

Ep #164: Navigating Fear and Anger in Parenting with Valeria



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host
Lisa Smith

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Welcome to *Real World Peaceful Parenting*, a podcast for parents that are tired of yelling, threatening, and punishing their kids. Join mom and master certified parent coach Lisa Smith as she gives you actionable step-by-step strategies that'll help you transform your household from chaos to cooperation. Let's dive in.

Lisa: Welcome, welcome, welcome. Welcome to today's episode. Let me tell y'all, you're in for a spicy treat today. We are going to rock the house here, at *Real World Peaceful Parenting*. I am joined by a very special guest today. We have Valeria joining us.

Valeria is a Mexican-American living in Miami, super bright woman, incredibly successful and intelligent. The mother of a two-year-old and a five-year-old, who she reports are both very strong willed, nay I say full contact sport young boys. Valeria reached out to me wanting some help.

We decided that this would be the perfect opportunity to do some live Real World Peaceful Parenting coaching for you all so that you could have a front row seat into what a coaching situation looks sounds feels and some of the solutions that I work with parents just like you to work through. So let me start by welcoming Valeria to the podcast. I'm so excited you're here.

Valeria: Hi Lisa, I'm very excited too. Thank you for letting me be here.

Lisa: Yeah, this is fantastic. Okay, so this is the email that I got, the reach out from Valeria. She said, "Hey, Lisa, I bought your course Peace and Quiet: The Crash Course For Strong Willed Kids." She said it's totally amazing. Thank you. She said, "I've learned so much from the course. I've just completed the third part. Here's my question, or my confession, I guess we could say."

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You said I struggle to set limits because I don't want to have a storm. So you're avoiding the storming. I set the limit, but then I don't follow through on them or respect them when my kids start to do the whole please mom, please thing, which I know oh so well. You said screen time is our number one topic that the storming end to please comes over. Right?

Valeria: Totally.

Lisa: So tell us more about this.

Valeria: Well, as I say, I started with your course because I was thinking that what's going on with Mateo? He always want to fight back. He never is, like he goes again and again if I say no. He will never back off. So I was like this is not normal. I have to find some help. For the beginning, your course helped me to understand the brain of my kid, that I think that it's very important. Also the way that I was sending him the instructions was the way that it was not working.

So in the beginning, I started to put all these kinds of limits that okay, Mateo, we're going to watch movies only in the morning or in the afternoon. But after that, you're not allowed to see any more videos. Okay, mom, yes, I can do it but please play me my movie. So he says yes because he wants the movie now.

When the movie finish, he's starts can I see just like a *Bluey* episode? No Mateo. We agreed that you cannot do that. Please, mommy, super please. I know if I said no a storm will come. So I started with okay, just one episode. Just one and that's it. But after that episode ends, it becomes another please. It's the last one. When I say no, there is the storm coming. So that's the thing that I don't know how to manage.

Lisa: Okay, I want to talk about three things. I want to talk about the brain and what they're developmentally capable of. I want to talk about the storm.

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Then I want to talk about you because you're as important, your storming when he storms or lack of storming or fear of storming is as important as his storm. So you touched on it in the beginning. I just want to help our listeners understand, and this is what I know you learned in the course Peace and Quiet: The Crash Course to Parenting Your Strong-Willed Kid. The brain continues to develop from birth until the age of 25.

So your five-year-old, let's do the math on this. Your five-year-old at this point, Valeria, is 20% of the way to a fully developed brain. 20%. I mean, I have a 19-year-old who is still six years away from that brain being fully developed. Let me tell you, girl, he shows that on the regular. God bless the kid.

Some ways he's 75% of the way there and in other ways he's six years away from crossing the finish line. It's like a duality. So your kid may be incredibly bright and articulate and have an incredible vocabulary and be able to tell you what he wants. Mommy, I'm hungry. I want carrot sticks. But he's still only 20% of the way to a fully developed brain.

You touched on this, which I think is so brilliant. We need to expect from our children, and we need to set limits around what they're developmentally capable of. We can't over index. We can't set limits that they don't understand or they're not capable of being successful with because he has a 20% developed brain, right?

I mean, a client of mine recently said to me, "Lisa, I cleaned the whole house, and I told my five-year-old daughter now we're going to keep the house really clean." I'm like well good luck with that because she's five and all those words just went right over her head.

So it does sound like you've grounded yourself in I need to set limits around what my kid is developmentally capable of at five and at two. Okay, good. So we've checked that box.

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Valeria: Yes, correctly.

Lisa: So now you say I'm afraid if I say no he will storm?

Valeria: I know that he will storm.

