# Reimagining Limits (and More) in Peaceful Parenting

**Speaker 2:** [00:00:00] Welcome to the Peaceful Parenting Podcast. I'm your host, Sarah Rosenzweig, mom of three young people, Peaceful Parenting Coach, and your cheerleader and guide on all things parenting. Each week, we'll cover the tools, strategies, and support you need to end the yelling and power struggles, and encourage your kids to listen and cooperate so that you can enjoy your family time.

**Speaker 2:** 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.

**Speaker 2:** Let's dive into this week's conversation.

**Sarah:** Hey everyone. Welcome back to another episode of the peaceful parenting podcast. I am so excited today to have Corey with me. Welcome Corey.

**Corey:** Thanks for having me again.

**Sarah:** it's awesome for everyone to get to know you better. And great for us to have a chance to [00:01:00] have some conversations that I think are going to be really helpful for parents.

**Sarah:** So we are going to be talking today about our big ideas of peaceful parenting and how that how our approach has evolved over the years from when I first started out doing my training eight years ago now and then trained you four years ago, three years ago. I can't remember when that was, but like how things have evolved for us with peaceful parenting.

**Sarah:** And actually that evolution was, Behind the rebrand of our business, which we now call re imagine peaceful parenting because we actually have done a lot of re imagining. So just maybe do a quick intro of who you are and what you do, and then we'll dive in. Okay.

**Corey:** I was trained to be a coach two years ago, but this fall I've been working for you for four years. So this is my longest job I've ever had. [00:02:00] My previous life, I worked in the museum field, which is very contract based.

**Corey:** But anyways I have a six and a nine year old as of this week. And both of them are a little on the complex side. And so that's what led me to meeting Sarah and needing to find the peaceful way.

**Sarah:** Yeah, because when I first met you, you were a coaching client when big C was three and little C was a baby. Yeah. Yeah. So, and that's when we kind of went, yeah, there's something complex going on here that I think we need to look at. Cause as we say in peaceful parenting, like if you try if you're pretty if you're, applying the peaceful parenting tools and approach, and you're pretty consistent, you don't have to be perfect, but if you're pretty consistent with the tools and the approach, and after three months, things still seem really hard, that's often a sign that there's something else going on, and it's usually some layer of complexity, as we've sort of called it, like those kids who are it.

**Sarah:** Extra sensitive, extra strong [00:03:00] willed, highly spirited and or neurodivergent, which ADHD, autistic, sensory processing, dyslexic, et cetera. So yeah, that's what you came to is that, that they're more complex or at least big C at the time.

**Corey:** And I, as I'm learning, I think little C is. A very strong willed child, just like me. So I, really feel like when I work with parents that I'm, in the trenches with

**Sarah:** Yeah.

**Corey:** still going through all of this, just like they

**Sarah:** Yeah. Little little C reminds me so much of Asa when he was little. And I remember last year you were like, when was your hardest year with Asa? And I went to my husband and I asked him and he remembered the same as I did, which was five and you're coming out of that. So,

**Corey:** I am finding some ease in six. So that prefrontal cortex is starting to

**Sarah:** yeah,

**Corey:** activate, I

**Sarah:** in our membership, we've had a number of calls where we've had like the [00:04:00] parents of five year old, like lots of five year olds on the call, and everyone's going, Oh my gosh, five, like that can be a tough year and six to you in some degrees, because I think six is like, you have your expectations are a bit higher, but they're still so they can be six year olds can be so uneven in their development.

**Sarah:** Anyhow, we're getting off topic. So I'm getting off topic. So what I thought we do is just ground us in sort of our definition of peaceful parenting. And then it's especially the third big idea that I think we've changed. We've changed a lot on in terms of how we talk about it and not as we, as you were reflecting, which I think you're going to mention more, not necessarily in how we practice but in how we talk about it.

**Sarah:** Because I think that's really important. So First big idea of peaceful parenting is parental self regulation, which doesn't mean that you never get frustrated or upset or annoyed or angry. It just means that when you do, you notice it and you, try to calm yourself. Right? So, and if anyone needs [00:05:00] more help on that we have a free course called How to Stop Yelling at Your Kids.

**Sarah:** So we're not going to talk about that much today, but if you go to reimaginepeacefulparenting. com slash resources, you can find the link to sign up for the free course, which is all about self regulation. And it's really, if I do say so myself, a really helpful course. The second big idea is a focus on connection and the relationship.

**Sarah:** Because that's really the only true influence we have with our child. And it's also really what brings us joy in our families is that sweet connection. And the third big idea we used to say kind, firm limits with no punishment and lots of empathy. And we're obviously still sticking with the no punishment part and the lots of empathy part.

