

## Ep #27: My Biggest Parenting Epiphany



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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. As we dig in, I want to take a moment to honor you. Yes you. Yep you. I'm talking to you. I want to honor you and the work you are putting into your parenting, into pointing your family in a new trajectory. Today's episode promises to provide another opportunity to dig deep and help you show up in a new way with your kids and for your kids.

Now if you've been listening for a little while, you know that I try to be 100% real with you about my own journey from dominant parent to peaceful parent. So you know I've most likely been exactly where you're at, and so you can see the transformation that is possible for all of us no matter where you are starting on your journey.

Over the years, there've been these moments in time that have provided for me what I call a massive parenting epiphany, try saying that fast three times, or an ah-ha moment. One of the late great mentors of mine, Maya Angelou, says, "When we know better, we do better." Once you know something, it's very hard to unknow it. That's what I'm hoping to provide today. When we know better, we do better.

What I know for sure as a parent coach over the last 10 years is that small changes in your mindset and approach as a parent can make a big difference in creating peace in your home, in being the parent you really want to be. So I want to share one of my big, massive parenting epiphanies or ah-ha moments that happened along the way.

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One day I realized I was giving my son what I needed, not what he needed. Let me tell you the story of how this unfolded. I realized that I was unconsciously looking to fulfill my own childhood needs and tend to my own injuries through my son rather than taking an honest approach to assessing what he needed and who he was. Whoa. I mean this was a major eye opener for me.

You see when I was a kid, I had lots of unmet needs and big feelings. I needed stability and happiness and a sense of safety and comfort. My thought was why is everyone angry all the time and constantly screaming at each other? I needed less people coming and going from my life. I really needed help sorting out all of my feelings, especially the ones that didn't feel good like jealousy, not feeling loved, and a lack in general all around my basic human needs.

Fast forward a few decades and as I saw the plus sign on the pregnancy test that day, I swore to myself at that moment I would give to my child everything I didn't have. Everything. He would want for nothing, and all of his needs would be met. That, my friends, is where all the problems started in that moment when I swore I would give my child everything I didn't have. I was convinced this was the key to being a perfect mom. I would anticipate all of my son's needs and make sure that he had everything that I didn't have.

Who can relate to this? Who's like, "Oh yeah Lisa. I've thought that a million times. Of course I'm trying to give my kid or kids everything I didn't have. I just want to help them and teach them. I want to guide them and protect them. I don't want them to make the mistakes I made. I want them to have the experiences I never had Lisa. Yeah, that makes total sense to me." Ah, but let's dig into the problem.

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So back to my story. Slowly over the first five years it started to become incredibly obvious to me that giving my son everything I didn't have wasn't working. We were both angry all the time and not afraid to loudly express our anger and frustration. At first, I couldn't understand why he wasn't happy or getting it. I mean come on. I was busting my butt to make sure he had what I never had. If I'm completely honest, I was really angry at him that he wasn't more grateful for all that I was doing for him.

Feel familiar? Is the hair on your neck standing up right now? I mean I thought over and over and over again didn't he know how much better his childhood was than mine? Didn't he know the effort I was putting into his happiness and giving him everything I didn't have?

At the height of my frustration was when I had my epiphany moment and experienced a profound shift in my parenting and in my relationship with my son. In this moment I realized the answer to that question was no. No he didn't know. I mean how could he? He wasn't me. He hadn't experienced the pain I grew up with. Of course he wouldn't know.

This was a defining moment on my path to peaceful parenting. Once I understood that it was my past, my history, my wounds that were guiding my parenting decisions, I was able to make several profound shifts. I was able to heal my own childhood wounds, which were controlling my beliefs as a mom. I was able to let go of my expectations of him. Like, he should be grateful that I'm there for him because no one was there for me. He should be happy for providing the stability and support he has, something I never had as a kid. He should not be bored because I'm always willing to spend time with him. Again, something I never had as a kid.

I needed to heal my own childhood wounds and let go of my expectations, and just let him be his own person and have his own experience. By healing my own childhood wounds, I was more likely and more able to be

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present with my son and begin the process of tuning into what he needed instead of giving in to what I needed. Let me say that again. By healing my own childhood wounds, I was more likely and able to be present with Malcolm and tune in to what he needed instead of what I needed at his age.

I learned that when I don't know what he needs, ask. I no longer assumed that I had the answers to what he needed based on my own past. This allowed me to step into the role of being his emotional support and his emotional coach around his feelings and needs and let go of the wounds and story of what did or didn't happen for me at his age. Being present also allowed me to be his emotional coach and help him navigate his big feelings and emotions, not my feelings and emotions I had at his age.

