

# Ep #157: Parenting Fear: How It Shapes the Parent-Child Relationship



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**Lisa Smith**

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# Ep #157: Parenting Fear: How It Shapes the Parent-Child Relationship

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 I am super excited to be with you here today. Today especially, and I've got a really wonderful treat for you today as we head into 2024.

Now, if you were listening last week, you know that I announced that 2024 is going to be a year of self-regulation. So as my commitment, my gift to you, I'm going to walk alongside you all year long to help you work on your ability to regulate even when your kids are having a meltdown. The value of this is that as we get better regulating ourselves, we then can offer coregulation to all those around us, but most importantly, our children. So this is what we're going to work on in the year of 2024.

With that in mind, today I want to delve into a feeling that's pretty common in parenting. Drumroll please, are you ready? Fear. I know it's a tough one to talk about. We're going to do it today. I've got some amazing parents with me to help me do this today.

Fear is a big part of being a parent and can show up in lots of different ways, affecting how we decide things, what we do, even how we get along with our kids. But here's the question, how does this strong feeling change the way we parent? Because it does. It really does. That's what I want to talk about today.

Stick with us as we figure out the ins and outs of fear in parenting, finding out how it shapes what we think, how we choose, and that sometimes messes with our best plans. We'll chat about it, hear from Hive members

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Dina, Chris, and Viv, and discuss how to handle and meet the worries as we raise our kids. So let's dig in.

I want to start out by thanking Dina, Chris, and Viv for joining me today. They're Hive members that have been in the Hive for a while now and we're excited to come and pay it forward to the world and share their thoughts on fear and how it shows up in dysregulating them and in their parenting and share some insights with you and how they work on it, and how they've conquered it. So thank you all for being here. I appreciate it.

Let's dig in. The first topic I want to talk about is how fear dysregulates us. So oftentimes, our kids do something, say something, don't do something, don't want to go to school, don't want to come home for Christmas break, don't want to miss curfew, don't want to do their homework, you get a phone call from the school. We immediately go into fear or anger. We immediately become dysregulated.

The secret is to notice that, I think, okay, I'm just regulated. I got surprised with some news. It's scaring me a little bit. Then really take a moment before you do anything else to regulate yourself back to your higher brain. Tell us about the experience you've had in learning to do that, Dina?

Dina: Well, thank you for having me, Lisa. I'm really excited to be here. Wow, fear is a big one. For me, especially with my daughter, she is not like me academically. So my biggest fear comes out when she refuses to do homework or wants to follow through on something academically. The minute there's a push back, I can feel this emotion like very heightened like, oh no, she's not going to get this done. She's not going to get a good grade. Something else is going to happen. It's like this explosion in my head that I get very tense about.

Then immediately, I'm pushing my emotions onto her. I also realized this recently when I looked at time to because I'm very planned and time

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oriented. So when I say or I suggest it's time to do homework, she pushes back. I've given her enough time, but yet I want it done right away because I'm like well if she doesn't do it right now, and she doesn't get it done, it's not going to sink in. So that's where a lot of my fear comes around is about her at school and academically and with homework.

Lisa: What have you noticed as you've worked on when that explosion in your head comes, which is a great description? Tell us how it's different for you now that you know to take that moment, that extra moment to pause and regulate yourself versus acting out on or parenting from that explosion in your head.

Dina: Well, what's totally changed is when she immediately pushes back, the first thing I say to myself is oh, she's having her kid reaction, and I just stop. I frame it as a kid reaction because it helps my brain understand that she is not an adult. She's not thinking like I am. She's having her kid reaction. Then I simply keep my mouth quiet, and I usually walk away now.

By doing that, what I found is that she will just continue to move forward. But what she needs to do is just release what she needed to say. It just needed to come out of her. It may not be what she's truly thinking, but it has to come out.

So I've just learned that I don't need to react what's coming out of her or what she's saying, if I just pause and say to myself, this is just her kid reaction, I can move forward and stay regulated. So when she says to me in 10 minutes later, "Mom, I need some help with my homework". I am in a much different state than I am if she started it all frustrated, and I said we've got to do it now. Then we're already in a different frame of mind, and we can't move through it.

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Lisa: Oh, Dina, that's so good. I mean just the fact that you recognize I don't want to react to the behavior, to the storming that's happening in that moment, what a game changer.

Dina: It has been. It's absolutely. I've been on some Hive calls recently. We've talked about this. Over probably the course of the last three to four weeks, I've really been putting in the work to do this and not react. I've seen just an astronomical change in how we approach it entirely. I can't even tell you the last time there was like a full blown on storm. There's a little bit of friction, but we can move past it very quickly. So the behavior is changing.

