

**Ep #33: Procrastinating Kids:
Real World Coaching with Dani**



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.

Welcome, welcome, welcome to today's episode. I love being here with you each week. I wanted to take a minute to tell you that I'm so proud of you for investing this time in your parenting, in your kids, and in your family. Well done you. Well done. I also want to give you an invitation. If you have a suggestion for a future podcast episode or a question you'd like to ask me, feel free to reach out to us over on Instagram @the_peaceful_parent. You can send us a direct message on Instagram with a question, a comment, or a suggestion for a future episode. I would absolutely love to hear from you.

Now if you've been listening to these episodes for a while, you know I do my very best to bring you tips, ideas, and support that helps you create deep connection and cooperation with your kids. Today I want to take the episode to a whole new level. I say all the time that reading and listening is information and coaching is transformation. Getting coached yourself or listening to someone else get coached is where we take everything to the next level. It's where you have an opportunity to really create the transformation in your family.

So today I have a special treat for you. Today I want you to be able to listen in on a coaching call. So Dani, who is a Hive member and a mother of a seven year old and a five year old little boys who are strong willed, reached out to me for support around getting her strong willed kids to get ready in the morning. Hmm, can you relate to this one? She feels like they're late all the time. Or always rushing to not be late.

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So Dani reached out and asked me to address kids and procrastination. She asked me, “Lisa why do they do it? How do I overcome it? My youngest always waits until the last minute to do everything, and then usually tells me he won't do it. Then finally runs to do it right before we have to walk out the door. All the while I'm losing my shiz.” She asks me, “Any thoughts on how to motivate him to get going a bit earlier? He's five and I'm at my wits end.”

Yep Dani. I know exactly how to help you. So Dani and I jumped on a call, and I want you to listen as I coach Dani through the tools and the support and the coaching that I give her so that she can use these tools with her strong willed five year old to create connection and cooperation in the home while getting to school on time. So have a listen and enjoy.

While you're listening, I don't care how old your kids are. They could be two and four months old or 12 or 16 or 18. I want you to listen with your own family in mind. I want you to listen. The tools are universal across all age ranges. So listen with your own family in mind and how you can take the tools that I'm teaching and reinforcing with Dani and bring them into your home to create your own transformation.

Lisa: So welcome Dani. I'm so happy to have you here today. I'm looking forward to having this conversation and seeing how I can help. Why don't we start out by you telling me what we're coaching on today?

Dani: Well, thank you so much for having me and really dealing with this problem. I don't know what to do. I'm kind of stuck. So I have two sons. My youngest one's name is Jacob. He recently turned five. He's like the utmost procrastinator. He just won't do things. He has every excuse in the book. He will say yes to your face. Then you come back and he's still naked and he said he would get dressed.

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I'm at a loss. I don't know what to do. I don't want to yell. I'm reminding him 100 times, and I don't want to keep doing that. I'm trying to have fun, but we've got to go places. We've got to get to the places, school for instance. Church. I can't take him in his pajamas.

Lisa: Right. I follow you.

Dani: Yeah. I'm kind of stuck.

Lisa: So let me ask you. Do you think he remembers, or do you think that he forgets what he agreed to do?

Dani: I think for the morning routine like school he knows. Because we've been doing the same thing pretty much all the time. He may forget if it's something different. Like if we're going for a playdate or we're going to church, it's a different routine. It's a different day. We're not on our normal schedule. So then it may be possible that he's forgetting.

Lisa: Okay. Let's take the school routine because that obviously happens five days a week for many years. So let's break that down a little bit. So you have these things. You want to leave the house at 8:00 let's say. On the regular he is not ready to go. You walk in the bedroom, and he is not dressed, not ready to go, and what? Looking out the window? Playing with a toy?

Dani: So I'll give you an example of this morning. So he wants to go to walk his older brother to school. So we have to be out of the house at 7:45 let's say. He'll eat his breakfast, that's not an issue. Then he'll be in his jammies, and he wants to play. So I know that he wants to play. I've woken him up early enough to try to allow for some play time, but I try to say

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things like, “Jacob, after you get dressed then you can play.” He’ll look at me and he’ll go, “Okay mommy.” Then he’ll open the door and go outside.

