, but that you're trying to welcome his feelings. You're trying to remind yourself about dysregulation and about how kids can get kind of out of control when they're dysregulated. And maybe if you, if he knew that this was more conscious on your part, that he would be, it might be easier for him.

Haley: Yeah. Yeah. And I think it will be helpful if I'm, if I just, you know, learn more about this and become stronger at utilizing the strategies and like [00:38:00] the, like understanding the reasons behind it. I just started following you a couple of weeks ago. Okay. Yeah. You're brand new then. Very new. Yeah. But I just know that, like.

Haley: I was asking myself last night, like, well, why do I want to parent in this other way? Like, why do I want to try something else? And it's because my mom did yell and scream at us quite a bit. And I feel like that made me really small. And I know that. My relationship with her really suffered because of it.

Haley: And as I got older, I, like, she wasn't a safe person for me to share things with.

Haley: And I hid a lot of things from her, and I lied a lot. And I don't want that from my son and I, [00:39:00] you know, like, I really want a healthier connection and relationship, and so that's why I'm willing to try this.

Sarah: You know, I mean you, you have an excellent big why for doing this and I think that if that's what you want and you want a kid who is going to see you as his safe person and who's going to tell you things even when they're hard, peaceful parenting is the way to get there.

Sarah: It really is.

Haley: Yeah. And I think going back to that why, unlike the really hard tricky moments. will be helpful.

Sarah: Yeah. And really what we see over and over again is that when kids don't feel like they're going to be in trouble, like quote in trouble, they're not afraid to come to their parents when they have problems.

Sarah: Right? And that gets even more important as kids get older and their problems get bigger when they see you [00:40:00] as an ally Someone's gonna help them and it doesn't mean that we're always happy about everything that our child does, right? It doesn't mean that you know, they could do they could make a mistake and do something wrong we might be unhappy about it But we're not gonna shame and blame and take their phone away and you know We're gonna try to help them find a solution Right.

Sarah: That's what they come to trust is that my parent is on my side and they're going to try to help me and that start you're building those patterns now with him right where he sees you as his ally when he's upset about, you know, not being able to listen to his favorite song in the car and screaming and crying instead of like someone who's his adversary.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Sarah: Right? Like how can we work together? That's what we've been really leaning away from the word limits and more towards the word collaboration. So how can we make this [00:41:00] work? And as you know, there are some things that are non negotiable in parenting. And, you know, you get to decide what those non negotiable things are.

Sarah: But I'd say the majority of things can be collaborative.

Haley: What are some non negotiable things in your household?

Sarah: Health and safety, seatbelts, helmets you know, as kids get older, like, no phones in their rooms past a certain hour you know, that kind of thing. Like, things that really felt important.

Sarah: There wasn't a lot And, you know, I think my kids were pretty reasonable and they, and I think that was partly just the history of them feeling like we were trustworthy and that if we were setting a limit about something, there was a reason, even if they didn't like it, my daughter said, I overheard my daughter this summer, she's 17, and I overheard her telling a friend that that we were [00:42:00] 0 percent strict and I was like, wow, that was so and I went to her older brothers who are 20 and 23 and I said, I just heard Maxine say that we were 0 percent strict and they were laughing and they're like, she just doesn't want to do anything bad and you know, and that's true to a certain extent.

Sarah: But I also think that she's just very Yeah. Yeah. You know, we've had examples of like her wanting to do things that go to, you know, a party or something where there's drugs and drinking and talking through all the possibilities and the outcomes and she comes to determine, Oh, yeah, I don't want to go to that.

Sarah: Like, that's probably not a good idea. And it's because it's collaborative, right? There's nobody saying like, you can't go like, No, absolutely not. You're not going to that party. So I think for her, because we never say, No, you can't do that. She's used to, you know, having a say in things.

Haley: Do [00:43:00] you think that any part of that is personality though? I mean, I'm just wondering, like,

Haley: are some kids just easier than others?

Sarah: For sure. I wouldn't say she was an easy kid. None of my kids, they're all like really strong willed and pretty sensitive and intense. But I do think it's the connection piece. Like, I think just the connection is still really strong, and I think that can balance out the temperament piece.

Haley: So if you have a

Sarah: kid who's really strong willed and intense and doesn't feel connected to you, that's where the problem comes in.

Haley: Yeah. Yeah. And I think that's kind of what I experienced in my own childhood,

Sarah: is

Haley: that kind of distrust and just lack of like mutual respect.