Lisa: Well, and what you're avoiding is I always say when a storming child meets a storming parent, there's going to be an explosion 100% of the time. So what you're doing is by taking that pause and noticing the cue of the explosion in your head and not feeding that beast.

But taking a pause for a moment and regulating yourself with the cue of she's having a kid reaction. You're not meeting her storm with a storm yourself. Therefore, ergo, there's no explosion. So we can move right past that small storm and straight into the homework, which then comforts the fear in the first place of yours because you're not feeding into the fear. You're working around the fear of she's not academically motivated on her own.

Dina: Absolutely. Yeah. That's really what I, yeah, it's been amazing. Because underlying, I looked at this, and this was just the fear as more of is she motivated? I'm seeing it, but it was so covered with these storms and this fear and everything else. It took a while for me to really be that's what it is.

Lisa: Yeah.

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Dina: She is motivated.

Lisa: Just differently than you.

Dina: Correct.

Lisa: Because she's here to have her own experience.

Dina: Absolutely.

Lisa: Okay. So this leads me to my next question that I think Chris will really give us some insight on this. Chris, first of all, welcome. Glad to have you here. Chris is the mother of two adult daughters, let's call them. Legal, still developing brain, adult young women.

One of the things I think about you, Chris, is one of the first things we worked on when you joined the Hive was really naming your fears to yourself. Taking a minute to just acknowledge them, and get them sort of out of your brain and out into the ethos in a safe place where you could really take a minute to examine them. Can you talk to us about that?

Chris: Absolutely. Thanks for having me on today. I appreciate the opportunity to share. Yeah, I think when I first joined in my kids were already in their teen years, which can be fearful sometimes. I think what I started with was I honestly had a lack of awareness of the separateness between myself and my girls when it came to fear. I really did focus, I think, on the behaviors.

I remember one of the first things I learned from the Hive was the difference between snorkeling up the surface and scuba diving down. I think I, like as an example, if my kiddo did something that, as an example, if somebody vaped, which I think unfortunately, most teenagers at some point

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or another, they're going to make a choice that as a parent you're like not in on that decision.

I looked at the behavior, and my fear was about stopping the behavior because I felt like it created this fear of the unknown. Oh my gosh, what happens if this kid starts vaping? I would allow these stories to start to build. I was almost creating this whole negative potential outcome for my kid's life by one teenage brain choice.

So I really had to learn how to differentiate between the behavior and getting underneath to what was the unmet need and why some of these behaviors might be happening. I think when I was able to, like you said, to name the fear, to look at it square on, I was able to be a little bit more regulated about it.

And realize that sometimes those fears were more about me than they were about necessarily the behavior that my child might be exhibiting and creating these spiraling stories of what could possibly happen. Instead of just being more in the moment of hey, tell me more. What's going on with this? Why was this a choice for you? Is there something that you know, that we need to talk about further.

So I think that was one of my, one of my big aha was, was really, like I said, starting to understand that my lack of awareness, and then once I gained an awareness, really not focusing on the behavior as much as I was focusing on the unmet need and how the stories that I was creating were creating the dysregulation, not necessarily the behavior.

Lisa: Yeah, I can totally relate to that. I'm thinking, talk about this for a second because I have a 19 year old and share some of the same fears you have. Fear, and I want listener, if you hear nothing else I say today, please hear this. Fear is not permission to go ham on your kid, as my friend Corinne Crabtree would say. Fear is not permission to go cuckoo, loco,

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ham on your kid. We don't want to work up a whole head of steam over a fear and then explode on our children.

What you really want to do is acknowledge your fear and connect while having the fear, right? If Dina, for example, we'll use this homework example because it's a good one. Chris, you can speak to this. But if a parent is afraid their child isn't going to be successful academically, and the child doesn't want to do their homework. We don't use that to start berating screaming, yelling, dominating, controlling the child into doing the homework.

Because A, it doesn't work. But B, then it creates more disconnection. You're using the fear to push your child away rather than using connection to pull them close. What's been your experience with your kids, Chris, with that?

Chris: Yeah, I think there was probably a time when I felt as a parent, I was supposed to know and have all the answers. I think once I learned to be vulnerable and basically say, I don't have the answers here, or to admit that as a human, I could have fear and sit with it and still try to move forward. I think that really helped open up conversations.

