

## Ep #115: Triggered? Here's How to Stay Neutral



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host  
**Lisa Smith**

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

## Ep #115: Triggered? Here's How to Stay Neutral

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 this every week. I sound and feel like a broken record every time I record this sentence, but I mean it from the bottom of my heart. I am so excited to be with you here today. So thank you for joining me, and I can't wait to talk to you today about triggers. Triggers.

Let me ask you what gets triggered for you when your older child storms by hitting or aggressively wrestling with your younger child? How about when your child sneaks forbidden snacks or sweets into his bedroom? What comes to mind when your child admits he did something because their friend encouraged them to do it even though they knew they shouldn't? So difficult, right? Triggers.

Now most parents who come to me for coaching when asked about this respond to these questions with concern and fear for their child's future. When circumstances such as these arise, thoughts of fear get triggered, and the parent often ends up storming right alongside the kid. Not because of what the kid did but because of the fear that triggered us. I've been there. I've experienced it. It continues to happen to me from time to time. So I am no stranger to this cycle.

Based on our own past experiences, our unmet needs, our fears, as parents, we often project all of that onto our kids assuming our child's storms are red flags or precursors to a life of doom. Are you with me? Are you like oh, girl. Girl. Going deep today. #truth, amen.

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Yes, based on my own past experiences, my unmet needs, my fears, I often project all of that onto my son. Because of that, I go down the rabbit hole of assuming he's going to be living under a bridge with a shopping cart or he's going to be doomed or it's not going to work out, and then I storm alongside him.

As parents, we're often quick to link things like sibling fighting to our children becoming violent and a menace to society. We go down the rabbit hole quickly. One thing leads to another. Parents who have children who crave sweets are quick to assume their child is going to grow into an adult who's overweight, unhealthy, can't say no to sweets, and will suffer because of it. The truth is sometimes this is happening so fast and so unconsciously we don't even realize it's happening in real time. It's over before we've even wrapped our arms around it.

Let's go here. When children admit to doing dangerous or inappropriate things, let alone because their friends encouraged them to do it, as parents, we're often immediately triggered into believing our child will grow up to be a people pleaser, a follower, or one who cannot or will not make decisions based on their own internal compass. All of this, all of these examples, my friend, lead to fear based parenting. FBP. Fear based parenting.

Fear based parenting 100% of the time leads to dysregulation and disconnection. Let me say that again. Fear based parenting, FBP, leads to dysregulation and disconnection, and it is the nemesis of peaceful parenting. In today's episode, I want to give you tools to help you drop the fear and show up for your kids in a neutral way. Sounds good? I thought so. Let's dive in.

When our kids present something that triggers thoughts that generate fear in us, the goal is to get neutral about it rather than be afraid of it. When our kids do or present something and we get triggered into fear through our

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thoughts, the goal I want you to have going forward is to get neutral rather than give into that fear, and I'm going to explain why.

Because we want to help our kids learn how to work with what might be their shadow side instead of raise them to believe that they are flawed because they have this thing—this love for sweets, this love for risk, this affinity for risk, this desire to game all the time—whatever this “thing” is, we want to raise them to learn how to work with their shadow side instead of raise them to feel they are flawed. We don't want to parent from fear because fear triggers us. Then we have our kids living under a bridge with a shopping cart.

Then we're languishing in a way that is not productive in trying to parent our kids. When you are parenting from fear, you are languaging in a way that is not productive. Our children's shadow side can often reveal another side of them, including their hidden super power if we remain neutral and help them recognize and work with the thing that scares us. Their superpower could one day change the world.

If we get neutral about it and we nurture it and not fear it, it does not have to be a negative thing. I promise you. What you perceive as your child's shadow side could lead to suffering for you and maybe for them depending on your reaction, but it could also lead to his or her superpower if you help your child recognize and manage whatever it is without languaging it as a character flaw, without approaching it with fear. Let me tell you, it's so, so, so much more productive to teach, to parent, to coach from a place of neutrality rather than fear.

So maybe you're saying okay girl. I hear you. How do we get there? How do we get to a place of neutrality when the fear is so palpable, so real, and so ingrained in me? Well, the answer might surprise you.

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Getting to a place of neutrality around your fear often requires recognizing what your biggest fear is. Calling it out, naming it, at least to yourself. For example, one of my biggest fears has been that my hyper focused kid would turn into a drug addict. I'm just being totally honest with you here. For years, this fear has sat in the way back recesses of my brain. He has a very hyper focused personality.

So a bunch of years ago, I sat myself down and decided to do this work. To look at the fear of hyperfocus. I decided to not spend all my time looking at the negative side of hyperfocus. I got curious about what hyperfocus presents, what it looks like, what it does for the world. I looked for examples of hyper focused successful people. I found people like Tony Robbins, Steve Jobs, Tom Brady, Amy Porterfield. All of these people are hyper focused like my son, and they use it for good, not evil.

