

Ep #109: Breaking the Cycle of Dominant Parenting and Why It's Important



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host
Lisa Smith

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

Ep #109: Breaking the Cycle of Dominant Parenting and Why It's Important

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 know I say it every week, but every week it's 100% true. I am so excited to be with you here today. Today's episode is very special to me and very dear to my heart. Today's episode is offered with great love and absolutely no judgment.

Today's episode is for any parent out there who feels trapped in the cycle of resorting to physical and verbal punishment when their kid's frustrating behavior pushes them beyond a limit that they just don't know how to manage. They just don't know what to do. They feel completely at the end of their rope with no other options. I know exactly what that feels like. I'm here to assure you with 100% confidence that you, yes you, can learn and practice the parenting skills that will create connection with your kids rather than fear and compliance. It can happen, I promise.

I'm so confident in saying this because I personally have been where you are. I was able to use the exact tools that I now teach and completely change my style of parenting and the relationship I have with my son. Now, there are no smoke and mirrors involved here. No fairy dust, no rainbows, no unicorns. No magic wands, spells, or potions. There's no quick fix. None of the tools I teach them peaceful parenting lead to permissive parenting. Let me be crystal clear about that.

What we're going to talk about today is in no way permissive parenting. It is not permission to avoid your kids, not deal with things going on, behavior, storming, process problems. What I'm going to talk about today does not

Ep #109: Breaking the Cycle of Dominant Parenting and Why It's Important

give us permission to avoid the circumstances that come up from raising our kids.

Nor is today about shame or blame for those of us that were raised in a dominant household and are now modeling that for our kids. Today's episode is about healing, learning, and breaking the cycle of dominant parenting. You in? Awesome.

This episode is also for any parent who is working hard to implement peaceful parenting and feels the need to protect their children and convert their spouse or co-parent from being a demanding controlling dominant parent to one who will commit to healing and learning alongside them. If either of these descriptions resonates with you, stay with me. You're not gonna want to miss this episode.

I want to start by setting a scene in a movie that might feel somewhat familiar to you. The exact details might be different, but the overall movie might feel very, very, very familiar to you. So picture two parents with four young children.

In this movie, the father was raised by parents who used to swat him with a belt when he did not comply with his parents demands. The mother was raised by a single parent who verbally degraded her every time she made a mistake. So there's definitely some childhood wounds there that have been brought into this couples parenting of their four young children.

Now the mother has been coming to me for coaching and been practicing the peaceful parenting tools I teach for about a year and a half now. The father, though intrigued by peaceful parenting, just does not believe he can or really needs to change how he demands compliance from his four boys.

Ep #109: Breaking the Cycle of Dominant Parenting and Why It's Important

So picture this scene in the movie. One afternoon, the parents agree it's time for the family to get focused and clean up the backyard. They give their children warning that this is going to be happening today. That they expect every member of the family to willingly participate in the project and be helpful.

But the oldest child, their seven year old strong willed son, is very attached to many things in the backyard and is having an emotional meltdown anytime he's told he has to throw something away like his favorite stick, his pile of rocks, and the empty cardboard box delivered by Amazon three months ago. I'm not making this up this. He's very attached to every stick in the backyard, his pile of rocks, and the empty cardboard box. Can you relate?

Now the seven year old boy has been reacting to the news of the family cleanup project by punching, kicking, and yelling at his siblings all morning. He's having a full on storm. When it comes time to dig into the project, this seven year old boy is not only not helpful, but he's now screaming and crying and pulling things back out of the trash that have already been thrown away. The box, the rocks, and the sticks.

The father who's just trying to get this backyard cleaned up, to check off the box and move on to the next thing, reaches his limit of frustration and starts threatening physical punishment to coerce his seven year old son into compliance. The mom steps between the father and son to help with the situation, to use her peaceful parenting tools to help try to regulate both the father and the son.

So as I'm describing this, can you feel the tension, the fear, the frustration, the disconnection happening within this family in this circumstance? Can you feel it? I know I can just as I'm describing it. Can you relate? This is the

Ep #109: Breaking the Cycle of Dominant Parenting and Why It's Important

moment when recognizing some facts can make all the difference. Let me explain.