Because, one, it just made me, I think, more approachable by my kids for them to see oh, my mom has fears about things too. She's willing to acknowledge that and willing to work through it rather than maybe trying to cover up the fear. But whether that be in perfectionistic mode or whether that be just, again, that fear of the unknown of what does it look like if I'm vulnerable with my kids, especially as they get older and develop more understanding?

I guess I feel like learning to acknowledge the fear, learning to be vulnerable to it just being a normal emotion in life helped me figure out a better way to connect with my kids as opposed to, like you said, trying to



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roll over them or stop the behaviors. Just allowing the fear to be present and to still be able to work through with that fear being part of the room.

Lisa: Chris, that's so good. Just realize, I mean, fear is a normal emotion in life period. Hello, in life. Why are we to think that it isn't going to show up in parenting, and try to hide it and act like we've got all the answers? That's so valuable, Chris. So valuable. Thank you.

All right, Viv. Talk to us about, Viv has four children. She is bookended with two incredibly strong-willed boys. All four of her children have very different personalities. So talk to us about the fear and parenting multiple children, as the parent having different fears for each of them. How you stay regulated, what you've noticed over time as you've been doing this work, and how you work to stay regulated in that menagerie of kids and personalities?

Viv: Well, thank you, Lisa, for having me on today. I appreciate it. So I think one of my biggest fears in parenting is getting it right. I have this fear that if I don't get it right then they're not going to turn out okay. This fear is always there. So one of the things that keeps coming up more recently in my parenting is, especially my bookend boys, they have very big reactions to things.

So for Thomas, it's all about like he's a teenager. So he wants to do things his way and be with his friends and do all of his events. It's hard with a family of four just scheduling all of that. So he'll quickly get dysregulated about that.

Then with my youngest who's five, he's in kindergarten. So he's in that preschool was a lot of fun. Now we're in kindergarten, and there's not a lot of playtime. So he's just refusing to go to school. Sometimes my brain goes to like okay, I'm learning a lot about my strong willed teenager. I want to

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trickle this down and do really well with my youngest one because I've had all this experience with the older one.

I'm like it's my fourth kid, and I can't get him to go to school. Like this is happening on the regular where if it's a very busy family schedule night, he just falls apart the next day. It's just too much for him. I've had to recognize that my two boys in particular also very much get very stuck in their feelings.

That used to really confuse me because I wanted to move them forward. I wanted to move them past whatever it was. I understand you wanted to go to the football game, teenager, but we just can't do that. I'm sick. It's just not going to work. I wanted to like move him and fix it and get him to go on to the next thing and not really give him space to kind of feel his big feelings.

I noticed that it's the same with my kindergartener where he just, I don't want to go to school today. I just want to take a day off. Why can I take a day off? I have to, my soother is to kind of stand there for a minute or two, try not to use so many words, and then eventually just walk away and just give oxygen into the room.

I'll leave my kindergartener with two choices. I'm like if you want me to help you get dressed, I can do that now. If not, I'll meet you downstairs. I'm going to start working on breakfast, you decide. I usually take a couple minutes in my room. So I think just by walking away, it allows that oxygen to just kind of come back into the room. Gives him space to kind of feel his feelings. Then when he comes and meets me, then it's okay.

Sometimes, he honestly stays in his bed and doesn't budge, and I'm like okay. Then now the new thing is I will take your clothes with me. We come to time to depart for school. Buddy, we're getting in the car. Whatever you're wearing, you're getting in the car, and I just take him to school. He

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doesn't like having to be dressed by the teacher at school because that happened one time. So now I'm able to dress him.

But it's given me just strategies. Like I just need to slow it down. I need to give them space to just be stuck in whatever they're feeling and not try to just jump in and fix it.

Chris: When Viv said one of her biggest fears as a parent was getting it right, that really struck me because one of the questions that I ask is getting it right by whose definition? I think there was a time when I thought that my idea of how their life is supposed to go, how all these events are supposed to unfold, was what meant right.

I think Dr. Wayne Dyer defined fear as false ego appearing real. That has always stuck with me. As my kids have gotten older and have gone through, like Viv was saying, those teenage years where it's about their friends, their decisions, their things. I've also had to let go of this idea of I had this amazing design for my child. My child came to this earth to be their own person. That own person maybe is part to help me grow as a person.

So learning to recognize and see my child for who they are doesn't mean permissive parenting. But it also means giving the kids space to recognize they're not me. They're not the person that maybe in my head I designed them to be. Learning to just appreciate who they are and help them develop themselves as their best selves instead of me trying to channel and to organize and to orchestrate okay, if you do this and you do this and you do this in high school, or you get these grades and you do these activities. That's going to make you a successful person.

