

## Ep #70: A New Way to Look at Respect and Parenting



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host  
**Lisa Smith**

[Real World Peaceful Parenting](#) with 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. Welcome to today's episode. I am so excited to be with you here today. I have a doozy of an episode. I've got lots of just incredible information and thought provoking ideas to share with you today. So I don't want to waste any time. I want to jump right in and get started. Today is going to require listening with an open mind. But ah, magic might happen for you and your family about 25/30 minutes from now. So let's dig in.

I often hear parents tell me one of the greatest goals in life is to raise children who are respectful. "Lisa, I just want my kids to be respectful. I just want them to show me respect." What I know is that that word can mean so many different things to so many different people. But I hear many parents tell me it means their children will obey them and do exactly what they tell them to do when they tell them to do it with no pushback, no attitude, no opinion and no questions.

Do you fall into this category? Maybe? Possibly? Maybe a little? Maybe you used to? Maybe you grew up in a household where this was the sign of good parenting?

These parents believe their children will be successful in life if first and foremost, they learn to be disciplined and compliant to authority. To these parents this "respect" is even more important than having connection and relationship with their children now and into adulthood. These parents believe this is because this is how they were raised and they turned out "just fine" and still respect their parents to this day. But my question is

## **Ep #70: A New Way to Look at Respect and Parenting**

always this when I hear this, when I have this conversation, when I engage in this discussion around being “a respectful kid” to their parents.

My question is do you feel like you can consult your parents about anything that weighs heavily on your heart or mind? Do you feel safe asking them questions or asking them for advice? Do you feel emotionally close and connected to your parents in a way that makes you feel like they can console you when you're scared or hurting? That they get you or understand you? That they take time to understand how you feel about things or where you stand?

In most cases, these parents admit to me that though they feel love and respect for their parents, they can see where the relationship is lacking in some or all of the areas mentioned above. They tell me this is not how they want to parent their children. They tell me this is not how they want their children to see them as they grow into adulthood. They want their children to grow into adults who will come to them with their questions and concerns and share with them their most vulnerable thoughts.

As a recovering compliant child myself, today's episode is intended to shed light on what it actually means to raise a compliant child. You may be really successful at teaching compliance, but are you sure that's really what you want? Are you really willing to sacrifice some connection, trust, honesty, and relationship with your children to make them compliant?

Let's take a look at what “compliance” might look like when your children become adults, and then I'd like you to consider the question again. Now, you can raise your children any way you want to with absolutely no judgment from me. I promise. But I do want to share with you that you can have it both ways, compliance from your kids and connection with your kids. It's totally up to you to choose which one holds more value for you. So let's dig in.

## Ep #70: A New Way to Look at Respect and Parenting

What are the characteristics of a compliant adult? The problem with compliant children is that they turn into compliant adults, which may sound like, "Well, Lisa, what's the problem?" Well, in hypothetical and let's say extreme situations, compliant adults can't think for themselves. They don't have an internal compass or it's very minimal because they've been doing what they've been told all their life.

They're easily influenced by people who may not have their best interest in mind. Ah, that one is so important to me. Let me say it again. When you raise a compliant child, and they turn into a compliant adult, they may be easily influenced by people who may not have their best interest in mind.

Compliant adults don't often speak up for themselves if they're being taken advantage of. They always do what their boss tells them to do, even if it's illegal or unethical. Because anyone in a position of authority must be obeyed. They go out into the world with no capacity or experience with questioning anything. Compliant adults have low conflict management skills, and they're left open to being harmed by people that don't have their best interest in mind.

Compliant adults have low compromised skills because they have no practice at it. They might have little impulse control because they don't have any authority figure telling them what they can or cannot or should do, and they're used to that. Compliant adults are often people pleasers.

Now there can be some positives to being a compliant kid. You don't have to think. You just do. You know the rules. You know how to please. A compliant child is easier to raise, yes, but does not always serve us as an adult. So if you're raising your child to be compliant, the lesson your child is learning is not just to be compliant to you, the parent. Your child is learning to be compliant to any authority figure. Please hear this.

## **Ep #70: A New Way to Look at Respect and Parenting**

What happens is the brain is given the assignment to be compliant to people in authority. What happens is in the complaint scenario, the one who holds the keys to the kingdom is the one with the authority. Therefore, this makes the compliant child's goal in life to be the person with the authority because the person with the authority has all the power. If they have younger siblings, this means when mom and dad are not around, I'm in charge. I'm going to tell you what to do because I'm now the authority figure in the house, and you are going to bend to my will.

Compliant kids think the prize or the trophy is about the power, the authority. Not things like good conflict management skills and compromise and speaking up when they're passionate about something and learning how to find the common ground and that everybody's voice matters. All that's out the window. Because the prize is the power that comes from being the person with the authority.

What you get is a person who believes that the person with the most power is in charge, and everyone else is compliant. So I need to be in charge. To survive, to feel good about myself, to feel safe, I have to be the person in charge with the authority, or I have to be subservient to someone else's authority.