I’m like okay. What do I do? Then I’m like okay I’m going to let him be outside for a minute. So this morning he came back inside. He put his underwear on, and then he went back outside. He was like, “Mommy, mommy. You have to see this. You have to come out here and see what’s in the dirt.” I’m freaking out because I’m like, “We’ve got to go. You’re still in your underwear. Your brother’s getting dirty. My stress level is rising.”

I’m like, “Okay. I’m going to look at what you’re doing, and then we can get dressed.” So we find the thing. We do the activity that Jacob wants to do. Then he goes inside, and I go to get my shoes on. His brother gets his stuff and gets in the car. I turn around and he’s got his shirt on, and he’s playing with a toy. So then we end up...The end result is like yes he put his pants on.

I am like, “We’re leaving. We’re going to the car. We’re leaving.” I leave the house and get in the car. Then he’ll come running out. He doesn’t have socks. He doesn’t have shoes. He did remember his lunchbox and his drink. So he’s putting on his shoes and socks in the car, which is not the end of the world, but everyday it’s something.

My biggest thing is I don’t want him...He still goes to a school where it’s not a consequence if he’s late, but now his brother goes to a real school. It’s a consequence if he’s late. So I’m like we cannot have the whole entire family late because you are procrastinating or playing or doing what Jacob has to do.

Lisa: Okay. So I hear a few things going on here Dani. Let’s break them down a little bit. What I hear is in your adult brain, your fully developed

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brain, in the very beginning of that example, that was a perfect example. Really great one. In the beginning of it, in your mind you and Jacob made a contract. He's going to get dressed, and then he can go outside and play.

Dani: Right.

Lisa: So in your mind you're like, "We agreed. I set the rules. You said yes mommy. We're good to go."

Dani: Right.

Lisa: Okay. Then he turns around and he runs outside. Then the second problem comes in where you're like, "Okay well I'll let him play for a few minutes, but we've made the agreement. He's going to come back inside and remember that he has to get dressed.

Dani: Right.

Lisa: Then we move onto the third tier which is where you come back into the room later only to realize that you lived up to your end of the bargain and you bent the rules, and he didn't live up to his end of the bargain. My guess at that point is you get triggered, dysregulated, and now you're pissed. Because "First we set the contract, you agreed to it. Then I let you sort of do your own thing with the unspoken agreement that you were going to get back on track and be ready to go at 7:45. Now nothing's happened. You got to do what you wanted, and you didn't live up to anything on my side."

Dani: Yeah. Sounds a little crazy when you put it like that but yeah.

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Lisa: Well, no. It's just this is what our brain does. We think that we're making progress. We think he's agreeing because he did agree.

Dani: Right.

Lisa: Okay.

Dani: I'm very much like when you say you're going to do it, you do it.

Lisa: Right. Sure.

Dani: Like a core value. I know it may be silly for a five year old but.

Lisa: Well, no. It's your core value, and it's what you want to work towards in the family, but he's five. He's got shiny object syndrome. He may not even realize what he agreed to in the morning in the very beginning. He okay doked you, right? So let's step through how to make this better, okay?

Dani: Okay.

Lisa: Step one. When you say to him, "Jacob, we're going to get dressed and then you can go out to play." He says, "Okay mommy." I want you to say to him, "Repeat back to me what you just agreed to."

Dani: Okay.

Lisa: Let's get a feel for whether he understands what he's just agreed to. Because sometimes as adults we speak in complicated sentences. Kids agree to things. I mean there's so many times over the years where I've said to Malcolm, "Okay this, this, this." He's like, "Right, got it mom." I've

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said, "Okay, what did I just say?" He looks at me and he's like, "Uh, I have no idea." Even now. It happened like a couple weeks ago. We were totally laughing about it.

Because I tend to speak in very adult mom speak. Like, "Okay. You're going to do this and then this and then this and that's naturally going to lead that. Okay ready? Break." He's like, "I have no idea mom." So I want you to clarify that he heard you.