It started with asking myself, "What did I need or want at his age?" Just recognizing what I wish someone would have given me, what I needed, what I wish I would have had. Recognizing it and honoring it allowed me to see the stories, the traumas, the wounds, the unmet needs and heal those for myself. Then and only then get curious about what does he need now? We're different people. He's here to have his own experience.

You know sometimes parenting is hard on us because we're raising ourselves right alongside our kids. When we watch our kids at a certain age, we're often reflecting back subconsciously or consciously on the experiences we had at that age. Sometimes it brings up a lot of stuff for us. Sometimes it's hard because our kids are reflecting back to us what we haven't healed inside of ourselves.

If you haven't done this work of healing, sometimes it comes out as giving our kids what we didn't have rather than what they need. So we try to give them what we wish our people had given us. When they don't respond

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appropriately, we get triggered and often start storming right alongside them.

Mind blowing, right? Is your brain jumping all over the place right now? Are you like, “Oh my goodness Lisa. Thank you, thank you, thank you.” I sure hope so. Let me illustrate my point with a couple stories or case studies where the parent understands where he or she was giving their kid what they wished they would have had instead of what the kid needed.

Okay. So a couple years ago, I worked with a mom named Amy who was the youngest of two kids when she was little. Her older brother used to get physical with her all the time. I mean really physical. He would hit her and pinch her and go after her in a very aggressive physical way when they were growing up. Amy said she felt like her parents never did anything to protect her. This was her story and her wound. She has awful childhood memories of being in pain, both physical pain and emotional pain, from her brother’s constant torture.

So fast forward many years, and Amy is now the mother of two boys. Her two boys are two years apart. According to Amy, they fight all the time. The boys start out having conflict over a toy or a game, and it escalates from conflict to harsh words to getting physical. When Amy and I first started working together, she would get extremely triggered and start storming anytime her older son was physical with her younger son regardless of any of the details. She would rush into the room and immediately start defending and protecting her younger child.

Now this is not really a problem per se, but what was really going on is that Amy was overprotecting her younger child because she wished that when she was at that age her parents would have protected her. So she was getting very triggered by the fighting and would immediately get incredibly angry with her oldest child before getting any information at all.

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She would rush into the room and immediately start defending her younger child. She'd get very loud and reactive with her older child. "Why are you doing that? Get away from him right now. Go to your room. Stop that. You're older. You should know better. Stop being a bully."

What's happening is it's setting up a situation where in her mind her oldest child is the villain, much like her brother, and her youngest child is the victim, much like her. Because this is what it felt like to her when she was a child. Because of her unresolved childhood wounds, she unconsciously thought her job was to immediately rush in and rescue the younger child from the older one.

So we worked through this, and Amy recognized the wounds and worked to heal them. The wounds that she was carrying around that she wasn't even completely aware of when we started our work. It was healing for Amy to come to terms with the idea that her parents, although they loved her very much and were doing the best they could, could have done a better job of helping to protect her. They could have done a better job of mediating and resolving the conflict. They could have done a better job of making sure Amy had some tools to protect herself when she was little.

She took time to honor her feelings of anger, her feelings of both physical and mental pain, and the feeling of helplessness that she felt when she was a little girl. We worked on healing these wounds for her so that she could show up now and be fully present with her two boys and work with them to help resolve their conflict. So that when they were fighting over a toy, she's able to stay calm and not get triggered. She's able to work on holding both boys responsible for the conflict they're experiencing.

Amy moved from the role of protector into the role of mediator and someone who's emotionally coaching both of her children to resolve their conflict. We moved her away from feeling like one of her kids was the villain

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while the other was the victim and into a role of both children feeling amazing and loved and both children understanding how to resolve the conflict, they were feeling when big feelings come up.

She was able to disassociate from the story that her younger son was experiencing exactly what she was experiencing. This allowed her to show up and be fully present with her boys, both of them. This allowed her to get curious and ask what each boy needed when they were fighting. She was able to scuba dive down to the unmet need for each boy instead of assuming that her younger son's experience was exactly the same as hers and that he needed to be protected or saved.

Amy now reports that although it's not perfect and both boys still argue, she's approaching the arguing and the conflict from a different place. She no longer sees her younger son as the victim. She's no longer overidentifying with her younger son because she's resolved her own wounds. Now she shows up to help them work through their conflict.

