

Ep #2: How to Listen to Your Kids So It Makes a Difference



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host
Lisa Smith

[Real World Peaceful Parenting](#) with 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: Well, hey there. Welcome back for episode two. I am so excited to be with you here today. This podcast has been a dream of mine for so long. It's hard to believe it's happening. It's so great to have our dreams come true, isn't it?

So, in my work with families whether it's coaching, teaching, writing, or now podcasting, I share simple and effective tools that can help you create connection with your kids. Here's what I know. Once there's connection, then cooperation follows. In today's podcast, we're going to talk about one of the magic tools that creates deep connection with your kids. As a side note, this magic tool also works with spouses, partners, bosses, employees, coworkers, mother-in-laws, and friends.

So, I borrow Brené Brown's definition of connection because why not. I mean she's amazing, and the definition is spot on. I love me some Brené Brown. She is a mentor of mine, and we haven't even had the pleasure of meeting yet. That's a different podcast for a different day. So back to Brené's definition. Brené says, "Connection is when the other person feels," that's the key word in the sentence, "the other person feels seen, heard, and valued." Ugh, I just love that. The other person feels seen, heard, and valued. You with me so far?

Okay. So back to the magic tool that is going to be a game changer for your parenting. This one simple tool can completely change the dynamic in your family overnight. Here's the good news. It's pretty easy to implement. By the end of this podcast, you'll be good to go. So at this point, you're probably like, "Okay Lisa. Come on. Give it to me." Right? All right. Well, let's dig in.

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It's a big full circle moment to me that this tool came to me while listening to a podcast. I can't really say I'm surprised because let's be honest, podcasts are amazing and definitely where it's at right now. I love listening to podcasts. I listen to them while I'm driving, while I'm walking, folding laundry, cooking. I love them. One of my absolute go-to podcasts is Oprah's *Super Soul Sunday*. It's so good. I just love it.

I tend to gravitate towards podcasts like *Super Soul Sunday* because I'm a pretty loud, high energy, intense person by nature. I'm always looking to find the balance of appreciating those strengths, and at the same time discovering and bringing out that peaceful, quiet, Zen-like side to myself. It's a struggle, but I'm always working on it.

So I was thrilled to hear that Oprah was interviewing Thich Nhat Hanh on *Super Soul Sunday*. Nhat Hanh, which is the proper Vietnamese name to call him, is a Buddhist monk and a peace activist. Nhat Hanh has written over 100 books on peace, and 40 of them are in English. He went to college at Princeton, and today he lives in France after being exiled from his country for peacefully protesting the Vietnam War. Nhat Hanh is active in the peace movement promoting nonviolent solutions to conflict.

I was listening to the podcast hoping to work on my own personal balance. Little did I know when I began listening on an average Tuesday while driving to Trader Joe's that I would receive one of the greatest parenting reminders ever from a peace activist with no children.

So in the podcast, Oprah asks Nhat Hanh to talk about the value of deep listening. After a peaceful pause, Nhat Hanh responded, "Deep listening is the kind of listening that can relieve the suffering of another person. You can call it compassionate listening. You listen with only one purpose, and that is to help him or her empty his heart. Even if he says things that are full of wrong perceptions, full of bitterness, you are still capable of continuing to listen with compassion because you know that listening like that, you give the person a chance to suffer less. If you want to help him correct his perception, you wait for another time. For now, you don't interrupt. You don't argue. If you do, he loses his chance. You just listen with compassion

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and help him suffer less. One hour like that can bring transformation and healing.”

So then Oprah says, “Oh, I love this idea of deep listening because often when someone comes to you and wants to vent, it’s so tempting to start giving advice. If you allow the person to just let the feelings out and then in another time come back with advice or comments, that person would experience a deeper healing, right?” She and Nhat Hanh just spend a moment really listening to that and digesting it.

I was reminded while listening that deep listening is at the heart of peaceful parenting. I say often that kids—and it’s really true, it’s all humans—but kids really, really, really want to be heard above all else. I don’t care whether they’re two or 22 or anything in between, they want to be heard above all else. They really want to be heard by their parents. They want to be understood. I think the biggest compliment a child can give their parents is, “You hear me, and you understand me.”

Deep listening to our kids, or anyone for that matter, is a skill. One that needs to be developed and practiced, and definitely not one we’re born with. Deep listening to our kids requires setting aside our ego and at times our anger and disappointment, at times our goals and dreams for our kids, at times our expectations and our fears, and just listen. Listening to relieve the suffering of our kids. Listening so they can empty their hearts. Listening so they can feel heard.

