

**Ep #64: Getting Back on Track:
Real World Coaching with Kate**



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 absolutely love being with you here each week and am so proud of you for investing this time, in your parenting in your kids and your family. Well done. Before I share today's episode, I have an invitation for you. Yes, you.

This is for you if you have more than one kid, multiple children, and there's fighting in your home. Sibling fighting, sibling rivalry, name calling, shouting, hitting, not getting along, and you don't know what to do about it. If you have your hand raised right now, or you were like, "Hey, that's us." Or maybe you're thinking, "Lisa, do you have a camera in my house?" Well, I don't have a camera in your house. I promise. But I do you know how this chaos goes, and I know why. Yes, I know why. I know exactly why.

On Thursday, April 7th, I'm going to share with you all the secrets to sibling fighting. Imagine what it would be like for you if sibling fighting we're no longer an issue in your family. On Thursday, April 7th at 9:00 a.m. Pacific, 10:00 a.m. Mountain, 11:00 Central, and 12:00 Eastern, I'm going to be offering a live workshop called The Sibling Fighting Workshop.

In the 90 minute workshop, we're going to address sibling fighting. In the workshop, I'm going to teach you why your kids fight, what doesn't work in helping to resolve the sibling conflict, why your kids can't stop, what you should do about it, and when to step in, and when to let him work it out. In this 90 minute live workshop, I'll make sure to include time to answer all your questions, and we'll have some live coaching.

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In the spirit of 2022, the year of becoming a better parent, I'm offering this workshop for only \$22. If you can't make it live, no problem. Everybody who signs up for the workshop will get a recording and lifetime access to the recording. So you can watch it over and over and over again and share it with your co-parent if you'd like. So head on over to thepeacefulparent.com/fighting to get all the details and to save your spot in the class. I'll see you there.

Now if you've been listening to me for a while, you know that I try to bring you tips, ideas, and support that helps you create deep connection and cooperation with your kids. Today I have a special treat for you. Today I'm joined by a Hive member named Kate. Kate reached out for support around getting her four year old, very strong willed son Mr. Four, as we call him, "back on track".

Kate's been moving down the path of peaceful parenting for a couple years now with much success. However, recently Kate, her husband, and her sons lives have been turned upside down a bit. Their normal status quo and routine has been disrupted. They've lived in a bit of chaos for the last 90 days due to a series of unforeseen events.

I really wanted to bring you this coaching call today because I know many of us can relate to this, especially in 2022. Many of us have had our normal status quo and our routine be disrupted. Maybe you're living in chaos right now or you're just coming out of a season of chaos. So I wanted you to be able to hear how Kate and I work through getting back on track.

So Kate reached out for help and support. She specifically asked me, "Lisa, how do I define the line between peaceful parenting and permissive parenting? I feel like I've somehow slipped into being a permissive parent with some things. My very strong willed four year old son is storming

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nonstop and constantly shouting no at us. I'm a loss on how to fix this mess. Please help.”

So listen in as I coach Kate through the tools to use with her strong willed four year old. The tools that are going to create connection and cooperation in the home.

Lisa: All righty. Welcome Kate. So excited to have you here today and talk with you about this important topic.

Kate: Hey Lisa. Thank you for having me.

Lisa: Ah, this is going to be fabulous. I love bringing these live coaching sessions to the listeners of the podcast. So you have a four year old scrumptious, amazing, delightful, strong willed little boy who we're going to call Mr. Four, right?

Kate: Yes, yes, I do.

Lisa: All right. What you reached out and wanted to talk about today is the fine line between peaceful parenting and permissive parenting. So give us some background, some thoughts, and then we'll jump in.

Kate: Well like you had mentioned, my son is very strong willed. I don't know where he gets that from. We've had a couple months of storming when he is told no. It's not just the pouty lip and that I'm going to go pout. It is a cat category five hurricane that just explodes. I am concerned that maybe I have slipped into some permissive parenting that is allowing this,

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and so I want to get back on course and kind of help him out and make things a lot better for him.

Lisa: Okay. So strong willed kid doesn't like no. He's got to be the only kid in the entire world ever born that doesn't like the word no.

Kate: Right?

Lisa: Yeah. The storms feel more intense all of a sudden. Is that what it feels like? Is that what you're saying? They feel different.

Kate: Yeah, this is definitely a different horse of a different color, if you will. They're getting more violent. I mean he is a big kid for being four. He looks like he could be six. He's very solid and stocky. So I want to help him be able to soothe himself down, with my help, you know. I don't expect him to be 25 and able to do this on his own overnight or anything like that. But just some pointers on how to help him because I know this is upsetting him. Because when he's in his storm, he just has this look on his face. Like, "I don't know what this is. Mama helped me."

