

Ep #4: A Parent's Greatest Tool



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.

Well hey there. Welcome to today's episode. Let me tell you, it's going to be a good one. But first, let me say thank you for joining me. I want you to know as we meet here each week that I'm here for you, and that I know becoming a peaceful parent doesn't happen overnight. It takes practice to implement new tools and a new way of parenting.

One of my biggest goals with this podcast is to build a community of likeminded parents who want ongoing support in overcoming the parenting styles that don't work while at the same time holding grace for ourselves as people who don't always get it right. I really want you to know that you are not alone. You are not broken. It's never ever too late to find a new way to parent that leads to connection and to cooperation.

Today we're going to talk about what I like to call a parent's greatest tool, and it leads to deep connection. Sound good? Okay. Well we're going to start diving into the material with me asking you a question. So I want you to take a moment and just think about your answer to this question. There's no right or wrong answer. I just want you to take a moment to think about this. What is your goal or goals with respect to your kids?

Is your goal to raise happy, healthy humans? I get that. Is it to raise nice people? Ah, got it. Is it to raise productive members of society? Check. Is it to get your kids out the door on their own? I hear you on that one. Believe me. Let me invite you to add one more goal to your list. Consider adding the goal that you want to build a meaningful relationship with your kids throughout their life. Wow. I know right? Let me say it again. I want to build a meaningful relationship with my kids throughout their life.

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Now society or your definition of parenting and/or your own upbringing might want us to believe this relationship is different than any other human to human relationship we engage in. And in some ways, it is. But like any other relationship, the parent/child relationship requires continuous care and connection. Connection is created, as we've talked about before, when your child feels—that's the key word here—he or she feels seen, heard, and valued.

As a side note, what I know for absolute sure is that you as the parent are much, much, much, much, much more likely to get cooperation if your kids feel connected to you. So today I want to help you create connection with your kids easily, effortlessly, and consistently with what I call a parent's greatest tool. How's that sound? I know. I know. Let's jump in here.

All right. Let me begin with stating that this tool works on all kinds of kids at all ages. I don't care whether your kid or kids are 2, 4, 8, 12, 16, 18, 22, or 42. It is one of the absolute best tools that you can use to engage your kids and go to the next level. This tool allows you to dig a layer deeper and invite your kid to open up. Sounds amazing, right?

Okay. Well the tool is to simply use the statement, "Oh, tell me more." Anytime you as the parent want to learn more, connect with your kids, understand where they're coming from, and even get your point across. You see when we say to our kids tell me more, what we're telling them is first of all I'm listening. What we're telling them is I want to engage with you. What we're telling them is what you have to say matters to me. What we're telling them is I want to hear from you and I'm here for you.

When we say, "Oh, tell me more," we're inviting them to go a layer deeper. To dig deeper into their feelings and needs. We're also telling them that it's safe. You can dig a little deeper son. You can explore daughter. You can share with me and I'm here for you. Even if at first blush it seems like they don't know what their feelings are, when we say to them tell me more, we

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are holding a container or a safe place for them to slow down and explore their feelings and needs.

Now sometimes you'll ask your kids something like how was school today? Your son might say, "It was stupid." Your first reaction is you want to get mad at him for using the word stupid or get triggered or upset with his answer. Or get completely sidetracked with what's really going on by lecturing him about how he shouldn't use the word stupid. Or be frustrated that that's his answer and he won't give you anything more. Yeah? Have you ever been in this scenario? Does this sound like your family? Right.

We don't call this podcast the *Real World Peaceful Parenting* for nothing. This is real world. This is happening all the time, but here's the solution. I want to give you four steps that you can do that are going to make a world of difference. So step number one is to take a deep breath so you can slow everything down.

Step number two is realize that this is a first line defense for our kids. Sometimes they don't know what they're thinking. They don't know what they're feeling. They don't know the answer to the question. They don't know the right answer to the question. They're afraid to express the answer or they need some help getting it out. So by saying, "oh tell me more, tell me more honey," you're saying it's safe. Dig deeper. Open up, share, and explore.

Step number three is to feel confident that you have a parent's greatest tool in your toolbox. So there's no need to get triggered or mad. There's no need to correct or lash out. Then step number four is to just use the tool and say, "Oh, tell me more." Then use your deep listening skills that we talked about in episode three. This will create an incredible connection between you and your kids, I promise.

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Here in the *Real World Peaceful Parenting* podcast I always like to give some real world examples or scenarios so you can see the tool in action. I think it's incredibly helpful and deepens the learning. So let's look at a couple scenarios. Let's say you have two kids and they're five and eight. While you're in the kitchen making dinner, they've been in the living room and you hear some fighting going on. All of a sudden, the younger one comes in the kitchen holding the side of his face and he's crying. I'm talking big tears. You ask, "What's wrong?" He says, "Older brother hurt me."

Now it would be easy here to take that sentence and just immediately go into action. It would be very easy to get triggered. Maybe because you are the youngest of two and you have deep, painful memories of being pummeled by your older sibling. So the idea that your older child is hurting your younger one really brings out the mama bear in you. If you use the four step process here, you would instead of jumping right into action you would take a deep breath, suspend judgement, and say to your younger son, "Oh honey, tell me more." Right?