Lisa: You know. We can take it to Vegas and put some money on it.

Valeria: Yes.

Lisa: Not that you, as a financial adviser, would ever tell someone to put money into a bet in Vegas but.

Valeria: Yeah.

Lisa: Here's my question to you. So what if he storms?

Valeria: The thing is that if he storms, for example, yesterday, it was his brother's birthday. Okay. He wants to cut the cake before his brother. I say like Mateo, you cannot cut the cake until your brother is here. So he stormed, and I became a five-year-old girl. So he stormed. I stormed too. It was like the struggle of control. So the thing is that if he storms, for me, it's very difficult to keep calm.

Lisa: Okay, so this is where the coaching comes in.

Valeria: Yes, it's the calm. Then, for example, sometimes I start yelling at him. Or, for example, yesterday, he hit me and I hit him back. Then I was what a bad mom I am then. The guilt that I have because of that was killing me. So the thing is that I don't want to see him storm because I don't know how to control myself. I don't know how to make him stop.

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Lisa: Okay, I love this. I love this. At the end of this, you're going to be a different person.

Valeria: I hope so. Because now I feel guilty for yesterday.

Lisa: Sure, of course, of course. That's a good thing. Guilt is there in these instances is to have a wake-up call. You see what's possible. You're just not sure how to get there yet. So I do want to say as a side note, I love the saying, and I don't know who to attribute it to. I heard it once a long time ago well before it became a parent. Guilt is the enemy of the effective parent.

You want to forgive yourself, tell yourself look, you're here. When we know better, we do better. You're here getting help. You're getting coaching. We're going to improve this. So let's let the guilt go because it doesn't. Once we've had the wake up, we've taken responsibility which you've done, we're getting coaching. We need to forgive ourselves, repair and recover and move on, because the guilt doesn't serve us, right?

Valeria: Right.

Lisa: Like there's no point in feeling guilty over credit card debt. Okay, yes. You bought all the things. You spent the money. Now let's figure out how to get you out of debt and move on rather than wallowing in the mistakes of the debt in the first place. Right? You can relate to that. Right?

Valeria: Totally. Especially because he already really moved on, and I'm not. I'm stuck in there, and he moved on.

Lisa: So, that's a good point. Because when we don't move on then the next storm comes, and we're triggered not by his actions, but by the guilt. Here I go again. Why am I doing this? I'm a horrible parent. It's never going to get better, right? These are the things that trigger us, which is exactly

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why as a parent if you're hearing this, and you can relate to Valeria. You've been in her shoes. I know I was for many years. We don't want to marinate in the guilt. Use the guilt to have a wakeup call and then move on.

If, again, back to a financial example, if every time I meet with you. You're my advisor, and every time we meet I'm saying to you oh, I feel so guilty for all the debt. I look at my credit card statement every day, and I look at the debt, or I think about my bills. You'd be like girl, we got to move on to create a financial plan to get you out of debt. So wallowing in the debt doesn't get you out of debt. We've actually got to take action.

Okay, perfect. So now we're going to talk about how to take action. Okay, so Mateo starts storming. He wants to cut the birthday cake. It's a perfect example, but it's his brother's birthday. We're going to let the brother cut the cake.

Valeria: Of course.

Lisa: Makes total sense, but he wants what he wants. At five years old, I don't know how to self-regulate. I don't know how to hold space for other people. You're telling me but it's brother's birthday, and we need to wait for him. None of that really means anything at this point to your kid. What may be happening is you're thinking, I'm explaining all this to him. I am explaining to him why he can't cut the cake, and he's not fill in the blank. Listening to me, getting it, understanding. Like I am explaining to him. Right?

Valeria: Right. Totally, totally. I explained to him.

Lisa: You might even have grown up in a household where you're thinking listen, son, nobody would have ever taken the time to explain this to me. They would have just pushed me out of the way, sent my room, whatever. I

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am actually being a good parent by taking the time to explain it to you. You're not even listening to me.

Valeria: Totally. It was just like that.

Lisa: Okay.

Valeria: For me what it was like why are you being so selfish? It's not to party. It's your brother's party.

Lisa: Oh. Why are you being so selfish? Beautiful. Yes, there's the underbelly. Yes. So let's answer that question. Why is he being so selfish? Because at five years old, he's completely self-centered. Now, don't let this scare you. It doesn't mean he's going to grow up to be self-centered. It means right now where he's at in brain development, he's stuck in only thinking about himself, and he wants what he wants.

When they have needs and wants and they aren't met, big feelings bubble up. Right? Cortisol gets secreted through the body. What happens is once the storm gets cooking, it shuts down any ability to hear, this is scientifically proven, hear, think, or respond. I mean, it's literally a storm. Like you live in Miami. It's like a hurricane has made landfall. You've just got to get out of the way. I mean, there's no stopping a hurricane.