Lisa: Gotcha. Yeah. It's good that you said that. Because just to review, what we know is that when they are storming, they're speaking the language of help, right? If I knew how to help myself, I would. If I knew how to ask for help, I would.

So just to have a little refresher, in case anybody's new to listening to the podcast, you know when our kids are storming, they're speaking the language of help. If I knew how to help myself, if I knew how to calmly ask you for help, I would. This is the only way that I know how to ask for help is to storm.

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So it sounds like the storms are getting bigger. He's not able to avoid the storm. So let me ask you this. It's probably a direction you didn't expect the conversation to go. But, you know, at four years old, naturally I don't feel in control of a lot of things because I'm four. I don't have a lot of control.

I happen to know that you've had a lot going on in your life recently. You've traveled a little bit. You guys have had some family situations. So you haven't necessarily been in your status quo routine. Things have been different for you all. You've had to do some different things. So how do you think that's playing into the storming a little bit?

Kate: I can definitely see how that would make him uneasy because the status quo is no longer the status quo. Yeah, life has been big for all of us lately. I can definitely, I could see how that would be a problem.

Lisa: Yeah. So let's say, we'll just make some things up here for the sake of this. Let's say that you guys had a lot of, or to use your word, things have not been status quo for 90 days, right? It's been like three months let's say. A series of different events have caused you to be out of your rhythm and routine that you had worked hard to establish. Yeah.

So the areas that I had control, i.e. the predictability, are gone. As a four year old, I don't know when they're coming back. So now in addition to my normal storming, I have a very strong sense of the little control I did have, I no longer have it. Yeah. You had a house guests for a while who right before all these other things happened, the house guest was in, which was a little bit of a problem. I mean not that the guest was a problem, but just a new human. Then the house guests left.

Kate: Yes.

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Lisa: Yeah. So here's my question. And again, probably not where we thought we were going to take this, but how can you parent in a way. And of course, I know the answer. So I'm going to give it to you. But how can you parent in a way that actually causes him to say no less often so he doesn't have to storm? = I'm not saying be permissive, right.

But the number one thing strong willed kids want we know because I teach you this, and I've talked about it before in the podcast. I teach it in my course Peace and Quiet: The Crash Course for Parenting Your Strong Willed Kids. The number one thing strong willed kids want is to feel in control. For a series of events that you have no control over, Mr. Four's sense of control was ripped out from under him. Temporarily, we're gonna get back to routine. All these things are starting to settle down in your life. But there was a period of time where let's just call it, it was chaos.

Kate: That's a good word.

Lisa: Okay, good. I'm glad we can agree upon that word.

Kate: Absolutely.

Lisa: Yeah. You were probably dysregulated based on some of the events you had going on. Right?

Kate: Oh, yes, absolutely. I struggled with self-regulation myself.

Lisa: Okay. So if we take stock, I'm four. My rhythm and routine, my status quo that I count on, is gone, and no one can tell me when it's coming back. My parent who I spend, the human that I spend the most hours with the day is dysregulated. So I'm going to storm a lot.

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Can you just see that? I just want you to be able to kind of take that in from a 50,000 foot level. Because when we're in it, and this is great that we're talking about this and letting other people have a peek into this. Because as the parent when we're in the middle of that storm, it's hard to see this perspective, right? Because it just feels like it's just out of control. Well, why don't you tell me what it feels like?

Kate: I completely agree with that word, is out of control. It feels big and heavy. When I reached out to you, I was literally sitting at my kitchen table bawling my eyes out because I didn't know where to go. You know, there was no way up at that point. Yeah.

Lisa: I love it. I love that you reached out. You know I'm always here for you.

Kate: Oh yeah, for sure.

Lisa: Yeah. So just side note, this is the kind of relief that one can get from reaching out to a parent coach and a community is just when I don't know where to go, I reach out and I go there. So now you can see, you know, we're at a point where there's not a storm going on this second. So you can get up at the 50,000 foot level and see all the things going on for Mr. Four and gain some perspective. Yes?

Kate: Yes.

Lisa: That's important. That's an important component of peaceful parenting is to gain some perspective, is to stop taking it personally, is to get out of the power struggle, the tug of war that you're playing in your mind, if not also literally, with our kids. To have someone help you perform a pattern interrupter in your brain so you're not locked into judgment of you,

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of him. The judgment leads to a trigger, and the trigger leads to you storming alongside him.