**Sarah:** But I find what we're finding is that you and I don't talk about limits in the same way that we used to. So what we've changed that to. Is a collaboration with no punishment and lots of empathy. So I think that's sort of where we're standing [00:06:00] now is that we're not even, we don't even really want to talk about limits.

**Sarah:** Of course there are limits that are non negotiable and I love Dana. Abraham gave me that language. She's like, of course there are things that are

non negotiable like seatbelts and helmets. Those health and safety things that are non negotiable, but everything else. Is going to fall under collaboration.

**Sarah:** I'm talking a lot and I want to hear what you have to say, but first I'm just going to share with you sort of the moment where I realized that the word limits is really tricky. I heard, actually, I think I saw it on Facebook on someone, a Facebook post of a parent who was sharing a win and that they had been cutting their toddler's fingernails and the toddler wanted to hold the fingernail clippers after they were done with it.

**Sarah:** And unless there's some really unusual kind of fingernail clippers that I'm not aware of, I don't really consider fingernail clippers to be something that you wouldn't let A toddler hold just because they're usually like, I don't think you can do much damage with fingernail clippers, but this [00:07:00] parent had the agenda that they didn't want the child to hold the fingernail clippers.

**Sarah:** And so they were really and I'm, not saying this to be mean to like, take away from their win, but their win was that even though their child was so upset, they were able to hold a limit with empathy. And I thought, Oh, that feels really. problematic to me that they described their child crying and crying, but they still like held the limit that they weren't going to let them hold the fingernail clippers.

**Sarah:** And to me, it was sort of this thing that I'd been percolating around my fear that if you talk about kind friend limits, It can be as Vivek, our friend Vivek Patel says he says peaceful parenting isn't regular parenting done more nicely. And that was my fear, right? That like, this parent still had the agenda of their way, which was that the kid can't have the perineal clippers.

**Sarah:** And they were using peaceful parenting's kind firm limits to sort of, Use that as an excuse to have their way, right? So that for me was the [00:08:00] moment where I started to think that limits, the word limits can be like a slippery slope. What about you? I've just talked for so long.

**Corey:** Well it's funny. I can't remember the exact moment, but I remember one time, I think it might be, it was even on the podcast where I was like, we're not the peaceful parenting police. And I remember it was making me realize that I was starting to feel differently than some of these really big people who are promoting kind of, shall we say, gentle parenting.

**Corey:** I think gentle parenting is a more common word. And so many of them were being so firm on so many things, and I was starting to realize that We

weren't feeling that locked in about any of these ideas and limits in particular was one that we were just starting to really have a hard time with. To be clear, we're not saying you shouldn't have any limits. I had a coach, I was, I'm running our office hours. I think it was on Monday and a parent was having a [00:09:00] really hard time with something that was happening over and over again. And I actually said to her, I think you need to set some limits here. So we totally still think that there's times when something's happening and you need to, with empathy, stop it.

**Corey:** But really, when we look at what you wrote in your blog post on what is peaceful parenting, I was checking it out today. On what you said, what are kind from limits? Every example you gave was actually collaboration and not even stopping someone from doing something. And so I think that we've actually felt this way for a long time.

**Corey:** We just didn't, like you said, we just didn't have the language to realize that's what we were saying. So I'll give you an example. The three things you said you could do instead of just, using a punishment threat or bribe was give choices, try and find a win solution. Ask the child for help to solve the problem.

**Sarah:** Yeah. Yeah. And I think, I mean, I think the spirit, I don't think the [00:10:00] spirit of what we teach has changed. It's just, I think using the word limits can be very as I was saying before, it can be really tricky because it moves away from the spirit of collaboration, right? Limits. And there I was just thinking about what you said it doesn't mean we don't set any limits.

**Sarah:** And I was just, I do this radio show at local, like, Call in radio show every week on Friday. And there was a question about, now I can't remember if I'm confusing my, your story in this thing in my head, but there was a question about that every time they, Oh yeah, it was every time they had to leave somewhere like the park or a friend's house, that kid was having, and I'm not confusing.

**Sarah:** It is the same example. The kid was having like a giant freak out meltdown every time they had to leave. And I said of course we like want to work on. Collaboration to solve the problem and do all of the things that we can But if you need to take a break from going to the park for a little while because it's just too hard That's okay, too [00:11:00] right So it's not that we're doing that like we're not going to the park as a punishment because you have a meltdown every time We go But it's just too much for the parents sometimes.

