

Ep #127: Why Multitasking and Peaceful Parenting Don't Mix



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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. I am so excited to be with you here today. I have to ask you, what are you doing right now while listening to this episode? Are you doing something else? Maybe you're folding laundry, you and the dog are on a walk, maybe you're on your way to work, maybe you're at work, maybe you're organizing a closet while listening to this.

Chances are right now while listening to this episode, you might also be doing something else, which is the definition of multitasking. That's what I want to talk about today. I want to talk about how urgent often crowds the important and holds us back from being the parent we want to be. A lot of it is rooting in taking a look at our multitasking and understanding how sometimes, maybe even often, that gets in the way of our parenting.

Now you and I both know that a lot of people, may be you, and certainly I used to be this way, really enjoyed perfecting the art of multitasking, which is doing more than one thing at a time and requires your executive function to be scanning the universe while you're doing one thing and another at the same time. So I'm folding laundry, matching the socks while listening to a podcast, or I'm listening to something while also reading email.

Now one of the things you need to know heading into today's episode is that multitasking requires executive function, which is located in the prefrontal cortex of your brain. Your kids are not capable of multitasking because of their lack of development of the prefrontal cortex. We've talked

Ep #127: Why Multitasking and Peaceful Parenting Don't Mix

about this before. The brain is not fully developed until around the age of 25.

So your kids are not capable of multitasking. I really need you to hear that and understand that. Your kid or kid's brain development, or lack thereof, prevents them from being a multitasker. They're not doing one thing while scanning the universe for something else.

So let me give you an example. If you're in the kitchen tidying up the breakfast dishes, getting the lunches organized, thinking about the work meeting that you're about to go to and realizing oh, crud, it's time to get on with getting our shoes on and getting ready for school. You bark out to your son who's laying on the couch reading a book. Hey, time to get your shoes on.

Chances are, he's not going to hear you. He's not going to hear you because he is not multitasking. While he's reading, he is not scanning the universe for the next command. They're all in on doing the thing right in front of them. Your son or daughter is not saying wow, each morning around 7:15 my parent tells me to get my shoes on. It's now 7:10. So while I'm reading this book, let me also keep an ear out for the upcoming command. Let me anticipate the next command coming in.

It just doesn't happen that way. That's not how their brain works or is developed. The more you stay regulated when they don't follow the command, the more you stay regulated when they don't jump on your request, the easier getting the shoes on is going to be.

Now I want to share with you that a few years ago, I gave up multitasking. We parted ways. I realized it just doesn't work for my brain. It makes me a little crazy when I'm trying to do too many things at once. I want to

Ep #127: Why Multitasking and Peaceful Parenting Don't Mix

encourage you to take inventory on how many things you're trying to do at one time, especially while parenting.

Now listen, I get it. We're all incredibly busy people, incredibly busy. But this is one of the secrets to getting your kids to listen the first time and getting cooperation from your kids. I want you all to take inventory. Here's the question, how often are you present with your kids? How often are you doing too many things at once? To be helpful, and with no judgment I promise, I ask you, are your kids last on the list often? Because you're so busy doing other things.

Maybe even you justify your busyness by saying I'm doing all of this for them. I get that. But then we have to ask ourselves, is having to fight for your attention and beg you to be present with them really for their benefit? Or do we get into a cycle or habit without realizing that our busyness causes us to bark orders over and over and over at our kids, thus seeming like they're a massive inconvenience. We're always losing our shiz and our patience with them.

Again, I have no judgment. I've been there myself. I've been that frustrated, over-multitasked, irritated parent who every time I open my mouth, I just seem irritated and frustrated with my kid. So I challenge us to ask ourselves these questions and be honest.

