

Ep. #243: Your Blueprint for a Peaceful School Year (Even with a Strong-Willed Kid)



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.

Welcome, welcome, welcome, welcome to today's episode. I am so energized to be with you here today. Let me paint a picture and tell me if it sounds familiar. It's 7:45 in the morning. One kid is having a complete meltdown because their socks are too scratchy and another can't find their homework. You know the assignment they swore they put right here last night?

You're standing in the kitchen clutching cold coffee in one hand, a permission slip in the other, and hear yourself saying those words. Every parent. Has said, we're gonna be late. Let's go get a move on. And then the backpack gets thrown. The tears start flowing, the doors are slamming, and that's all before you've even left the house in the morning.

And as you're driving to school and complete silence because everyone's either crying or fuming, you think to yourself, is this really what the next nine months? Is this really what the school year is gonna look like? If you're nodding your head right now, if you're already feeling that familiar knot in your stomach, just thinking about the school year ahead, I have something important to tell you.

Here's what most parents don't realize. September is your superpower. The patterns you set right now in these first few weeks of school. Literally shape your entire school year. September is when your family's nervous system is deciding, are we gonna spend this year in chaos mode or are we gonna find our calm?

And right now, early September is when you have maximum influence over that decision. I speak from experience. I learned this the hard way when Malcolm is in middle school. Every single morning was a battle. Every homework session ended in tears, his or mine, and I kept thinking, this is just how it is with strong-willed kids.

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This is our life. But then something shifted. I realized I was approaching everything from a place of control and correction instead of connection and understanding. In the morning, I was trying to manage his behavior and his habits. His decisions in the morning instead of meeting his needs. The moment I learned to decode what his meltdowns are really about, the moment I became the calm anchor instead of adding to the storm.

The moment that I started preventing power struggles instead of engaging in them, everything changed. Not overnight, I wanna be clear about that, but steadily, consistently, and by the end of the school year, our mornings are peaceful. Homework happened without battles, and Malcolm started coming to me with problems instead of shutting me out.

And if you're thinking I need this kind of transformation for my family, I have something incredible for you. I'm hosting a free three day challenge starting September 8th, called From Chaos to Calm Your Blueprint for a Peaceful School year. And you can join from anywhere in the world completely free.

To grab your spot right now, go to the [peaceful parent.com/challenge](https://peacefulparent.com/challenge). Don't wait. Get registered right now. I can't wait to welcome you inside and let me share exactly what this blueprint looks like, because I want you to know what you're signing up for. What if this September could be your turning point?

What if instead of bracing yourself for a school year of chaos. You could actually look forward to the school year. What if you had a blueprint, a real practical system for creating calm connection and cooperation in your home? And that's exactly what we're talking about in today's episode. Three essential steps that can transform everything from morning meltdowns to homework battles, to afterschool attitude.

So let's dig in to the first game changing shift you need to make, and it's probably going to surprise you, and it's to remind yourself about 4,872 times that your kid or kids are not giving you a hard time. They're having a hard time. Every single behavior, the sock meltdown, the homework refusal, the homework, frustration, the door slamming, the eye, rolling.

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It's all communication. Your kid is sending you a message and it might not be polite. It definitely isn't pretty, but it's a signal. Most of us parents, were snorkeling at the top. We're skimming the surface of the behavior. We're seeing the tantrum about the socks, and we think they're being difficult. We see the homework about resistance and we think they're being lazy.

We see attitude and we think they're being disrespectful, but peaceful parents, we scuba dive. We go beneath the behavior, down to the feelings and needs, and we find the need that kindergartner melting down about getting dressed. They're not trying to make you late. They might be saying, I need comfort and reassurance because school feels big and scary.

That third grader refusing to do homework, they're not being lazy. They might be communicating. I feel overwhelmed. I dunno where to start, or I can't remember the lesson the teacher taught today and I don't know how to do the homework, or I'm scared of getting it wrong. That middle schooler slamming doors after school.

They're not being disrespectful. They're likely saying, I've been holding it together all day at school and I need a safe place to fall apart. Even your teenager's attitude at dinner, it might not be personal. They could be communicating. I need autonomy, not interrogation about my day. Here's your challenge this week, and this is something we're going to dive so much deeper into if you join me for the three day challenge.