So it might go something like this. "Jacob, I want you to get dressed and then you can go play." "Got it mom." "Okay, what did I just say Jacob?" "Uh, I have no idea." "Okay. Let me repeat it. We're going to get dressed." Or you might need to be even more specific. Shirt, pants, socks, and shoes. Because what does get dressed mean to a five year old? To one five year old it might mean a shirt and pants, and to another it might mean just pants. To you it means shirt, pants, shoes, and socks.

Dani: Right.

Lisa: So the more specific you can be. "These four things. Shirt, shorts, pants, socks, shoes. Then you may play." Keep going back and forth until he articulates that to you and then close him. "Okay, so you're going to get that done right?" Because when we make a commitment to the other person, and this is the part you said. In our family, we value doing what we say we're going to do. We value following through on our commitment. Often that takes closing someone, right?

If you and I sort of go back and forth about meeting for dinner and I'm unsure are we meeting or not, I may not be there. If you're like, "Okay Lisa. I'll see you next Tuesday at The Original ChopShop at 6:00." I'm like, "I will be there. It's on my calendar. Done." We've closed it. We've closed the

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loop. So we need to close the loop with him too. Like, “Hey buddy can you get that done?”

Dani: What if he says no?

Lisa: Then you say why not?

Dani: Okay.

Lisa: Tell me. “Well, I can't get my shoes on.” Oh okay. Okay. How about I help you? How about we put a different pair of shoes on? How about you come get me when you're ready? I mean most kids, especially at five, aren't going to say no just for sport, right? You want to understand why. Okay, well why not? Then work with them on whatever reason comes up. Why not? You know another thing here to point out before we move on is at five years old, I'm hardwired for what Dani?

Dani: Fun.

Lisa: Fun. So what we as adults know is we're going to do the work, and then the fun is going to come. Kids don't really know this. So the other opportunity is to make the getting dressed fun.

Dani: Yeah.

Lisa: Let's see how fast you can do it. Let's set a timer. Let's see who can get dressed first. I'm going to run to my room, and I'm going to get on my shoes, pants, shirt, and socks. Let's see who can win. Right? So the other part is, again, as adults with a fully developed brain, we know I'm going to get dressed and then I get to go to Starbucks and have a cup of coffee. It's my favorite thing in the whole world. I'm going to power through the getting

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dressed because I get the reward at the end. A five year old doesn't really know that.

Dani: Right. They want the reward right now.

Lisa: Right. It's easy to want to rush ahead to the fun and not do the work. As parents, we're often trying to get them to want to do the work first. Their brains just aren't really able to do that yet. So do think about ways to make that getting dressed fun. Making it a contest. If you can't make it fun, make it easy. Lay the clothes out the night before. Don't make him make a lot of decisions. Minimize the distractions. Maybe he could bring his clothes into your room and get dressed. Figure out how to make this either fun or easy for him so he can get on to the part he really likes.

Dani: Okay. That makes sense. Yeah, I think I need to make it easier. The fun part I believe I was trying to accommodate that by going out there and watching him dig up what he had planted in the flower garden the night before.

Lisa: Okay.

Dani: Even though it was starting to trigger me and stressing me out. I was like okay this is fun for him. We can do the work after the fun, but I didn't close the deal as you said. I didn't get the agreement. I didn't get his buy-in.

Lisa: Okay. So work on that. Then let's go to the next step. Let's say that he ignores all that. You do all that and you come back, and he's still not dressed and he's out playing.

Dani: Okay.

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Lisa: At that point, you want to bring him back in and hold him accountable to the getting dressed before going out playing. Because when you let that slide, now you've sent him the signal that that's okay. That becomes the habit in his brain. You want to do it in a calm, regulated way. "Jacob, are you dressed buddy? Look down. Do you have on your shirt, your pants, your shoes, and your socks?" "No mommy." "Okay buddy. We need to go back inside."