When my brain latched onto what's possible for my son, I started finding tons of evidence to help me parent hyperfocus from a place of neutrality rather than fear. I found evidence to support the theory that my son's going to grow up to be successful, safe, happy, and highly capable of changing the world for the better. Let me tell you, with this new thought, I have been so much more successful at showing up in a neutral way to help guide him when his hyperfocus threatens to trip him up.

Now, I'm human, and I get triggered into fear at times. But what I promise you is that with this new perspective, it's far less often than what it used to be. My son and I, when we converse about this, he admits that he feels far more connected to me, and he sees the confidence that I have in him. He trusts me to be a safe place, and to be the one he can come to help him navigate the circumstances of his life with his hyper focusness. He doesn't have to hide it from me. He doesn't have to pretend it's not there.

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So I have to make sure I didn't see his hyperfocus as a flaw. What that would look like is I had to make sure that every time I opened my mouth to parent, I wouldn't say things like oh be careful because you know you're hyper focused. That does not lead to a positive outcome. Oh, you know, you're hyper focused, and that gets you into trouble. Oh my gosh, I'm afraid of blah, blah, blah. That leads him to see his "thing" about himself as being something to fear, hide, and be ashamed of, which is not productive and certainly not how I want my son to see what may very well be his superpower.

Another example. Let's say your kid is someone who loves sweets or taking more than his share of chips or cupcakes at a birthday party. If you set your fear aside, you can actually teach your child how to work with this from a neutral place. You can help your kid learn about serving sizes. You can also help him make sure that there's enough for everyone and help him learn and appreciate what moderation means. You can also help your child by buying and keeping less sweets in the house so the temptation and the impulse to have sweets isn't as often or as tempting.

See? When you put your fear aside, you can recognize their impulse for sweets as a process problem rather than a character problem. You can teach your child how to have a healthy relationship with food from a place of neutrality and logic while really loving sweets in moderation. Your child can grow up to be someone who absolutely loves and adores sweets and still has them in moderation on the regular.

When we do this work, we shift into spending our energy teaching our kids what to do instead of what not to do. I believe, as parents, we make this mistake often that we often expend all of our words constantly focused on coaching, teaching, and parenting our kids on what not, N-O-T, not to do. They may very well understand the message of what not to do, but

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sometimes with it comes fear, shame, and wanting to hide. They're often tripped up simply because they don't know what to do instead.

I mean, let's be honest. It's possible to be an avid lover of cake or candy or homemade cookies and exercise moderation and impulse control. Just because one really loves dessert doesn't mean they need to be ashamed of themselves. Just because someone's hyper focused on things they're passionate and interested in doesn't mean they're a horrible person and they need to hide that from the world. If we can explain to our kids what we want them to do at least 50% of the time, and we do that from a neutral place as a parent, they have a much greater chance of being successful.

Now, let me share this with you because this is really important to understand. Fear is an emotional response to a perceived threat. Let me say that again. Fear is an emotional response to a perceived threat, which is normal as a human. It's part of the human experience, and important to help us when we're in dangerous situations. But when fear becomes disproportionate to the threat, it sneaks over into anxiety or it crosses over into anxiety.

What's really helpful as a parent is to acknowledge your fear. Ask yourself what am I fearing? What is my greatest fear? Why does this trigger me? Why am I so upset about my kid's love for cookies or candy? Really take a minute to look at it head on and then move it out of the way, neutralize it. We will never be able to totally get rid of our fears, but we can develop the skill of managing them and setting them aside when they're disproportionate to the circumstance.

This is one of the most important things I help parents do when I'm coaching them is I help them understand what fear is. That it protects us from danger, but when it becomes disproportionate to the threat, when it's out of whack, and it transitions into anxiety. Because when we're parenting

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from a place of fear and anxiety, we're going to get triggered, and we're going to storm alongside our kids.

What we really want to do is we want to coach our kids as a guide. We want to show up from a neutral place and parent and guide when we're regulated. We don't want to attempt to control our kids in order to alleviate our own misplaced fears. What I know is that fear leads to control and compliance. Working through these fears, recognizing, naming them, setting them aside, and being neutral leads us to coaching our kids, which creates connection and cooperation, which ultimately sets our kids up to really hear us and learn from us. So good, right?

So my invitation to you this week is to do this homework. Remember, 2023 is the year of upleveling our parenting where small changes have a big impact in our parenting, our connection, and our cooperation with our kids. So the homework assignment this week is to acknowledge what are your deep, dark, fears?

What is your kid's shadow side? How can you get neutral about it so that you can parent from a neutral place and help them recognize that in fact their shadow side might be their superpower? So that you can guide and parent them from a neutral place rather than from a place of fear. I really invite you to do the work so that you're not FBP, fear based parenting. Yeah? So good, isn't it? I just love talking about this.

If you're ready or you need some support to really understand your triggers and your fear based parenting then come join us in The Hive. The Hive is my membership community where we take all of this to the next level. Where I coach you and support you and help you transition away from fear based parenting. So if you're ready for that, I want to personally invite you to go over to [thehivecoaching.com](https://thehivecoaching.com) and join us. I can't wait to work with you. Until we meet again, I'm wishing you peaceful parenting.



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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.