Valeria: No, the best way to define it is a storm. That's it.

Lisa: Exactly. That's why I call it that. Okay, so you said I find it difficult to keep calm. Now, here's the interesting part. One finds it difficult to keep calm, not because of what your son's doing but because of your thoughts about what your son is doing. Because I could be there at the birthday party, as a parent coach of 15 years. Your son would be storming, I wouldn't find it difficult because I would have different thoughts. Oh, he's really struggling. He doesn't understand why he can't cut the cake.

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So your job in these moments is to do a couple things. Observe your thoughts while you're having them, not take it personally, like really not take it personally, and realize that he's in a stage of development where he literally can't absorb anything around him when he gets into the storming mode. So let's break those down.

Number one, we've got to observe and manage our thoughts. Right? That's number one. Yeah, he doesn't understand. He doesn't get it would be a much better thought then why is he not understanding what I'm telling him? Because in the heat of the moment, he is not going to understand it.

When you're in your survivor brain, your middle brain, it literally cuts off any access to your higher brain. I mean, we see adults like this all the time. People getting into fights at football games or confrontations at Starbucks, or, right. I mean, this is where I am so in my fight or flight survivor brain that I can't even hear when you're saying ma'am, calm down, we're solving your problem, or we'll go get it, or whatever.

So you can't be in your higher brain and your middle brain at the same time. Okay. What's really important about this is that if a kid can't be in his higher brain and middle brain, an adult certainly can't. So I need you to stay in your higher brain while your kid is in their middle brain.

We do that, Valeria, with our thoughts. Of course, he wants to cut the cake. He's five. Of course, he wants to be the center of attention and cut the cake and eat the delicious sugar. When I say to him, wait for his brother. It's his brother's party. Of course, he's selfish or self-centered. Because this is the phase he's in.

We also don't want to catastrophize. Because he's so self-centered at five doesn't mean he's going to be living under a bridge or the shopping cart at 25. Right, because that's probably the other thing. Oh my gosh, if he's like this now. I mean, or I've got a brother, I've got a cousin, or I know someone

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who did this when they were five, and now they're living under a bridge with a shopping cart. Ergo, my son will be living under a bridge with a shopping cart.

Valeria: Totally. What will happen when he has a job and he's selfish with his boss? Things like that.

Lisa: This is where we have to believe in our ability to discipline and coach and set limits overtime and turn on the internal compass within our children. You have to believe you're going to get them to where they need to be. Because catastrophizing is only going to further trigger you into storming alongside him over the birthday cake. Can you see this?

Valeria: Yes, yes.

Lisa: Yeah. Okay. So reflect that back to me in your own words. I'm going to observe my thoughts. Tell me what you heard.

Valeria: Oh, I have to observe my thoughts. I have to do, especially the keyword that you used is that it's not against me. That tells me a lot. Because sometimes when he does something, he wants to bother me. No, I cannot take it personal because it's not. So I think that the part number one that I have to be and also understand that in the age of his mind, he's self-centered. So I have to start with that kind of thoughts. To change my thoughts, that will help him a lot.

Lisa: 100%. He's not a colleague. He's not an adult. He is not operating from a fully developed brain. The little mantra I love to offer you is QTIP. I have two QTIP, quit taking it personally. Right? I love the saying from Peggy O'Mara. Our kids are not giving us a hard time. They're having a hard time.

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So if you can look at him as though he is literally having a hard time not wanting to cut that cake, then empathy can come in, and your brain will flood with chemicals released in your brain from the empathy rather than the anger and the fear, right?

We're, as parents, 99.9% of the time we're triggered from a place of fear, anger, or not feeling heard or some combination of all three. So our kids are not, I mean, we just want to stay out of that fear, anger, and not heard mode and stay in the what is he capable of developmentally? Now, it doesn't mean you don't take him in the other room if he's standing in front of the birthday cake, and you've got 20 people there. It doesn't mean you don't take him in the other room to finish the storm. But you do it with empathy without taking it personally.

Valeria: Actually, when that happened, I bring him to like a separate room. I was like we're going to talk about this. You cannot cut the cake. It's your brother's birthday, I understand. But then he stand up, and he hit me. He hit me hard. So that's the point that I was so frustrated that I hit him back. Then he's started like you cannot hit your son. I'm going to call the police. He's always like that kind of. Then the guilt was killing.

But I tried to do my best to bring him to a quiet place to explain, but he was like. I think that at that point, the storm was in its highest point, his and mine.