She said it feels like a completely different energy, and she feels like a completely different parent who's well equipped to help them over the years. Help them learn to cooperate, help them have a relationship, help them resolve the conflict, and help them get along. Amazing right? I know. I'm so proud of Amy. She's done such a great job in giving her kids what they need, not what she needed at their age.

Okay. Let me share another story with you. Let me introduce you to Sarah. Sarah grew up in a really loving but rigid home. Sarah's parents served dinner every night at the same time. Every day they did the same exact activities after school and on the weekends. They had a schedule, and they followed it to a tee. Not really a big deal. Not really necessarily a big wound, but Sarah craved adventure and excitement. Her childhood was



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filled with routine and monotony. Or at least this is her story about her childhood.

As she got older, Sarah swore that if she had kids, she wasn't going to parent them this way. She was going to give them freedom, variety, and little to no routine. No one was going to be required to eat at the same time every day. There was going to be lots of open time on the calendar and lots of spontaneity and adventure.

So fast forward to kids. When I met Sarah, she had two daughters. One was 10 and one was 12, and there was a lot of conflict in the home especially between Sarah and her youngest 10 year old daughter. In our first appointment together, Sarah said her youngest daughter was often ungrateful, angry, and uncooperative. She didn't understand why her daughter was so unhappy all the time.

As we dug in and looked at what was going on with the family, it turns out that her oldest daughter did really well with Sarah's style of parenting. With a lack of structure and with lots of white space and free formed style of living. But her youngest daughter, it turns out, needed more structure in her day. Her youngest daughter needed more support in the form of a schedule, and she needed more rules to help her feel calm and to know what is expected of her.

Sarah was so busy giving her kids what she didn't have because she assumed that this is what her kids would want. She missed the signals that her youngest daughter needed something else. So after putting some structure in place that worked for her daughter, they had a complete turnaround in their home. In one week, everything changed. Her daughter was able to feel the effects of Sarah giving her what she needed, not what Sarah wished she would have had at that age.

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Now hopefully you can see that sometimes we're giving our kids what we needed or what we wanted at that age. It's blinding us from being able to see what our kids really need or want. So I ask you to spend some time thinking about this. Reflect, observe, get curious. I want you to ask yourself when there's a lot of conflict and when you're really triggered. When you're really angry or frustrated with your kids, ask yourself, "Am I offering my kids what they need or what I wanted when I was a kid?" It's work worth doing.

I work with parents to sift through their emotions, disappointment, and stories. I guide them through the process of healing so that they can show up and be fully present as parents. What I know for sure is that when we invest in ourselves and our families in this way, magic happens. Magic, I tell you. What I want you to do now is check in with yourself for a second.

Are you thinking and feeling right now like you would like a piece of this magic that I speak of? If yes mam is the answer or yes, please or, "I'll have that", I want to invite you to come and check out The Hive. The Hive is where you learn all about the tools to become the parent you've always wanted to be.

The Hive is a one of a kind community that serves parents who want ongoing support with their parenting. It's designed to help you take small steps in your peaceful parenting journey that will bring you exponentially closer to the deep connection you've always wanted with your kids. The Hive enables you to have me as your parent coach in your back pocket at all times and get all your questions answered without any obligation on your end.

Now let me share with you that The Hive is not an online group of parents showcasing their social media perfect parenting. It's not a feed of inspirational quotes and empty cliches. It's also not a place where I do all of the talking. The Hive is designed to help you make small steps in your

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peaceful parenting journey that are going to bring you exponentially closer to the parent you've always wanted to be in as little as one hour per week.

Now think about this for a minute. Do you have an extra hour in your week? One hour. Sixty minutes. Because if you have one hour in your week to invest in your family through The Hive, you will be the parent you've always wanted to be. I promise you. I want you to know what's possible for your family.

So if you can, close your eyes for a second. Imagine never being more than a few days away from having a tried and true parenting expert give you tailored guidance on your most recent situation. Ah, that would be amazing, wouldn't it? Imagine feeling any anxiety and guilt you feel right now about your parenting melt away. Oh, so good. Imagine feeling the love and connection with your child or your kids growing stronger every single day. Oh.

Okay now imagine this. Imagine knowing that no parenting challenge is too big for you because of the vast experience and support you can immediately draw on within The Hive. Oh, that would be so great, wouldn't it? You can make it a reality with what I coach and teach you in The Hive. So I want you to go to [thehivecoaching.com](http://thehivecoaching.com) to join. I cannot wait to work with you. You're going to absolutely love 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](http://thepeacefulparent.com). See you soon.