

Ep #103: When Your Kids Aren't Grateful for Their Gifts



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. Welcome to today's episode. Today you are in for a magical treat. I'm so excited for you to listen to this. Now, if you've been listening for a while, you will know that I do my very best to bring you tips, ideas, and support that helps you create deep connection and cooperation with your kids. Today is no exception.

Now what I know for sure, is that while reading and listening is information, coaching is transformation. So this week, I want to crank things up to a whole new level at the perfect time of the year, and bring you a short and sweet but potent real world peaceful parenting coaching session to help you right now. What follows is a conversation with coaching between myself and a Hive member named Gail.

Now you might remember Gail from episode 36 Grandparenting Strong Willed Kids. Gail and her daughter are both members of my community called The Hive. Gail is a proud peaceful parenting grandparent while at the same time Gail supports her daughter as her daughter brings peaceful parenting tools into her household with her three small kiddos. I am really honored to be on this journey with all of them and to be their guide, as well as everyone else that I have the pleasure of working with.

So Gail came to this week's weekly Hive call to ask a question about gratitude, gift giving, and expectations for the holidays for her, her kids, and her grandkids. The coaching call was so helpful and on point that with Gail's permission, I felt compelled to share it with you at exactly this time of the year.

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Coaching gives you the opportunity to create transformation in your family. So I want you to listen to this week's episode and ask yourself what comes up for you as you listen, especially this time of the year? What can you take away from the episode that will help you stay in the moment and truly enjoy the holidays?

Ask yourself are there expectations, subconsciously or consciously, that you and your family have that need to be examined, altered, or dropped? Ask yourself where am I most likely to get triggered or have too high of expectations of the holiday that we're about to celebrate? Ask yourself if my kids don't like something gifted to them, how do I want to show up and respond? What am I expecting them to do? How am I expecting them to respond?

Then ask yourself, can I plan to respond rather than react? What I know for sure is that these are important things to think about. If you do this work now well in advance of the gift giving, if you take just a few minutes to consider your answers and what you want your answers to be and develop a plan, you are much, much, much less likely to get triggered when something doesn't go your way or how you'd like it to go or how you're expecting it to go. So good, yeah? I agree. All right. Let's dig in and listen to the coaching call.

Gail: What's the peaceful parenting approach to gift giving and responses from grandchildren? I mean if they say oh, I don't like this. How do I guide my thoughts through that? How do I help them to learn from the experience?

Lisa: Okay, it's a good question, Gail. What are we trying to teach these grandchildren that we're giving gifts to?

Gail: No idea really? I mean just I love them, and I did my best. I'm willing to work with them, but I don't want to be a permissive grandparent and say

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oh well, we'll go buy whatever you want. Or do I just say oh man, that's hard. I don't know what to say.

Lisa: Well, it depends. This is why I asked it. Because if we're trying to teach our grandkids to have an opinion about how they feel about things, then they get to tell the truth.

Gail: Yes, I think so.

Lisa: I don't like this. I didn't want this.

Gail: Yeah.

Lisa: If we're trying to teach them to be grateful regardless of what someone gives them, that's a whole different lesson. So to answer the question you asked me, I don't think there's a standard answer because every family is different, right? So some families might place a higher emphasis on no, when someone gives you something you must be grateful. Other families place a higher emphasis on you get to decide how you feel about something.

Your grandkids are little. So gift giving is tricky because there's a lot of honesty there. Do you want to honor that honesty? So let me say it this way to you, Gail. You get to choose. So one option would be well, I'm gonna go out and buy my grandkids these gifts, and I want them to like. I want them to like the gifts. I want them to be grateful. I want them to be excited. How I feel about myself and my gift giving depends on the response they give me. Right?

Gail: I don't want to do that.

Lisa: Right. That's the muggles of the world.

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Gail: Yeah.

Lisa: Then there's the grandmother that says I feel grateful that I have the resources to buy them things and to show them my love. I don't care how they feel about it. I'm not dependent on that. I feel the joy in just being able to give them things with no attachment for what I should get in return. Because things factor into a kids response on Christmas or Hanukkah or whatever holiday people are celebrating. Let's think about this Gail.

