

Ep #147: How Parent Coaching Works



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.

Lisa: Welcome, welcome, welcome. Welcome to today's episode. I know I say it every week, but every week it's true. I am so, so, so excited to be with you here today. Today, we are joined by an extra special guest, Kyla. Kyla is a mom to a six year old, world's most adorable, strong willed little boy who is just the light of her life.

I met Kyla three years ago when she came to me to engage in some one on one coaching. We often laugh and joyously while smiling at each other about the transformation that Kyla's experienced through parent coaching. She graciously and kindly, which I really want to acknowledge, volunteered to come today and share her unique experience with you to talk about what the transformation has been like for her, her son, and her extended family.

So join me in welcoming Kyla to Real World Peaceful Parenting. Again, Kyla, thank you so much for being here and paying it forward by sharing your journey.

Kyla: You're welcome. Thank you for having me. It's such a privilege to even be a part of your podcast.

Lisa: I'm so excited. All right, let's dive in. So tell us a little bit about what parenting was like before we started coaching. Just give us a glimpse into how it was for you.

Kyla: Well, I would say it was pretty, definitely a lot different than it is now. It involved a lot of stress and anxiety and worry that I would parent like my father parented me, which was very abusive. I was afraid that I was going

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to end up like my dad and treat my son the way that my dad treated me. I was terrified and didn't know how to prevent that. So that's why I reached out to you and your coaching.

Lisa: So the goal was to break that generational pattern that you felt like without some intervention and work you were doomed to repeat.

Kyla: Yes.

Lisa: That is, let's just say for a second, work worth doing in the world. Yeah?

Kyla: Completely. Yeah. I feel like if all children had this kind of parenting that you teach and that my son gets to be a part of and benefit from, that the entire world would shift. It would be this peaceful world that we all, at one point, that was possible when we were little kids, I guess, or at least. So yeah, it was I just didn't know how to parent because the only thing I remembered was how I was treated and that I just didn't want to do that. But I didn't know how to not do it. I didn't know how to parent in any other way. So I literally just was like terrified of parenting.

Lisa: Give us a glimpse into what that terrified in parenting look like for you day to day. Not so much in how it presented itself, but what did that stress and anxiety behind the scenes look like? I think there's a lot of people, Kyla, that are relating to what you're saying. Let's just talk about what that stress and anxiety that you were going to repeat those same patterns that were modeled for you. What did that feel like inside?

Kyla: I felt a lot of guilt. I felt a lot of fear of what I could do to hurt my child, not even physically, but just emotionally, verbally. I started to yell at him. There was about a handful of times that I cried for several nights after yelling because my yelling equated to me, in my mind, that I had just done

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what my father did. But my father did a lot more than yelling, but I put the two together like they were the same.

So when I would tell a friend they'd say oh, we all yell at our kids. I mean every parent loses it. I would be like, in my mind, thinking no, you don't understand how I yelled at him. It was horrible. I should be punished for it. Like I'm a bad parent. I would go down these tunnels in my head like just totally doomed and helpless. Then I would do it again a few weeks later. So there'd be like weeks in between where I'd be okay but then it would happen again after I swore to myself that I would never ever do it again.

Lisa: I can relate to that. That was my story too. Every morning I would lay in bed and commit to today's the day I'm not going to yell. Nobody wanted to stop yelling more than me. Then in the heat of the moment, it just, it was a pattern that repeated itself much because of my own upbringing as well. Okay, so you find me. You commit to signing up for some one on one coaching with me. Talk to us about after the signing up what concerns came up for you? What was going through your mind?

Kyla: First of all, I was embarrassed. I didn't want anyone to know that I was even reaching out to you because some of your ads are, like I saw a Facebook ad through a friend of mine. But it said stop yelling and start connecting. I was like, no one needs to know that I yell. Like yeah, I might tell a close friend, but I can't be known for like yelling. It was super embarrassing because I equated it so much to this massive abuse that my father had done with me.