Instead of getting furious about the behavior, get curious about the need. That's your homework this week. Next time your child does a meltdown, pause and take a deep breath and ask yourself. What might they be trying to tell me right now? What do they need help with? What do they need assistance with?

What do they need to sort through this shift alone from seeing behavior as defiance to seeing it as communication will change everything about how you respond. Now, once you know it's not about defiance. About dysregulation. Here's what you need to understand. You, you are calm. Yes, you, I'm talking to you.

Your calm is their anchor. When your kid is spinning, storming, and melting down at any age, what I a hundred percent promise you is it their nervous system is

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looking for stability. They don't need you to match their chaos. They need you to be the anchor in their storm. Now, I know this is easier said than done, trust me, I've been there and I still struggle with it at times.

But here's what I want you to hear. When your child is screaming about the socks, when they're refusing to do homework, when they're giving you attitude, and every instinct in your body wants to react, to yell back, to demand compliance, to show them whose boss you wanna pause. Resist that urge because here's what I've learned, and this literally saved my relationship with Malcolm.

Their storm is not about you. Their storm is not about you. I want you to remember this acronym and it's Q-tip. Quit taking it personally. Your child's storm or meltdown. Whatever you wanna call it. Attitude is not a personal attack. It's not about your parenting. They don't get up in the morning and say, you know what?

Today I am gonna give her a hard time. Today I am gonna be difficult. They're not doing that. It's about their hard moment. And when you stop taking it personally, when you can step back and pause, which allows you to respond and react. It's a complete game changer in the relationship. You become the anchor, you offer them your calm.

So here's the tool you can use starting today. Before you open your mouth to respond to the challenging behavior, to one deep breath, just one. And while you're taking that breath, remind yourself. They're not giving you a hard time. They're having a hard time. This allows you to respond from a steadier place.

Imagine the difference. Instead of saying, stop crying, it's just socks. Put them on, we're gonna be late. You take one deep breath and you remind yourself that they're not giving you a hard time. They're having a hard time, and instead you say. You seem really upset about these socks. Let's figure this out together.

Instead of sit down and do your homework right now, you might say, I can see that homework feels overwhelming. What would help instead of, don't you dare give me that attitude. You might say, it looks like you had a tough day. I'm here when you're ready to talk. Same boundaries. Same expectations, completely different energy.

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And here's the beautiful thing that happens when you become the anchor. Instead of adding to the storm, your kid's nervous system starts to settle. They feel safer. And when your kid feels safe, they can think clearly, they can cooperate, they can learn. Your calm literally, literally helps bring their brain.

Try it. The results are amazing. Okay. Here's the third piece of your peaceful school year blueprint. You cannot force cooperation, but you can create conditions where cooperation follows. Here's what I mean by that. When you demand obedience, because I said so, just do what I tell you, you might get compliance in that moment.

You're not building internal motivation. You're not developing their problem solving skills, and you're definitely not strengthening your relationship with them. But when kids feel heard, when they feel understood, when they feel connected to you, they want to cooperate. Connection creates cooperation. Now, this doesn't mean being permissive.

This doesn't mean letting them run wild or giving into every demand or being late for school every day, or not doing the homework because they've met frustration. This means leading with connection first, then holding the boundaries or redirecting from that place of connection. Let me give you some real world examples of what this looks like.

Instead of the screen time battle, I told you to turn that off. Now you could try. I can see you're really into that game right now, and I know it's hard to stop when you're in middle of something and it's time to transition to dinner. How do we do that instead of the homework struggle of sit down and do your homework now or no TV tonight?

You could try. It seems like homework time is hard today. What would help you feel ready to tackle it? Do you need a snack? Do you need some movement? Do we need to make a list of all the things you need to do? Help me understand what would help you get started instead of move faster. We're always late in the morning because of you.

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You might sit down in the evening or on a Saturday and say, mornings feel rushed for our family. What do you think would help us feel more prepared? Should we get clothes ready the night before? Do you need to sleep in your clothes? Do we need to get the water bottle and the backpack packed and put in the car the night before?

Let's brainstorm or make a game of what would help the mornings go smoother. See the pattern? You're holding the boundary. Scream. Time ends, homework gets done. We leave on time, but you're inviting, collaboration and cooperation instead of demanding compliance. Here's the long-term magic of this approach.

