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**Full Episode Transcript**

**With Your Host
Lisa Smith**

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. Today, I am joined by a very special guest. Valeria is here with us. You will recognize her beautiful voice. Valeria joined me for episode 164 where we talked about navigating fear and anger in parenting. She's the mother of a two year old and a five year old boy, each a boy. She reports that they're very strong willed.

She reached out for some help. I thought we had a beautiful conversation and coaching session in which we talked about what it means to set limits around what our children are developmentally capable of, how to let go of the guilt, and how to connect before correcting.

A couple of weeks since the episode, I reached out to her to see how it was going. She said she had a massive transformation. In fact, if I understand correctly, the transformation was so massive. She is now a beautiful member of our Hive community.

So I invited Valeria back because I know, as the listener, I know that the first episode was incredible for you to sort of listen in on as a fly on the wall. But I also know what takes it a step further is the follow up where we can dig in. She can tell us how that coaching transformed her parenting and her family. So without further ado, join me in welcoming Valeria to today's episode. Welcome.

Valeria: Thank you, Lisa. How are you? Very glad to see you again.

Lisa: Yes, it's beautiful to be with you and see your face and be together. I am doing well. Thank you for asking. My son is coming home tomorrow for spring break.

Valeria: Wow.

Lisa: I know. I'm so excited. He's going to be home for a week, sleeping in his bed, hanging out with us, playing with the dog. It's going to feel like a flashback to high school. So I'm actually giddy. I can't wait to pick him up at the airport.

Valeria: Of course. That's amazing. I'm sure that you have like a lot of plans for him and for your family to enjoy his vacation.

Lisa: Yes. He'll be home for Easter too, which will be special.

Valeria: Wow.

Lisa: Yes. Yes.

Valeria: I'm very happy.

Lisa: Okay. So tell me.

Valeria: It was amazing, I think, that the thing number one that I do is like to trust in the process because I listen to you. You told me that if you start to be like to work with empathy, a lot of things will change. In my brain, it was like yeah, but maybe I'm going to be a permissive parent. We have to deal and to fight with all our past and the way that our fathers teach us how to be.

So I remember perfect that my sister from Mexico was visiting us. She knows perfectly how my sons. I remember that we were in the table having breakfast. I see a storm coming. Actually, I don't remember why he was storm. Maybe because he want ice cream for breakfast or something like that. My sister was like okay, this is going to be bad. I was like I know Mateo that you ice cream for breakfast. I love it too. But how about we have ice cream in the afternoon? It was like okay, we can have in the afternoon.

So I was like, oh, and my sister was like what did you do? I was like I just like I tried to be empathy with him. Because the first thing in my mouth is no, you're not going to have ice cream. I used to be like that. So the first time that I start with this, it was like total, like his face changed. He was like my mommy understand me. My mommy knows that I love ice cream, but I cannot have it. She doesn't say no. She said later we can have it.

So it was amazing because thank you, thanks for that. I am not feeling guilty because in the other Valeria who will be like no, we're not going to have it. Then we will struggle with the power that who is going to win this argument? For now, I have been like dealing with this a lot. Like I see a storm coming. Instead of saying no, I try to be empathy with him to understand.

It was like two super important things that you teach me that one, it's not personal. That's like totally different because he's not doing that to me. Sometimes I compare when my two year old is crying because he's hungry. That he's not crying because he wants to bother me. He really is hungry. So like the five year old, it’s like he's telling me that he needs something, and it's his way to communicate.

Lisa: So beautiful. So many things I want to dig into. So let's start at the beginning. I want to just acknowledge that yes, many of us who grew up in homes where our parents love us but there wasn't the empathy and understanding and connection. In the beginning, it feels very foreign, right? Especially in a culture where maybe empathy implies permissivity. Right? Empathy wasn't modeled for you as a child. It wasn't offered. So now in the parent/child role, it feels awkward, and it feels wrong. Maybe the worry is that it's going to lead to being a permissive parent, which then the fear of that is an entitled child.

Empathy does not lead to permissivity. You've had a chance to witness it. What it leads to is the child feeling seen, heard, and valued, right? The child is happy to be told or will live with being told no ice cream if the empathy is offered on the front end. Oh, sweetheart, we love ice cream so much, don't we? We can have it later. We're just not going to have it for breakfast. He got it. You got it.

Valeria: Yep. Yeah.

Lisa: Then the other thing I think that's easy to do when you have a five and a two year old is adultize the five year old, or at least advanced him beyond five. Because in comparison to the two year old, the five year old is so much older and so much more independent. They have words and language. So the brain goes oh, well, of course, the two year old isn't giving me a hard time. But the five year old probably is because he's so much more advanced.

But in reality, let's do the math on this so that we can see this. In reality, a two year old is 8% of the way to a fully developed brain. A five year old is 20%. I mean, the difference is so small on the scale. Right? I think you kind of got that too in our coaching call.