I was afraid to even contact you. Then I also was like is this really going to work? I mean, this is impossible, but I'll try, but we'll see how it goes. I was kind of apprehensive.

Lisa: Yeah. Then we had our intake call where we get to know each other and make sure we're fit. You signed up. We talked about what you wanted

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to accomplish. I remember it. We talked about the parent you are now and the parent you wanted to be. I assured you that I could help you get there. I remember you sort of saying like yeah, I don't really believe this is actually going to happen.

Kyla: Yeah. We had this extremely powerful coach session that it changed my entire life. I had like this epiphany that didn't hit me until the next day because even while you were coaching me, I wasn't getting it. I could feel, I conceptually could understand what you were saying, but I just I couldn't even grasp it because it was so not like anything I've ever heard before or thought about. I just thought I was doomed.

So I don't know if you remember. But basically, we had this conversation where you asked me what am I thinking right before I'm about to yell at my son. I said, no matter what, I'll always end up like my father. You said wait a second, you just said no matter what. So no matter what kind of self-development you do, no matter how many books you read, no matter what coaching you get, you're going to end up like your father.

So in a flash, I could see that didn't make sense and it wasn't true, but I really believed it. Like you couldn't tell me otherwise. So then you helped me create a new belief that was a lot more accurate. I couldn't think of one. I kept saying okay, how about I just don't be like my dad. Is that what I'm supposed to say? And you said well, I have one for you but try again. Then I tried and couldn't come up with anything. You just said how about this? How about my father is my greatest teacher of what not to do?

I was like wait, wait, that's a good one. Because it's not like a horrible thing about my dad. It's pretty accurate, right? It made sense to me. But I thought to myself how's that going to change anything that I know that like? Now, do I have to think about that all the time? What do I have to do? What do I do with that.

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So I ended up writing it in my bathroom mirror. Looking at it every day and just reading it out loud, reading it to myself, and I put it everywhere around my house that was appropriate. The next day, it didn't even take that long. The next day, my entire perspective of parenting and who my son actually is and was shifted to that belief. It was like every single thing, I can't even explain it. It was like I had a whole new life, and that my son had a whole new life.

So then I started acting and operating from that perspective that kind of just took over. Then what happened was I messed up again, like weeks later. It might even been a month because I was like on cloud nine with this thing. I was rolling with it. I remember I yelled at him again. I thought oh see, didn't work. I knew it. Lisa's like a big fraud or like she's good for like a couple of weeks. It really, I put it on you and you're coaching and not like wait, there's more work to do. I thought like I was done, and it was like this utopia.

So what I came to find out later is that I'm a recovering perfectionist. So if I didn't do it perfectly, I failed. It's over instead of get up and try again. Then what I also learned is that this is a continuing journey of parenting and that yeah, you can mess up but you get back up on that effort to just be the best parent you can be in every moment. That's not something that I even, I thought it's permanent, right? Like.

Lisa: It's on or off. It's black or white. Yeah.

Kyla: Yeah. So that was super just mind boggling. I remember being so upset the first time that I yelled at him after, and there's only been a handful of times since in the last three years or less. But like, it changed my entire life. I'm so grateful because now I know I have no question that I am the best parent I could possibly be for my son. I have no question about that. I have no doubt. I have no problem with any what's happened in the past. I am like present and an amazing mom.

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Lisa: Yeah. On a journey of progress, not perfection, right?

Kyla: Yes.

Lisa: When mistakes happen, as they do in human to human relationships, you have a process to repair and recover and move forward. You're not trapped in making that incident mean that you're doomed to repeat the mistakes that were done to you.

Kyla: Completely. I'm constantly aware of how I'm being as a parent. It's a lot of work, but it is, it's so beneficial. If I do mess up, I definitely stop myself. Like it's immediate. If it's too late where I've already yelled then I'll go back right away, and just say Oliver, I'm so sorry, Mama made a big mistake. I apologize. I don't give a reason. I just say, and then he says that hurt my feelings. Then I'll say, I'm so sorry buddy. I just yelled and that's it. Then we move on.

