

## Ep #148: The Difference Between Love and Connection



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With Your Host  
**Lisa Smith**

## Ep #148: The Difference Between Love and Connection

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 we're going to talk about love and connection. I want to know do you remember that old TV show called Love Connection? It was what feels like the precursor to what we now know today as reality TV like The Bachelor, but far less drama and over quicker.

So if you remember on the Love Connection, a man or woman contestant was introduced by first name only to either three eligible bachelors or bachelorettes which the contestant couldn't see, and they, bachelor or bachelorettes, couldn't see the contestant. They were separated by a wall, and the contestant would ask a series of questions to each individual suitor.

Based on their answers, the contestant would choose one of the three to go on a date with in the hopes of finding their one true love connection. Do you remember this? It was typically very funny and very cute. It was very popular back in the day.

Today, I am here to tell you that the words love and connection do not always go hand in hand to making such a hit show. The contestant was looking for our connection. Connection is when we feel seen, heard, and valued by the other person. So they weren't really looking for love, they were looking for a connection.

What I've come to realize in my 15 years as a parent coach, particularly when it comes to our children, is that love and connection are not the same thing. I know that you love your children. That is not in question, and it is not up for debate in any way, shape, or form. I know that you love your

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children, or you would not be here listening to this podcast. You wouldn't even know that I exist. So the fact that you love your kids is never, ever, ever a doubt in my mind.

I would say I am not in the business of coaching you to love your kids. You don't need it. It's not required. It's a given. What I am here to do, however, is coach you in ways that will lead to a deeper connection with your kids, and there's a big difference. The definition of deep parental love is to be willing to lay down your life for someone. That can mean laying down your life literally, like taking a bullet for someone, or it can mean wanting the very best for someone. I have no doubt that you want the very best for your kids. Many of us would take a bullet for our kid. That's deep parental love.

Connection, though also a form of love, requires a different awareness and a different sacrifice. Connection requires a willingness to be open to learning new insights, new perspectives, new ways of thinking, and new tools. It requires a willingness to challenge the limiting thoughts that you have about your kids that loop over and over and over in your head.

Connection requires the willingness to change your habits, not your kid's, yours. It requires that we acknowledge our own childhood wounds and heal them plus meet your kids where they're at. Not where you want them to be, but where they're actually at. It requires a willingness to recognize children have process problems, not character problems.

When your child storms, it requires you to recognize that he, she, or they are having a hard time, not giving you a hard time. That your child is just asking for help. Sometimes in the hardest of ways, the strangest of ways, the loudest of ways, but all they're doing is asking for help to get their needs met. That is connection.

I've said this before, but I want to review it again. There are five core basic needs that every human, but today we're talking about children, that every

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child has. Core basic needs. Autonomy, affection, attention, acceptance, and appreciation. The five A's we call them. In addition to the five A's, there's the C. The C is, can you guess? Right, it's connection.

Your child or children have a core basic need of connection. Connection is when they feel, it's the key word here, they need to feel seen, heard, and valued. In order to build connection as the parent, it's necessary to see our children as human beings with their own souls put here on earth to have their own experience. As our children grow and make mistakes, because as humans were horribly flawed, and we all make mistakes all the time.

So as our children grow and make mistakes, we want to teach them with discipline, which literally means, discipline literally means to teach. Not break them or harm them with punishing, threatening, guilt, and shame. I believe that all kids deserve a basic level of human decency in the way they're treated, which is not to punish and harm our children.

I would offer this. That if you truly believe that loving your child is enough no matter what they do or say as their parent to raise them, and you have no interest in growing your connection with your child. I offer to you that without a real connection, love aside, without a real connection, there can come a day when your child will feel free or released or as though the debt is paid up. They no longer have to maintain a relationship with you. I know you don't want that. Because if you're willing to take that risk, you wouldn't be here listening to this podcast.

Now, sometimes parents come to me. When I'm talking to him about connection, they tell me they don't need to worry about connection because they themselves don't feel an emotional connection to their parents. They believe they turned out just fine. I'm just fine Lisa. I'm not connected, nor was I ever connected to my parents, and it turned out just fine.

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I always offered this up. They may be successful in business. They may have a loving spouse who loves them very much. They may have a beautiful home and beautiful children. But if they don't have an emotional connection with their parents, I really question did you really turn out just fine?

If you buy into this and you hear yourself repeating this, that an emotional connection to your children doesn't matter. What matters is that your children are successful, and they achieve their goals and they contribute to society. I have two questions for you. The first one is if you, as an adult, have a problem that you don't know how to navigate on your own, do you go to your parents for advice and support? Are they your rock? Are they who you have always turned to when something's gone wrong?

If the answer is no, then I ask you why not? Chances are there's no connection. Then I ask you do you really want that for your own kids? Or do you want your kids to feel comfortable coming to you when they've made a mistake? When they're in trouble? I don't know about you.

But when my kid makes a mistake, I want him to run to me, not away from me. I want him to know I'm a source of support and wisdom and ideas. I don't want him to think I have to hide this from her because she'll be really mad at me or reject me.