I don't know what's going to make the most successful person. One of my joys right now on this journey is learning to step back and letting it unfold. Learning to step back and just say great. Like just because you made this decision that doesn't mean that's a certain path for your life.

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I mean, if we look back at our own lives, my gosh. I probably went to 12 different points between A and B in order to help figure out where B even was. As I'm learning to rest, learning to let go of some of the fears that are created in my mind, and just really watching the beauty of my child unfold into who they're meant to be. Watching them have that discovery process has really brought me more peace and has brought me more ability to connect with them instead of trying to control and trying to define this process for them.

Lisa: Yes. I feel that theme weaved in your experience and Viv's. Even as she gives her youngest son some space in the morning and gives him those choices and leaves the room, that's connection rather than I need to control this thing. Now he still needs to go to school. We still need to aim to get there on time. If he doesn't get dressed, we dress in the car at school.

But that's connection rather than trying to control the situation and moving away from catastrophizing. Where I know this going to sound like a silly example. But as a parent in the back of your brain going well, if this kid can't even get up and go to kindergarten, how is he ever going to do anything real in life? Then we have our kids living under a bridge with a shopping cart. I know, Dina, you're dying to share. So jump in here and talk to us.

Dina: Yeah. I just have to say when Chris was talking about stepping back and then talking about the design for your child, I remember you saying at one point, you don't necessarily get the child that you really want. It's the child you need, right. It helps you grow as a person. That is 100% on target for me because strong-willed wasn't even in my definition, or in the family for my definition.

So when I was presented with this very strong-willed child, it was like whoa, okay. This is a whole new ballgame for me. So stepping back and learning

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a lot more of that. That, again, is a recent too. I'm really stepping back and letting her, seeing her grow in some of her experiences.

For example, she's in show week. She has four days of three and a half hour rehearsals before her show this weekend. I was like oh my god, this is going to be a disaster if I can't get her to bed on time, and we get sleep and we get food. I said you know what? We're just going to go through this, and I'm going to let her figure this out.

But she's used her words. She's connected with me. She's like, "Mommy, I'm exhausted." I said, I get it. I know. I said this is really tough. I said, but we're almost at the finish line. I said what can I do to help? Sometimes it's just snuggling. Sometimes it's.

So instead of getting so worked up about oh, this is going to be a disaster the next day, or we're going to have storms itself and really catastrophizing. I'm staying very much so in the moment now. I also like Chris's point on vulnerability. I noticed that of late too.

I have a strong thing about being on time. So when I'm running late, I get very triggered, very triggered. I can get very loud in the past. But recently, I stopped and really sat and explained this to my daughter, and how it makes me feel and just the real feeling inside. Like the anxiousness and used all these words.

Believe it or not, what happened the next time is I was like, and I said to her. I said so when mom says it's go time, it's really kind of go time. I've given you all the time I can give you. Amazingly enough now when I say it's go time, we work together. There's a connection, and she just goes with me because now she truly understands how I'm feeling.

I'm still working on that. I still get heightened. But now she just kind of goes, okay, this is just how mommy's feeling. I know what that feels like that she

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because gets anxious about other things because that's how I related it to her. I was like you know how you get anxious when something doesn't work out? That that's how mommy feels when we run late. So it's been a beautiful thing to watch.

Lisa: What a great way to use your fear to connect rather than disconnect.

Chris: Dina, I really liked that you what you said about sharing, being able to start to share common emotions. Your daughter is connecting and relating to that, and it's creating this connection. The thoughts that came to my head is something else that Lisa has taught us over and over is that it's not a character problem. It's a process problem.

By you being vulnerable and sharing with your daughter hey, being late is a real trigger for me. It creates this anxiousness. She's in a stage in her life where she's understanding what anxiousness feels like too. You can look at her not as being driven by time. It's not a character problem. It's not like it's going, to let that story continue to fester and brew that she's never going to be able to hold a job because she can't be on time.

She's understanding and learning that getting out the door is a process. By you are sharing and connecting in that way, it sounds like you guys are able to create this process that now works for you. So it doesn't become this power struggle of getting out the door. It really is this understanding and this connection of this is what this is like for me, and your daughter is stepping up and seeing how she can help with that. I think that is in due to the fact that you guys have created a connection with that as of was to it becoming a moment of power struggle. Because it definitely can be.

Viv I love that when you were saying take the clothes with you, there are some things that are choices and some things that are not choices. Like getting to school is not necessarily a choice. We're going to get there.

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Again, giving him that space and that opportunity just to have the choice of how he's going to get to school is beautiful.