So for those listening, if this is all you do is go gain perspective with someone, it is really an important step and a beautiful first step in getting out of the dysregulated cycle. Is just taking a minute to say hey, here's how it feels for me. Help me understand what's going on. So speak to that for us Kate. How do you feel already?

Kate: I feel better just simply talking to you because I know that this is all going to get fixed. Or not fixed, but better.

Lisa: Yeah. We'll on board some tools for you.

Kate: Yeah. I can see looking back over even the last six months, not even just three, of we had status quo, and then life just tailspinned. We have been in survival mode for a long time. Watching him come out of that. We are on spring break right now. The last two days we have just been home just because plans have fallen through, and he woke up sick this morning. So we've cancelled all plans. We're just chilling. We're doing what we want to do. We basically eat, sleep, wash, and repeat.

Lisa: Beautiful. So you're bringing some of that status quo and predictability back into his life.

Kate: Yes.

Lisa: Yeah. Beautiful. That's one of the tools right there. How can we? You know we can't always in the middle of, you know, a crisis. We have to ride that out. But when we can get back to status quo, it's a beautiful thing. Sometimes it looks like just hanging out together and watching movies and,

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like you said, doing what we want and snuggling. Just assuring him that it's okay, right.

So let's talk about the storming part of it because I want to give you some practical tools here. So I think with a four year old strong willed little boy, one of the greatest tools that we have is choices, right. The reason choices are important is because the number one thing a strong willed kid wants is to feel, that's the critical word in the sentence, in control. Predictability, repeatability, status quo to use some of the words that we've used.

One of the best ways at his age, any age by the way, but his age to help him feel in control is to give him choices. Now, as you know Kate but we'll let the listeners in on this, it's always choices we can live with, right. It's not like ice cream or M&Ms for breakfast, right? Or do you want to go to bed now or never? Right?

It's instead of saying things like coming your breakfast where you're just begging for a no, right? We're gonna say, "Hey, are you ready to eat breakfast now or in five minutes? Do you want eggs or waffles? Do you want to wear the blue shirt or the red shirt? Do you want to put your shoes on first and then your coat or your coat and then your shoes?"

It's giving him choices that are going to help him feel in control. The side benefit is working yourself out of situations where he is being invited to say no to you, right? The, you know a great example is hey, come eat breakfast. "No." Okay, now what? Now I'm stuck.

Now I'm automatically either going to feel permissive because I've given into it as the parent, or I'm going to engage in power struggle where I feel dominant. Where I feel like I'm forcing him to come to the table and eat

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breakfast. Neither of those extremes feel good, and they don't help the strong willed kid at the other end feel in control?

Kate: Yes, I'm watching a movie play in my head of the last night. Yes, that is very correct. Choices. He is a big give me choices kid.

Lisa: It's easy to understand in chaos or crisis that may be the first thing to go out the door because you're juggling so many things in your mind. Right. It's not status quo. So we have a tendency as parents when we're stressed to want to fall back on barking orders. Eat breakfast, get your shoes on, we got to go. Come on. Right? It's just natural for all of us.

Which is why it's great to be a part of The Hive where you can come back and have a touchstone of being reminded, "Oh yeah, that's right. Strong willed kid wants to feel in control. Choices are a great way for a four year old to feel in control. Choices are easy for me. I know how to do that. Let me go back to that, you know, breakfast now or in five minutes? Red shirt or blue shirt, right?"

Kate: Yeah, he definitely thrives on that.

Lisa: Yeah. It's just a matter of recommitting to it, of bringing yourself back to how do I offer that, and offering it from a place of connection? Right. I think that's the other critical part here. It's not from a place of being permissive. It's from a place of I want my kid to feel in control. I want him to feel calm and regulated throughout the day. One of the tools I know works is choices. So I'm not being permissive, right. Permissive would be, you know, Oreos or Chips Ahoy for breakfast.

Kate: Right.

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Lisa: I think. That's just what I, yeah. Not that you can't offer your kid Oreos or Chips Ahoy, but I'm using it as an example. But I don't think saying shoes and then coat or coat then shoes, brush your teeth now or in five minutes is permissive. It's building connection with your kids. What we know is that when there's connection, cooperation follows. When we're mandating compliance, right, or when we're demanding things, we don't get cooperation. We get compliance.

Kate: Yes, that's absolutely correct. One question that I have is when I slip into my dominant side due to crisis or not being awake yet, how do I recover from that without it being permissive?

Lisa: Hmm, such a great question. Okay, first of all, you get a large cup of coffee and drink it quickly.

Kate: Yes.

