

DPD Part 3B - Dr Honda's experience growing up

[1:10:19]

So, I want to talk a little bit about why I am not dependent, why I am, if anything, pathologically independent. But because I thought, you know, your patrons and I can be kind of honest with y'all.

So, when I was growing up, my parents were not dominant. They were definitely firm. It was the 70s, but **they were not dominant. Meaning they didn't enmesh over me. They didn't micromanage me. They didn't tell me how to think. They didn't, you know, bark at me all the time.**

And my parents were attuned enough. They were warm, attentive, loving, and caring. And I was allowed to make mistakes. As I was saying, I think in chapter two, regarding the parenting, I would climb trees without supervision at the age of three and four. No one was watching me. I would play with my friends all day without being monitored from the ages of like three or four until I moved out at the age of 17.

My parents just, I would just say, I'm going out, hang out with my friends and they were like, okay, I did my homework on my own from a very early age. I always sort of was weirded out by the occasional friend of mine that had parents that even knew what they were doing in their homework. Like I brought my homework to home. And you know, there must have been times when I screwed up my own homework, right?

But my parents didn't take over that process and at the age of seven or eight, I just learned, huh? **I need to learn how to do this on my own.** My parents, and maybe my parents even helped me with that. They're just like, hey, you need to do this on your own. **You're a big boy now, you can handle it.**

So with homework, with grades, I knew it was up to me and I learned that I could handle it on my own. **And it made me feel good.** I would play sports without their help. They wouldn't intervene. They wouldn't tell the coach to knock it off or anything. I'm sure there were times when they thought the coach might be over heavy handed or something. I mean, sometimes my dad was littered with the coach.

But anyway, they let me do things. They let me register for college courses by myself. They didn't micromanage that. They let me choose my own career.

There were conversations about it, but there was a consistent method of parenting from a very early age that my parents said, you know where **we're gonna let him make his own mistakes. He's gonna make mistakes. And he frequently makes mistakes, but we're not gonna take over. We're not gonna over protect him. He needs to learn from his own mistakes.** And so that was another reason why I didn't develop pathological dependency.

Also, **my parents forced me to take challenges even when I didn't want to.** I mean, this is kind of key. So I'm gonna give some examples of this. There's one particular example that I'll give in a second, but smaller examples are like, well, actually, let me give the big example of [Frecus?] as the first one chronologically.

Anyway, so me and my older siblings, my older sister and my older brother, they're quite a bit older than me and my dad, my mom, we were at the bottom of a hill, and it was getting late and we were gonna walk back to the car. And it was a pretty steep hill. And I was tired. And I remember, I remember this in my head. It's a vivid memory. I remember I just really could not make it up the hill. I'm like, oh, I don't want to, anyone with young kids, you've seen kids do this where they just kind of

flopped. I'm like, I don't want to, can you carry me? And that's what I did. I said, I don't know, can you carry me up the hill?

And what happened was my parents made this a learning moment. I don't know what their decision was. But, and my parents remember this moment too. Maybe I could even ask them what was going on in their head. But what they did was they said, Kirk, we believe in you that you can make it up in the hill on your own. We're not gonna carry you.

So, in this moment, they were kind of saying, they were saying a lot of things to me. They were saying, **you can make it, we believe in you, and you can do it. And we're not gonna always be there to pick you up when you're tired.**

You're gonna have to figure things out on your own. You're gonna have to do things on your own sometimes, including walking up this hill. Now, they weren't saying you have to pay your bills on your own, you have to cook food on your own. They're just saying, you're gonna have to walk up this hill on your own and we believe in you.

They didn't say, get up the hill, you piece of crap. What they did was my mom, I think engineered this. My mom and dad and my older brother and sister, they we all did a huddle. And they said, okay, Kirk, you know, let's give Kirk our energy. He's gonna be able to make it up the hill. And they gave me a pep talk and we said, break, and I shot up the hill as fast as anybody, and I beat everyone else to the top of the hill.

So I went from, I can't make it. Well, you please carry me to "boom". And the reason why I remember this, I think, is because I beat everyone up to the top of the hill and **I felt so accomplished**, you know, because my older brother and sister were just, they were like six, seven years older than me. There was so much more stronger and better at me than everything, at everything. Of course, my parents were better than me at everything. And for me to win, and maybe they let me win.