Lisa: Yes. Okay, let's talk about that. So you did a great job, take him to the other room. Okay, when we get to the other room, let's try this. Oh, sweetheart. I know you really wanted to cut that cake, didn't you? I know. Tell me all about it. You don't need to explain to him because you've already done the work of taking him away from cutting the cake. You are in charge. This is not a debate where he's going to win and go cut the cake. We don't need to explain again.

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What we need to offer him is to feel seen, heard, and valued by listening to him about how he wants to cut the cake. If you say sweetheart, I totally get that you wanted to cut the cake. It doesn't mean that you're agreeing with it, and you're suddenly going to run out back out into the dining room and let him cut the cake. You're just acknowledging that in that moment, what he really wanted was to cut the cake.

Because if you take me in the other room, and you further explain to me how I can have what I want. As a normal kid, I'm not going to like it. But as a strong willed kid, now your power struggling with me. I'm not going to back down. Never because control is the number one thing I want.

See, the thing is when we connect with our kids, when we allow them to feel seen, heard, and valued, it doesn't mean we're agreeing. We're empathizing. We're understanding in that moment what you wanted. I understand in that moment, you wanted to cut the cake. I get it.

If you want to tell me all about it, I'm here to listen. Yes, Mommy, I really wanted to cut the cake. I know sweetheart. It's so hard when you can't do what you want to do, isn't it? Yes, mommy. Yes. Oh, sweetheart. I know. Do you want to stay here a few more minutes? Or do you want to go back out and watch brother cut the cake? Now we're redirecting after we've connected.

Valeria: Excellent and regulate emotions.

Lisa: Right? It's connect and then correct. If you go straight into correcting me, I'm resistant to it.

Valeria: Amazing. Yeah, totally. Totally.

Lisa: Yeah. So that's the second step. So step one is not take it personally. Step two is provide empathy to the child. I am struggling. I am struggling.

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I'm signal I'm struggling to you with this storm. It's like an SOS. It's like a flare.

So as a parent, that is not our moment to fix or lecture or explain or justify. It's our moment to just let the storm ride out, not take it personally, and provide empathy and redirection. Then later, we can talk about the lesson that we want to teach our child. But when the child is storming, there are no lessons to teach because I literally can't hear you. Right?

Valeria: Right. Totally, I understand. What can I do if he hit me?

Lisa: I love the saying every behavior communicates in need. So when he hit you in that moment, what he's saying is my lid is so flipped. I am hurting so bad that I want to just strike out. I would let the storm completely calm down. When you're in your higher brain and he's in his higher brain then I would talk about how in this family we don't hit when we get angry. Although maybe we do in this family because you did hit him.

Valeria: I know.

Lisa: So the bigger picture is it's not our words that matter. It's our actions that we're modeling for our kids. Right? So maybe later the conversation is we both need to work on not hitting when we're angry. I'm going to work on it so I can show you what it looks like. I want you to work on it, son. Right. But much later. When we've recovered from the storm then we're going to talk about how in this family, we don't hit people. We have to mean that when we say that. So we have to work on that. Right?

So the biggest step one here for all of us, and I had to learn this too, is to not take it personally. Because my son would start storming. My thoughts would be here we go again. Why is he doing this to me? He's so disrespectful. I can't believe this. How is he ever going to be productive? I would go down the black hole fast. That black hole, once you go down the

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black hole, you're going to get triggered. It's impossible to show up regulated when we get that cortisol cooking in our body.

Now, the other thing is, the more we stay calm. Number one, they then can borrow our coregulation. Then we're modeling it for them. We're saying when we don't get to cut the cake, this is what we do. We stay calm. So kids don't do what we say, they do what we do. So we really have to model this for our kids. You can't, I'm not saying you, but all of us can't talk a talk and not walk it. They don't listen to our talking. They watch the walk we walk.

Valeria: Wow. Yeah, totally. That's true because I am the one that has to be the example. That I have to regulate myself first and then I can start talking. First I have to regulate and then I have to show empathy. Because if not, these are not going to work.

Lisa: Exactly. Because I'm hurting. I'm five. I've got this fast acting intense hormone called cortisol raging through my body. I'm uncomfortable. I'm dysregulated. I can't think. My heart is racing. I'm taking shallow breaths. The blood is rushing out of my stomach. I'm in like this ah, and you're trying to use words to talk to me. It's 0.0% helpful.

I like to say there's a right time to parent and a wrong time to parent. If your kid is storming because he can't cut the cake, and you're trying to parent him with logic and words and reason and rationale and justification, it actually makes the storm worse. There's all these words coming. So I'm already in this argh. Then you're using all these words I don't understand. There's too many words, and there's no break. So what it does is it takes the category three storm and makes it a category four and then five, right?