When you model how to handle stress and conflict with respect and problem solving, your kids learn the same skills. You're not just managing today's homework battle. You're building emotional intelligence and cooperation skills that serve them the entire lives. So let's put this all together. You're a three step blueprint for a peaceful school year.

Step one, get curious, not furious, decoding what the behavior is really communicating. Step two, be the anchor. You're calm, helps them find their way back to regulation. And step three, connect before you correct. Creating cooperation through understanding not demands. These three shifts will transform how your family navigates the school year.

I promise. I know some of you might be thinking, okay, Lisa, this sounds amazing in theory, but how do I actually do this? I'm already triggered and overwhelmed and my kid or kids are pushing every single button I have. Well, that's why I created your free three day challenge. I'm hosting a completely free three day challenge called From Chaos to Calm Your Blueprint for a Peaceful School year all year.

It starts Monday, September 8th. Now listen, this isn't just information. This is live coaching, real-time practice, and a community of parents who are on the exact same journey as you. Here's what we're gonna cover in this free three-day challenge. Day one, the school meltdown. What they're really trying to tell you, you and I will dive deep into decoding your kids' behavior.

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You'll learn to read the signals, identify the unmet needs, and respond in ways that actually help instead of escalate. Day two, we're gonna work on how to be your child's anchor during school stress. We'll practice staying regulated when they're dysregulated, and I'll give you the tools for the hardest moments and we'll get to troubleshoot your specific triggers together.

Then day three, we're gonna work on how to end school year power struggles before they start. We'll create systems that invite cooperation and you'll walk away with practical strategies for morning routines, homework time, and those daily transitions that can make or break your family's piece. Each session will be an hour long.

We'll be live on Zoom at 9:00 AM Pacific, 10:00 AM Mountain 11 central and 12 Eastern. On September 8th, 10th, and 12th. And if you can't make it live to all of them or any of them, no worries. If you sign up, we'll send you the replay afterwards. But here's why I want you to join live if you possibly can, because this is where the real magic happens.

This is where you are gonna get to ask me specific questions and hear from other parents dealing with the exact same challenges. You'll feel supported instead of alone in this because here's what I know about this work. It's so much easier when you're not figuring it out by yourself, and this challenge is completely free.

My gift to you for being a real world peaceful parenting listener. By the time we're done on September 12th, you'll have a blueprint you can use for the entire school year. So this is important. Registration closes soon because I wanna make sure everyone who joins gets the support they need. So I want you to sign up right now, and here's why I'm so passionate about offering this challenge, this time of the year and really encouraging you to join right now.

It's because the habits you create in September become your default for the entire school year. If you're starting the year with chaos, the chaos compounds every difficult morning, makes the next morning harder. Every homework battle makes your child that much more resistant, and every power struggle erodes trust.

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But when you start with calm, that compounds too. Every peaceful morning builds confidence, yours and theirs. Every connected response builds trust. Every collaboration strengthens your relationship and turns on the internal compass. September is when you're setting the trajectory and the beautiful thing is it's not too late.

Even if you already had some rough mornings, even if homework is already a struggle, you can still reset right now. That's the power of this blueprint. It works whether your kid is five or 15. It works if they're anxious about school or already in the middle of the first semester. It works for strong-willed kids, sensitive kids, and everything in between.

That's what's possible, and that's what we'll build together in this challenge. So I want you to join me for your most peaceful school year yet. Listen, friend, you don't have to survive the school year. You can actually enjoy it. You can build the relationship with your kids you've always wanted. It starts with a decision.

A decision to do things differently. A decision to learn new tools. A decision to invest three hours over three days in transforming your entire family dynamic. The challenge starts. September 8th, and I would love, love, love to have you there with us. So to reserve your spot, I want you to go right now to the peaceful parent.com/challenge.

That's the peaceful parent.com/challenge. Registration is free, but you need to sign up right now to save your seat. And if you wanna invite your partner, your mom, friends, your sister, people at this playground, please do. The work is even better when you have support. And honestly, this challenge is too good to keep it to yourself.

Your peaceful school year is waiting. Let's build it together. Until next time, I'm wishing you Peaceful parenting.

Thanks for listening to Real World Peaceful Parenting. If you want more info on how you can transform your parenting, visit the [peaceful parent.com](https://parent.com). See you soon.