Somebody might not look at that and say oh that's connection, but think about the alternative. If that became a yelling match or that became a force, and you're holding him down trying to get the pajama bottoms off and the pants on. I mean that starts the kid's day in such a different way.

Being a former school teacher, I know what that's like when that kid walks through the door, and they've had a really crappy morning. It takes so much time for them to then come in and be present and to be able to be a part of the classroom. So sometimes these seem like maybe little micro steps in the morning, but they really do make a big difference for how that child is going to start the day. So thank you for sharing those opportunities.

Viv: I think, too, one of the big thoughts that I've had at the forefront of my mind is that my storming kid needs to borrow my regulation. So if I'm anxious about being on time, and I don't think it's fair to the other kids that they are late to school because this one doesn't want to go to school that I really have to have it that front of my brain like okay, he has to borrow my regulation. So I've got to get regulated so that's what he can borrow.

Just another thought that kind of couples with that is just that they're also learning to coregulate. They'll learn to eventually regulate themselves. Also just all of that resiliency that comes in growing up and just giving them the space to be resilient and to experience these things.

This morning, I didn't want to get out of bed either. It was snowing outside. It was just like I just want to stay in bed. So just these different experiences come along, and we have to learn how to bounce back from them. So giving my kids the space to learn that lesson.

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Something that happened this weekend, I got into a power struggle with my teenage son. I picked up the rope, and I knew I was yanking really hard on that rope. The whole night just completely went awry. He had this thing where he likes to barricade. He'll either barricade himself in his room or this time he was blocking the fridge from the kids getting dinner.

But anyways, on Monday, I drove him to school. I dropped the other ones off. I was trying to like impart this lesson. You could just tell it was just not sinking in. I was just like okay, I'm rushing it. Like I want them to learn the lesson. I want him to have remorse, and he doesn't have remorse.

Then I'm like wait a minute, like my brain is going down a rabbit hole. This is not my strong-willed kid who doesn't have remorse. I let go, parted ways with that thought a while ago. So I dropped him off. I ended up writing him a very short email just kind of what happened the night before. Then also what my hopes were for him growing into young man, and what I was looking for yesterday, the night before because my husband was out of town. So I needed some extra help from him, which he didn't give.

So I just let it be. I was like I'm just going to let it go for the day. That night, we were driving to basketball practice. He said, "Mom." He said, "I got your email during study hall." He's like, "I really thought about it for a while." Then we do the four step apology that Lisa has coached on. So he did his four step apology, and I was like Thomas, that was a beautiful apology. Thank you for this.

I practiced a lot coming up with my apology. Then all of a sudden in my brain, I'm like oh my gosh, he is getting it. Like I just need to slow it down. Like it took him all day, but he was getting it. I said my piece in the email, and I let it be. Then he came back on his own and apologized. So it's just that slowing down, that recognizing they're borrowing my regulation. They're learning resiliency. I'm modeling what I can. I make mistakes too.



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They make mistakes. So it's just beautiful to just see it come full circle that way.

Lisa: What an effective use of study hall. Studying emotional intelligence. I mean, if every school could focus on emotional intelligence during study hall, we'd have a different world, wouldn't we?

Viv: Yes.

Lisa: Yes. Well, I want to share this. So I know this about me. Again, listener, I have a 19 year old freshman in college. So fear is at the forefront of my mind a lot. He's doing well, but you're sending him out in the world. My son is halfway across the country. You're getting snippets here and there of information. Sometimes they call home and they're having a good day. Then the next day they call them, and they're having a not so good day. It's very easy to catastrophize.

One thing that I've noticed about myself is that I often, and you guys have spoken of this is that often when I'm in fear mode, I want to speed everything up. I want to control everything. So I've been doing a lot of work on myself of slowing down and moving away from control.

The mantra that gets me there. I'm a fan of Jon Acuff, and he recently posted something on his Instagram page that said fear gets a say, not to vote. I think this is a good topic for us to discuss. I remind myself of this regularly. Okay, fear, I see you. You're in the room. I see you. Your presence is known.

I don't think we can ignore the fears we have. Right? I think that to eyeball the fear, whether it's academics, or vaping, or my child is never going to be successful, or he's struggling making friends, or she doesn't seem very motivated. I think we need to acknowledge it that it's in the room, but be careful not to give it a vote.

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Because I know for me when I give fear a vote, I immediately start to try to control the situation. I can think back to lots of examples over Malcolm's childhood where I would try to control his basketball experience or his social, the friends that he had, wanting to direct him towards certain friends or away from others, or his schoolwork. So really, I'm offering this to the listener, give fear a say but not a vote. So tell us about your experience with that, Dina.