Sarah: Yeah, and I think that's what she means when she says that we're zero percent strict is that there is like a Mutual respect as you said and trust there So but you started by asking what limits do we set [00:44:00] and I always think is this hurtful to? people or property or themselves And if it's not, I generally try to find a way to make it work.

Sarah: And sometimes, you know, the bandwidth question comes in, maybe it's not hurtful to people, property or themselves, but you also don't have the bandwidth, you know to, Get out the finger paints at six o'clock or whatever and you say no because you know, you don't have the bandwidth for it That's also totally reasonable It doesn't mean that your child gets to do whatever they want as long as it doesn't hurt anyone.

Sarah: It's a collaborative process

Haley: Yeah, that feels really good. That sounds really great It sounds like something I want to work toward

Sarah: good. You know we haven't mentioned this, but you recently have started doing my course and the membership. So you've got lots of learning that you're working on and we will talk in in a couple of weeks [00:45:00] and see how things went.

Sarah: And yeah, I think that you're, I think you have that big why that you just want to keep holding onto that is you want a kind of relationship that you didn't have and you don't want to feel like you. So if you have any questions, please feel

Haley: free to reach out to me and I'll be happy so much. I really appreciate your time.

Haley: You

Sarah: are so welcome. So we'll talk to you in a few weeks and and we'll see how it went and see if we need to tweak anything. So just remember when he's, if he's yelling at you, empathy is your big response, compassion for yourself. that this is hard and compassion for your inner child. I know I hate, I wish there was a better term for it.

Sarah: Inner child. It always sounds so cheesy, but I really love it. It comes out, you know, I think it does come out that, you know, you, it triggers you for that you were yelled at and it triggers your inner child of like, he shouldn't be doing this is dangerous. So tons of self compassion [00:46:00] and reminding yourself that your loyalty is to him.

Sarah: And then he's completely dysregulated changing the story that you're telling yourself is not him being disrespectful is him being for right and not having. Ctrl over his impulses or his emotions and. he has already used up what little control he does have at school and at his dad's.

Haley: Well, I think that this conversation is going to be so helpful because now I can go into these hard moments with him and not feel all this like pressure or like this like guilt that like, it shouldn't be like that, you know, or I should like, but this isn't okay.

Haley: It is okay.

Sarah: Yeah. He's a small child and he's having big feelings and he doesn't have the wherewithal yet. It's amazing what brain development, you know, in a few years, you're going to look back and you'll be like, [00:47:00] wow, like he's so much like he's not, we're not going to change his temperament, but his brain development coming online is going to make such a difference.

Haley: Yeah.

Sarah: Can't wait. Yeah. I've seen it happen over and over again. I was just this girlfriend of mine who, she used to live about a block away and she had a child and very much like your son and he's like he's only 10 now. Like he's quite a bit younger than my kids. And Facebook post, you know, how they show you your memories.

Sarah: And it was like a memory from six years ago where he was throwing things all around the house and you know, cause he was upset that he couldn't come over to my house. Apparently. And I just thinking about like, Oh yeah, I

remember him when he was like that. And now he's 10 and he's like the most calm, easygoing, like, you know, his brain development came online.

Sarah: totally different. Wow. That [00:48:00] maturity. Yeah. Yeah. Starts to happen. Yeah. So, and sometimes you just have to tell yourself like, yeah he's just not there yet. He's still really little. And this is okay. Yeah. Yeah. It's not fun. It's not pleasant. It's just part of, it's just part of the process.

Speaker 3: All

Sarah: right. All right.

Sarah: We'll talk to you in a few weeks.

Haley: All right. Thank you. Bye.

Sarah: Hi Hailey, welcome back to the podcast. Hi, thank you for having me. So how are things going? We, I'll just remind you of sort of the biggest themes we talked about with Augie last time or his emotional outbursts where you're feeling tricky for you sort of checking in with yourself around limits and what were the limits that you wanted to set and thinking about those within those, thinking about those in terms of teamwork and also sort of feeling a bit.

Sarah: unsure of yourself around [00:49:00] peaceful parenting as you were getting going on it. So give us a, give us an update. What feels what feels better? What still feels like you need some help around?

Haley: Okay. I think that over these last few weeks, I've really been like understanding or realizing some of my own triggers, which is really eyeopening for me.