Valeria: Totally.

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Lisa: So all I need in that moment is just understanding room to storm. Storming doesn't mean, this is the last thing I want to talk about Valeria. Storming doesn't mean you're a bad parent. It doesn't mean you've done something wrong. It doesn't mean your kid is bad. It doesn't mean you're not connected. It doesn't mean, my brain is 20% of the way developed. Okay.

So let me ask you this. Remember when you brought Mateo home from the hospital? Newborn baby, your first one. The first few weeks were crazy, right?

Valeria: Right. Scary.

Lisa: Okay. 2:00 a.m., you're sleeping, finally get to sleep. You're in deep sleep and all of a sudden you hear storming, crying. Did you get mad?

Valeria: No, not at all.

Lisa: Did you take it personally?

Valeria: No.

Lisa: Okay.

Valeria: He's hungry.

Lisa: Right. Isn't it interesting how our newborns storm, and we don't get mad. Listen, I didn't want to get up at 2:00 a.m. and do the feeding. I really didn't. But I didn't get mad. I didn't think Malcolm was disrespecting me when he cried at 5:00 a.m. I didn't think that he was giving me a hard time.

But he was storming to get his needs met. Because that was his mode of communication. Something is wrong here, and I need you to fix it. I need

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connection. I need attachment. I need entertainment. I need a diaper change. I need to be burped. I'm ill. I'm hungry. I need something. So at birth, I have a need, and I storm to get my need met. Can you see that?

Valeria: Yes, I can.

Lisa: Okay. Then they become verbal. For some reason, and I haven't figured out why yet. When the child becomes verbal, we immediately assume that the storming then becomes an ode to us, an offense to us. But your five-year-old wanting to cut the cake and he couldn't, and so he's storming to get his needs met, which is I need to work this cortisol out of my body. I might need a little bit of attention. Like I'm struggling that it's brother's birthday. I need a few minutes of reassurance that I still matter.

I don't need you to use a lot of words and justify with words that I don't even understand why I can't cut the cake. I need you to let me storm. I need you to not take it personally. I need you to just give me an understanding that I'm not a horrible human being because I'm self-centered and want to cut the cake.

Valeria: Yes, that's totally the way that you described. I like it because it's such a different perspective. To help him and to help me because something that I love of your podcast is whether you prefer relationship or behavior? In this place, I prefer totally relationship.

Lisa: I love that for you. Yes. Yeah. So taking them in the other room for a minute and giving them empathy. Is it inconvenient? Yes. You want to be in the kitchen with the two-year-old and watching the joy in his face? Yes. But he needs a minute. Here's the irony. At five years old, the average storm, if you don't interfere and take it to a higher level, the average storm last 90 seconds.

Valeria: 90 seconds. Wow.

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Lisa: If you bear witness to it without taking it personally, with empathy, and don't upregulate it to the next level, reactivate it, the average storm last 90 seconds.

Valeria: Wow. That's very good to know.

Lisa: It doesn't feel like that. I know sometimes it feels like nine hours. But on average if you could have just stood there and just oh, sweetheart, I know you're dying to cut that cake. Of course you are. He's going to look up to you like you get me. You understand me.

One of the greatest compliments my son has ever given me is I think he was about 17. We were having an intense discussion one day, and he said to me mom, you really get me. You really understand me. I thought yes, I do, but it's not because I have a special. I mean, I do have a connection with him. It's not like that connection came natural. It's that I've worked over the years once I learned this work to make sure that he felt seen, heard, and valued even when I knew he was wrong. I didn't agree with him. I didn't understand what he was saying.

Now, that doesn't mean that I'm a permissive parent, and I let him do whatever he wants. I would never let the five-year-old cut the two-year-old's cake. Let me state that for the record. But I can understand that the five-year-old, because of his brain development, wants to be the center of attention, sees that cake and wants to cut it. I want what I want.

When we approach that with a calm, not taking it personally understanding and empathy then I feel heard. Even though I don't win in that I get to cut the cake, I win that you understand that I want to cut the cake.

Valeria: Amazing. Amazing. Thank you. That's like a very different perspective. I don't know if I can give you one more example. The biggest trouble is with screen time. He love YouTube. Especially he like to watch

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videos all the time. I think that we have like a lot of rules around it that for him is difficult to understand.

For example, for me, it's like okay on weekdays, you can watch YouTube after you brush your teeth and on the way at school, but that's it. On weekends, you can see a movie in the morning, in the afternoon, but you have to pick one ride wherever we are going so you can watch a video. So I don't know.

