

Ep #62: Am I Spoiling My Kid?



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 am so excited to be with you here today. I wanted to start today's episode by giving a real world peaceful parenting shout out to Beth Meacher. Beth left this review on Apple podcast. She said, "Awesome. I've only been listening to a few episodes, but I already feel so motivated to be a better parent." Thank you, Beth. Thank you from the bottom of my heart because that's what we're doing here together in 2022. It's the year of becoming a better parent. And Beth said it so eloquently. "I've only listened to a few episodes but already feel motivated to be a better parent."

So again, thank you, Beth. And thank you to all of you who've rated and reviewed the podcast. I so appreciate the feedback, so appreciate it. But more importantly, I want to thank you because when you rate or review the podcast, what you're doing is you're paying it forward to other families.

You see when you leave a review, the podcast service is much more likely to recommend this podcast when people are looking for a parenting resource. So when you take the time to leave a review or rate the podcast, you're paying it forward to other families and more importantly to children who really need their parents to hear this information. So from the bottom of my heart, thank you. Thank you for helping to change the world one family at a time.

As we move into month three in our journey in our year of becoming a better parent, let me ask you. Do you sometimes fear that your peaceful parenting will lead to a spoiled child or an over-indulged adult? Yeah? Or are there adults in your life like maybe your partner or maybe your ex-partner, maybe your co-parent, maybe your in-laws, maybe your parents.

[Real World Peaceful Parenting](#) with Lisa Smith

Ep #62: Am I Spoiling My Kid?

Or family members who tell you that your child is spoiled or going to be spoiled if you keep parenting that way. Or that your parenting, you know, going to your child when they're upset, refusing to tell them to toughen up, asking them what they're feeling will spoil them.

If you're experiencing any of this, I imagine it doesn't feel good and you feel confused or unsure. It often feels confusing and frustrating that you're committed to peaceful parenting and others around you who you know care about you and care about your kids aren't on board. Or worse yet, they're telling you that the connection you are seeking and experiencing will ruin your kids by spoiling them. Oh.

And if you didn't feel safe and secure growing up, this accusation might even make your own inner child feel unsafe. Spoiling your child does not come from how much love, time, and attention you give your kids. You cannot spoil your children by giving them too much care and attention to their needs in the same way you can't spoil a baby by holding him or her too much or responding to her needs every time she expresses them.

So let's take a minute to ask ourselves this question. What does spoil even mean? Well, I went to Webster's dictionary and I looked it up. Here's what it said. Spoil is to impair the disposition or character by overindulgence or excess praise. Let me say that again. Spoil is to impair the disposition or character by overindulgence or excessive praise. Or to pamper excessively or to coddle. I'm so glad I looked this up.

Let me ask you this. If you're attending to your kid's needs, is it overindulgence? Is it excessive? If I am a five-year-old, a seven-year-old, a nine-year-old, a 15-year-old, a 19-year-old, and I am storming because I haven't been able to meet my core basic needs and feelings bubble up. When the volcano fills up, I'm storming out the top as a language of help. Then is it excessive? I don't think so. I think it's baseline. I think I'm just trying to get my needs met.

Ep #62: Am I Spoiling My Kid?

In fact, it's just the opposite. By attending to your child's needs, being present with him or her, and trying to meet their emotional needs, you provide them the gift of secure attachment. A secure attachment bond meets a child's needs for security, calm, and understanding. It allows for optimal development of the child's nervous system.

Kids who are securely attached have learned they can trust people to take care of them. Kids who are securely attached tend to react well to stress. They're willing to try new things independently. They form stronger interpersonal relationships, and they become superior problem solvers.

Research over the years shows that children who form secure attachments with their parents have much better outcomes all throughout their life. Secure attachment patterns are formed when parents see and respond to the needs of their children.

Now let me be clear here, we're not talking about the wants. We're not talking about giving your kid a cookie every time they ask for it or a candy bar at the checkout line at Target or unlimited gaming or demanding they eat cake for dinner. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about core basic needs. Attention, affection, autonomy, acceptance, connection.

Secure attachment patterns are formed when parents see and respond to the needs of their children. Such as providing comfort, reassurance, being present with them. In other words, the parents are scuba diving down to the feelings and needs rather than snorkeling at the top by always focusing on the child's behavior. Now remember, I've said this before. Connection is when the other person feels. That's the critical word. The other person has to feel seen, heard, and valued by you.

So when we are in connection, as the parent, the child feels like his, her, or their needs matter. They matter. I care about your feelings and your needs even if I don't like your behavior. I value the relationship more than your behavior in this minute.

Ep #62: Am I Spoiling My Kid?

For example, you might want me to put my shoes on because we need to get out the door. But you can see me struggling to do it myself. Although you're frustrated because we really do need to go, you see me struggling and you understand it, and you assure me that it's okay. At some point, I'll get it. I'll be able to put the shoes on myself.