Valeria: Yes, totally. Because I cannot compare both of them. Because their way to ask for a necessity to be covered, it's totally different. So I just understand that at the end, they want the same, but they have different way to ask it for.

Lisa: Yes. All humans are that way, right? If you and I are best friends, the way I might ask for support from you might be completely different than the way you might want support from me. What I've come to realize in all my rotations around the sun is that, or the earth, is that my job as your friend is to figure out how you want support and give it to you in that way. Right? That, to me, makes a good friend. You know what I need. It is no different with our children.

Your two year old and your five year old are each their own souls who have come to earth to have their own experience. I think part of peaceful parenting is for you, as the mom, to figure out, to realize that my five year old is going to ask for help in the darndest of ways. My two year old is going to ask for help in a completely different darndest of ways. My job as a mom is to show up and give them each the support they need when they're asking for it.

Valeria: Totally, totally. Also to stop fighting for the things, for example, for the ice cream. I was like no, you will not have it. Mateo was like yes, I will have. We can be like maybe 30 minutes, and it has changed a lot. The only thing that I struggle sometimes is that I have, sometimes, I'm not in the mood.

I need a lot of patience to stop like fighting. I have to breathe. I have to go to my corner and say like Mateo, I need a minute. That's the way that we have been working that. But I think that our last storm was maybe, I don't know, maybe one month ago. We have like working super good with this new tool.

Lisa: Yeah, I think having patience and empathy and investing in the front end. It can feel exhausting in the beginning because it's new, like you said. It's a new tool. But as a financial advisor yourself, I see it as a 401 K. I see it as, because here's the thing, and you'll relate to this. It's not only an investment in today, but it's also an investment in the long term relationship of you and your boys.

I mean this makes me want to weep saying this to you, but what you model for them is what they're going to learn. I was just telling a couple this morning that when we learn to stay regulated, not only do we show up in a better way to help our children. But our children are looking at us, Valeria, and they're saying how does my mom solve problems when she's angry? How does my mom deal with frustration? How does my mom deal with telling people no ice cream for breakfast?

They're watching us. What we model is how their brain says oh, that's how we solve that problem. So we're not only parenting, but we're teaching them how to solve their problems, right. So it's kind of like the investment that not only pays a return but a dividend. My husband loves investing in things that give a dividend. So it's really like a solid investment that not only pays a return down the road, but a yearly dividend. Because what you model for your kids is how they're going to show up in the world.

Valeria: Yeah, totally. One super important thing is that our bond is like super, it has a lot of strength because of this. Because we are not like fighting anymore. We are not with the power struggle. It's helping a lot with this.

Lisa: Yeah. I bet you're seeing even a change in the interaction between the two boys. Yeah, little more patience, the five year old with the two year old, right? Because we also talked on our call, I remember, that sometimes the five year old wants to be the two year old, and you were frustrated before we talked with that too, right? We talked about the birthday cake and like. We're also teaching our children how to treat other people in how we show up in our interaction with them. Tell me your thoughts on that.

Valeria: Yes, totally. Because now, as you say, I have to play with Mateo that he's like the older one, and I have to give him like his space. For example, I give him like tasks a little bit more of important than the two year old. That's it because Mateo is always watching and looking how I am treating his brother. He's learning about that.

Because, for example, I remember that when I was mad and I’d yell at that the two year old, I’d catch Mateo yelling to him. Because he's watching. He's watching that mommy screams to the younger brother. So they are always watching. Always.

Lisa: Yes. The other thing your five year old is looking for is, now really think about this listener. Think about this if you have multiple children. What's happening in Valeria’s home is the five year old, now this is all happening on a subconscious level because these five. But Mom has the power in the home. Mom is deciding and making the rules.

So one of the things that your son is gauging is mom a dictator or benevolent leader? Empathy is a benevolent leader, right? We're firm about the rules, but we deliver them with firmness and empathy. But the other thing your son is looking at is how does the person with the power treat the people beneath them?

So as you model kindness and patience, empathy but firm guidelines, that empowers your five year old to then, when he has the power over his two year old sibling, show up as a benevolent leader rather than a dictator.

Valeria: Wow. They're learning that.

Lisa: That's right. He learns it by watching you. It's not osmosis. It isn't like at some age. I mean kids are born knowing how to cry, eat, poop, pass gas, burb, right. I mean, that's the basics. All the emotional skills, the emotional intelligence, they learn by watching what we model. It's just how it goes.

Valeria: Yeah, and that’s it. They are like all the time watching us. So we have to behave the way that they want to see the world, and the way that they want to behave in the world. That's, for example, so my mother was here. I remember one of your episodes about boundaries in our family because it was super. Like, I was treating my Mateo with empathy. My mom was like he's totally controlling you.