I also want you to think of it this way. What are you modeling for your kids? If you're in the cycle of asking or commanding or demanding that your kid stop what he's doing no matter what it is to put shoes on, you're probably not modeling, connection, and cooperation. I mean, are you stopping what you're doing, no matter what it is to take a moment to pause, connect, and help him get his shoes on? Or are you modeling always multitasking? Maybe your kid sees you continuing to do what you're doing. So he's really just following what you're modeling.

Ep #127: Why Multitasking and Peaceful Parenting Don't Mix

Again, back to the example in the kitchen, you bark out orders to get your shoes on while you continue to clean up the kitchen. Now, listen, I understand the breakfast dishes need to be done. But you want him to stop reading on command and put his shoes on while you continue to do what you were doing. To the underdeveloped brain, it's confusing. Our kids don't do what we say, i.e. stop what you're doing right now and get your shoes on, they do what we do, which is most often ignore them and keep writing and doing what we're doing.

Over the years, I've learned this about myself, that multitasking just shuts my brain down. So I don't do it anymore. I especially don't do it when I'm with my kid. Our kids deserve better than that. Think about this. It's not your kid's fault that you're working a full time job, and that you're busy in the morning, and that there's so much to do. That you get up late, and you're rushing around, and that you hit the snooze four times. You got an email you have to take care of right away. It's not their fault. They shouldn't have to pay the price of your busyness.

So the most helpful thing I can do for you is to encourage you to take inventory. To help you ask yourself, are you in command and compliance because you put yourself in a position where you don't have enough time to get you and your kids ready in the morning? You don't have to admit it to me, but I do want you to take the inventory and admit it to yourself.

If you're in command and compliance, what can you do to get out of it? Because what I know is that command and compliance is often created as a solution to being over tasked with not enough time, i.e. being multitasked, too busy, and not enough space or time to get everything done.

Another great question to ask ourselves is what is happening to make my lack of planning my kid's emergency? What is happening to you or for you around you that is making your lack of planning your kid's emergency?

Ep #127: Why Multitasking and Peaceful Parenting Don't Mix

Maybe you're a person who hits the snooze button four or five times in the morning, or maybe you could get more organized the night before, or maybe you have too many tasks in the morning with not enough time.

So now you're rushing around, and you're in an irritated command and compliance stance with your kids. You're short, you're irritated, you're stressed. Essentially your lack of planning and preparation becomes their emergency.

Unfortunately, humans resist command and compliance unless there is a big hook, a massive reward, like a paycheck or a bonus or present. Or there's a threat like losing your job if you don't get to work on time or get the work done. Humans resist command and compliance.

Let's be honest, if you're here listening to this podcast, command and compliance is not how you want to parent anyway, right? We're all working down the path of real world peaceful parenting, moving away from the dominant parenting and moving into the peaceful parenting. To do that, we have to take inventory of where we're slipping into command and compliance, where circumstances around us are forcing us into that command and compliance.

The inventory is a great way to figure it out. If you're in command and compliance, you're probably not getting cooperation from your kids. If you're in connection, you're gonna get cooperation because cooperation follows connection. As parents, we often say wait a minute, I don't have time. Let me finish this. Yet we expect our children to respond the first time straightaway upon command.

I hope you can see this. Sometimes it takes a little introspection to see this. We may not see what our kids are doing as important, but it's important to them. So we want to take an inventory of if we're often in a I don't have

Ep #127: Why Multitasking and Peaceful Parenting Don't Mix

time. Let me finish this. Not right now, but then we're expecting them to stop reading their book, put the game down immediately, close out whatever they're doing, and immediately do what we're saying.

Let me tell you something, if you have a strong willed kid like me, they're not going to do command and compliance just because you said so. They are not going to do it. It's like you've sucked all the oxygen out of the room, and they can't breathe. Connection and cooperation works so much better than being stuck in a command and compliance cycle all the time.

Does everything become an emergency because you're always running late? Are you creating the emergency by your own lack of planning? Again, just really important questions we have to ask ourselves. So I want you to ask yourself where can I do better? Where can I ask more of myself? Where can I practice some more discipline? Where can I simplify systems, processes, and logistics? Where can I get more organized?