Dina: It just hit home because it was a very recent example. Again, it comes to academics in school and stuff like that. At school, my daughter can get easily distracted. The sitting arrangements, they change, but she was that kind of like a quad, four people.

What was happening is somebody kept talking and talking. She would politely use her words to say can you please be quiet? I can't hear the teacher. What would happen is the teacher would see her talking. So she'd get a little bit in trouble for talking. That would go on, but she came and she talked to me about it.

So I helped. We coached on this about her going and talking to her teacher because I didn't want to step in to do this. I wanted her to take the first step to talk to her teacher. Well, she went and talked to her teacher, but then nothing changed. So immediately my fear went okay, now I've got to step in. It's like now I've got to control this situation because my child's getting distracted. What about her grades? I started going all in this weird place.

Then I stopped because I also listened to your recent podcast about resiliency and adversity. I said nope. I said what needs to happen is we've got to, like Viv says, give oxygen in the room. She needs to follow up if nothing happens with her teacher. Lo and behold, on Monday, the teacher had rearranged the whole room. She's now by herself. So she's sitting by herself.

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So, again, instead of jumping in on Friday and writing another email to the teacher and trying to control the whole thing and stepping over her, I just let it be. I said my fear. I said no, I'm not doing this. I said she is okay. Everything will be fine. This is a good lesson and a growing experience for her instead of me jumping on my fear and the need to control.

Lisa: I love it. I love it. I was giving a presentation yesterday to a group of parents in person, which I haven't done in a while. It was really great to be in a room with parents. We were talking about resiliency. I asked the group who doesn't want their children to be resilient? Of course, no one raised their hand because we all want our kids to be resilient.

I said well, here's the problem. Y'all are not going to like this. They just looked at me, and I said resiliency requires adversity. Most of us are unwilling to let our kids experience adversity. It's hard. We become protective people and we live in a society where there is the expectation that we fix our children's problems.

Many of us identify as problem solvers. We are quick to want to jump in. We also get a chemical hit for solving problems. We define, and this could be a whole other podcast episode, but we define the job description of parenting as solving our kids problems, right. I think this gets tipped off by fear. Like Dina, you gave us a great example.

I want my daughter to do well academically. I naturally did well. She seems to not come by this naturally. So any little thing that's going to interfere with that, quote, academic success I feel entitled to jump in and mama bear over this because that's in my job description so that she will do good academically. But you caught yourself.

You regulated and said fear gets to say, but not a voice. I am not permitted to go and solve this problem for because it didn't get solved on the first try.

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You resisted that urge. You let her work through that adversity on her own. Now she is more resilient as a result of that.

Dina: Yeah. It just so resonated because I listened to the podcast as the situation was starting to unfold, and I was like oh, I really have to stop. I said I am not going to do this. I am just going to let this be. If nothing had changed, I would, again, encourage her to talk again with her teacher. Because she needs to work through that adversity and having her teacher understand because I'm not there. I'm not going to be there to solve every problem she's ever going to have. This is part of growing up. So.

Lisa: Well, you wouldn't want to solve every problem because then you create a non-resilient codependent child that is always going to need someone else to solve their problems. When it's no longer you, it might be someone else in the world that doesn't have their best interest in mind.

As an example of this, Viv, is you letting your youngest child work through the adversity of not liking kindergarten, not wanting to go, right? You're not in his face every day going come on buddy. You love school. You can do this. Don't worry.

You're not trying to gaslight him, convince him that kindergarten is fun. You're not trying to incentivize them or beg him or dominate over him to go or tell him to get over it. You're just giving him the oxygen to get ready in the morning, and you're giving him choices.

So you're still the peaceful leader of the household. You can get dressed on your own, or we can get dressed in the parking lot at school. We will be going to school. We will be doing our best to get there on time. I hear you that you don't like it. I love you. I'll be in the kitchen.

You're letting him work through the adversity of not liking kindergarten, which, for a parent, could be really stimulating in the fear department.

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Because the idea, the thought is that all kids like kindergarten. There must be something wrong with my kid. What's going on here? Is there a problem?

Viv: I think with him being five, like my oldest, he's very much a talker. So we talk it out. We work it out. But the five year old, I've tried questions like oh, what do you like in school? Or if you can change anything, what would you change? He just keeps coming up like he doesn't have words. He's very much very emotion activated, very touchy feely, but when it comes to words, he struggles.

