

## Ep #81: What To Do When Your Kid's Big Storm Hits



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With Your Host  
**Lisa Smith**

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

## **Ep #81: What To Do When Your Kid's Big Storm Hits**

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. One of the questions I am often asked as a parent coach is what to do in the moment a storm hits. I refer to storming as when your child melts down and releases all of their big emotions, by crying, screaming, yelling, hitting, kicking, throwing, fighting, power struggling, any number of things that indicates he, she, or they are having a hard time and has a need that they don't know how to satisfy or fix on their own.

We've talked about this before, but I need you to remember that their storm is a cry for help. Their cry for help often leaves us parents crying for some help of our own. Yeah? Well, today, I'm here to give you exactly that. Help.

In today's episode, I'm gonna give you over a dozen, almost two dozen things you can do and think in the moment that your child is storming. These are meant to be very practical, useful tools that you can use at any time that are going to help you not storm alongside your child.

Many, many, many of my clients and Hive community members are familiar with these tools, and report that the more they practice them in the moment, the more regulated they remain while their child is dysregulated and storming. The more and more and more they remember and practice these tools, the more they become second nature and natural in their parenting.

What I know for sure is that if you can memorize in practice just even one, two, or three of these tools, you will find yourself better able to help your child work through their big emotions and stay regulated yourself, which is

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the key to building connection and cooperation with your kids at any age. So are you ready for a mini class in peaceful parenting? This is it. Let's dive in.

Let me start first with your number one goal in the moment you are starting to feel triggered by your child's storm or your kids storms at any age. The number one goal in the moment when you are getting triggered by your child's storm is get yourself from your middle brain to your higher brain before doing anything else. Said another way, get yourself from dysregulated to regulated.

If you remember nothing else about this episode other than this, please remember that when your child is storming and you're getting triggered, you will succeed at peaceful parenting if you remember first and foremost, this goal. Get yourself from your middle brain to your higher brain, from dysregulated to regulated before you do anything else. Your middle brain is where all of your emotions, fears, childhood traumas, wounds, and triggers sit. Your higher brain houses your prefrontal cortex, which is where your executive function, your problem solving skills, your creativity, your calmness and your capacity for empathy sit.

The key to peaceful parenting and building connection with your kid, especially when they're storming, is to stay regulated and functioning from your higher brain. It's to parent from your higher brain, not your middle brain, not from your triggered dysregulated place. With that goal in mind, here are actionable ways you can take control of your thoughts and move from your middle brain to your higher brain in the moment you're feeling triggered.

One actionable way is to take note of where you are feeling discomfort in your body. Sometimes we get surprised by your triggers, and we don't even know that we are getting pushed into the deep end of our middle brain until

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it's too late. Until we're panicking and swimming frantically to get to the surface for air.

Your body can be your guide or your compass or your sign well before your thoughts show up. That the push into the deep end is coming. That the moment is starting. Your body can be the guide to tell you get your life jacket, your air tank, your flippers, and work your way back out of your middle brain to your higher brain. Your body can be your alarm. Or better yet, think about like the check engine light in your car.

Where do you feel discomfort in that very moment? Does your chest feel tight? Does your stomach hurt? Does it feel nauseous? Do you feel a lump in your throat? Is your mouth suddenly dry? Ask yourself when I get dysregulated, when I get triggered because my child is storming, where do I feel it?

When you recognize this feeling coming on over and over and over again, your body can be the signal, and you will know what to do next. What do you do next? You get yourself from your middle brain to your higher brain by doing anything else. If it's not a life threatening storm that your kid is having, you remove yourself from the situation and soothe yourself. As Tony Robbins teaches us, motion changes emotion. Do something physically to soothe that feeling of discomfort in your body.

Examples include, go to the bathroom, wash your hands with soap that feels and smells good. Do 10 Jumping jacks, sing a little jingle, walk outside to get the mail, take three deep breaths, do a yoga pose. Figure out what works for you. Whatever will give you a good 20 seconds or so to tell your higher brain hey, it's time to get to work.

While you're taking those 20 seconds, ask yourself a question. Any question will do. Questions like I wonder what makes that soap smell so good. I wonder what I should make for dinner tonight. What was the first

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thing my child said that told me he's having a hard time. What were his words? What was she doing right before she lost it? What has their behavior been like today? Asking yourself a question gives your higher brain the green light to get involved and get to work. Juices start flowing in your brain moves from the emotional mode to answer seeking mode.

Okay, next tool. Remind yourself your child is simply having a hard time. He or she or they are not giving you a hard time. They're having a hard time, and they're asking for help. So there's no need to take any of his or her words, actions, tone of voice or attitude personally. Use the tool QTIP, quit taking it personally. Ah, it's one of my favorite parenting tools there is. I use it all the time. By the way, I don't just use it in my parenting. I use it with lots of situations with other human beings. Quit taking it personally. I QTIP myself all over the place.

Next tool, practice getting comfortable being uncomfortable. Oh, I know. I know. Building tolerance for your own discomfort takes tens of thousands of hours of practice. Add more hours to your bank. Sit in your discomfort and just let yourself feel it. Most storms lasts only about 90 seconds. Convince yourself you can tolerate your discomfort for 90 seconds. This will get easier the more and more and more you practice it. The more you simply allow yourself to be uncomfortable.

I speak from complete experience here. When I started on this journey to peaceful parenting, I had zero tolerance for any big uncomfortable emotions of my own or my kids. Now I would consider myself to be an incredible expert at being uncomfortable with being uncomfortable. You can do this, you've got it.