Things factor in like do I even want this? Did I ask for it? Is it exactly what I asked for? Am I rested? Am I hydrated? Is gifts my love language? Or is auditory my love language? I told you I wanted a red truck, and you got me a green helicopter. So now I don't feel like you heard me. A kid who's whose love language is auditory, in that instance, is going to have a completely different experience than a kid whose love language is gifts. I don't care what the gifts are. I just want gifts.

Then there's siblings. Well, how come he got a bigger president than me because I'm five, and I don't understand. I always think of this. A five year old doesn't understand that a dime is worth more than a nickel because the dime is smaller, right? So you can see brain development at play. If you show typically a five year old a nickel or a dime, they're gonna pick the nickel because it's bigger. So then you've got that coming in.

Then how many other gifts have I got? What time of day is it? I really I have so much empathy for the pressure. Then everybody's watching me and waiting for my response. Then depending on how I respond, the parents get awkward and uncomfortable. You should thank grandma. You should be more grateful. Then I got that coming at me. I don't know how I feel about this green truck. I had no idea.

Gail: Oh, I knew you would be able to confuse the issue but yeah. All good thoughts. I'll have to put some thought into it.

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Lisa: I would just give gifts for the joy of giving them and not care what the response is for my grandchildren at all.

Gail: I can do that.

Lisa: Because then the joy is on you, and the excitement of I've made money. I have money to be able to buy these gifts and share things with them that I think they'll like. There's just joy in that for me regardless of the response.

Gail: Yeah, yeah. I remember when our kids were 10 and eight, and I gave them a horse for Christmas. Of course, I was more excited than they were, and I still have that horse.

Lisa: Listen, I have gotten Christmas wrong every year for 18 years.

Gail: Oh, yeah. You've told us that. Yeah.

Lisa: I'm gonna get it wrong again this year. Malcolm's already told me. We're gonna have this amazing family experience. He's excited about it, but the experience means there's no presents.

Gail: Yeah.

Lisa: So for him it's like, "I kinda didn't sign up for this Mom. You didn't ask me if I wanted to do this." I'm like you're right. He's right.

Gail: You've given me some good thoughts.

Lisa: Yeah, there's so much pressure on these little kids about this holiday.

Gail: Yeah. Well, I think Mandy and I'll do fine. We'll just have to work on the rest of the family. Also, this is about my adopted grandkids too, but I

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was mainly asking about because I don't know how their parents feel. I don't want the kids to be pressured because the parents want them to be grateful. So I will work on that and explain to them my thoughts and see how they feel about it.

Lisa: Yeah. If you get a chance to have a conversation with the parents before the day and just say listen. I would say it like this to them. The joy for me has already been felt. I already have gotten everything I need out of this. So I'm not looking for anything. I'm not looking for gratitude. I'm not looking for excitement. If it's okay with you, I would like them to just be able to have their natural response, whatever it is. I'm not going to be upset. I'm not going to be embarrassed. I don't want us to feel pressured to manipulate them into liking what I've gotten them.

Gail: Yeah, just see what their opinion is of that attitude.

Lisa: Most parents, you're just gonna have spoken Korean to them. Because we put so much pressure on our kids to be happy through all of this and to like it. I can just imagine for a lot of children, the anticipation is just draining.

Gail: Yeah.

Lisa: Remember, frustration is when there's a gap between expectation and reality, right? So I have expectations I'm anticipating, and then reality sets in. If there's a big gap. Listen, I've created a big gap some years. I mean Malcolm could happily tell you the stories of I told her I wanted X, and I got Y. Either because I was trying to save a dime, or I didn't really listen the first time. Or he had already told me wanted something else, and I got it. Then I couldn't make a last minute switch. I mean I've let this kid down on gifts so many times. It isn't even funny, and I'm okay with it.

Gail: You make up for it in other ways though my dear.

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Lisa: Yeah, I don't, yeah.

Gail: That's great. No, this has been a good thought provoking conversation. So thank you so much.

Lisa: You're welcome.

Gail: I'm looking forward to doing Christmas with my grandkids if I can ever get my tree up.

Lisa: Yeah. Find the joy in it Gail. Find the joy in it for yourself, not through gifts.

Gail: Yeah. Just find the connection. Okay, I will do that.

Lisa: Good.

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.