They look for relationships where they're in charge or where they are subservient. It's black and white with very little gray area in between. Relationships built on this dynamic, not one of equality or partnership or mutual admiration, is what the compliant adult seeks out. I'm either in charge or you're in charge. Our relationship is built on that dynamic. There is no partnership, mutual admiration, or equality.

The other problem with compliance is that if your child has a desire to do something, rather than coming and talking it through with you, they just do it and try not to get caught. There's the potential to lie and hide things in an

## **Ep #70: A New Way to Look at Respect and Parenting**

effort not to get caught with the person with the authority rather than doing the right thing.

It becomes more important to the compliant child to avoid getting caught by the authority figure than trying to figure out the right thing to do because they don't want to get in trouble. They want to get away with something. They want to feel in control. It creates a very complicated parent/child relationship that grows into a very complicated adult parent/child relationship. Yeah? Light bulbs going off right now.

So let me ask you, what do you make compliance mean? If you're a parent that requires compliance from your children, I encourage you to ask yourself what is the thought that has created the belief that compliance equals good parenting? Let me say that again. What is the thought that has created the belief that compliance equals good parenting?

Is it the belief that compliant children grow up to be thoughtful of others, self-disciplined, and responsible in their duties? Is it that compliant children make you look good in public? Is it that your children will surely succeed in life and remain safe because they know how to follow rules?

Is it that you were a compliant kid and you turned out okay? So you make the conclusion that this works or this is just how I parent? Maybe you've never really questioned this. Ironic because you were raised not to question things. See the irony there? Of course, you wouldn't question because you were raised to be compliant.

Now, let me ask you is it possible for your children to become thoughtful, self-disciplined, responsible, the source of your pride, successful, good and safe without demanding compliance 100% of the time? Is it possible? I think so.

## Ep #70: A New Way to Look at Respect and Parenting

I want you to ask yourself if your children are compliant, what does that mean for you? What are you making it mean about you, about your parenting? What are you making it mean about your parent/child relationship? Could it be that you think your child values you as a person and values your authority as a parent? Could it be because for the first time in your life, you can force someone to see you, hear you, value you, giving you a false sense of connection that you miss throughout your own childhood?

Oh, that one rings so true for me from my old parenting ways. I can't even tell you. Let me ask you that again. Could it be that you're attached to raising a compliant child because for the first time in your life, you can force or demand or expect someone to see you, hear you, value you, giving you the false sense of connection that you miss throughout your own childhood?

Maybe you're attached to raising a compliant child because it's finally your turn to be the one with all the power and the keys to the kingdom. As such, you've earned your prize or your trophy, or you feel entitled to parent in this way.

If any of these ideas hit home for you, I really want you to hear this. I have no judgment. I totally understand. I spent many of my son's first years trying to raise a "respectful, read in the fine print compliant" child. I made it mean a lot of things about me, about my value, about my parenting. I definitely thought that it was my turn to be the one with all the powers and the keys to the kingdom. I definitely had a false sense of connection by trying to force my child into seeing me, hearing me, and valuing me. So I get it. I have no judgment, none whatsoever.

I do want to challenge the thought that these things make a successful parent, a successful real world peaceful parent. Instead, what I'd offer up is that you have become a successful authority figure who has taught the

## Ep #70: A New Way to Look at Respect and Parenting

hierarchy of authority, of what it looks like. When we're focused on hierarchy of authority, it's so much harder to create connection. So much harder.

So what does the other side of the coin look like? Allow me to share some ideas with you. A peaceful parent, in my opinion, is one who raises children who can stand on their own two feet, who can speak their mind in respectful ways, who can ask questions when they don't understand something, who will seek help when they need it, and have the capacity to create true connection in their relationships. Sounds amazing, doesn't it?

Now, let me ask you. Reflect for a minute and think about what do you believe would happen if your children weren't compliant? Would that mean they have no respect for you at all? Does your brain think that they would have no value in the world? That they would walk all over you and anyone else who presented any resistance to their ideas? The opposite of compliant does not have to be the other extreme where chaos, mayhems, and yelling "F yous" ensue. The opposite of compliance and authority can be connection and mutual respect.

Let me say that again. The opposite of compliant and authoritative parenting can be connection and mutual respect. I know you want that, as a member of the real world peaceful parenting community. I know it because if you didn't, you wouldn't be here.

So let me ask you, what if you have a strong willed child who's simply not wired to be compliant, to naturally follow authority? Does that make you feel like there's no way to build connection with him, her, or them? Do you make this mean that he will never learn discipline, self-control, and respect? Does that scare you? Do you really want to think of him this way for the rest of his life? Or make him feel disapproved of because he can't follow authority?



## Ep #70: A New Way to Look at Respect and Parenting

If you believe respect means following the rules, does that mean the Rosa Parks was disrespectful? Or was she standing up for what she thought was right? Not all rules are good rules. Some rules need to be challenged. Some rules tear people down instead of build them up or keep them safe. Don't we all want our kids to grow into adults who question rules from time to time? Who have the ability to understand the good rules from the not good rules, the rules that tear people down versus keep them safe?