It's confusing to him because there are like a lot of kind of different rules around it. The thing is that when he's not getting ready to go to any place, I'm always like do you want to watch a video? So I'm breaking the rule because I need to get him fast. So I don't know if their limits can be flexible or not. That's a thing that I started also to give him a lot of options. But sometimes I think that the options make me a permissive parent. I don't know if you understand.

Lisa: I do.

Valeria: That's the thing.

Lisa: So there's a lot in there. So let's sort of dissect it out a little bit. I think that I always only recommend two options, A or B, red shirt or green shirt, eggs or oatmeal. Because at five years old, if you give me too many options, I melt down over I can't choose. I'll never forget I took Malcolm. I don't know if you remember back when we had that toy store called Toys R Us. Do you remember that store?

Valeria: Yes.

Lisa: I mean, oof. So I was excited. He was probably about five, and he had saved 20 bucks. We were going to go to Toys R Us and get a toy. At the time, I didn't really understand brain development. So I marched him into

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Toys R Us, and I'm like okay, buddy pick. He had like a category 10 meltdown, and I ended up picking them up and swooping him out to the car.

I eventually learned okay before we got to Toys R Us, we decide what aisle. Then Legos, okay. Then I would pick two Lego options and put them on the floor. I'd be like you can have A or B. He could pick a or b. that was much more successful.

So with 20% brain development, I would limit the options. I mean, even with my kid I limit the options to A or B because it's just too much. I'm overwhelmed. Strong willed kids get overwhelmed very quickly because they have very big emotions, and the highs are high and the lows are low. So I always recommend A or B. So I would reduce the number of options down.

The other way you're sort of shooting yourself in the foot, if you will, is by being inconsistent, right? So we set rules, and then we want to use, which I totally get. I used it too. We want to use videos as a babysitter.

Valeria: Totally.

Lisa: I get it because sometimes, listen. Life's busy. We've got things to do. I need to go get some extra work done. I didn't finish my project, and I need to finish recording my podcast episode. Okay. But if you're going to be inconsistent, then the price you're going to pay is the storming when you turn it off. You know what? That's okay. Just let him storm. Don't try to force the storm to go away. Don't try to bribe it away. Don't try to threaten it away.

It's like a beach ball. If you hold it down underwater, eventually you let go, it's going to come up with the velocity. But if we just let the beach ball skim the surface of the pool, it just kind of rolls around. So if you have to be inconsistent because listen Lisa, sometimes I've just got to get dinner

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started or I've got to do something. I'm going to stick them in front of the YouTube to watch a movie or a series of shows then expect the storm. Welcome it.

The storm just means I'm not handling this very well. It doesn't mean the video is rotting my brain or I'm a horrible person or you're a horrible mother. It's not a report card. It's just there's cortisol built up. I was enjoying this. Then it went away. I can't understand why it's going away because I don't understand time. You might even be like hey, you know if you promise to be a good boy when we turn it off, I'll let you watch two videos. Yes, mom. Yes. I'm agreeing to anything. I don't know what I'm agreeing to.

It would be like me agreeing to a contract in Spanish. Valeria, I don't read Spanish. So I might sign it. Then you're like but you signed it. Yeah. But I didn't know what I was signing. It's the same thing. Okay.

Valeria: Got it.

Lisa: So the price you're going to pay, if you will, is the storm. If you go yeah, okay, and that's the price I'm willing to pay. I'll just hold him while he's upset because he watched two videos and now he can't watch anymore. It's okay.

Valeria: Yeah because the storm will come when video ends and in the next day he's going to, if I'm cooking, but I can watch videos while you're cooking because yesterday you let me say. It's going to be no, yesterday was a different time.

Lisa: You just say not today, don't explain. You just say not today, sweetheart. I know you're unhappy about that. Do you want to tell me all about it? Do you want to use your words? Do you want? Then you let him storm because his 20% developed brain doesn't understand why Tuesday I got to do it. Habits form and little kids very quickly, especially habits, they're

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hardwired for F-U-N, you've heard me say this, F-U-N, and get their needs met.

So yesterday, those videos were F-U-N, and I want them again. I don't want to have to entertain myself. That takes energy and work. I want to sit down and have this entertainment fed to me. I get feel good chemical in my brain. I don't have to think. I get to laugh and giggle. I mean, these videos are hardwired for F-U-N. Then I get like I want it, I want it, I want it.