When children experience this type of connection from their parents, they learn that their needs matter and therefore they matter. When children experience deep connection from their parents, they learn to trust that they can count on people to show up for them and be fully present with them. When children experience this type of connection from their parents, they are free to learn and explore and develop without fear of making a mistake.

Yeah? Oh, I want that for every one of our kids in the world. I want all of it, and I know it's possible. One family at a time. You're doing it. You're working on it. Just by showing up here and listening with an open mind. I'm so proud of you that you're on this journey with me in 2022, in the year of becoming a better parent. I love it.

Let's go back to the dictionary definition of spoiled. According to Webster's, to spoil is to impair the disposition or character by overindulgence or excessive praise. Or to pamper excessively and coddle. Now, many of us grew up with parents who are now our kid's grandparents who believed that secure attachment would lead to a spoiled child and an overindulgent adult. They believed this. This was somewhat the thought, the trend, the parenting trend of the times.

So as we're often working to scuba dive down to our kid's feelings and needs, we receive comments, feedback, criticisms from these people in our lives that tell us or intimate or criticize that we're going to spoil our kids. Please, please, please, I beg you. Please let that go in one ear and out the other.

This person believes that they're offering good advice. I'm sure their advice is coming from a place of love, but their advice is misguided and not in

Ep #62: Am I Spoiling My Kid?

alignment with peaceful parenting. Yeah? So love them, hear them, but let it go in one ear and out the other because it's not overindulgence. It's not excessive praise, and it's not pampering excessively to show up and be there for your kids.

Okay, so maybe right now you're saying, "Got it. I understand, and I agree, Lisa, and I'm on board. But how do I create secure attachment and continue on?" Well, I'm so glad you asked. Because the secret to forming secure attachment with your kids at any age is to scuba dive down to the feelings and needs. Commit to honoring, caring, and showing up for their feelings and needs.

I mean, come on, you kind of knew I was going to say that, didn't you? I know. Everything leads back to being a scuba diver as a parent. It all comes down to scuba diving down to the feelings and needs rather than snorkeling with the behavior at the top. If you've been snorkeling for a while, it's okay. I started there too. I grew up in a house that all anyone cared about was my behavior. All the people taking care of me were snorkeling at the top focused on my behavior. I was either good or bad depending on how I was behaving.

So when I became a parent, I had to learn how to scuba dive down to the feelings and needs for my son. No one modeled that for me. I had no idea what it looked like. Let me be honest with you, in the beginning, it was awkward and really uncomfortable. I was not very good at it at all. At all.

In the beginning, what I said to myself is just let me scuba dive more than I snorkel. Every day I got a little bit better at scuba diving down, a little bit better. I went deeper and deeper and deeper down to the feelings and needs until it didn't feel so awkward, and it felt less uncomfortable. And I got better and better and better at it.

In full disclosure, even now, sometimes I still snorkel at the top over the behavior. We all do. Remember, progress over perfection. There is no perfect parenting. But even when I catch myself snorkeling, I can adjust,

Ep #62: Am I Spoiling My Kid?

put on the scuba gear, and scuba dive down to the feelings and needs. My motivation is that my son will feel connection. I just see now at 17 how secure he feels about himself and the world and our relationship and his confidence and his place in the world. I can see that he feels secure in a way, at his age, that I never felt when I was 17.

Now, here's what we know today. Kids who are parented with secure attachment, i.e. connection, grow up to have less extreme reactions to distress both as children, teens, and adults. Kids who are parented with connection grow up to have better coping skills for life. Kids who grow up with connection have better problem solving skills. Kids who grow up with connection are better at forming family, peer, and romantic relationships. And my favorite, kids who grow up with connection think more of themselves and have higher self-esteem.

Ah, sounds amazing, right? I want that for my son, and I want that for your kids too. Each and every one of your kids. It's possible. We can do this. You can do this. I don't care how old your kids are. I don't care if you've been snorkeling at the top for years. Doesn't matter. You can create connection right now with your kids at any age. I know you can. I absolutely know you can do this.

So what I want you to do in 2022, the year of becoming a better parent, is put on your scuba gear, get all kitted up, put on all the equipment. The mask, the fins, the mouthpiece, the tank, put it all on. It's going to be awkward and uncomfortable, yes. But put it on and begin to scuba dive down to the feelings and needs to create that connection. So that your kids can have less extreme reactions to distress, have better coping skills, have better problem solving skills, be better at forming relationships, and think more of themselves.

Ah, so good, right? I know. I know. You've got this. I know it. Join me in the worldwide community of scuba diving down to the feelings and needs. Ah, so good. All right. Until we meet again, I'm wishing you peaceful parenting.

Ep #62: Am I Spoiling My Kid?

Thank you so much for listening today. I want to personally invite you to head over to 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. 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. See you soon.