Next tool. Repeat to yourself I am safe. She is not doing anything to me. I am safe. I am safe. Your brain is hardwired to protect you. The thing is it does not differentiate an internal threat from an external threat. If your child's storm makes you feel threatened, your brain will take your thoughts

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and actions to a place that will defend and protect you instead of to a place where you can help and connect with your child. So it's very important that you convince yourself I am safe. I am safe. He is not doing anything to me. She is not harming me. I am safe. I am safe.

In addition to these tools of what to do in the eye of the storm, there are tools of what not to do as well. An important one is do not parent. Yep, I said that correctly. You didn't misunderstand me. Do not parent. When your kid is in the middle of a big storm, simply be in the moment with your child. Listen, support, empathize. Repeat I hear you. I hear you.

The eye of the storm is not where you coach or train your child into having different thoughts or to get it together or to think of other ways to express his big emotions. Most of all, you do not want to discipline or shame your child for having their big emotions. The time for teaching, guiding, and supporting is later when you are both regulated. Because as we've talked about before, no one can learn when they're in the middle of a storm. Let me repeat that. No one can learn in the middle of a storm.

Our job is to relieve their suffering. Listening to relieve the suffering does not require relating, understanding, internalizing, or providing any solutions. Listen with your heart instead of your head. Let her use up all of her words. Encourage him to express all of his thoughts by saying, tell me more. Tell me more. Tell me more. Tell me more is a parent's greatest tool. Yeah. Oh, so good.

Next tool, get curious, not furious. Ah, it's one of the most important tools in peaceful parenting. Keep asking questions to scuba dive down to figure out what your child needs in the moment. Get curious. Don't go to furious. Go to curious. Hm, I wonder what's going on. I wonder what he needs. I wonder why this happened. I wonder what we can do differently next time. Get curious, not furious.

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Another really important tool, do not judge. Fight the urge to judge your child for feeling the way he feels in this moment. It's easy to blame his big emotions on what you perceive to be a character problem instead of a process problem. Avoid that. Go wildly out of your way to avoid judging your child when they're having a meltdown.

In the moment, simply meet him where he's at with no judgment. You and your child can figure out what triggered the storm and how to think different thoughts or do things differently for the next time later when you're both regulated. In the moment, we simply want to stay in the moment and stay away from judgment. So critical. It's so hard to feel connected to you, to feel seen, heard, and valued if I feel that I'm getting judged for my meltdown.

Next tool, do not analyze your own thoughts and feelings in the moment. You and your relationship with your child will benefit greatly from analyzing your own thoughts and feelings when you are regulated, but not until then. When you are in the eye of the storm, it is not the time or place to analyze what's going on for you. You'll have plenty of time later after the storm passes. But if you try to analyze your own thoughts and feelings, you're so much more likely to get triggered and storm alongside your child.

Lastly, do not rush it. When you try to rush your child through storms, you are unintentionally telling him his feelings don't matter. Other people's feelings are more important than is. In teaching him this, he won't learn how to process or recover from his big emotions on his own. He won't learn how to sit with his emotions and be comfortable with being uncomfortable.

Remember, in the moment, that your connection is more important than getting somewhere on time, more important than your own comfort and security, more important than his getting a right answer on his homework, or getting his shoes on or tied. Yeah? Connection is everything because connection leads to cooperation.

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There you have it, the list of tools available to you in any moment when the storm comes rolling in. So let me list these suggestions again. I want to encourage you to write them down. Write them on an index card or post it note one at a time. Rotate them every couple of weeks. Keep them visible and easily accessible in any given moment, in your house, in your car, on your phone so that when the storm comes rolling in, you don't have to think. You just follow the list.

In the interest of simplifying, I will give each tool a number. You never have to use all these tools in any given storm or do them in order. You may want to write them down and work through them, memorize them and practice them so that the next time a storm comes rolling in. Two or three of these that really resonate with you are your go to tools so that you can stay regulated and guide your child rather than coming alongside him or her or them and storming with them. Yeah?

All right, here we go. Number one, get to your higher brain. Number two, ask yourself where in my body do I feel discomfort? Number three, remove yourself. Number four, soothe yourself. Number five, ask yourself a question to be helpful and to change the pathway that you're going down. Number six, remember or repeat the mantra he, she, or them are having a hard time, not giving me a hard time.

Number seven, remind yourself she's asking for help. Number eight, one of my personal favorites, QTIP, quit taking it personally. Number nine, get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Number 10, adopt the mantra I am safe. I am safe. I am safe. He's not giving me a hard time. He's having a hard time. Number 11, use the tool to connect. I hear you.

Number 12, set the intention to listen to relieve the suffering. Number 13, use a parent's greatest tool. Tell me more. Tell me more. Tell me more. Number 14, when you feel yourself getting triggered, use the tool get curious, not furious. Scuba dive down to the feelings and needs rather than



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snorkeling at the top. Number 15, when your kid is having a big storm, remind yourself it's not the moment to teach, parent, or guide. That will come later. Right now it's just the time to witness and support.

While your child is having that big storm, use tool number 16, which is do not judge. Do not judge. It's not helpful. Number 17, while you're not judging, also don't analyze your own thoughts. Not helpful for you to be analyzing your thoughts and feelings while your kid is having a meltdown. Number 18, do not rush in. Let the storm run its course. Number 19, connection, connection, connection. Because what we know is that connection leads to cooperation.

So good. Yes? Ah, so excited to bring all these tools to you. I can't wait to see what you do with them. Jump over to Instagram to the [\\_peaceful\\_parent](#), and leave me a DM. Tell me which one of these tools today is your absolute favorite. As you're trying them out, let me know which ones you're having success with. I would love to hear from you over on Instagram. I really hope that you've loved today's episode as much as I did. 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](http://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](http://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](http://thepeacefulparent.com). See you soon.