It's like eating a doughnut every morning on vacation. Then you come home from vacation, I look down at my oatmeal. I'm like I don't want this. I want the chocolate glazed donut I had on vacation every morning, or the buffet of anything I want. Right? So now I'm back home, and you're dishing up oatmeal. It's like I want the choice. I want the sugar. I don't want the oatmeal. In one week, I developed the habit of having the donut holes at the buffet every morning at breakfast. So you just let the kids storm over the oatmeal and then we move on with our lives.

Valeria: Okay, okay. I have to stop being scared that I'll just storm.

Lisa: Yes. Because then we do these things. We threaten. We punish. We bribe. We cajole. We sticker chart. We do all these things. You're putting all this energy into those things. I'd rather you put your energy into just bearing witness to the storm. Yeah, I'm here for you, buddy.

Because remember when they stormed when they were babies, it didn't bother us. Right? We may not have liked it, but we weren't mad about it. We weren't trying to bribe our kid into not waking up at 2:00 a.m. to feed. We weren't threatening our babies.

Valeria: No, correct. For example, when he is like I want to have ice cream for breakfast. I remember you that calm but firm. So it's no Mateo, you

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cannot have ice cream for breakfast. We are moving on because that's kind of limits. It's like wants, not needs.

Lisa: Right. You can even say to him, again, to connect before correct. Oh my gosh. You love ice cream, don't you? It's so yummy. I know. Ah, gosh. I love ice cream too. We're not going to have ice cream for breakfast this morning, sweetheart. See, I didn't use a but. I gave empathy. I gave a little pause. You're acknowledging he loves ice cream. I get it.

Then you can think to yourself and a five-year-old doesn't understand breakfast from dinner. Sweetheart, Malcom I used to say, I'd be like what's your favorite flavor? Oh, mom. This I love this week. I love Oreo cookie ice cream. This week I love cookie dough. Oh, sweetheart. Me too. Oh, ice cream is so yummy. Do you want oatmeal or eggs?

Valeria: Okay, yeah.

Lisa: Because I feel connected. I feel heard. You heard that I love ice cream. Then you redirected me to oatmeal or eggs.

Valeria: Perfect. Perfect.

Lisa: Yeah. Connect then redirect.

Valeria: Connection, that's very important.

Lisa: Connection leads to cooperation. It's most of us think it's cooperation then connection. It doesn't work like that. Right? I mean, I go into Starbucks, my favorite place. The first thing they say is welcome to Starbucks. Right? They're connecting with me before they make the request.

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I don't walk in, and they go what do you want? I say vanilla cold brew. Then they say okay, now that I've taken your order hi, how are you? We don't do this to adults, right? You and I had some nice, beautiful gets to know each other chitchat at the beginning. I was connecting with you before we hit record.

Yet with our children, we think it's let me request or redirect you and then I'll connect with you. But the human brain is not built like that. So you connect through oh, gosh. I didn't know you loved ice cream. You love ice cream? Good to know. Do you want eggs or oatmeal? Or I know you love ice cream. Tell me your favorite flavor.

Then if he has to storm because you offered oatmeal or eggs, and he doesn't want those, you just oh yes. You just you bear witness to the storm knowing that's what he needs to move on. Knowing it's not something to take personal. It's not a report card. It means nothing about me. It's that some cortisol built up in the body.

Like he woke up that morning, and he thought about ice cream. He's like oh, ice cream. I want ice cream. I want ice cream. He comes out and announces I want ice cream. He's disappointed. He's frustrated. He doesn't understand. We don't need to make him understand all that at five. We can connect and then redirect. It's not meant to take personally. You are going to have a massive transformation in your parenting when you, all I need you to do is QTIP, quit taking it personally.

Valeria: Perfect.

Lisa: Because then I'm staying in my higher brain. I'm seeing in my higher brain where I've got executive function, where I can think a couple steps ahead, where I can connect all the dots, where I can be creative, where I can be calm. When I parent from my higher brain, there's no explosion. Then on top of it, I'm modeling staying calm. Now it's going to take years for

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him to take over, but you're modeling it. Another side benefit is you don't feel guilty.

Valeria: That's it, the guilt. I hate the guilt. Okay, and I'm also trying to negotiate with him a lot because I also learn that about you. But sometimes I'm scared that negotiate leads me to be a permissive parent.

Lisa: Yes, we're not negotiating.

Valeria: Okay.

Lisa: Once we've set the limit, we can go associate as he gets older in the setting of the limit. But once we set the limit, we never ever, I don't care how old your kid is. We never want to renegotiate the limit while in the middle of enforcing it. Okay.

So for example, I'll give you a five-year-old example. On a Tuesday, you let him have the two movies after school so you can get dinner going. You're going to make paella tonight. It takes a couple extra steps. I'm coming for dinner. You want to get it going so when I get there, we can have a glass of wine. I can hang out with you. So you're like I need to get a little head start on my paella.