I have to be like okay, that's just not how we're going to connect. Like just give him the choices, give him space, give him a hug that way. Because I want to use words. I want to like pull it out of him and help them see the light. He's five, and he just can't do it. So I have to constantly remind myself we're just not there yet.

I can have deep conversations with the oldest one, not so much with the five year old. He just needs a hug or tickle. Just to kind of differentiate the four kids. They each need something different as far as connection.

Lisa: But he's going to be resilient because he's working through this adversity on his own. Yeah.

Chris: One of the things that I'm hearing through Viv's example and Dina's example is, and we've talked a lot about choices that we give to our kids to perhaps help them regulate or to help them see that there are options. What I was hearing is each of them were making personal choices themselves, making choices between emotional dysregulation, allowing fear to be in control and lead to certain actions, or being able to step back and to say Dina was really clear. No, I'm not going to do that.

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I think there's a crux, there's a point for us as parents when we find ourselves in these moments where fear does seem to feel like it's in the driver's seat. How can we step back and give ourselves those choices and to say okay.

If I let fear have a vote, if I let fear run with this, what does that look like? Where's that going to take me? Is that taking me anywhere closer to where I want to be with my child or with myself? Or can I look at this and maybe learn to sit with that difficult emotion or that challenge myself? Can I approach this in a different way?

So, I love the fact that it's almost like learning to parent ourselves in some ways in order to better parent our kids. When I was hearing that, the idea of choice, personal choice and how we show up, definitely affects then how our kids can show up.

Lisa: I love that Chris. It brings up the point, I used Nicola Para's definition of emotional immaturity, and that's when we project, blame, and deflect onto other people and externalize our big negative emotions. I think what we've talked about today is really working on not deflecting our fear onto our children.

That's really the common thread in today's conversation is disciplining ourselves or editing ourselves not to constantly deflect our fears for our children onto our children. Not using it as permission to get dysregulated, to storm, to control, right.

This is a lot of what we work on in the Hive is working towards emotional intelligence. Self-regulation, self-reflection, holding space for other people. All of your examples today are where you self-regulated, you self-reflect, and you held space for your daughter, for your daughter's, for your four kids. You held space for them. You resisted the urge to deflect your fears onto your children.

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I'm a work in progress as well. I work on this regularly. Malcolm and I had a conversation last night. We're going to have another one today. I spent all last night thinking about how I want to deflect my fears onto him. I want to. The urge is there because in the heat of the moment, it feels good. But I'm not going to do that. Because nobody wins when I deflect my fears onto him.

So I last night literally said to myself, let's self-regulate. Let's reflect. Let's hold space for what he might be going through. Then I had a good night's sleep on it. I feel like a completely different person today, ready to have a completely different conversation than I would have had yesterday because I've self-regulated.

So I think the beauty that one of the things we work on in the Hive is not deflecting and projecting onto our kids. Fear is an area where sometimes we feel like there's permission to do it because it's a fear. We think we have our kids best interest in mind when we project onto them.

But really, it's not a connected method. What I think is that when we project and deflect onto our children, the next step is control and compliance. It's not connection and cooperation. You've all provided beautiful examples of that. You've provided examples of when it has been control and compliance, and you've provided beautiful examples of when it's been connection and cooperation.

I mean, Viv, your story of sending the email to Thomas. To me, the heart of that story is what I sent the email, I was complete. I wasn't really expecting anything else from him. I've done my work. What I got back from him was just bonus in him being able to come back, tell me he reflected on it, and apologize. That is connection and cooperation.

Demanding an apology. Telling him you can't behave like this. If you think you're going to get away with this in life, which you didn't do. But had you

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gone that route, that would have been command and compliance. That would not have brought you closer together. It would have taken him further away from you.

So you guys have all illustrated beautiful examples today. Beautiful examples of how fear is helping you raise your emotional maturity as a parent. Now, isn't that an interesting conundrum? So tell me your thoughts on that, Viv.

Viv: Yeah, I think, like you said, like fear is in the room. But when it pushes you into dysregulation then the lesson gets lost. So recognizing that fear, learning to understand that it's there, and then figuring out okay how do I now regulate? How do I get from my middle brain to my higher brain? Because, like you said, then that's where you find the connection and the cooperation. Then they're able to borrow your regulation.

Like I did. I wrote that email. I was like I'm done. I've said my piece. No more. I'm done. I just let it be. What I received back was that connection from Thomas. So I think just recognizing that it's there but not letting it drive the bus. I remember on a coaching one time, you were like don't even let fear on the bus. Like the fear stays outside of the bus, and I'm like okay. Like you have those thoughts, and you can't always get rid of the thoughts, but what thought are you going to attach to?

