

Ep #24: Not Gonna Give In



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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.

Welcome, welcome, welcome to today's episode. Thank you so much for joining me. I want to begin today by giving a Real World Peaceful Parenting shoutout to hjm1976 for leaving this review on Apple podcast. This mama wrote, "Lisa is amazing. As a single mom with two children, her insights are invaluable to me. She makes me feel a little less crazy, and like I'll someday be able to live in a constant state of peaceful parenting. I'm a work in progress. I listen and relisten to her episodes because it takes practice." Yes, it does. "Thank you, Lisa," she said. "Your podcast is the real deal."

Well, thank you mama. Thank you so much for investing your time in doing the work and thank you for leaving the review on Apple podcast. I wanted to just take a minute to thank all of you, every single one of you, who've rated and reviewed the podcast. I am really grateful. I appreciate the feedback, but more importantly when you take the time to rate and review the podcast, you're paying it forward to children who really need their parents to hear this information. So from the bottom of my heart, thank you for helping change the world one family at a time.

Now, a couple weeks ago on podcast episode 21 I talked about letting your child feel their feelings by holding space for their feelings including and while they're storming, which I know can be difficult. I know it can be challenging. I received a lot of questions about this. Many of you asked me, "Lisa, I get it, but how do I do it? Help me understand." Okay. I can do that. Let me illustrate how to hold space for your child in the middle of a storm

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with a 100% true story that happened to me that I call “Not Gonna Give In”. Here it goes.

Once upon a time in a far, far away land...No, I'm just kidding. Seriously, here's how the story goes. Again, this is a true story. So if you know me at all, you know I'm a person of action. I like to make things better. This is part of who I am. I like to offer suggestions. I love helping people solve problems. I love to create change for people. This action based problem solving personality is not always my best friend when it comes to parenting.

Let me explain. A couple years ago, my son Malcolm came home from school on a Monday afternoon exhausted with a good amount of homework and wanting to go to our gym to shoot baskets with his friends. Now, I could see this was not in his best interest. He needed to focus on his homework. He needed to rest and get to bed early.

We had traveled the weekend before out of state to a basketball tournament, and had gotten home very, very late Sunday night. He had ridden in the car six hours both ways, played eight basketball games Friday, Saturday, Sunday, won the championship, and then driven back home, like I said, about six hours. I think we pulled into the driveway Sunday evening about midnight.

As you would expect, Monday this boy was dragging. He had dark circles under his eyes. He was tired. He was short, and he just needed an afternoon of downtime. But he couldn't see this. He kept asking me. “Mom, can we please go to the gym? Mom, please, please.” It was like his world was ending if he didn't get to go to the gym that day.

So after calmly explaining over and over and over again that we would not be able to go to the gym that day, he had a massive meltdown. I'm talking epic, one for the books. We all know what those look like, right? Right away

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as he's having this massive meltdown, my heart started beating rapidly. My palms got sweaty. My body felt wildly uncomfortable. You recognize these feelings? Let me tell you. I wanted to make all of this go away like right now. I was so uncomfortable I could barely stand it.

Now, I admit I too was tired from the weekend. From the six hours in the car, from the tournament, from the excitement of it all, from the travelling home and getting home at midnight. And on this particular Monday, I felt behind from being away over the weekend. I was very focused on wanting to get a few things done like laundry and dinner while I had this fantasy of my son relaxing all afternoon and watching movies on the couch.

If I'm really honest with you, I just wanted my son to cooperate and behave with the plan that I had developed in my mind. I had the thought, "This is not what I had in mind for the afternoon." Followed by feelings of anger, disappointment, and fatigue. While Malcolm was having this epic meltdown, my mind wanted me to jump into problem solving mode immediately. "We can do this," it said. "We can make this go away. This uncomfortableness that you're experiencing, we've got to get rid of it."

I asked my mind how? My mind tempted me to offer my son a distraction in the form of a milkshake, which at the time happened to be one of his favorite things. It still is to this day. My mind said, "Hey Lisa. We have to go out anyways. So go ahead. Offer to stop at his favorite place and get him a milkshake." I calmly said to my mind, "We aren't going to do that. I'm not going to soothe him with food. I'm not going to try to distract him with something sugary."