The first fact that is so important to know and understand is this, the same sex parent is most influential person in a kid's life until the age of 10. If any parent, but especially the same sex parent, is going to model for their children that in this family when we feel frustrated, violence is justified. Then when the child gets frustrated, they feel justified in being violent, whether it's yelling, hitting, or name calling because this is what is being modeled by the parent.

Now, this is all happening in the subconscious. I know that the parent is frustrated and feels pushed to his limit. I get it. We've all been there. Every one of us. In his mind, I'm sure he feels like hey, I warned that this project was happening. I reminded the kids. I planned for it. I told him it was going to happen.

I'm sure the father had a timeline. We need to get this yard cleaned up today. He's determined to push through and get this done. Today. I get it believe me. I love checking things off like you wouldn't believe. So I totally get wanting to finish up a project, like clean up the sticks, rocks, and cardboard in the backyard.

But here's the thing, how we respond when these big negative emotions show up. Like frustration, disappointment, missed deadlines, conflict, how we show up matters. These are the moments we are modeling for our kids how we want them to show up when the feelings of frustration, disappointment, missed deadlines, and conflict arise. Do you see this? Is a light bulb going off? It matters how we behave when these big feelings come like frustration, disappointment, conflict. How we behave matters because we're giving the roadmap to our kids.

Ep #109: Breaking the Cycle of Dominant Parenting and Why It's Important

Here's another example. Let's say a mom is driving down the road with her two kids in the backseat, and one child is hitting the other. The other starts kicking. The first one starts crying. There's mayhem going on in the backseat. Full blown fighting. Fighting, kicking, hitting, crying. As the mom's driving, she starts screaming at them to stop and reaches in the backseat out of frustration and swats the two kids on the leg to get them to stop.

In this example, the mom is teaching, modeling, and reinforcing that in this family when we feel frustrated, we are justified to swat. We use our hands to exert our frustration. We use our hands to express our frustration and try to control the other person. She is modeling that for her children.

I know this might be hard to hear. I understand. But in this example, the mom is using her hands to express her frustration through violence and try to control the other person. She's modeling that for her children. So listen to me. I'm not here to tell you this is wrong. The mom can choose to do that. But at least if she's going to do that, at least understand the model she is putting forth for her kids.

Let me say that again. If the mom chooses to do that she needs to understand the model she is putting forth for her kids. The real crime is to be surprised or frustrated when your kids are good learners and parent what we model. Do you see this? If nothing else, just see the irony, the crime committed here. I just want us to all understand the modeling going on. It's very hard, very hard to demand a child stop doing what is being modeled in the family.

The child thinks subconsciously but albeit thinks, "If my parents, the people who love me and are raising me, hit me or threaten me when they're frustrated, then when I'm frustrated, I hit people because this is what we do in this house. This is how we handle conflict. Or I yell or I name call or I shut down and ignore."

Ep #109: Breaking the Cycle of Dominant Parenting and Why It's Important

The child thinks this is how we resolve conflict in this home. It's just the reality of it. If you're going to choose to use physical reprimands to try to control your child at least be cognizant of what you're doing. It is the intention you come at your children with. It's the way you approach circumstances when frustration continues to mount. It's the building up of the frustration and the reaction that comes out of it that's being modeled for your children.

Now, if you're the parent in the family that's here each week listening to *Real World Peaceful Parenting* and is trying to practice peaceful parenting, you really can't fix this in your spouse or co-parent. I know. I wish you could wave a magic wand and fix it, but you really can't. What you can do is patiently attempt to bring an awareness to your partner of what they're doing through lots of regulated conversation. The light bulb has to go off for them to see this, to see the modeling that's going on when they lose their shiz on their kids.

It may be that your co-parent really wants to be a peaceful parent. But what might be getting in his or her or their own way is their childhood wounds. It's just the cycle of parenting from generation to generation. It's one of the things that makes raising kids so dang hard.

Our job as the co-parent is to help them have an awareness of the cycle that they're trapped in. You can share with them by saying our kids don't do what we say, they do what we do. I want you to remember this, write it down, tattoo it on your arm, put it on post-it notes around the house. Our kids don't do what we say. They do what we do.

Here's another thing that's important for you to understand. Our children have no judgment around hitting. If we lived in a society that revered hitting as a justified way of resolving conflict, then you could easily teach your child to be a world class hitter. But we as a society don't like hitting, which I

Ep #109: Breaking the Cycle of Dominant Parenting and Why It's Important

am a fan of not hitting. So we put a value on it. We say don't hit. We try to teach it and value it and encourage it.

