

Ep #3: The Pledge: The Most Important Work You Can Do



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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: Well, hey there. How are you? Oh, my goodness. So good to be together today. How's it going so far in 2021? Things with me are good. High school basketball has finally started here in Arizona, albeit with masks on. But hey, the young men get to play and that's a good thing.

So, in today's episode I want to share with you how to bring peaceful parenting into your family on the regular, and the four steps for us to get there. I have been talking about this a lot with my private clients and the groups that I lead and the classes that I teach. The more that I talk about how to bring peaceful parenting into our families on the regular, and the more I talk about it, the more excited I get about positioning peaceful parenting as a practice.

I have come to realize over time that to create deep connection with our kids and peace in the home, we have to engage in peaceful parenting as a practice not something we do occasionally, or we turn on and off when needed. I equate it to something like the practice of meditation. So, the practice of meditation, as you know if you're a meditator, is you have to practice meditation regularly, right. There are many, many, many things we do in our life that we practice regularly.

You know, the list includes religion or faith or spirituality. Some of us practice a sport or exercise regularly. We practice art whether it's appreciating or making art. Some people practice bird watching. Some people practice hunting. Some people practice hygiene like brushing teeth or bathing. There's wine tasting, playing cards like bridge euchre, listening to music. There's practicing cooking or baking, and the list goes on and on.

You probably only identify with something if you're practicing it regularly, whatever regularly means to you. For example, let's take a religion or a

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faith or a spirituality. If you're, I don't know, a Buddhist or you practice Islam or you're a Christian or you're Jewish, you may have been indoctrinated into that faith when you were little. But then there's the whole other issue of whether you're currently practicing it now. You most likely only identify now as a Buddhist or a Christian or a Jew if you're actively practicing it. Am I right?

Then there's also the practice of exercise. Who here's a runner? Are you a runner? If you are an actual runner, you're running all the time or you're running regularly. You didn't run five years ago and stop, right. I used to be a half marathoner from 2008 through about 2012. I ran and trained regularly. I ran in a few races around the country, and then my knee said, "Yeah, no Lisa. We're not doing that anymore." So, I don't currently call myself a runner because I don't run anymore. I call myself a former runner.

I do other exercise. I ride my peloton bike. I walk every day, and I do CrossFit. I don't call myself a runner anymore because I'm not currently engaged in the practice of running. Do you see where I'm going with this?

Let's say you go to the gym regularly. You're someone who works out. You practice working out. If you have a gym membership but rarely go, you're probably not going around saying or thinking that you're engaged in the practice of working out. Maybe you get on the scale and you see that it's gone up. So, from an alarm state, you start going to the gym. But until you develop the practice of going regularly, you probably don't identify as a person who goes to the gym.

Now let's say you play the guitar. You would only call yourself a guitarist if you're playing the guitar currently, actively, and regularly. Maybe in a different phase of your life you were in a band back when you were single. But right now, you aren't in a band. You aren't regularly practicing the guitar, and the fact is the guitar is in the basement somewhere in the corner or in the bedroom with a robe flung over it. So, at the moment, you would not say you are practicing playing the guitar. Or do you say picking the guitar? I'm not sure.

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Most of us are engaged in the practice of brushing our teeth regularly and the practice of grooming ourselves. Lord knows I am trying to get my 16-year-old son in the practice of showering regularly. Or maybe you're engaged in the practice of knitting.

I draw the analogies because peaceful parenting is very similar. I want to invite you to commit and engage in the practice of peaceful parenting on the regular. I'm talking with you about this to give you a new perspective. To shift your mindset a bit because when we're practicing something, we're doing it regularly and we're doing it consciously and we're doing it from a place of commitment. This is what I want to invite you to do. To commit to the practice of peaceful parenting.

I don't want you to just wait until something's gone wrong in your family. Until someone's had a massive storm or meltdown, and then think, "Okay. I've got to do something about this quick and immediate." This is one of the main reasons I started this podcast. Because a community, I want us to engage in the practice of peaceful parenting on the regular together. It's the reason why I plan to release one episode a week on the regular so together we can all practice peaceful parenting at a consistent cadence.

This feels like a really important theme as we dive into 2021, especially right now during the pandemic. Some of us are getting more down. We're feeling untethered. We're needing community, and we're needing direction. Our kids are struggling too. There's no better time in my opinion to commit to the practice of peaceful parenting. This means we're going to engage in the practice of peaceful parenting without guilt or shame. Let me say that again. Without guilt or shame.

Now listen. Sometimes things happen. You get in a rut and you don't run for a while. You don't pick up the guitar for a couple of weeks. You get busy and you don't meditate. You get a cold, and you don't go to the gym. That's okay. When you get better or feel better or come out of the slump, you jump back in, right. That's because you've made a commitment to the practice of running or you've made a commitment to the practice of playing the guitar. It can be the same for your practice of peaceful parenting.

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I have a couple of clients that have had epic meltdowns this week, and they fell off the peaceful parenting bandwagon, if you will, and reverted back to some old habits. In working with them, what I invited them to do is to simply return to the practice of peaceful parenting. Just gently bring yourself back with no judgement. See how this works?