Okay, some real talk. I will confess that my practice of deep listening has slipped a bit as of late. I’ve been busy, distracted, a bit nervous about the current state of affairs. The deep listening often goes out the window in times of stress for me, which ironically is when I need it the most. So my intention with this podcast is to extend an invitation to you and me to listen deeply. What I know is that if you accept the invitation to practice and develop the skills of deep listening, you are giving yourself and your kids the most amazing gift with this magic tool.

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Let me give you a couple examples of what this might look like. Maybe your teenager needs you to listen deeply to her rant about her soccer coach. You know the coach is just doing his job and his best. She doesn't need to hear that right now. Right now, she needs to ease her suffering by expressing her thoughts and being heard. Maybe your eight-year-old needs to tell you how mad he is at his brother, even though he started his fight, and by telling him how to do better next time is on the tip of your tongue.

He isn't going to hear that right now. Because right now what he needs is to empty his heart. He needs you to deeply listen to him so that he can empty his heart. Then later you can circle back around and discuss the actual conflict and new ways to resolve the conflict between he and his brother.

Or maybe your two-year-old fell down and hurt himself for the 20th time today. He needs you to put your phone down for a couple of minutes and listen deeply by looking into his eyes with love as he babbles about his owie. No response is needed from you at all. He just needs to know someone's listening to him.

Okay, your turn. How is your practice of deep listening to your kids? Can you do better? I know I can. I sometimes have arguments in my head with my 16-year-old son ahead of time. I want to have my talking points down. I want to know what I'm going to say. With my son Malcom, there's often a really small window to get my point across. So I often pre-argue in my head. The upside of that is my thoughts are organized. The downside is sometimes I think I know everything he's going to say. So I want to skip over the listening part because I already think I know exactly what he's going to say. Can you relate?

But let's be honest. Number one, I don't know what he's going to say. I do not know what he's going to say. Number two, when I skip over this part, I rob him of the opportunity to be heard and the opportunity to ease his suffering with deep listening. What I know for sure is when I engage in the practice of deep listening, he feels seen, heard, and value which equal connection for both of us. Even if I'm not agreeing with him or saying yes or

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giving in, even if he doesn't like my answer or request, he feels seen, heard, and valued. Makes sense?

So, again, I want to invite you to join me in committing to the practice of deep listening to your kids. Even when you're distracted, even when you're stressed, even when you don't like what they have to say or are uncomfortable with their big emotions. We want to engage in the practice of deep listening.

Let me be clear. Deep listening doesn't mean you automatically give in to what they want or demand. It doesn't even mean you like what they say or agree with their opinion. Deep listening just means you're committed to listen to ease their suffering. Nhat Hanh says, "If you want to help him correct his perception, you wait for another time. For now, you don't interrupt. You don't argue. If you do, he loses his chance. You just listen with compassion and help him suffer less."

He says one hour like that can bring transformation and healing. What I know is we don't even need to spend an hour doing it. Five minutes of deep listening to our kids can really bring transformation and healing to them because they feel seen, heard, and valued. I love this so much. We can always revisit the perception, the style, or the presentation later. But in that moment, the gift is to help our kids feel heard.

When you are practicing deep listening, you can use it as an opportunity to go below the behavior to the feelings and needs. To really understand what is going on. That is the place where deep connection and cooperation blossoms. So, again, let me ask you. Can you improve your deep listening with your kids? Are you willing to work on it? I am all in. I am committed to working on this skill in the coming months because I so see the value of it. I want to know if you're ready to join me on this quest. Yeah?

Listen. I dream of raising a generation of kids to feel deeply heard. Can you imagine for even a moment the problems that can be solved if we all felt heard? Ah. My heart swells just imagining it. What I know for sure is that deep listening begins in the home. Do you hear me? I need an amen on

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that one. Let me say it again. What I know for sure is that deep listening begins in the home.

All right. There you have it. The magic tool. The game changer. So take that back to your family. Implement it, use it, work it, and just wait for the magic to unveil as your kids feel deeply heard and they feel seen, heard, and valued. That, my friends, is connection. Okay. Join me for episode three where we're going to talk about the practice of peaceful parenting. Until next time, I'm wishing us all peaceful parenting.

To celebrate the launch of the *Real World Peaceful Parenting* podcast, I'm going to be giving away a \$50 gift card to one of my many Peaceful Parent courses. I'm going to be giving away one gift card to 10 lucky listeners who subscribe, rate, and review the show on Apple podcasts. It doesn't have to be a five-star review, although I sure hope you loved the show. I want your honest feedback so that I can create an awesome show that provides tons of value.

Visit www.thepeacefulparent.com/podcastlaunch to learn more about the contest and how to enter. That's www.thepeacefulparent.com/podcastlaunch. I'll be announcing the winners on the show in an upcoming episode. So stay tuned.

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.