But the point is, I remember in that moment, really learning this lesson of, okay, at one point, I felt like I couldn't do it. And **I wanted someone to save me. But the whole time, I had the capability to do it on my own. And I needed a pep talk, fine, you know, they gave me mental and emotional energy, but I did it. I was the one that ran up that hill. I can do things when people believe in me. I can do things.** That was a huge lesson for me.

Fast forward a little bit. I am trying to use Ohashi, which is chopsticks for Americans, what we call them Ohashi. And I did not use Ohashi as a kid, because, you know, they're hard. And my dad was a little embarrassed by that. So the next day, he sits me down. I've told the story before. He dumps out what seemed to be hundreds of little buttons that my mom had in this jar. And he said, when you pick up all the buttons and put them into the jar with your Ohashi, then you can go out and play. And the first hundred of buttons, it was very labor intensive, but by the 500 button, I was throwing them in. And ever since then, I've been very, very good at Ohashi to the point where I can pick up the very, very soft tofu and miso soup with Ohashi and not break it. And, you know, I'm very good with Ohashi.

But anyway, so in that moment, my dad said, even though it's quite young, I'm guessing I was seven years oldish. And my dad said, you know, before you go outside, you're gonna pick up all these. And I'm not gonna help you. My dad, I mean, he might have helped me a little bit with the form, because there's a certain way you have to hold them in your hand. So, **he probably helped me a little bit, but I remember sitting there by myself.**

And what did my dad tell me? Well, what he told me was, I believe in you. And **I'm gonna give you a tough task. And life is hard sometimes, and good things come to those who work, but you're gonna do the work. You are the one, and I believe in you. I'm not doing this because I think you're gonna fail. I'm doing this because I think you're gonna win. I think you're gonna actually succeed at this.**

When I got my license, I was, you know, when I was getting my driver's license, I, my parents were, I don't know, busy. And so they let me do all the license things on my own. And they let me drive illegally to get my drive, because you have to drive to the DMV to take your driver's license test. And obviously, when you're driving to the DMV, you don't have your license yet, right? Well, they let me drive there on my own. And I actually failed the first time, but they didn't micromanage, you know, the whole process of me getting my driver's license was, I was left to my own devices. I was, you know, there's like, do it, you know, you're okay. And they didn't micromanage.

They just said, you know, you'll figure it out. And I did. It wasn't easy. It was hard. I remember several moments in that process. And I guess I wish I had someone that could have fixed it for me. But really, you know, I needed to figure it out. **Every driver, everyone who learns how to drive, there's at some point where you're just like, look, it's up to me. I got to figure this out. I can't have someone tell me what to do all the time.**

Another moment that I remember that my parents doing, and this, it seems like a small thing, but I often talk about it, because I remember it being a really big moment in how I saw myself in terms of dependency and independency. I was 16 years old, and my parents came to me, and they said, **you have to buy all of your sundries now. You have to buy your shampoo and your soap, and your contact solution and all that stuff.** This was revolutionary in my family. Like, for me to have to buy anything, you know, because my parents took care of everything. For me to have to buy my own soap, I thought, that's insane. Like, no, I remember I was pretty upset about it. I didn't like it, and I protested. I thought, this is kind of some bull crap, because I have a job, but I work real part time for minimum wage. I don't, this is a lot of money. You know, if five bucks for some Perk Plus, you know, that's gonna set me back. I didn't like it, and I protested, but my parents said, nope, you're 16, you're old enough now, you're gonna do it, and it's practice, and they, I'm sure, thought, this is practice for the future. I mean, you know, it was probably 15 bucks a month for my parents, and I'm sure they could have swung that, but they were trying to prepare me.