Let's think about this. The idea that you were respectful as a kid because you were compliant is just one tiny piece of the picture of the relationship between you and your parent. Here's what I want you to hear. Compliance is not the only avenue to create respect between the parent and the child. You get to define what respect looks like for you, for your kids, for your parenting, for your parent/child relationship.

So as promised, I want to ask you again. Are you really willing to sacrifice connection, trust, honesty, and the relationship with your child now and into adulthood to make them "compliant"? If your answer is now no, you recognize and believe that there are other ways to teach your children respect that will honor your relationship with more connection. Chances are you want to raise your kids to have the skills, to question, pushback, speak up for themselves when appropriate.

You may be asking, "Sounds great, Lisa, but how do I do that?" Well, here's some suggestions. Number one, figure out acceptable ways your child can approach you to question, challenge, or change your rules, decisions, or instructions. For example, make it clear to your kids that they can say I don't like this. Can we talk about it? Is there a compromise? Can we find a happy medium? Can I state my case and you listen with open ears? Is it possible to come up with a different plan?

Encourage your kids to find acceptable ways to push back, respectful ways to push back. Let them know that the best way to approach this is to

## **Ep #70: A New Way to Look at Respect and Parenting**

schedule a time when you're both regulated to have an open conversation. Take time alone to consider your child's argument and request. Set your ego aside and really listen to your child's argument or request. Consider their point of view. As you're doing this, weigh in your mind what is more important to you compliance or connection because you can't have both.

Sometimes compliance is required, right? Be home by 12 o'clock. Don't run out in a busy street. Don't run with scissors. Don't do backflips on the trampoline. Whatever feels like compliance is required, stand in that space and explain why from a regulated place. I'm not encouraging you to be a permissive parent. Sometimes we do require compliance. Don't stick your finger in a light socket. Go to bed. Put your phone away. You get one hour of gaming.

Take the time to explain why. Avoid because I said so. Right? That is a classic example of someone with authority exerting power over their kid. I'm not going to explain it to you. I don't have to. You should just listen to me. That's a classic example of someone authoritatively parenting. If you are going to require compliance explain it. Explain it while you're calm and regulated. Give your child room to ask questions and help them understand. It's a safety issue. It centers around our family values. It's what we do in our culture. It's what I think is right. I want to keep you safe.

If a compromise is acceptable, bask in the connection it creates. Talk it through, be open, really enjoy the connection that you're creating with your kid or kids. Here's what I definitely know. If you give your kids space and room and train them to question and push back in acceptable and respectable ways, then you have kids that won't be afraid of conflict, won't be afraid to question things in a respectful way, won't be afraid to debate topics while staying regulated, and won't be afraid to voice their opinion.

## **Ep #70: A New Way to Look at Respect and Parenting**

As a side benefit, they will feel seen, heard, and valued in the parent/child relationship. This to me is a win/win and so, so, so worth the work. You've got this. I know it. I know you do.

Now, maybe you're thinking, "Lisa, I like this. I like what you're putting out, but I don't know how to parent differently. I don't know how to create that connection. I was raised in authoritative home, and demanding respect and authority is all I know. How do I figure out the next step along this path? How do I show up and do it differently?"

Well, I happen to have the answer for you. It works by getting on the same team as your child rather than being on the opposing team. You work on valuing the relationship over the behavior. I have a free masterclass coming up on Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, where we're going to dig into this deep. I'm going to help guide you as to how to take the next step. I'm going to show you how to move from compliance to connection. I want you to come join us.

So if you go to [thepeacefulparent.com/workshop](https://thepeacefulparent.com/workshop), you'll find all the details to the workshop and have a link to get yourself signed up. In this workshop, I'm going to show you exactly how to get your kids to listen without yelling, threatening, or punishing your kids. You might be like say what girl? How's that possible? Well, it is, I promise.

I'm going to show you how to drop the disrespect, the power struggles, and the drama. I'm going to show you how to move away from the meltdowns, the fights, the stalemates happening with your kid over and over and over again in this free masterclass taking place on Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. Pacific time, and I want you to join us. There is a seat waiting for you. Yes, you, and anyone else you want to invite. We have room for absolutely everybody.

## **Ep #70: A New Way to Look at Respect and Parenting**

So if this speaks to you in any way, if you recognize yourself today in the podcast and you want to move from compliance, from demanding respect, and you want to move into connection with your kids, then I want you to go to [thepeacefulparent.com/workshop](https://thepeacefulparent.com/workshop) and sign up for the free masterclass happening on Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. I can't wait to work with you. Until we meet again, I'm wishing you peaceful parenting.

Thank you so much for listening today. I want to personally invite you to head over to [thepeacefulparent.com/welcome](https://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](https://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](https://thepeacefulparent.com). See you soon.