You're inviting him to dig deeper. In this instance, you're also letting him express himself and get it all out and really be heard. Maybe while he's sharing with you, you learn that your younger child started it by spitting on his brother. Or maybe you realize the younger child needs some attention. So to get it, he wrecked his older brother's Lego set that the older brother had just spent three hours on. Now that doesn't make it okay, but it gives you a lot more information to go on. Tell me more also allows you as the parent to gather details and information, to play detective before jumping into judgement and getting triggered. You see?

Okay. Example number two. Let's say that you pick your 12 year old daughter up after soccer practice one day. She marches across the field, gets in the car, slams the door as hard as she can. As you're driving away, you ask her, "How was practice today?" She looks over at you with the most strained look on her face and says, "I hate my coach." Your fear gets

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completely activated. Oh my gosh. I want her to play a sport. Maybe you're concerned about what she might have done or how she might have acted during practice to bring this on. She can really wear her emotions on her sleeve.

Maybe you're getting triggered because you realize you've already paid for the season, and you fear dragging her to practice and games. The knockdown drag out fight that could come. Maybe you're worried about what the coach thinks about her. Maybe you really, really, really hate the word hate. So as soon as she said it, you got triggered because you're trying to raise a kind and thoughtful human. When you were her age, you would have never dared to utter the word hate for fear of the repercussions.

So then that leads you down the rabbit hole of thoughts of does she not respect me? Why is she being disrespectful? Am I a bad parent? Am I too soft? Which then triggers a whole new round of fear and anger. All of this happens in such a flash. Your pattern in the past was to immediately and passionately jump in here and start coaching and parenting her. The temptation might be to say, "Honey, we don't use the word hate. You don't hate your coach. What are you talking about? You love soccer." Am I right? Been there? Yeah, me too.

Then she responds by glaring at you or ignoring you or losing it by unleashing all of her frustration out on you during the drive home, none of which feels good and just triggers you further. Can you feel the anxiety amping up by the minute? There's no connection happening here. None. And you're getting completely sidetracked on her statement, "I hate my coach." The solution is to put all of that aside for a moment and use the four steps. Get out a parent's greatest tool and help her figure out what is really going on.

What I want you to say to her is, "Oh honey, tell me more." Well, then all of a sudden, she's sharing with you. That the coach called her out in practice

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today in front of everybody. Or maybe she didn't get to practice and had to sit on the sidelines. Or maybe he made everybody run laps today and she's the goalie. She doesn't understand why she has to run when she spends the entire game in the box. Right? Maybe the whole reason she decided to be the goalie in the first place was so she didn't have to run at practice. Maybe she hates running, and all of a sudden this guy has decided she's going to run. She's confused and angry.

So by asking her, "oh tell me more," you're able to dig deeper and find out what's really going on for her. And really be able to listen and hear her concerns, to help her feel heard. Then if it feels like the time to help her with what to do because now you understand what's really going on, you can have a calm conversation with her because you can see that it's not really about hating the coach. It's that she felt embarrassed or she felt called out or she got surprised or she doesn't understand why she has to run. Maybe she hates running, and this is why she picked the position of goalie in the first place. Now he's making her run.

So hopefully you're having a lightbulb moment right now, and you can all see why I call this a parent's greatest tool. Because not only does this tool help your kids feel seen, heard, and valued, but it gives you a way to play detective and gather more information.

In the example above, the daughter doesn't hate her coach. This is a first response to the question how was practice, a defense mechanism. When the mom invites her to say more, it helps the daughter articulate her feelings and what's really going on underneath the surface. The mom doesn't get sidetracked on the initial statement. As she gathers more information, she's able to understand and help solve the real problem. If she wants to circle back later about using the word hate, she can do that.

Tell me more is a way for your kids to feel heard, and it's a simple way for us to gather more information. Ultimately, it's a way for both parties, the

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parent and the child, to feel connected to each other. So I want to encourage you to use the parent's greatest tool all the time. Use it often at any age. Especially if you get the initial answer to one of your questions is fine or I don't know or nothing. This is the perfect time to say tell me more.

If your toddler is trying to communicate something and is getting tongue tied or frustrated, you can always slowly and calmly say, "Tell me more honey." If your teenager gives you that dreaded eyeroll, you know what I mean. Even with the eyeroll, you can take a deep breath and say, "Tell me more. Tell me more."

So I want you, I invite you, I encourage you to take this tool, a parent's greatest tool. Adopt it, use it, incorporate it, bring it into your parenting. I want you to set a goal that today you're going to try to use it with your kids. Right away today. Don't let another day go by that you're not using oh tell me more on each and every one of your kids. And by the way, tell me more also works with partners, coparents, bosses, mother-in-laws, friends, the lady at the grocery store, the customer service agent at the airport, the soccer coach, etcetera. This really is one of the greatest tools you can use. So until next time, tell me more.

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.

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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.