

## Ep #15: What to do When Your Child Says “I Hate You”



### 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.

Welcome to today's episode. How's it going? Last week in our family we had to say goodbye to our precious dog Callie. She was a part of our family for 11 years and my son's very first pet. It's always so hard to lose a furry family member. Gosh, it brings up a lot of emotions. And our house was no exception last week as we processed the loss.

Emotions, our kids sure have them, don't they? Sometimes they're happy, loving, delightful, joy. You know the big smile, the belly laugh, the squeals of joy. Then sometimes the emotions are big and raw and loud, full of anger, out of control, and hard to take. Can you relate to that?

I remember the first time I heard it. Yes it. Malcolm was about ten years old, and he was having a tough day. I don't exactly remember all the details, but I do remember it felt like the steam was building hour by hour. He wanted to keep gaming, and I was insistent that it was time to take a break. I probably interrupted him mid-game, maybe when he was close to winning the platinum world championship that would lead to world domination or some crazy thing like that. He was mad. We're talking mad. Fuming, enraged. I wasn't budging.

I was still working on finding my peaceful parenting style with his big emotions. So I probably wasn't full of empathy or even able to recognize the battle going on inside him, and the dysregulation on the horizon. He was working hard to express himself, change my mind, and get his way. It

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wasn't working for him at all. I wasn't listening, cooperating, or giving in to his demands.

So, of course, the volcano of anger was producing more and more and more lava. As we know, once the volcano erupts the lava spews out the top and all over the place in the form of big, giant feelings. Now in this moment, it was like we wound up like a pitcher and threw the ball right at my throat. He took a deep breath and said, “Mom, I hate you.”

My reaction, oh my reaction. In that moment, I did everything, and I mean everything I want you to not do. I got upset. I cried. I ruminated on it. I created drama around it. At first, I froze him out, and then later I couldn't stop talking, okay really whining, about the big moment. Inside my head, I made it mean he didn't respect me. I wasn't a good mom. We didn't have the relationship I thought we had. I was thinking he needs to apologize. He needs to promise to never, ever, ever do that again. In essence, I made it about me. It makes me cringe to even talk about it now.

Can you relate to this? Have you been there? Are you like, “Oh my, this happened just last week Lisa.” Well, the late great Maya Angelou says when we know better, we do better. So let's know better so that we can do better. In today's episode, my goal is to shift your perspective, explain what's really going on for your kids, and give you the tools to help both of you through what feels like an incredible crisis. And maybe even come out the other side more connected, yes more connected. Sound good? Awesome.

All right. You know me. I like to ask you thought provoking questions. So today's question is what does it mean to be mad? What is the definition of mad? Think about this for a moment. I'll wait. Mad, according to the Webster's dictionary, means greatly provoked, irritated, abnormally furious.

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So here's the deal. When your kid says something outrageous, hurtful, disappointing, know this. You have to understand that your kid doesn't actually hate you. With an underdeveloped brain, they aren't even capable of really understanding hate. They are just feeling their feelings. Mad, out of control. They're feeling abnormally furious, greatly provoked, irritated. With that comes dysregulation. With dysregulation comes a moment of not knowing exactly what to do.

Dysregulation is the poor ability to manage emotional responses or keep them within the acceptable range of typical emotional reactions. Oh wee that was a mouthful. Say, “What? Lisa, I'm driving. I don't even know what you just said.” Okay. No worries. I'm here for you. Let me say it again. Dysregulation is a lack of ability to manage your emotional response or a lack of ability to keep your response within an acceptable range of typical emotional reactions. Okay.

What does that mean? “Lisa, what does that have to do with my kid saying, ‘I hate you mom’.” Well here's the deal. Your kid is hurting. They're hurting so bad they want to lash out and hurt those around them. Or maybe they're asking for help. “I am so upset and dysregulated. I am lashing out as a sign of asking for help.” Let me say that again. Your child is asking for help. “I am so furious and upset and dysregulated that this is the only way I can possibly ask for help is to lash out.”

There's a saying that kids who need the most love sometimes ask for it in the worst ways. Sometimes kids who need the most love ask for it sometimes in the worst ways. I hate you is a perfect example of this, right. “I am asking for help in the worst of ways.”

Consider this. We're going to take a deep dive down into this topic right now. While dysregulated, your kids will sometimes test you by showing

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you their absolute worst side to see what your response is. They're subconsciously asking you, “Can you hold space and not reject me when I am in my most upset, ugly, dysregulated, mad, furious, out of control.” They're asking you, “Is this a place that I can be vulnerable and still feel safe?”

They're asking you, “Can you show me love and acceptance when I am at my worst and trying to hurt you?” And they're asking you, “Can you guide me when I feel out of control? Because I can't guide myself. I'm sending up the SOS, the flare, the white flag. I'm reaching out and asking you can you guide me when I am at my worst? Can you look past my words and actions and understand what is really going on here? Please help me.”