I like might think about it for the next hour. I'm better at like now. I don't think about it for days, but I really go there and like do like kind of an after action review. Like why did I get so? Oh, it was because of my own trigger. I just was like rushing, or I was just trying to make him do what I need him to do, like this dominant. I was going there in my mind. So then I yelled to get him to just do what I need him to do now.

Lisa: Or you have a deep seated desire not to be late for things. So the fear of being late can create the trigger for you of rushing him along, which at six, that's difficult to do. Then you might snap a little bit.

Kyla: Yeah, yeah.

Lisa: Now you have an understanding of where it comes from.

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Kyla: Totally.

Lisa: So you can also backtrack and work that. So the beauty is you can work forwards and backwards with no guilt or shame.

Kyla: Exactly. Well, there's some still a little bit of guilt and the shame. I kind of, I think it's because as a kid, we were shamed and made to feel guilty to learn a lesson. So sometimes I'll stay there a little too long because I'm I cannot do that again. It's wrong. It is not okay. There's like all this judgment going on. But then I just go no, Lisa says the enemy of the greatest parent is guilt, right? So I just try to let that go. It takes a minute or whatever and then I move on. I'm not going on for days like in this guilt. Then it has me be a better parent and learn and kind of go back.

But I do think that if you just move on and you don't try to get deeper with yourself and deep dive, scuba dive with yourself, then you're just back in the same thing over and over again. I think that's the difference. Like if I didn't ever meet you or know about your coaching, I would be this guilty person all day long just keep making the mistake over and over and have no idea what to do with it.

Lisa: Yes, yes. Also I would like to ask you to speak about this because I would like the listener to know this if they don't already is that sometimes, most often, in the mistake, in the yelling or the storming, let's call it. There can be connection through that. During and after in taking responsibility as the parent, in owning the mistake, in apologizing to the kid, in doing an after action review and discovering where the trigger came from. There can be connection with the child or children all the while that is going on. Yes.

Kyla: For sure. Like I've asked Oliver before how do you feel right now? He'll say sad or right after, let's say, I've yelled at him. He'll say I'm sad. I'll be oh, I would be sad too. I'm so sorry, buddy. Then I'll check in a little bit later but then he's kind of over it like because kids just kind of move on.

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They're in the present moment. So, yeah, there can definitely be connection after. Obviously, I don't want to go around creating that to have connection. I find a lot of ways to connect all day because of your coaching.

I'm constantly looking at how can I make this fun? How can I get down on my hands and knees and really play with my son, that's what he wants. Even though it's inconvenient to me, or I'm busy. I'll stop, and I'll just do eye to eye and I'll start playing with him, even if it's for five to 10 minutes. You can tell a huge, that it impacts him in such a positive way. He feels really kind of like he loves it, you know?

Lisa: Yeah, I mean, you are a beautiful example, Kyla, of someone who is parenting in a completely different way than you were parented and who is breaking the generation cycle. I mean, it is broken with you. You are not repeating the mistakes and the ways of parenting that were modeled for you. That must just feel, talk to us about how that feels to know that you are real time doing that.

Kyla: I feel lucky. I feel grateful. I feel, it's priceless. I can't explain that. It's, I know that my son is safe around me. He's being validated, and he's getting his needs met, but we're also having this great time together. That his life will be completely different than if I had never reached out to you.

Lisa: I love it. He's a lucky boy to have a parent that was willing to put in the work, and to take the chance to try it, sign up for coaching. Look in the mirror, take the tools. I mean, you've really done a great job of taking the tools and putting them into practice, even when you weren't sure they were going to completely work, go work at them, and also do the hard work of looking in the mirror and asking yourself the questions required to break that generational cycle. Right?

Kyla: Yeah.