So you put him in front of the video, and you give him two videos. Then you turn it off. All is going well. We have a lovely evening together. You're feeling great, mother of the year. Okay. Wednesday comes and now tonight we're just having warmed up leftovers. So I don't need to prep for dinner. I want to play with my kids for a couple hours and spend time with them.

He says mommy, I watch videos? You say not today, sweetheart. Because you've already made the decision. Not today sweetheart. We're going to do something else. We're going to go to the park. No videos mommy, please.

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That is not the moment to renegotiate the limit that you've set of we're not going to have videos today. That is the moment to hold to it.

Now later, if you want to question should I let him have a video every day after school? Maybe I should let him have one video. Later, when you're back in your higher brain, you can consider that. But in the moment when he is begging you or he is hitting you or he is yelling or he is running away or he's throwing himself down on the floor, you are not in your best self parenting higher brain. That's not the moment to question things.

The other thing is if we're constantly bending the limits because we're uncomfortable enforcing them then what happens is not following through on the limits can do more harm than good. It might feel like you're protecting the peace, but it inadvertently fosters entitlement. It sends the signal to your kid that storming gets can get him his way. So then he starts to use storming as a weapon rather than a tool.

Right now it's a tool. I'm dysregulated. I need to burn this cortisol off. So I'm using it as a tool to signal that I need help. We don't want him to learn to use it to get what he wants.

Valeria: Understand. Perfect. Got it.

Lisa: Here's the last thing I want to leave you with. We'll wrap up here. Here's what I want to promise you that is a fact. Rules and limits help kids feel safe, know what is expected and loved. If we're constantly setting limits and then not following through, the child grows up feeling insecure. Is this one she really means? Can I talk her out of it? How big of a storm do I have to throw? It invites this power struggling on top of power struggling, and it makes me feel insecure as the child with an underdeveloped brain because I don't understand what limits mean. I don't understand how to follow them. I don't understand is this the time you mean it or not?

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Valeria: I got it.

Lisa: When you enforce a limit you've set, so back to the example. It's Wednesday, and you've decided we're not going to do videos today, and you hold to it. It's like a 401K. You're turning on the internal compass in your kid.

You're investing in the future, in his ability to be able to hear rules and follow rules and not like them and storm but still respect them and understand them. They help him feel safe. They help him feel secure and trust you and feel secure in the relationship and feel loved because when my mother sets a rule, 99% of the time she follows through on it. So I can rest in the safety of it.

Valeria: Excellent. Totally understand.

Lisa: Yeah. Okay. So Valeria, take all that and run with it. Thank you for helping. You're paying it forward. There's so many people that are going to really benefit from hearing our coaching today. So thank you for coming and being so real with us, Real World Peaceful Parenting. I know, I can see it in your face that you learned a ton.

So what I'd love to do is follow up with you in a few weeks and hear how these lessons transformed you and your family and what you noticed and how you're showing up in a different way. So don't worry listener. I'll try to encourage Valeria to come back for a follow up conversation where we can sort of give you the where's she at now version of how did this all land and what did she notice and what was different for her. Sound good to you, Valeria?

Valeria: Sounds amazing. I will process everything that you just said.

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Lisa: Good. Okay, so stay tuned listener and thank you for being here today. Again, thank you so much for paying it forward to the world. I know these episodes always really help people a ton. I know you're not the only one struggling with this. I know there's tons of mothers of five-year-olds out there that are going to really, and parents of strong willed kids at any age, that are going to really take a lot away from our interaction today. So a big hearty gratitude and thankful to you. Appreciate it.

Valeria: Thanks to you, Lisa. Thank you. It's always a pleasure to listen to your podcast, and I always learn a lot.

Lisa: Oh, I appreciate that. All right listener, if this episode resonated with you, slide over to Instagram and leave me a DM. Let me know what you learned. When we write things down, it deepens our learning. So I'd love for you to let us know on this episode what you learned, what you took away. If you have the big aha moment, I'd love for you to share that with me too. I always consider that my soulful currency. So take this and run with it. There's some great nuggets in here. Until we meet again, I'm wishing you peaceful parenting.

Thank you so much for listening today. I want to personally invite you to head over to thepeacefulparent.com/welcome and sign up for my free peaceful parenting minicourse. You'll find everything you need to get started on the path to peaceful parenting just waiting for you over there at www.thepeacefulparent.com/welcome. I can't wait for you to get started.

Thanks for listening to *Real World Peaceful Parenting*. If you want more info on how you can transform your parenting, visit thepeacefulparent.com. See you soon.