**Sarah:** Like it's just too much. Like it's, as Amanda Deakman says, like some things are just, some things are hard and some things are too hard. Right? So in a certain way, that's like dropping a demand on yourself to have to take your kid to the park, even though it's like gives you high blood pressure and ruins the rest of your day.

**Sarah:** So I think there are still like parental limits, but we're going to, we don't go there until we've exhausted. All the other possibilities.

**Corey:** Yeah. And it's, so funny because my son, my older son, so used to me taking this approach with him now of like, whenever there's a problem, we try and solve it. And he looked at me last night so wisely where I was like, Oh, we're going to have to try and solve this problem. It was the same problem we've had our entire life, where he always to do anything, he needs to dump out whatever it is and search through all of it.

**Corey:** Instead of [00:12:00] looking through things. And he looked at me and he goes, Mommy, something's just, you can't solve. Some problems are unsolvable and this is one of them. I'm just always going to dump things. So I, and so I, I loved that approach too, where he's, actually was teaching me that I needed to change my expectations around something. And that was so wise. I was like, right. So he's like, I think what would be better is if you and I worked together on just continuing to teach me how to tidy up.

**Sarah:** I

**Sarah:** love that. What a problem solver you're raising.

**Corey:** Yeah.

**Sarah:** It's so great. And I was thinking too about, there are times when our kids just don't have the experience and they need us to be the guide. Right. I always think about like if you were a tourist visiting Thailand and you didn't know, like the rules and customs of Thailand or, you Pick a, pick some other country where you don't speak the language and things are different.

**Sarah:** You need a guide to tell [00:13:00] you the things that you don't know, right? And to teach you those things and that's sort of where we come into with our collaboration thing is that sometimes kids just don't have the, don't know, they don't have the information or the experience.

**Corey:** Yeah, and I think what we're saying here is that's just, if we focus on that instead of focusing on the limit, comes after if we really haven't been able to collaborate. And the kid might even come up with the limit with you. That's the interesting thing. They might even be able to agree with what is the thing we don't want to be doing in the situation.

**Corey:** What do we want to do? So the limit might even be developed with

**Corey:** them.

**Corey:** Example of this would be the member I'm thinking of. Her daughter wanted to have sleepovers every, like multiple nights in a row. And every night when the other kids were there, no one would sleep. So that's kind of a health and safety issue then because kids need the proper amount of sleep in order to do what they need to do.

**Corey:** So I told her it's [00:14:00] okay that you have to set a limit when it comes to health and safety issues. And I think the next thing we'd probably work on her with is like talking to her daughter, like what would be, when can we do this, how can we make this still happen sometimes for you while still making sure everyone's getting enough sleep, or maybe she's not ready for it yet but in a couple years she'll be ready for that.

**Corey:** So I think that's why we really don't want to focus on limits is because if we focus on collaboration. deciding with them,

**Corey:** Know, guiding them what the options are in any given situation.

**Sarah:** And I also think that in that, just say using that example you just talked about, I think there's also, maybe the kid is tired and it's kind of, everyone's kind of a wreck. And also sometimes there might be a cost benefit analysis. thing that you weigh that's worth it because it's something special or you know it's and so that's the other thing too is like we've got to be flexible because maybe someday you might say like no we're not going to allow this sleepover because you need you won't get enough sleep [00:15:00] and you know we've got this thing happening tomorrow afternoon that you need to be well rested for or whatever and then maybe other times you weigh it and you're like yeah I can handle a cranky kid for the day it's not we don't really have anything big going on and we can say to this, right?

**Sarah:** So that's the other thing too, I think, is just like being super flexible.

**Corey:** Yeah. Cause I think when you get really stuck on the limit thing, you start to feel like, well, I have to hold this line. It gets you into that. I have to hold this line mentality. Instead of pausing and taking time to think about the situation and, what is actually reasonable in that situation.

**Sarah:** yeah

**Corey:** Cause the hold the line thing is I think where we get into a lot of trouble and move away from being peaceful.

**Sarah:** and I think a lot of parents think that it's good parenting to, as you say, hold that boundary and Yes, we want to be strong leaders. Yes, we want to try to be consistent so our kids aren't confused. However, if you're setting a limit about something and then you then realize that was sort of silly or [00:16:00] I was being arbitrary or I hadn't thought about how we could make this work, What you're demonstrating to your child is being inflexible.

**Sarah:** So, so we want to teach our kids to be flexible. I mean, cause so many, I mean, you're with me, right? So many of our clients come to us because their kids are not flexible. Right. And they have like big meltdowns when things don't happen the way they want them to happen. And we have to model that flexibility and also model.