Now we're not yelling at him, berating him, punishing him, making him feel bad. We're just going back to the original agreement. We need to go inside and get dressed. Then after you're dressed, you can go outside and play. Because we're training his brain that when we make an agreement, we follow through on it. So when we let it slide, now we're sort of confusing his brain as to what's the process.

Dani: Okay.

Lisa: You know the first week you want to allot a little extra time because this is going to take a little bit of extra time, right? It's work worth doing. If you think about schools, I mean this is how schools run for five year olds. They tend to do the same thing every day. Why? Because then the little brain knows exactly what to expect.

Dani: Okay.

Lisa: So letting them slide is you not setting the limits peacefully. It's a little bit of permissive parenting. It may even be because your brain's like, "Well, I'll let him play but then he'll come in and get ready quickly." His five year old brain can't do that. He knows that we made a deal and, "Now I'm outside playing. Now I'm having fun. I don't want to come back in." Sometimes with strong willed kids switching gears can be really difficult.

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Dani: Yes, I agree. Yeah. I think he's trained me. I probably do that too often.

Lisa: Yeah. Sometimes it's easier or you're busy in the morning. Maybe you're not a morning person. Mornings are not my best parenting time. I kind of want to just be left alone in the morning in my own little brain and get myself ready. So I remember when Malcolm was young, five, we struggled trying to find that rhythm and the routine.

The other thing Dani is once you find what's working, stick with it. Don't deviate. If it's get dressed, play, then have breakfast don't get dressed, have breakfast. Or have breakfast, play. Stick with the routine because that trains their brain. "Oh I go outside and play after I have on my shirt, my pants, my shoes, and my socks."

When he gets it right, we talked about this before. When he gets it right, the shirt, the pants, the shoes, and socks are on, go nuts with the praise. Because his brain gets chemical hit off of that. The pleasure center lights up. Then he's like, "Oh, well that was fun. Okay. Shirt, pants, socks, shoes."

Dani: Okay. Yeah. That celebration part is so important. He loves it.

Lisa: So in summary, I don't think it's procrastination. I think it's not clear understanding of what's expected, and then coming back and following the steps each and every time.

Dani: What do I do if his older brother kind of gets in the mix or distracts him or doesn't help him complete the task or tries to get engaged in the bringing him back? Do you know what I'm trying to say?

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Lisa: Does that happen a lot?

Dani: Not as much in the morning because he wants to go to school and he's ready to go to school, but it will happen on a weekend or if we're trying to go somewhere else on Sunday. They kind of play off each other, right?

Lisa: Yeah.

Dani: They want to play together. Sometimes they just like want to prank me or play a joke on me or something. So they'll think, "Oh, let's go do this thing that she said don't do because it's funny." I want to let it be funny, but I'm triggered because they didn't do what I asked. You know?

Lisa: Yeah. I think it's the same kind of advice in terms of F-U-N. I think your older son, not to make him the villain here, but he's enjoying the attention probably from distracting little brother. That's fun. Then mom getting triggered or surprised or the joke is kind of fun too. So I would find other ways to make it fun. Getting ready to go somewhere isn't really fun for kids. Listening to mom bark out order after order after order isn't really fun.

So I think you've got to think about some things introspectively too. Am I taking too long? Do I give too many commands? Am I making this too complicated? Is there something else I could do? Could I do more on my own to get ready to go somewhere and then just kind of spring it on them the last five minutes? Really evaluate what you're doing and ask yourself what could I do differently here?

Dani: Okay. Yeah. That's good advice. I definitely think my expectations can be too high sometimes.

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Lisa: Yeah. Like what? What would be an example of that?

Dani: Like just, you know, I told you once. So you should have heard me, and you should just do it. I have been trying to ask them more questions. Like what did mommy say? What is the next thing to do on the list since it's a routine? Like what are you missing? "My shoes mommy." Okay great. Let's get that done. Instead of saying get your shoes on, get your shoes on, get your shoes on. That has been helpful.