Lisa: Then we simply, again another tool we've talked about on the podcast here. Then we simply have a do over. You know what, buddy? Let's freeze. We make it playful and fun. Because remember, a four year old is hardwired for F-U-N, right. So it gives us an opportunity to reset our mindset. Okay, I'm not offering choices. I'm being dominant. I know this isn't going to work, and this is not how I want to parent. I don't feel at my best. So let's have a do over.

So, you know, you might even make a fun game of it. Like, "Hey, sweetheart, let's rewind the tape and do our morning over. You go jump back in bed. I'll jump back in bed, and we'll just start over." Right?

Kate: He'll like that.

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Lisa: Yeah. We're literally just saying hey, I went down the wrong path. Let me put the car in reverse, back it up, and try a different street.

Kate: Yep, I think he would totally run with that.

Lisa: Yeah. Then the beauty also of this, there's so many benefits. The beauty is we're modeling mistakes are okay. We're modeling that we all have a bad day. We're modeling that we can recover. We can stop the power struggle and have a do over and try again down the road. After you do this for a while, he'll say to you can I have a do over? Can you have a do over Mommy? Can we have a do over? We just begin again, you know.

We bring ourselves back to the lesson, like a good meditation practice. Right? I got down the wrong path or I lost the mantra. You know when I'm meditating, I have a mantra, and my mind drifts. I realized it's drifted. Now I'm thinking about which chicken recipe I'm going to make for dinner. I go oh yeah, just go back to the mantra. So I gently bring myself back to the mantra and begin again.

This is what you can do, Kate. It's like oh yeah, that's right. I got dysregulated for a moment. Maybe I got a phone call or maybe I'm thinking about what I've been through. Or maybe I'm missing someone. Or maybe I'm frustrated that the last three months have been what they are. I'm overthinking it, and I got dysregulated for a moment. I got triggered. Oh, yeah. Let me just work that cortisol out of my body, soothe myself back to regulation, and begin again. Then you can start to do it out loud with him. Hey, let's just begin again. Let's have a do over. Do overs feel so delicious and fun.

Kate: We actually call them restarts. I used to do that. It's weird how our brains get rid of or eject these tools, then we have to come back and learn

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them and then reapply and keep doing that. But yeah, I think he will do well with that.

Lisa: Yes. Well, and it's funny. I mean, it's not like you could have. We did not rehearse or practice the script at all before we jumped on today to record, but that is exactly why I have a weekly podcast. I have some basic tools that I talk about every week like connection, and storming is the cry for help, and, you know, a strong willed kid wants control. Then we have a do over. Because it helps all of us remember these core basic tools, and then just recommit to them.

We all fall off. All of us for different reasons. It happens a lot. So then when you notice, "Oh, I'm getting dysregulated. He's not only storming, but I am too. I forgot that we've moved past status quo. I'm not giving choices because I'm dysregulated a lot based on what I've been through."

Then you can just bring yourself back to the tools, which is really what we've just done. We've reconnected you with the peaceful parenting toolbox. You started out being worried about permissive parenting. We just reconnected with the whole peaceful parenting toolbox of tools to use in your peaceful parenting with Mr. Four. So do you have the same concern now that you've crossed over into permissive parenting?

Kate: No, I don't. I feel a lot more calm, and that I can do this. That he will be okay.

Lisa: Beautiful. Wonderful. Awesome, Kate. Well, thank you so much. We're gonna follow up with you in a couple weeks and do a quick little check in and see how it's going and see what you noticed. I just I can't wait to hear how it's going for the two of you as you use the tools that we've talked about to create the connection with your son. Because what we all

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know, or what I know and I'm teaching you all every week, is that connection leads to cooperation.

What happened for Kate, I'm going to say, is a series of events drove her a little bit away from creating that connection on a day by day, hour by hour basis with her four year old. So the power struggle started. What she needed is just a quick little refresher to come back and remember the tools in the toolbox that when she pulls them out and uses them leads to connection, and then the connection leads to cooperation.

Because when I'm connected with my parent, I feel seen, heard, and valued. I feel like I'm being given choices. My voice matters. My parent cares. They see me rather than barking orders at me or making demands or working towards compliance. So when I feel connected, I want to cooperate, and that's where the magic sits.

So I hope you enjoyed this as much as I did. Kate, thank you so much. Can't wait to hear out the tools work for you. We'll be sure to do a follow up in a couple of weeks and see how it's going. We'll link in the show notes to the different podcasts that I've referenced. The do over and the strong willed kid. We'll link to those in the show notes as well.

So thank you for listening today everybody. I enjoyed this. I hope you got a lot out of it. I want to give a special big real world peaceful parenting shout out to Kate for coming on and talking with us and being open to this. 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.