**Sarah:** Models saying admitting when you made a mistake, right? Like kids are going to, they learn that from somewhere. And the worst thing we can do is double down on a bad decision just because we think we need to do that as a parent.

**Corey:** Yeah, that's so important. And I, think that's where my flexibility, you and I were talking about this flexibility has been so important to me. And I think that's where we end up losing a lot of, parents who want to parent this way. When you have a more complex child You can't be rigid

**Corey:** [00:17:00] Because situations are complicated, and there's so many layers to what's going on.

**Corey:** And that's where we've really loved the work, like we said, of Amanda Dieckmann, who talks about dropping demands. It's, I think that's really informed a lot of our change as well, as being like, if we tell parents to focus on limits, it does set them up for feeling like they're failing a lot if things are hard.

**Corey:** And I know having the freedom to not be rigid is what gave me the ability to keep peaceful parenting, even when I had a really complex child. You and I talked about this one of the big areas for me was food. There's so many people, even in like the peaceful world saying, like, you have to, it goes like this, there's specific mealtimes and you can't give them food in between that.

**Corey:** And you need to hold that limit for it. And my child would starve,

**Corey:** So it's, I think that was what is really great about moving in and towards [00:18:00] collaboration is also, is it does give you the freedom to be like. This child is not gonna thrive if we're being really rigid around rules.

**Sarah:** right. I also think that collaboration is such a powerful way to fill up the That goodwill bank like you've heard me Talking about the goodwill bank where we're either making deposits into it or withdrawals from it And I think that the more we collaborate with our child That goodwill bank is going to get nice and beefy right because they're going to experience us as like trustworthy Like willing to listen willing to be flexible taking their preferences and desires into consideration.

**Sarah:** I don't know if I already said listening to them. I think I already said that. But then there are times where you just have to say like, no, I'm sorry, this isn't going to work out, or we can't make this work, or we need to, we do need to actually set a limit around something that's health or safety.

**Sarah:** But then they've had this whole past history of experiencing us [00:19:00] as flexible, trustworthy, et cetera, that they trust us that this is important, right?

**Corey:** That is so true. Yes. And listening to you say that is kind of getting my head thinking about too. The funny thing about this, though, is I, there's one area I want to warn parents. When you're doing this a lot, it can be really tempting though, then to be really upset when that doesn't work, when you're always like filling up this beefy bank account of connection.

**Corey:** And then you have a time where you do have to kind of not do something that they want, and then they're going to get really upset about it. And that's where I just wanted to warn parents that's normal, that's part of this process, because. everyone doesn't like being told they can't do the thing they want to

**Corey:** do. you do need to watch out for when you're doing this is that you don't get resentful on the times when you do have to kind of say we can't do

**Corey:** something

**Sarah:** Yes.

**Corey:** a big [00:20:00] reaction because I know that's a bit of a trap that we can fall into when we are really collaborative.

**Sarah:** Yeah, totally. That makes sense. But I'm also thinking that there are times too, that, you might get more collaboration from your child or more cooperation from your child than you would, if you weren't making that Goodwill Bank nice and beefy. I mean, that I, people may have heard me tell the story before, and it's a bit of a small, silly thing, but it really stood out to me when my sister was getting married and.

**Sarah:** Wanted the kids to dress up in like fancy outfits like little suits and stuff. Asa, my middle son, he was probably around, nine, eight or nine at the time. He didn't want to wear the dress shoes. He wanted to wear sneakers with his suit. And I was like it's really important to your auntie.

**Sarah:** And therefore it's really important to me. And he was like, okay, fine. Like but it was like that sense of I've felt this before that you've done this with me and now I can do this with you, right?

**Corey:** Yeah, they don't feel like you're always [00:21:00] telling them what to do and bossing them around

**Sarah:** Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

**Corey:** you if it's a specific way they're like, all right,

**Sarah:** Yeah. Just shifting a little bit, I think another thing that, sometimes gets overlooked when we're talking about limits is that parents, I'm thinking of a specific example, and I think this is also something that came up in office hours. A child. So we're, the thing we keep mentioning office hours is our membership.

**Sarah:** If you're interested, you can go to reimaginepeacefulparenting. com slash membership. And we have a monthly membership that's like a subscription Netflix style model. And we do at least one, if not two hours of

drop in coaching every week with me and, or Corey where we answer your questions. And we also, there's lots of other stuff inside the membership, but we keep mentioning the office hours.