Because she learned to teach me, for example, in the place of fear. That when she made to me that look, or it's like okay, I'm going to shut up. It's totally different the way that our generation are teaching our kids.

Lisa: Yes, yes. I want to share a story with you to support that, if I may. So my son, Malcolm, he's 19. He's a freshman in college. He's going to a really great school. One of the things they do freshman year is they spend the first semester teaching kids practicing writing skills, college writing skills. Then the second semester, they take a class where they practice presentation skills, which I think is phenomenal.

So this semester, he's taking this presentation class, and the teacher, the instructor, tries to pick interesting topics because it doesn't matter what they're presenting. They're practicing presenting. So he was telling me recently one of the topic city had to present on was what makes a great childhood. Of course, it just warmed my heart, you know?

I said to him well, what did you present on? In the back of my mind I'm thinking well, you didn't call me. Why didn't you call me? I'm an expert in this area, right? But then I realized he didn't call me because he already knows. So I said well, what did you present on? What did you say?

He said well, Mom, I said that what makes a great childhood is when the parents have rules. He said kids need rules. But, he said but, the rules need to be delivered with discipline and not punishment. They need to be delivered with empathy, understanding, and room for the kid to have a voice. I was like, I mean drop the mic. My work is done, right?

I mean, let's review that. So at the end of the day, your kid really doesn't want ice cream for breakfast. I mean, impulsively in the moment, he thinks he does. Right? He does. But rules help him grow up learning that we don't eat ice cream for breakfast, right? It turns on the internal compass. When they're delivered with discipline not punishing, meaning yelling, attacking the character, trying to set the limit when you're angry, imposing some harmful threat that attempts to teach the lesson. Kids rebel against that, especially strong willed, which you have two of, right?

But when we say, with a confidence, oh honey, ice cream is so yummy. Let's consider it later. But right now we're going to have the eggs or oatmeal. The kid feels loved. He knows what's expected. He knows how to navigate the world. Then letting him have a voice. Really connecting with him that the ice cream is yummy. I know you want it, but we're not going to have it right now. It just dissipates the storm.

Valeria: Yes. You are not saying like the first thing like no. You're saying like okay, I know you like it. But right now we stand for breakfast. Later, we can have it. That's like totally different.

Lisa: We're also not saying something like what is wrong with you? Why would you ask for, right? We're not creating insecurity and doubt. What is wrong with you? Why would you ask for? We don't have ice cream. Right? We're also not doing that, which is really not helpful to building up the self confidence and the self-worth in the kid. Right?

Valeria: Right.

Lisa: The other thing I think you've done a great job I hear, I want to talk about this for a moment, is you have done a nice job of what's called frustration tolerance. Right? When our kids have big emotions, a lot of us are reacting because we can't be comfortable with those big emotions. We don't have a tolerance for our discomfort or our kid’s.

So oftentimes, we either give in to the ice cream. You might have said it would have been easy in the back of your mind to say well, my sister's here, and I don't want my kid to melt down. I don't want to be judged. So I'm just going to give my kid the ice cream. Or your mother's there, and my mother thinks that my kid’s controlling me. So I'm going to really give it to him. What is wrong with you? We're not having ice cream. Go to your room, right?

But what you did is you stayed in that discomfort. I can't tell you how big this is, right? What you're building is you're building frustration tolerance. You're allowing yourself to be in this discomfort. Then you're modeling that for your boys too.

We don't have to impulsively fix everything. There's not an answer. Like sometimes it's like yeah, we can't give into the urgency or the impulsivity of wanting ice cream. It's okay to want it and not have it right this second and be uncomfortable with that. Talk to me about that.

Valeria: Yes, totally. Because for me always the easy way is to say okay you're going to have ice cream because I don't want to see the storm coming. So I used to be like maybe yes, the permissive parent because I was scared about the storm. So right now for me, it's like I am not saying no. I'm just saying like this is not the moment. So it was amazing. Also like to see the face of my sister.

She was like maybe I can use this technique also with my co-workers. I was like yes. Because it's not only for child. It's like a tool to make strong relationships with all other human beings. So yes, you're right. Because for me, always the easy way was to say okay, let's do this. But not anymore because I am trying to model him, as you say. I'm trying to say you have a voice. I know what you want. I know that it is delicious, but right now we cannot have it.

Lisa: Yes. Get in the practice of saying I hear you versus I know. Right. I hear you. You voiced it, and I heard it. Then I knew, right. Yeah, I say all the time staying regulated, learning to stay regulated is the rising tide that lifts all boats, right? This works on kids and partners, whether you're co-parenting in the same household or you're in different households, mother-in-laws, sisters, co-workers, the neighbor next door who’s dog barks all the time, the community people you interact with, right? I mean, it is the rising tide that lifts all boats in our lives. It increases emotional intelligence.