Then my mind tempted me to offer him an alternative in the form of telling him, "Hey, we can go to the gym tomorrow." I calmly said to my mind, "We aren't going to do that. I don't know for sure that we will be going to the

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gym tomorrow, and I'm not going to try to offer him rewards and gifts to get him to stop feeling his feelings.”

Then my mind tempted me to offer my son a threat in the form of a punishment. “If you don’t stop this right now, we may not be able to go to future basketball tournaments. I mean maybe you can't handle this.” I calmly said to my mind, “We aren’t going to do that either. That doesn’t serve anybody. I am not going to punish him for feeling his feelings and attention to squash his feelings down and make them go away because I'm uncomfortable.”

I just decided in the blink of an eye to hold space for him. To feel his anger, fatigue, frustration, disappointment, and confusion. Here's what I didn't do. I decided not to give in to my mind's temptations. I decided not to give him a lecture about his behavior. I decided not to expect him to get happy or calm. I decided not to expect him to understand my reasons or agree to my decision. I decided not to get more mad at him when he asked me if we could go to the gym again and again and again.

Here's what I did do. I simply lovingly said, “We aren’t going to the gym today buddy. I know you want to go, but we’re not going to be able to go.” I held the space, and I said very, very, very little. I had empathy for me and how hard this is and how uncomfortable I am, and how this isn't what I had planned for today. I had empathy for him. He is upset. Probably doesn't even really understand why. He's angry and tired and he's 12.

I let us work through the afternoon at our own pace, and I learned that my work in that moment was not to give into the temptation to problem solve or distract or threaten or bribe or cajole or reward. It was just to hold space for us both. To just hold a loving space.

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I gave myself empathy and told myself, “Wow, this is really hard, but it’s going to pass Lisa. Empathy holding space for ourselves and our kids and letting everyone feel their feelings is at the heart of peaceful parenting. We got through the day. It was a bit rocky, but we got through it. The next day was a new day. My son got the rest he needed, and we moved forward.

What I learned that day is that it is possible to connect with your kids while they're storming by holding space for them. By resisting the temptation to problem solve or explain or justify or distract or threaten or bribe or cajole or reward. The connection is just holding space for both of us in those tough moments. Give yourself empathy. Offer empathy to your child. Know that it will pass, and just resist the temptation to problem solve, to distract, to threaten, to bribe, to cajole, to reward.

Here’s another example of a parent not giving in to temptation. Recently a client shared with me that she did a great job of resisting the temptation with her six-year-old son. She said, “He tripped coming up the stairs and cried through his entire shower. My husband was trying to distract him, and if I’m honest, I just wanted my husband to rush in there and fix the situation. I was thinking, ‘Get in there and make the storming stop.’

“After my son’s shower, I had him show me where he got hurt. I hugged him and let him cry. What I realized afterwards is that my son didn’t need us to fix it. He just needed to cry. I just needed to hold space for him while he worked through it. I realized Lisa that storming is their way of moving their feelings through their body. Ironically, I need to learn this as an adult,” this parent said. “I want to work on not rushing the storms. I want to work on just holding space for my kids when they're having a storm.”

Right? Amazing. Absolutely amazing. Does this get your wheels turning? Does this give you ideas? Are you having an ah-ha moment right now? I know I certainly am even as I deliver this podcast episode.

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Here's what I want you to know. You can do this. I know it with 100% certainty. You can resist the temptation to problem solve. You can resist the temptation to justify and get your kids to agree with you. You can resist the temptation to distract with something like a toy or food or promise to go somewhere. You can resist the temptation to threaten. You can resist the temptation to bribe. You can resist the temptation to punish and reward and cajole.

What I know you can do is just hold a loving space for both of you because it's hard and it's uncomfortable. Sometimes we just want to make it go away, but the connection is when you hold the space while your child is storming. You provide empathy for yourself. You remind yourself that it will pass. You remind yourself that you've got this. Sure it's uncomfortable in the moment, but I can do this because this is what connection really is. You've got this. I know it.

Okay. So hopefully this has helped you understand, have a really good understanding of what holding space during the storms look like. How to hold space for you and how to hold space for your kids. You've got this. I just know it. Until we meet again, 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 thepeacefulparent.com. See you soon.