**Sarah:** So that's what it is. This parent who had an older child who was. It's almost 10 who didn't want to brush her teeth. And he talked about everything he had done to try to get her to brush her teeth. [00:22:00] Trying to like threats and bribes and like all the traditional conventional things.

**Sarah:** And I said, Okay. Why doesn't she want to brush her teeth? And he was like, I don't know. And it's like, I think that's a very conventional parenting thing to like, just have your agenda and, go with your agenda without stopping to look at what's the underlying reason. And even something like teeth brushing, I think I've shifted on that as being from, and this might sound, out there for some parents listening, but I've even shifted thinking that is maybe not as non negotiable as.

**Sarah:** People think it is because it's such a, to force somebody to brush their teeth would be such a invasion of their body autonomy that I think like you really want to do like 99 things before you ever get to forcing of brushing teeth. But, what I'm getting at is looking at what's the underlying, what's driving this resistance, right?

**Sarah:** Is it that the child just resented being [00:23:00] bossed? Is it like a sensory thing? Is it the toothpaste is too spicy? Like there could be all sorts of reasons around the resistance and then there's also the education piece That we talk about too, of understanding like the why you want to brush your teeth.

**Sarah:** And I mentioned this to Vivek in in the summit interview about like talking about tooth decay and having, taking care of your teeth for ladies. Like he said, and he took it a step further and he's like, and teeth are so awesome. Like they're strong and they crunch things. And like so even like just even going to that discussion.

**Corey:** Yeah, I love that because it's, I think that's also what's really driven our change is this idea of being a stress detective.

**Corey:** And that's so much part of the collaboration, is getting to the root of the problem, and kids really need to be a part of that. We put so much pressure on ourselves to figure out, like, what is this problem?

**Corey:** Whereas, like, we just have to ask them Sometimes

**Sarah:** yeah,

**Corey:** won't know, [00:24:00] but sometimes they really

**Sarah:** yeah, and even like the creative solutions like I read somewhere the other day a parent saying that their dentist told them that even like some toothpaste on a finger or something like that if the kid can't tolerate the brush, or if folks don't know about Xylitol, which is actually a natural sweetener that is really good for teeth.

**Sarah:** dental health maybe you're going through a phase where teeth brushing is just there's been too much, maybe there's just been too much conflict around it and you need to reset have the kid chew xylitol gum after every meal for a little while you're doing this reset. Like there's always a way to, to work things out.

**Corey:** Yeah,

**Sarah:** So I think that we've really covered most of what we've talked about and most of what we wanted to talk about in terms of where we've landed in terms of limits and and collaboration. But one thing that I wanted to add that I think comes out for a lot of parents and caregivers is that when they feel that they've stepped out of their like position of authority over or [00:25:00] power over kids, which to be clear, that's not part of peaceful parenting isn't power over.

**Sarah:** But. Our culture is all about power over kids, right? So I think it can feel a little triggering, a little uncomfortable to quote, give in to your child. Like I know I've had a lot of folks who are new to peaceful parenting talk about, well, I don't want them to feel like they're running the show.

**Sarah:** Right. So there's, there can be this uncomfortable feeling of if you're flexible with your child, it can make you feel like you're being permissive. And I think that First of all, just recognizing that, like all I'm doing here is sort of treating my child with respect and, treating them as a person who matters.

**Sarah:** And that feels a little uncomfortable. But I think we've got to remember too, that there's so much that kids don't have any control over in their lives. Like there's so much that they they don't have a lot of say, and what the [00:26:00] family does is routines and things like that, that giving them as much autonomy and power as possible when we can is really good for them and really helpful.

**Sarah:** And. So I think just checking in with ourselves that this is feels uncomfortable because it's so not the norm in how children are treated in our culture. And also just remind ourselves that, What that it's not that they're running the show just because we're practicing collaboration there still is we are still the guides we're still the leaders of the family and that this is just Giving them as much sort of respect as human beings as we can

**Corey:** Yeah, totally.

**Sarah:** So, I think we're good. Like, I think we I think we hit on a lot of the things that, that we wanted to talk about and clear things up a little bit and sort of our re imagining of peaceful parenting. So thank you, Corey, for joining [00:27:00] us.

**Corey:** Thanks for having me

**Sarah:** I just want to remind everyone, check out the resources. We have so many free resources on our website, reimaginedpeacefulparenting. com slash resources. You can check out our membership also there. And finally, if you do want some coaching, Corey and I are both available. You can find on the website also a place to book a free short consult where we can talk about what the options are.

**Sarah:** And thanks for coming, Corey. And we'll talk to everyone soon.

**Speaker:** 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.

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