Maybe your brain works better in the evening than in the morning. So maybe you need to get the lunches done the night before. Lay out clothes, get backpacks ready and actually put in the car so that you can get out of the command and compliance mode, out of the multitasking, and have your brain be more regulated in the morning, i.e, less irritated, less stressed.

Maybe you're someone who needs to give yourself more grace in the morning. Set yourself up for success the night before. Build in your morning routine time to pause when your kids struggle to get themselves ready. Slow down, take a couple deep breaths. Work with cooperation and connection rather than command and compliance because you have more time to pause. Maybe you need to plan some extra time into the morning to pause and connect with your kids.

Ep #127: Why Multitasking and Peaceful Parenting Don't Mix

Another great way to take inventory is to ask yourself, am I asking too much of my kids in the morning? Am I asking too much of myself? Am I asking too much in the evenings before bedtime when I'm completely spent at the end of the day? This is another big area where irritation, frustration often pushes us into command and compliance at bedtime each evening.

What tasks can be moved to a different time of the day so they don't become so urgent at bedtime, and we're trying to do them in a command and compliance mode. I'm often encouraging clients to have their kids brush their teeth right after dinner, or at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Move bath time to a different time, space it out a little bit more, take in inventory so that you can move out of command and compliance when you feel yourself rushing, getting irritated, stressed. Too many tasks stacked upon each other where it triggers you into the kind of parent you don't want to be.

Figuring out these things and tweaking just one or two small things will give your brain time, space, and the permission it needs to take a pause at the most critical times of the day. When we take a pause, we can choose connection. We can choose to respond rather than react. We're much less likely to get triggered and go into our middle brain and storm alongside our kids.

One of my missions is to show up here each week, and do every single thing I can to help you bring the pause in so you can respond rather than react. So that you can stay regulated during these times when you're getting your kids to get in the car in the morning, come to the dinner table, get ready for bed, get dressed, do their homework. When you stay regulated, you are hundreds of thousands of times more likely to stay in the connection and cooperation mode rather than in the command and compliance mode. Yeah? Awesome.

Ep #127: Why Multitasking and Peaceful Parenting Don't Mix

So do the inventory. Ask yourself what can I do differently? What one or two small things can I change or tweak that is going to give me some space and time and permission to pause? That's going to help me get out of the command and compliance and multitasking mode that I'm in. It's an absolute game changer, I promise.

I speak from personal experience. I've coached thousands of clients on this. So I'm gonna wrap up today's episode with this idea. I leave you with this. Remember, you are not managing an inconvenience. You are raising a human being. I want to say that again. You are not managing an inconvenience. You are raising a human being.

If you like what I shared with you today but you need more ideas, you need more information, or you're still struggling to get your kids to listen even when you're not in command and compliance, I have the answers. I really want to share them with you in my upcoming free masterclass where I will teach you exactly what to do and what to say to get your kids to listen the first time without yelling, threatening, or punishing.

I promise you, it's possible. I know that may blow your mind, but it is 100% possible to get your kids to listen the first time without yelling, threatening, or punishing. I'm going to show you exactly how to do it. So my free class is happening on June 15th, Thursday, June 15th at 9:00 a.m. Pacific Time, 10:00 a.m. Mountain, 11:00 Central, and 12 Eastern, and this class is 100% free. F-R-E-E, 100%, I promise.

All I need you to do if you'd like to join us is go to thepeacefulparent.com/workshop to sign up. We'll have a link in the show notes, but you can also go right now to thepeacefulparent.com/workshop and sign up. We'll take it from there and get you all the details and the link to join us on Thursday, June 15th. I can't wait to work with you. I'll see you there. Until we meet again, I'm wishing you peaceful parenting.

Ep #127: Why Multitasking and Peaceful Parenting Don't Mix

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.