In these moments, our job as a parent is to acknowledge our kid's big feelings. Let them know they're safe to express their big feelings. Let them know it's okay. I've got you. Let them know they're not bad or broken or wrong. They're just mad. It feels out of control. It's okay. Let them know that you see them and understand them, and you're not going to take it personally. Yes? Ah, so good. Hard to do, I get it. But so important. So critical. So connecting. So healing and safe. Ah, I love it.

All right. So how do we do that? You're on board, but now you're wondering, “Okay Lisa. Great, but how do I communicate that? What steps do I take?” As you know, the goal always here at Real World Peaceful Parenting is to give you the tools to move forward on your path to peaceful parenting. So here's the steps you can take the next time your kid says something like I hate you.

Number one, are you ready? Step one. This theme comes up over and over and over again. Step one, don't take it personally. I beg you. Beg, beg, beg, beg, beg you. Remember. They aren't giving you a hard time. They're

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having a hard time. Please do not make this about you like I did. Please. QTIP. Quit taking it personally. It's not about you. They're just so dysregulated and they need help, and they're begging for it in the most difficult of ways. But look past that.

Step two, literally tell yourself, “My child doesn't hate me. They're just hurting so bad right now.” By telling yourself that, you're flooding yourself with empathy for them and for you. Do not let yourself go down the rabbit hole of believing they mean this in any way, shape, or form. Don't do it. Resist it. Say no. Just say no. Uh-uh. Not gonna do it. Do not let yourself go down the rabbit hole of believing they mean this in any way, shape, or from.

I don't care if your kid is two, four, nine, 12, 14, 22, or 28. Do not let yourself go down the rabbit hole of believing they mean this in any way, shape, or from. Tell yourself literally, “They don't hate me. They're just hurting so bad right now.”

Step three, this is the most important step. Say out loud to your child or kid or teen or young adult or adult in your most heartfelt voice, “That's okay. I love you enough for both of us right now.” Say it and mean it. “It's okay. I get it. I hear you. I see you. I love you enough for both of us right now. What you're saying is I'm not taking it personally. I'll carry the torch for both of us. I'll carry you until you can get regulated and share the load.”

What we're saying is, “It's safe. I'm not going to make this about me. I understand what you're signaling. That you're hurting and you don't know how to handle it.” Again, please say to them in your most heartfelt voice, “It's okay. I love you enough for both of us right now.”

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Step four, consider what are they really saying or how we got here. They might really be saying, “I hate not having a say in this. I hate that you're demanding this. I'm having trouble regulating myself. I'm so mad right now I'm having trouble communicating. I'm so hurt I want to hurt something else with my words.” Really consider what is right underneath the surface. What are they really trying to communicate with you?

Then lastly step five. Later when you're both regulated, solve the problem for next time. When you're both regulated, have a conversation. What was going on for you? What was happening? What do you need? What could I have done differently? How can I support you while I'm holding this limit? These five steps work every single time.

The most important step is to articulate out loud to your child, “I love you enough for both of us. It's okay. I get it. I love you enough for both of us. Total game changer, I promise.

So back to my story about Malcolm and I that I started with. Once I knew better, I did better. So about six months after the first episode, he said it again. Similar situation. Wound up and threw the pitch right at me. “Mom, I hate you.” And stood there and stared me down. This time I took a couple of deep breaths. I reminded myself that he doesn't really hate me. He's just really, really, really dysregulated.

I said, “I hear you buddy. I really hear you. Right now, I love you enough for both of us.” Then I just paused. Paused and breathed. A miracle happened; I kid you not. His whole body relaxed. He looked at me with such relief in his eyes.

He was still really mad, let's not kid ourselves. He still wanted his way. But I could tell that he felt safe and heard and relieved. Relieved that I had his

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back. Relieved that I wasn't taking it personally. Relieved that I wasn't going to make a big deal about this. Relieved that I wasn't going to yell at him or punish him, and that I understood what was really, really, really going on.

It was a pivotal moment in my parenting and in my relationship with my son. I was able to love him and support him. Not for one second did I take his words personally this time. I wasn't mad. I wasn't hurt. I wasn't triggered. I didn't get dysregulated. I was able to stay within my emotions. I was able to stay calm. I was able to stay centered and understand what was going on. I was able to provide empathy and support and carry the load while he was dysregulated. I was able to support and guide him through his hurt and anger and dysregulation.

He hasn't said it since, not once. If he did, we'd be okay too. But he hasn't. It's okay. I love you enough for both of us. I'll carry that load until you're able to share it again. So good, yeah? So, so, so good. Okay. Until next time, 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](http://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](http://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](http://thepeacefulparent.com). See you soon.