Maybe down the road you'll forget the tools. Maybe you'll get triggered. Maybe you've had a bad week. You let things build up and you lose it on your kids. Okay. But if you really want to make progress, then you forgive yourself and you bring yourself back gently to the practice of peaceful parenting. You don't say, "Forget it. It doesn't work. I'm not going to do it." Or "I'm not meant to parent this way," or, "I can't get it." You just forget yourself and you bring yourself gently back to the practice of peaceful parenting.

This is how a commitment to a practice works. You don't say, "Okay. I didn't meditate for a week so forget it. I'm not allowed to ever meditate again." Right? Let's say you haven't played the guitar for six months. You hurt your hand and couldn't play. But once your hand is better, you can return to the practice of playing the guitar.

All right. If this makes sense to you and you're ready to commit to the practice of peaceful parenting, I have a four-step process to help you ease into the practice of peaceful parenting. Step one in the practice of peaceful parenting is making the commitment that you're going to work on these tools regularly, not just when something's gone wrong. It's not just doing a four-week course and then forgetting about it and moving on. Or working with someone or occasionally showing up here when you feel like a bad parent. It's making the commitment to the practice of peaceful parenting. Got it?

Okay. Step two in the practice is to be intentional. To be engaged regularly. To show up and work the tools. To say, "I'm going to be a student. This is important to me, and I'm going to learn. I'm going to work at bringing the concepts and the philosophy into my parenting. Then I'm going to practice

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them regularly, much like one would practice a sport or an exercise or an instrument or a hobby.”

If you have a hobby, let's say you build miniature airplanes or you knit or you crochet or you cook and make videos on YouTube. You're engaging intentionally in that practice regularly, yeah? A client recently said to me that she took the lesson on apologizing as a full sentence, and not the beginning of a sentence followed by telling her kid what he did wrong. She said, “Lisa, I simply apologized to my kids for yelling at them without adding the because part. That's excusing or explaining my behavior, as you've taught me.”

It's so beautiful. This mama is engaged in the practice of peaceful parenting. She showed up, learned the tip, put it into practice, and came back here to report on her progress. That's being incredibly intentional. You like it? Okay. Step three might surprise you. Step three is, are you ready for it? Practice, practice, practice.

Peaceful parenting is not just going to come to you through osmosis. It's not enough to be on someone's email list and let the emails sit in your inbox for a week and then hit delete. It's not enough to just scroll through Instagram and look at pretty pictures. You have to participate and be active and practice what you're learning. I'm here for you. I will meet you where you're at. I will provide you with the resources, but you have to grab them and absorb them and put them into practice in your family.

Think about it this way. Malcom Gladwell says, “If you want to be an expert at something, you have to put roughly 10,000 hours in.” You've heard this, right? So, if you're practicing the guitar or you're training for a half marathon, you're practicing every week. You're going on runs. Or if you're going to the gym regularly, you make a commitment and you go three times a week. If you're practicing your religion or your faith or your spirituality on a regular basis, maybe you're reading a little devotion every morning. Maybe you pray as a family. Maybe you have some ritual that you do on a Friday night for your faith. This is practicing, practicing, practicing. Right?

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You have to sit down and take the yarn out of the basket and actually bring it to your lap with the knitting needles to actually be doing the knitting, or you're not practicing the art of knitting. That's the practice, practice, practice part. Here's the good news. When you do that, it becomes the fabric of who you are. It's not different for peaceful parenting, right?

All right. Step four, our final step, is to adopt the mantra progress over perfection. This is really important. Because when we mess up or slip up or step away, which we all will at some point, then we simply bring ourselves back to the practice of peaceful parenting. Maybe you get busy with work or you're in the middle of a remodel or you've just added to your family or you've experienced a loss and you temporarily stop the practice of peaceful parenting. That's okay.

Maybe you're using a peaceful parenting tool with success like giving choices or using the four steps to get your kids to listen the first time, both of which I'm going to cover in a future episode. And they're working. They're working really well. Then poof, one day you just forget. You just stop using the tool for whatever reason. A month later you realize that you moved away from something that was working, and you're not even sure why.

That's okay. You just gently want to bring yourself back to the practice of peaceful parenting by reminding yourself progress over perfection. I love that mantra so much I say it to myself all the time. Lisa, progress over perfection.

So, there you have it. The four steps to engaging in the practice of peaceful parenting. I hope you love this conversation today as much as I did. If you're a big giant, "Yes, Lisa, I'm in." Then I want to invite you to join me and take the pledge to engage in the practice of peaceful parenting. This doesn't mean we're going to get it right all the time. It doesn't mean you aren't going to have a meltdown or lose your "shiz" once in a while. It doesn't mean your kids are going to be storm free. It doesn't mean you and your partner or coparent are always going to be on the same page and agree about everything.

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What it does mean is that you're going to be actively engaged in the practice of peaceful parenting with the four steps. In today's show notes, you can find a link to a worksheet with the four steps to practicing peaceful parenting and the pledge. So, I hope you'll join me in signing the pledge and make the commitment. Until we meet again, 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.