Haley: Yeah. I'm realizing that Augie's outbursts, the reason why they're so triggering for me is because they feel really disrespectful and so that is, looking at that and realizing that and I've really just been trying to focus on like my own Self regulation and really that like I really struggle with that, you know, his dysregulation is really what is triggering me and so I really feel like I'm just at step [00:50:00] one still like learning those tools and like remembering them in the moment and Just like being able to utilize them, I'm realizing it's going to be like a lifelong practice with him.

Speaker 5: Yeah. It is. It is. It's like, it's not like people do, you know, do this work and then like, okay, I'm finished. Right. Like it's, and as he's in different

stages, you'll find that different things are triggering and that's great though, that you're really recognizing what's triggering for you. So tell me about disrespect.

Speaker 5: Like, what does that mean to you when you say that you feel like it's, The outbursts are disrespectful.

Speaker 6: I mean, I think about like conventional parenting, how the child is supposed to respect the parent. And so like, my mind is still kind of there. I compare a lot to my boyfriend's kids and their relationship, you know, and he did use like really [00:51:00] conventional parenting with his kids.

Speaker 6: And so I get in this place where it's like, well, my child is supposed to respect me. Like, that's the dynamic that is supposed to be playing out in my household. But I also understand that like, I'm choosing a different path for my son and I. And so it's going to look different. Good. You know, and I just like remembering why I'm doing this and

Speaker 6: try not to compare myself with other families that are doing it different.

Speaker 5: Yeah, and you have an intense child. And, you know that can look a lot different for, you know, if you were to try conventional parenting on him, you might not get the same result as your boyfriend has gotten. you know, with his kids with conventional parenting and like a lot of more intense kids, conventional parenting really backfires and makes things [00:52:00] worse.

Speaker 5: So just, you know, keep in mind, like this is, I just was listening to a podcast this morning about like best, you know, best wisdom of 2024. And one thing I knew parents said was the best wisdom they got was to parent the child that you have, not the child that you thought you were going to get or that you wish you had.

Speaker 5: Right. And I think that could really be. Good for you to remember, like you've got this intense kid who peaceful parenting is going to be way to get the outcome that you want in terms of being his safe person and really letting him be the person that he is. Right.

Speaker 6: Yeah. And I think that requires like some loyalty to him and I, and like this path that we're on.

Speaker 6: And also, you know, I have seen progress over the last month. You know, I am seeing more cooperation with him. I am like able to delight more in

him and like, have more like special moments [00:53:00] together, and that is, It's really encouraging.

Speaker 5: Especially because the past month has been the holidays and that's often the hardest time for families.

Speaker 5: Like there's so much change and excitement and later nights. And so the fact that you've seen progress over the past month is really great because it's definitely a harder time. I want to go back a little bit more to the respect piece because I know that you were raised with a lot of fear and yelling and probably to you, like it is to most people When you say children should respect their parents, it means do everything that they tell them to do and be a little bit afraid of them, right?

Speaker 5: And not quote cross their parents. But respect, that's not really what respect is. Like respect is caring what the other person thinks and having true Like a true feeling of I want to know this person and I want this person to know [00:54:00] me and really holding that person in high esteem, not being afraid of them.

Speaker 6: Yeah. And

Speaker 6: I mean, In my parenting journey so far, you know I am a single mom and I made the decision to separate from my son's father when he was really young, you know, he was like 18 months old and I was in a relationship where I felt that had I stayed in it, my son wouldn't truly know me. I really am.

Speaker 6: And so I made that decision early on and I want to continue honoring that, you know, and I think that, like, with that idea of respect, it does continue to honor it. [00:55:00]

Sarah: Yeah, 100%. And you want, you know, true respect can't come out of fear, I think,

Sarah: like you can't really respect someone that you're afraid of. You'd be afraid of them, but true respect that that feeling of wanting to be seen and known by somebody is, doesn't come out of fear. They, in fact, I think kind of cancel each other out.

Haley: Yeah, like what's most triggering for me is when he says those mean words and it's getting easier for me, you know, I'm able to like, remember that

he's only four, remember that his brain's not fully developed, and like, remember that this is a phase.

Haley: Whereas before I would just like take it so personally and react.

Sarah: Remember we talked about giving love to your inner child at those times? Yeah. Because it's going to be triggering for, you know, not [00:56:00] only you as a parent, but it'll be triggering for your inner child because your inner child is going, don't say those things.

Sarah: Don't do those things. You know, you could get hit or hurt or yelled at if you say or do those things. So really trying to give love to your inner child when he is having an outburst, I think will be really helpful.

Haley: Yeah. This is so much work on myself. I'm realizing it's not really about Auggie. You know, like, wow, parenting is, like, the biggest lesson I'm finding.