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Lisa: Let's talk about this for a second because I know lots of listeners will find this useful. You did all that work while also co-parenting Oliver through a divorce and co-parenting in different locations. Yes?

Kyla: Yeah. It was a separation. Like thankfully, we were not married. But yeah, that was probably the most difficult part of all of it and still is. The most coaching I've gotten from you is actually about how to deal with a difficult co-parent. That involved, for me, being a recovering people pleaser, a recovering perfectionist, a lot of drawing boundaries, learning how to draw boundaries, and knowing that those are for me and not for the other person.

The boundary is set so that I can benefit from the boundary in a mentally healthy way. It's not to stop or control another person's actions. It's strictly just for me to have a safety barrier, boundary. That's something that it all goes back, again, to my dad abusing me where I literally became invisible and perfect so that he would never come after me. He would just leave me alone and even forget about me. That was my strong suit that I, as a child, chose. It's very helpful, but it's not helpful as an adult.

So learning that and getting through all of that is really what, like my co-parent can very much parallel my father. So in my mind, it's my belief. It's all my own thinking and my beliefs, right, because they're two totally separate people, completely. But I can collapse it at times and then kind of get stuck. So that's the real work that I've done for the last three years.

I've had a lot of progress with the co-parent. We can actually be around each other with our son for brief periods of time and be great with each other in a way that he feels like good about it. Whereas that was not the case. This is only up until, what, this June that this started. Actually this started in May. We just recently started to be civil and being able to hang out with each other with him, which is what he's asked for. So that's been

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prior to that, we weren't capable of it. I mean, I think I was, but I didn't get the reciprocation from the co-parent.

Lisa: What I think is so beautiful, Kyla, about your journey is that Oliver's co-parent doesn't even know the work you've done. I mean hasn't been involved. You've single handedly changed the relationship between you and the co-parent by the work you've done on yourself by applying the tools.

I think it's fair to say you and your co-parent, and I want everybody to hear this for the people that can relate to this, like you all don't share similar interests, values, boundaries. Yet you found a harmony in raising the six year old little boy together. Can you speak to that?

Kyla: Yeah, I mean, she's not a part of the Peaceful Parenting. She'd probably be more on the permissive side. In so yeah, it's very difficult because I want to tell her how to parent him and what to do and what works and try this. When I do this, it works. They're not that open. They're not really, I don't know if they're not ready, or they just don't care. They're not like they can do it on their own.

So, yeah, I think that it's been mostly just like me putting the blinders on and knowing that I just have to parent the way I parent. If he's exposed to one person that parents this way, it will outweigh anything else is kind of the goal and the hope for me. Whether it does or not, it doesn't matter. I just this is who I am as a parent.

Lisa: That's right. You're not going to spend all your time trying to control what's happening in the other home. You're going to make the most of your time that you're with him, that you influence them, that you care about him, and that you connect with them. Because what we do know is that a child growing up feeling like one person, one person sees them, hears them, and values them is what they need in the world.

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Kyla: Yeah, and I think who that person for me was my mom. So if I didn't have her, I don't know who I would be without at least her. Then that's kind of how, and I've also heard. I've been to a co-parent class that's mandated by the court, but I went on mandated. I just voluntarily took the class.

That was one of the first things the teacher told us is that the child needs just at least one person that they're safe around and loved by. So kind of the focus there was also to just do what you've got to do in your home and don't try to control the other parent.

But I really got that from your coaching. You've literally said put blinders on. I couldn't even, again, at the time, I was like how do I? I can't. Like it's hard to fathom. Then I just trusted you, and I started doing that. I'm also not perfect at that either. I've actually corrected her in front of him and then apologized for it offline later and didn't do it since like. So I'm just so aware. If I do make this mistake, I can go back and repair and that also can create a connection too.

Lisa: The same connection through the accountability, responsibility, and apology. Yes. I wanted to say, again, that theme of progress, not perfection, even in the relationship with the co-parent has served you well. Right?