A seven, six, five year old does not understand instinctively that hitting is wrong. They have to be taught this over time. They have to learn it and internalize it, and it becomes a part of their value system. The best way to teach this is to model not using violence to get what you want as the parent.

Now, let me give you an example of this. Here in the United States of America we're taught from an early age that while we're eating we are to chew with our mouth closed. It's respectful. It's kind. It's what we do. Some of you may not know this, but in all other cultures slurping and burping your food is actually acceptable while dining and is sometimes considered a sign of appreciation of the cooking.

I've been to Korea a few times. In the Korean culture, when you want to compliment the chef, you slurp your food as loud as you can and you belch as often as you can. Tipping is not a part of the culture in Korea. So you slurp and belt to compliment the chef. I'll never forget. The first time I was in Korea eating a meal out in a restaurant, I was mortified by the slurping and the burping going on in the restaurant. I could barely eat my food.

I had not done adequate research on what to expect when dining out in an Asian culture, particularly in Korea. Let me tell you, this was a restaurant full of people who were enjoying their food and complimenting the chef by chewing with their mouth open, shoveling the food in, slurping and belching as they were eating.

I must have had a horrified look on my face because the person I was with, who was my colleague in Korea, explained to me that in the culture, it's acceptable and the expected way to compliment the chef. It was a lightbulb

Ep #109: Breaking the Cycle of Dominant Parenting and Why It's Important

moment for me at the time to realize that just because something is taught to us over time as right in our culture may not be the way it's taught in other cultures, and that we are not inherently born knowing values and right from wrong.

Our kids are not born knowing right from wrong. They're not. They're taught our cultural norms and familial expectations over and over and over again until the internal compass goes on, and they internalize it. They accept it as an intrinsic part of their values. Hear this, please. Their biggest teacher is our modeling as their parents, not the words that come out of our mouths, but our modeling, what we do. Especially how we show up when we're pushed to the limit, frustrated, disappointed, in the middle of conflict, etcetera.

So if you're resolving conflict in the back seat on the way home from school by reaching back and swatting your kids on the legs, or screaming threats at them, to get them to stop fighting, please, please, please don't be surprised when your oldest hauls off and hits the youngest out of frustration or to resolve conflict or to make the noise stop. Please do not be surprised by that. Because that is what you're modeling.

Okay. You see that? Yeah, light bulb's going off? Oh, my goodness. Yes. So this solution. I never like to leave you hanging. So we have to step back and ask ourselves what am I teaching right now through my modeling with my kids, and what do I want to teach? What do I want to teach through modeling?

If I was coaching one on one the father in the first movie I talked about, I described, who sees value in hitting his kids as a form of punishment, I would ask him what was the feeling you had when you were trying to clean the yard and your seven year old son was crying over a stick as you throw

Ep #109: Breaking the Cycle of Dominant Parenting and Why It's Important

it in the trash? Let's assume for a second this dad would say, "Well, I was frustrated, Lisa. I was frustrated. I'm trying to get the yard cleaned up."

Then I would ask him how exactly do you want your son to handle frustration at seven when he feels that come over him? What do you want his action to be when he's frustrated at school, on the baseball field, with his brothers in the backyard when they're free playing? How do you want him to show up? Because that's what we have to model because it's how our kids learn. There is no other way to teach our children. They learn from what is modeled for them.

Hypocrisy is to hit a child and then demand he not hit his siblings. It's not going to happen, especially if you're the same sex parent modeling this. Your child then believes oh in this home when we're frustrated, this is how we behave. It feels natural to him to hit his siblings. Then your kid's gonna get dysregulated when you're doing one thing as the parent and saying another. This is jarring to all humans. It's unfair, and it leads to further dysregulation.

It would be like a drunk police officer pulling someone over for drinking and driving. Yeah? This would be jarring to anyone. The expectation is the person that pulls us over is sober, is modeling for us how we get on the road and drive. It would be jarring if a drunk police officer pulled you over for drinking and driving.

Again, the expectation is that the person models what they expect of us. This is the big picture the dominant parent has to see before any change can happen. When he's frustrated, his habit brain says when I'm frustrated, I threaten. I try to control. I use any means necessary to get my kids under control. He has to have an intrinsic motivation to want to change that.