Haley: Like, it's the biggest opportunity for growth. It's the biggest opportunity to, like, look at the places inside myself that are needing healing. Yeah. Somebody who was in my summit last year was talking about about, Parenting and trauma and you know, old wounds and he said, you know, as an adult, you can like package up all your old wounds and like put them up on a high shelf somewhere.

Sarah: But then your kid comes along and climbs up that shelf and gets that [00:57:00] box down and opens it up again, right? Yeah. Yeah, and that's exactly what so many parents who I do you know, private coaching with after a couple of sessions, they're like, exactly what you said. This isn't even about my kid. This is just about me.

Sarah: So it's an invitation, it's an invitation, right?

Haley: Yeah. And like, in order for me to take that invitation, I need to be, well, for me, sober. I'm in recovery, and like, that's the first step for me, you know.

Sarah: That's amazing. So this is your, you know, what are there 12, 12 steps in AA? This is your 13th, there's 13 steps.

Sarah: The parenting challenge. Yeah, wow. Yeah. Yeah. Well, was there anything, I mean, it sounds like you you're sort of just continuing on this path. Was there anything that felt unclear to you or that you need some [00:58:00] more clarification on or more support on? Well, I

Haley: will ask, you know I'm doing the modules right now.

Speaker 5: In the membership you're talking about? In the

Haley: membership. Yes, I paid for the course. Oh the course and the membership. Yeah. And so I'm doing the first one, which is self regulation. I feel like because I have so much work to do in this area, I'm unsure if I should just stay here or if I should continue on into the next module?

Speaker 5: So I think both. I think continuing, did you make the respectful voice chart? Have you been doing that with the stickers? So I think, and for anyone who's not in the course or the membership that the, I have a free course, how to stop yelling at your kids that we'll put a link to in the version of what you're talking about.

Speaker 5: So I think continuing on with [00:59:00] that piece, and then the second module of the course is all about connection. And so that might be something that you can add in without, you know, a whole lot of extra extra brain energy, add in the connection piece. And then, You know, maybe just stay with that for a little bit and see how it feels.

Haley: Also say one thing that I noticed is, you know, in the beginning I thought like, I don't really yell at my kid that much, you know, like that's not really a big problem for me, but what I'm realizing is like my yelling kind of comes out in a different way. It's more of like, Kind of passive aggressive or just operating out of like anger.

Haley: And so for my like, respectful voice chart, I'm also including just like, just respect. Am I treating Anki with respect? Am I, And I call love

Sarah: that and remember that [01:00:00] everyone's that you that the goal isn't to just stay calm all the time It's to recognize because nobody can stay calm all the time The goal is to recognize when you're getting upset and asking ask yourself.

Sarah: What do I need? You know because our emotions are powerful indicators to us that there's something that's not okay with us, right? So maybe it's you're feeling upset maybe you need to remind yourself of the mindset shift or you're feeling upset and you need to You know, take a break or get some, you know, get some support that way, or, you know I'm, you know, lots of possibilities, but your emotions are a message to you.

Sarah: So the goal isn't just have no emotions and be calm all the time, but it's recognizing your emotions is really the first step. And then asking yourself, what's the message here? What do I need? What do I need to shift? What do I need to do to support myself or to support Augie? And you're also not alone with it.

Sarah: There are lots of parents who don't yell, but will give like the silent treatment or [01:01:00] with withhold affection because they're annoyed with their kids. So it's not just the yelling, it's just like not being aware of and not taking care to take care of your own emotions when they come up is really what the danger point is.

Haley: Yeah. And if we're not able to do that, then we're not modeling that for our kids either, right? Like such a cycle.

Sarah: Yeah, totally. Well, and you with the membership, you also have the office hours group coaching. So you'll be able to stay in touch that way and drop in and get some support from me or Corey or the other members.

Sarah: So I hope you'll keep in touch that way. And and you know Let me know how you're doing because I think you're, you know, you're fairly new to this. So just keep remembering that too. Like this isn't what you see modeled all around you and it is hard. Like it is a hard, it is a hard way to choose to parent because it does require so much of that introspection and work on yourself.

Sarah: It's not easy. It's worth it [01:02:00] though.

Speaker 6: Yeah. All right. Well, thank you so much. I appreciate

Speaker 5: you. You're welcome. Thank you for coming back on and letting us know how it's going. All right. I'll be in touch. Okay. Thanks.

Speaker 2: 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.

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