Letting go of the idea of perfection and just striving for progress, even in your own behavior. How you show up, how you communicate. You've reached a place where you've been able to ask her can we communicate this way? What do you think about that? Getting a response from her feels like connection as the co-parent no longer in a romantic relationship? Right?

Kyla: Yeah. Also like on that note, I think it's important to mention that we're able to kind of see eye to eye with his coaches and his teachers. So we'll collaborate before we communicate with them. Then it ends up working out because we're on the same page. We're not like competing with each other

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while we're trying to also advocate or stand up for or help Oliver, support Oliver.

Lisa: Which isn't where you guys started out when you came to me. Where you started out was you were texting each other multiple times a day. She would often fire something off without your consent or even eyeballs on it to someone, and then you guys would argue about that. I mean, you just, you've come a long way in your connection for your son, and how you've really developed policies in how to approach things that have pushed the ego aside so you're doing what's best for your son.

Kyla: Correct. The biggest source of that is that you teach emotional intelligence. That's what I've learned is the crux of everything, and it's the crux of everything with every relationship I have, not just with my son or the co-parent, but everybody. People at work, people, my family, friends. It's impacted my whole life that this whole being emotionally mature and being aware and responsible of how I'm being, and making decisions from the frontal part of the brain, which is about the bigger picture and what benefits the most people all at the same time.

When you're in a custody battle or have a difficult co-parent, you can become pretty juvenile in fight or flight. That is one path that is extremely difficult and a lot of suffering. When you could cross over to this other path of wait, I'm in charge. I can make a difference. I can be heard, but I have to do it this way.

Now there's a whole world available that wasn't before. It's all because of emotional maturity. It's something I was never taught. I will definitely be teaching to my son. I am like through modeling, but there's ways to do so. I just am excited as he gets older to really have real conversations about emotional intelligence.

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Lisa: Totally one thing we say in my community, whether you're in The Hive or you're doing one on one coaching with me or both, is that a rising tide lifts all boats. One thing I find over and over and over and over again in the 15 years I've been doing this is when a parent comes in for parent coaching, it has the opportunity to positively influence and affect every relationship in their life, their partner if there is one, their co-parent if there is one, their mother, their mother-in-law, the neighbor whose dog won't stop barking, the co-workers, the boss.

It's the rising tide working on raising, understanding what emotional intelligence is, understanding emotional maturity, understanding what emotional immaturity is, really understanding it, and then committing to raising our own emotional maturity, which is totally possible at any age, raising that is the rising tide that lifts all boats in our life.

Kyla: Yeah, and I think what it takes for someone, at least in my experience through it, is I had to realize that I'm also emotionally immature sometimes or a lot, or now it's better and I'm not so much. But there was a specific coach call you had with me where I realized oh wait, I'm also being emotionally immature.

It was kind of embarrassing. I was like wait, I strive to be this amazing. I'm always the good one. I'm the one that's right. There's no way. Then it was oh, I've also been emotionally immature. To not be like to sit in the shame of it but then to go oh, what can I do about this? This is now what I want to strive for all the time is to be the emotionally mature person.

Lisa: Yes. Well, and I don't even think anybody has to sit in shame of it. I think that when we can learn about this and drop our ego, and we sit in the realization of it. Because we talk about this. We're all emotionally immature given the situation, the circumstance, the topic, we're all triggered, all of us, into emotional immaturity from time to time.

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The ability to look at that and examine it without ego and sit with it and accept it and then commit to doing better, to commit to healing the wound or the trigger, to commit to working through it so that the next time that situation presents itself, I can strive to be the most emotionally mature person in the room really is what I think is that the essence of all this.

You know Kyla, I have to compliment you. I mean, there's a million ways to compliment you but one of them is that you've done the work. You've done the work to acknowledge this is an area I can grow in. This is an area that I can sit with it and look at it in its perspective. So I think even now when sometimes that emotionally immature persona rears its head, you're able to look at it in a completely different way without judgment, without shame, with compassion, empathy, understanding.