They didn't want me to be dependent on them. They wanted me to learn, and sometimes that means pushing your child to be independent in ways that they don't want to be, in ways that they might screw things up. I'm sure my parents thought, well, what if he just doesn't buy any shampoo, and he just stops showering, or what if he stops brushing his teeth, and his teeth fall out? Like, there are risks. **There's always risks when you push a child in this way, age appropriately, but that's how you develop a child into an independent adult.**

And the last one I'll talk about is, and this is very much on the cusp of my life becoming either dependent or independent. So it's, I think I had already graduated, or I was close to graduating from high school, and I was already accepted into University of Washington. And I was thinking about, my sister was in a sorority, actually my mom was in a sorority as well. And my sister was actually in a sorority at the University of Washington, and she was kind of my main mentor about this, because I was going to the same college as she was. And I, anyway, so I'm at home, and they're kind of pushing me to join a fraternity. And I'm thinking about it, and I'm like, I got it pretty good at home. Like, my mom cooks my dinners, and she does my laundry. And so my parents hadn't really pushed me in these other ways. And I kind of like my bedroom, and I like my neighborhood. And going off to

college and living in a fraternity, it's all kind of scary to me. And I know what my life is like. And at the time, I didn't live that far from University of Washington. It was like a half hour drive.

And I just thought, I think I'm thinking about just staying home, and save my parents money. They wouldn't have to pay for me to go to live in a fraternity. And I came upstairs, and I floated that idea to my family. And I thought they'd be like, yeah, sure. Whatever you want to do, kid, we love you. Okay, we can save money. And I remember my mom and my sister, they both said, no, you're moving out, and you're joining a frat. And I thought, oh, this is an optional. This is not an option. And I'm like, I'm being kicked out of the house. It was the first moment when I thought, huh, is parenting difficult? I remember it was the very first time I thought, because up until that point, I think for a lot of healthy reasons, I had this idea that my mom was just a bottomless pit of love and attention. And the giving tree, if you will, by Michelle Silverstein.

And at that moment, I realized, oh, my mom has a limit, and she's done with me. She doesn't want to do my laundry anymore. She doesn't want to pick up after me anymore. **She wants me out. She wants me to figure crap out on my own.** And I was like, okay, message received, moving out. And what if they hadn't? What if my mom had said, okay, sure, you know, or what if my mom had said something like, great, we didn't want you to move out anyway, because we don't believe that it's good for you to move out. You're too young. What trajectory would my life go on if life went down that road? I don't know. But it's just interesting to think about these little moments.

Now, is this the only way to avoid dependency? No, but I'm just, I'm telling you as a, because I know the way I was parented, and I know these little beats, these little nodes in my life, that I learned:

1. I am competent.
2. I can do things on my own.
- 3a. My parents and my older siblings believed in me.
- 3b. I could look to them when I was afraid.
- 3c. If it was too much for me, they would help me.
- 3d. If they were letting me do it, then I was probably okay.
- 3e. They believed I could make a mistake, and it would be okay, and I would, maybe I could even make up for the mistake if I did make a mistake.
4. The world was safe enough. bad things happened, but that's okay.

I had multiple concussions as a child from various different falls, one of them out of it. I didn't get a concussion from falling out of a tree. I actually just knocked the wind out of me. But bad things happened, but I learned that that's okay. Bad crap happens. Sometimes the bully punches you in the face, sometimes you fall out of a tree, sometimes you get in a fight with your friend, sometimes you get an F on a test, sometimes a relationship breakup happens or something. **And yet I survived, and I did it on my own.**

And my parents were there, and I could talk to them for support, but I didn't need them. I could do it on my own. I could go to them when I needed them, but I didn't need them all the time. And those lessons are slowly learned on a daily basis from the time I was born, such that by the time I was 18 and I moved out, I felt like I could do this thing.

And I'm okay, and I'm not incompetent. I'm not needy. I don't need other people all the time. I could make it. I could do this thing, given my 18-year-old mentality, that kind of stuff. And so I think my parents for doing that for me.

I also want to mention, I didn't have any major negative events that are factors that are associated with developing dependency. Like there was no divorce. My parents are still married. They've been married for almost 60 years. Do I have that right? Yeah. They've been married for 58 years this June. 58 years. So yeah, my parents, there's no divorce is a risk factor. I wasn't abused. There was no substance use at all. My parents never drank, never used drugs. There was, I mean, I mean, they would very rarely have like alcohol drink every now. Like once every, I don't know, number of years or something, anyway. No major illness, no poverty, no major bullying incidents, no community violence, no major discrimination that I went through. I went through some obviously as an Asian, as a mixed person, but not a lot. And so because of me and my fortune and my privilege, I also wasn't tempted to develop any personality disorder or didn't need to develop any personality disorder in response to those difficulties, including dependent personality disorder.