Lisa: Totally, yeah. Chris, tell us your experience.

Chris: Yeah. Yesterday actually, this is one of the beautiful things about the Hive is some weeks I tune in and learn so much through osmosis through other people. Yesterday, I had asked for coaching about looking ahead to Christmas break with kids coming home from college and that sort of thing.

You basically stopped me in my tracks and said what is really driving this? Having the opportunity to meet with a group of adults who are all in very



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supportive space, it helped me realize that what was driving it was my fear. Was my fear of oh, my daughter is going to drive 16 hours to meet us for Christmas break. What if she gets a flat tire? What if she is in an accident?

I thought you know what? What if that happens to me. Like those are all things beyond my control. So I had to really step back and recognize that a lot of fear is driven by this lack of control. That's life. Like we don't get to control all the outcomes. I don't get to control certain things that are going to happen along the way.

So when I can almost, in some ways, hold hands with fear and make a little bit of a friend with it as opposed to just constantly trying to push it away, or constantly trying to override it by me thinking I can control over the unknown then I can step back and say you know what? Like I don't get to determine that outcome. But if I go to my daughter and say you can't drive because I'm afraid you're going to get in a car accident, her first thing is going to push back and get into this power struggle. I've been driving for three years now. I've not had a single accident. Who knows what's going to come?

Like I said, it almost made me like laugh at myself to say yep, here it is. Here's my old friend fear coming back into the picture. I can say thanks for being here. But no, thank you. You do not need to be driving these decisions. You do not need to be creating this potential power struggle.

I can recognize that it's there. I can step back and, like you said, to regulate and not let the projection of my fear onto my daughter determine what I think is going to be right for her. We can have this more healthy conversation around what does this look like? What happens if you get a flat tire? What happens if you're driving?

Lisa: Right? That's the better conversation.

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Chris: Yeah. Explore what could possibly happen and how do we prepare for that? Rather than this hard no or this me jumping in to try to prevent it from happening. So, like I said, that was just yesterday in the Hive. So I was so thankful that you prompted me, and it gave me the chance to chew on that last night and to better explore okay, now what kind of conversation can I have with her about our plans as they continue to unfold for what getting home for Christmas looks like this year. So.

Lisa: Love it. Yeah, that is the beauty of the Hive. There's three opportunities a week to jump in and get coaching, and often something will sprout up. So what I love for you all is that literally, we've had people like jump in a Hive call and say I'm driving home from school after conversation with a teacher, or my kid just did this, or my coparent, this just happened. Help me navigate it. It creates regulation by having so many calls week.

I often see other memberships where there's a call a month. I'm like girl, a call a month? How's that helpful? So I'm very proud of the fact that we have three calls a week in the Hive. I plan to actually increase that even more over time. So all right, Dina, wrap this up here.

Dina: My thought is my self-awareness of fear recently has really changed my parenting to the point where Chris was just talking about the hard no's and things like that. I'm really stopping to slow everything down and let her work through her adversity and stop pushing my fear forward. Because I really have recognized a lot of my triggers are due to fears.

Do I have the name of the fear for all of them? No, but I'm really stopping myself because I see it coming. I've got that awareness now. It's coming when I'm reacting to what she's asking or what she's doing. So I'm really going to continue to work on this. I'll falter. I know I will. But I'm hoping I can recognize it more and give her more oxygen and slow down and really continue to empower myself and empower her and help her grow.

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Lisa: Beautiful. I love it. I'm just so pleased and proud and grateful, Viv, Chris, and Dina, that you came on. I love you all. I appreciate you helping to pay it forward and enlighten other parents on what's possible for them. I think that for the listener, really understanding what's possible for you. Take a minute and ask yourself what are my fears? How do I give fear a say, but not a vote? How can I regulate and connect with my kids through the fear, not in spite of the fear? How can I discipline myself to not allow the fear to give me permission to project and deflect onto my children?

So those are your three takeaways from today's podcast episode. Again, Dina, Chris, and Viv, I'm grateful for your willingness to come and pay it forward. I think we're off to a good start in 2024. If Chris, Dina, and Viv sound like three parents that you'd like to hang out with, and as they talked about the Hive feels like oh, that's a group I'd like to be in. Then consider this my personal invitation to you, yes you, to come and join us inside the Hive.

To join and learn more, I want you to go to [thehivecoaching.com](https://thehivecoaching.com). T-H-E-H-I-V-E-C-O-A-C-H-I-N-G.com, and I'll see you inside. Okay, until we meet again, I'm wishing you peaceful parenting.

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