Now here's what's really interesting. You can love your children and not be connected to them. What Lisa? They are not the same thing. Sometimes love isn't enough. Sometimes when there's love without connection, there's a risk of there not being connection with the adult child and the adult parent. It's interesting. There have been some articles written lately about this.

The current generation of 20 year olds feel far more empowered to live autonomously from their parents than ever, and they feel less guilt for

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turning their backs on their parents as they age. The current generation of 20 year olds do not feel the same obligation as older parents. The same 20 year old generation does not feel the same obligation as the older generations have felt to maintain relationships with their parents. They're happy to close off relationships with their parents and create their own family separately.

If we're not mindful, our parental corrections can easily slip from a good intention of trying to teach our children to an attack on their personal character. When we attack our children's character over and over and over again, they don't feel seen, heard, and valued. They know feel connected to you. They may know you love them because you tell them, but they may not feel a connection.

I always tell parents if you feel the need to attack or reprimand your child verbally, I implore you to at least attack it as a process problem rather than a character problem. When you attack the process problem, and even that's not ideal, at least your child feels he's done something bad rather than believing he is bad. He's done something wrong, made a mistake, but he doesn't take in that he's a horrible human being.

Let me give you an example. Let's say a dad consistently calls his son a liar. You're a liar. You lie all the time. You're such a liar. Now this dad has good intentions. It's founded on love. He wants to teach his son to speak the truth. He believes in the truth, and he gets very upset that his son doesn't tell the truth. But the connection is lost every time the dad says to the son you're a liar. Because what he's actually doing is attacking the son's character. You're a liar.

Attacks on character bring guilt and shame and awful feelings. They back people into a corner. They lower self-esteem. They make us feel bad about ourselves. Then we live into that identity. It harms the connection when the dad is constantly attacking the kids character by calling him a liar over and

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over and over again. To make matters worse, in addition to harming the relationship, calling his son a liar then brands him as being a liar. Then we live into the identity that is branded in our brains.

Peggy O'Mara says our external voice becomes our kid's internal voice. So we're losing the connection by attacking the character. Then we're branding our kid or creating a narrative the most often people live into. If they don't live into it, they spend a lot of time working out of it and creating a new identity.

If every time that kid doesn't report everything 100% truth, he gets called a liar, he'll grow up believing that he's a liar. That's just who he is. He'll believe that nobody ever believes him. Then that young man ends up living into that identity. On top of it, he will likely feel very eager to run away from his dad as an adult instead of running to him when he has a problem. Can you see this?

Now, even in this case, this dad, I have no doubt, likely feels an incredibly strong love for his son, but if he doesn't recognize and do the work to change the way he languages to his son, his discipline style when he catches his son in a lie, his son may very well live into that identity of being a liar and feel no emotional connection to his dad. So this is the work we do here on the podcast and in my membership community called The Hive.

We work on connection. We work on making sure that our child feels seen, heard, and valued all the while we're holding to our values and our limits. We are the peaceful leaders of the household. I am in no way here to help you become or guide you into being a permissive parent. No, sir. No, ma'am. No, thank you.

We are here to make sure that our child feels seen, heard, and valued while we're setting the limits and the tone and the values in the household. We do that by making sure that when there is a mistake or a problem, we

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are talking about a process problem, not a character problem. That through it all, our child feels seen, heard, and valued, so that we're turning on the internal compass so that when they struggle or have a problem as a child, as a teen, as a young adult, as an adult, they want to come to us rather than run away from us. I am so passionate about this.

I've seen this firsthand with my own son. After years of connection, putting in the work on this, making sure that I language as a process problem not a character problem, making sure that I broke the cycle of attacking the character every time something goes wrong. Instead we look at process problems and how to fix them.

Even now, as my son is a freshman in college and he has struggles and he has challenges in front of him and he makes mistakes, I can see him running to me, not away from me. I can see it. I feel it. I witness it. I want this for you. I want this so bad for you and your children.

Can you imagine a world where every child grows up feeling seen, heard, and valued by his or her parents? Ah, I want that so bad. If now feels like the time for you to step into this, to learn how to do this, to be a part of this movement, to move away from attacking character, to move towards connection then I want you to go to [thehivecoaching.com](http://thehivecoaching.com) and join the community of cycle breakers.

Join us in our work so that I can help you not only love your children, but connect with them deeply. Out of connection, out of them feeling seen, heard, and valued comes things like the internal compass gets turned on. They understand right from wrong. It's easier for them to follow the limits. They feel a sense of connection to their parents. They feel seen, they feel heard, and they feel valued as your children. I want that for you. I know you want it for yourself and your children.



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Love is not up for debate. I know you love your kids terribly, wonderfully tremendously with your whole heart. What many of us need is we need support, coaching, and tools along the way to help us create connection with our children. It's my dream. If it feels like it's calling to you, I invite you to go to [thehivecoaching.com](http://thehivecoaching.com) and join us.

That's my love connection that I dream of. It's what drives me every day to reach as many families as I can to change lives, to heal wounds, and to help you, yes you, connect deeply with your children. So come join us. 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](http://thepeacefulparent.com). See you soon.