When we practice that, here's the beauty. When we practice that on ourselves, that's an available gift to offer our children. So when your son is emotionally mature, you're able to stay regulated, provide empathy, understanding, work through solutions, encourage him to evolve from that place. But if we're not giving it to ourselves then it's not available to offer our children.

I've just seen you grow so much in this area and really mature in this space. It's been beautiful to witness over the last couple of years. So if someone's thinking about reaching out to me or another parent coach, what would be your advice?

Kyla: I would never go with anyone else. I don't know if it's because we're such.

Lisa: I did not ask her to say that.

Kyla: I really wouldn't. I'm so just blown away. I feel like you're also kind of psychic. Like you just know stuff. I've been on three years of almost weekly

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coaching calls. If I missed one, I'm listening to the recordings because I always want to hear. Everything applies to me. I just listen as okay, how does this apply to me? How does this apply? There's never one coach session that doesn't apply to me.

So I just am open and look out for it. So I have a lot of experience of what your responses are and where you go with people in how you go all the way to the last end of what's possible with a person and no matter how long it takes. I've seen people like from all ranges.

Some people seem like they're not open at first, and then they totally go, you're right. You're right. That's exactly what I did. That's exactly what I do. This is so helpful. To the person that's really open, and they're ready for it. It's just so amazing to see how much of an impact you have on every single person that I've ever watched you interact with.

Lisa: Thank you. Thank you for that. There's a lot of great coaches in the world. There are. So the really the message I hope you, the listener, takes away is if any of Kyla's story, there's an angle that you relate to, you want to break a generational wound, you want to know more about this thing Lisa's talking about, about emotional maturity. You want to raise your emotional intelligence, you want to learn how to stay regulated and not yell. You want to have a more productive relationship with your co-parent, whether you're living in the same house or not.

If any of this resonates with you reach out because what I want you to know is that coaching is where the transformation happens. Reading and listening is information. Coaching is where the transformation happens. It's powerful. It's absolutely powerful to work on yourself and to know things like I'm not alone. I'm not broken. I'm not doomed to repeat the wounds that were inflicted upon me. I just need some tools. I need someone to hold space. I need someone to show me my blind spots. I need someone to teach me tools.

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That is what, in my humble opinion, a good coach does for you. A good coach helps you see your blind spots, hold space for you, and teach you new tools that you can take back and raise your level of emotional maturity so that things like you can stay regulated, you can take responsibility, you respond rather than react. All these tools roll out of having that safe place to grow and evolve.

So, again, if this speaks to you, reach out to me. You can learn more about my coaching whether it's my membership community, The Hive, or my one on one coaching at thepeacefulparent.com. If it's not going to be me, find someone else whose style and their business, their coaching practice resonates with you. But please, please, please reach out and get the help and support that speaks to you.

You will be able to break generational cycles. To kind of put it bluntly, your kids will thank you. Because how you parent your kids is how they're going to parent their kids. When you take the plunge, or are brave enough, or get up the gumption to break the generational cycle, you point your family in an entire new trajectory.

That's what Kyla's done beautifully with her son. That's what I've been able to do. I've worked with thousands of families around the world that have pointed their family in a new trajectory. I want that for you. Yes, you. I want it for you. So don't wait. Take this as an invitation. Take this as the universe tapping you on the shoulder and saying go for it. It's worth it.

Okay Kyla, a million, a bazillion a trillion thank yous for coming and sharing your story so wonderfully with us. So well-articulated in the transformation that you've had. On behalf of all the listeners, thank you so much for sharing and paying it forward.

Kyla: You're welcome. Thank you, Lisa.

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Lisa: I just adore and love you and think you're just incredible. Listener, I think you're incredible too. I want you to know that I see you and that I'm here for you. 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 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.