Lisa: Yeah. I say this with a lot of love Dani. When we say to our kids, "I told you once, you should listen." What we're really saying is I expect you to obey my commands. That's assuming I heard you, as your child, the first time. And that I not only heard, but I assimilated what I heard. I am going to remember. I'm going to not be distracted, and I'm going to go get it done. So a better method might be let's play a game. Go get your shoes on, and then come back and show me that your shoes on as fast as you can.

Dani: Okay.

Lisa: Right? Turn it into F-U-N and a challenge, right? Or for everything you do the first time I ask, you get a point. When you get six points, we're going to do this.

Dani: We're going to wake up early and go to Starbucks together.

Lisa: Something. It's got to be fun for me because I'm a little kid and I'm hardwired for fun. I'm not stressed out that we're all trying to get dressed and get out the door at 10 a.m. to get to grandma's house by 11:30. I have no concept of time. I have no concept of how much work has to be done. I want to just entertain myself and have fun. So either you've got to make it super simple, or you've got to make it fun.

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Dani: Okay, yeah. That's very helpful.

Lisa: It's really the key to cooperation. The benefit of all this is then you're not going to get super dysregulated thinking thoughts like, "Why are they doing this? Why can't they cooperate?" I think as parents sometimes I say this a lot. Like let's say you were going to take Jacob to the park. Let's say he loves the park more than anything.

You're like, "Hey, get your shoes on so we can go to the park." You're thinking, "Hey, I'm taking you to your favorite place. I don't even really want to go to the park. I'm doing this for you. I'm doing this so you can get out and have some fun and have some fresh air."

Then you go into your mudroom, and he's playing with a truck and doesn't have his shoes on. You're thinking, "What? How can you not have your shoes on? I'm trying to do this for you." For him at his age, he doesn't always connect the dots. "Oh we're going to the park, and I love the park. Therefore when she tells me to put my shoes on, I should go do it." Because their prefrontal cortex is not working yet. They can't put all that together.

Dani: Right, yeah.

Lisa: Right? So sometimes there's just a power struggle over being commanded what to do all the time.

Dani: Yes.

Lisa: Right. I know that you have strong willed kids. So sometimes the other thing to keep in mind Dani is when we're with good intentions barking orders all the time. Do this, do that, do this, do that. It wears down that

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strong willed kid because they're not feeling like they're in control. The number one thing that makes them feel in control is choices.

Now sometimes as a parent we justify the barking because hey, we're going to the park. We're going to the beach for the day. You love the beach. You can't wait to get on the boogie board and crash into the waves. I've just got to get all this stuff done and ready. So we start barking orders.

If we gave choices, right. Do you want to put your shoes on first or do you want to help me pack the lunch? Can you go get four towels, any four, for the family? Do you want to put your shoes on first or go get the towels? Right. It helps them not get defensive and want to power struggle over every little thing because they're constantly being told what to do.

Dani: Yeah, that's a big issue for me. Yeah. My older one will fight about it, but the younger one just ignores it.

Lisa: So different coping mechanisms.

Dani: Right. Same result.

Lisa: Yeah, yeah. The younger one's like, "Well, while they're duking it out over there I'll just go play with my Legos."

Dani: Right. Pretty much.

Lisa: Okay. So you can engage both of them. You can give them choices. "Okay, ready? Who wants to go get the towels? Who wants to pick the snacks? Who wants to carry the floaties to the car?" Sometimes the jobs take a little bit longer when they're helping, but it still gets them involved

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and engaged. You're making it fun because now I'm helping and I'm contributing and that feels good.

Dani: Okay, yeah. That makes a lot of sense. I mean I know that Jacob really likes to help. His teachers are always telling me that he likes to help and clean things. So if I can get him on board like that, that would be great.

Lisa: That would be great. Yeah. Okay. So work on all that, and I can't wait to hear how it goes.

Dani: Thank you so much. Yeah. Definitely.

Lisa: My pleasure Dani. So good to work with you today. Take care.

Dani: Thank you.

I work with parents to sift through their emotions, disappointment, and stories. I guide them through the process of healing so 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'd like a piece of this magic 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

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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 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. 60 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.

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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. See you soon.