Ep #109: Breaking the Cycle of Dominant Parenting and Why It's Important

The peaceful parent can participate when the frustration gets to the point that the dominant parent is ready to use violence. You can say hey, let's take a break. We're not going to do that right now. Then later when you're both regulated, help them fill in the neuro pathways, the ski tracks as I call them, which is the habit brain with fresh snow, a new way to respond, or a new way to deal with feelings of frustration.

We have to model that culture we want our kids to follow. If we hit them but ask them or demand they not hit, they're not going to be able to follow that because we're saying one thing and modeling another, and it's hypocrisy. In the heat of the moment, you can stay regulated and guide your spouse or co-parent away from the violence. But more importantly, you also need to spend a lot of regulated time having conversations about modeling.

Let me say change is 100% possible. I am living proof. If I can do it, anybody can do it. I am proof that this is possible. I came from a family of gold medalists in yelling, threatening, punishing, and physical abuse. I have broken the cycle. If I can break it, you and your co-parent can too. After 10 years as a parent coach, I've helped thousands of parents around the world break the dominant cycle. I know with 100% confidence that it's possible for you. Yes, you.

What I know is we have to approach the conversation with the co-parent with the intent and energy to break the cycle. Be empathetic and help him know that you understand what's going on and are determined to help your co-parent break the cycle. Really help them understand the value of modeling. It wasn't until the light bulb went on for me, and I really understood that I was modeling and teaching my son to be a reactive yeller.

I'll never forget the day. I was yelling at him. He was yelling at me. I was yelling at him for yelling at me. In the back of my brain, I was thinking who

Ep #109: Breaking the Cycle of Dominant Parenting and Why It's Important

taught him to yell like this? I realized me. Me. I was teaching him through modeling to be reactive and angry. I was teaching them that this is how we show up when we're frustrated. We go from zero to 100. We start screaming. Our face gets all red, and we start screaming unkind things at the other person and making threats.

It took me a while to develop a new model, to model a new way to show up when I was frustrated, but we did it. Now in our home, there's very little yelling. There's a ton of true connection, understanding, compassionate listening to each other, and cooperation. Let me be honest, there's still dysregulation at times on both our parts.

Frustration bubbles up, believe me. After all, I am raising a strong willed kid who I call a full contact sport. But when frustration bubbles up, we don't turn to reactive anger. We don't turn to violence when we get dysregulated. That all started with me modeling a new response to my frustration. This is my hope for you and your family too.

I want you to know that I can help you. I can teach you a new way to model. I can teach you tools and help your family make progress, even if your co-parent is on board. Yes, I said that. Even if your co-parent is 0% on board, I can help you make progress. That's 100% possible.

How you ask? Well the answer is pretty simple. I want you to come and check out The Hive because it's inside The Hive where I will give you the exact tools you need to move down the path to peaceful parenting with or without your co-parent on board. The Hive is a one of its kind community that serves parents around the world who want ongoing support with their parenting at an incredibly reasonable price. The Hive enables you to have a parent coach in your back pocket at all times and get all of your questions answered without any obligation on your end.

Ep #109: Breaking the Cycle of Dominant Parenting and Why It's Important

Now, The Hive is not an online group of parents showcasing their “social media perfect parenting”. It's not a feed of nonstop inspirational quotes and empty cliches. The Hive is the place to help you make small steps in your parenting journey that will bring you exponentially closer to the connection you've always wanted with your kids. Once you create that connection, you get maximum cooperation. I want to let that soak in for a moment. Maximum cooperation through connection.

I want you to know what's possible for your family no matter what stage you're starting from. Imagine. Imagine never being more than a few days away from having a tried and true parenting expert, that's me, give you tailored guidance on your most recent situation. Imagine feeling any anxiety and guilt you have about your parenting meltaway. Imagine feeling the love and connection with your kids growing stronger each day, even on their worst days. Imagine knowing that no parenting challenge is too big for you because of the vast experience and support you can immediately draw upon within The Hive.

You can make it a reality, all of this reality, with what I coach and teach you inside The Hive. It might sound too good to be true, but I promise you it's not. There is a seat waiting for you right now. So go to thehivecoaching.com to learn more and join. I cannot wait to work with you. Okay, 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.