Valeria: Yeah.

Lisa: Learning to stay regulated, this why 2024 is the year of self-regulation because we can't raise our emotional intelligence as humans, if we're not staying regulated. I mean, that's a critical, that's like the foundation of the house. You have to have a strong foundation, and it's learning to stay regulated. Your children are good place to start because being in that parent/child role is unique. You know?

So I think what we're talking about is the intentional practice of learning how to sit with uncomfortable feelings, right? I mean, your sister's there. They're vacationing. It's someone's birthday. Your kid asks for ice cream. I mean I know that if you weren't automatically like oh, joy, right? It's uncomfortable. Like, he's asking for ice cream. People are watching. This is uncomfortable.

It's the intentional practice. This is, listener, what I want you to hear. It isn't that I sprinkled some magic dust or sent some magic dust in the mail to Valeria. It's that she made a commitment to the intentional practice of sitting with the uncomfortable feelings. When we do this, it's a game changer in all of our relationships.

Because many of us have uncomfortable feelings all day, right? We go to buy something, and it isn't in stock, or Starbucks didn't make our coffee right. Or there's traffic, or you're stuck behind someone driving slow, or your kids want ice cream for breakfast, or you forgot to take the chicken out for dinner, or your boss piled some more work on your plate. So it's the recognition of the intentional practice of learning how to sit with those uncomfortable feelings.

Valeria: It is.

Lisa: You're doing a good job. Yeah. Okay, my last question. So what, I'm just curious, what motivated you to take all of this and then join the Hive?

Valeria: Because I think that we are in the same. We are, like a lot of parents, are struggling with the same. Exactly because you don't feel alone. You feel like in the community that we have kids, and we want to improve as parents. We want to make a difference. We want to make like something different than our parents. I don't know good or bad they used to do, but I think that we're like a generation that wants some change. There you can have like all the tools and all the help that you can. Especially you know that you are not alone in this parenthood journey.

Lisa: Yes, yes. I've been doing a lot of work recently on learning even deeper on the central nervous system. One of the greatest regulators of the central nervous system back to a neutral state is feeling not alone, is feeling normal. Whatever you're experiencing is normal. I'm not alone. I'm in community. So I agree with you.

I think that being with likeminded parents, learning these tools, practicing celebrating successes, learning that setbacks are normal, refreshing on the tools. I think it's the greatest investment we can make in our children other than saving for college. But it's really, it's an investment that will pay off for generations to come. So I just want to say well done in taking that leap and joining.

Valeria: Thanks to you, Lisa.

Lisa: My pleasure. Anything else you want the listener to hear?

Valeria: Just one more. Another tool that you told which I learn from you is to stay firm and calm. That is totally like something super important for my family. Because sometimes I am firm but not calm or like calm but not firm. That tool is also helping me a lot because it’s like no, you cannot do but like super calm. It has like made a lot of difference too.

Lisa: I love that. I love that. I want to say that was really my greatest work too. Because I was like you. I was firm and loud or calm and permissive. Because that's what was modeled for me growing up. Half of my family was calm and permissive. Half were firm and dominant. I didn't know what calm and firm looked like.

The invitation was to step into that. The calm is me and how I'm showing up, which allows me to offer the empathy. The firmness comes from setting limit ahead of time, never in the heat of the moment, which I've had a couple of podcast episodes on that lately. What I really know to be true is that the calm and firm is the peaceful leader. That's what I want us all to be.

We are the leaders. We have the fully developed brain. You do get to decide whether there's ice cream for breakfast or not. Because you have the fully, your kid would be a hot mess if he was making all of his own decisions at five years old. Right? So we're meant to be the leaders. But most of us don't know how to lead from that calm, empathetic, and firm place. I think that's the switch that got flipped on for you is how to do that all at the same time well. Calm, firm, and empathetic. Yeah?

Valeria: Yeah. Yeah.

Lisa: That’s a game changed.

Valeria: Yes, totally. I'm like I do not have guilt anymore. So I feel very happy.

Lisa: Yay, I love that because guilt is the enemy of the effective parent. Guilt breeds more guilt. It's hard to step into community. It's hard to step into calm. It's hard to add empathy when you're operating from that place of guilt. I love it. I love it. Well done. Well done. Thank you for sharing with us today. I'm grateful to you. People love when they get that part two follow up and they can hear all the changes that happened. You have a giant smile on your face. I just see a light beaming off compared to last time. So well done.

Valeria: Thank you very much.

Lisa: See, this is the power. We did one coaching session, one, and you had a massive transformation. Now you're going to come to the Hive and learn another skill and apply it and then reinforce it and another skill. That's the beauty of this whole thing. It's a building block.

Valeria: Yes.

Lisa: Yeah.

Valeria: Totally.

Lisa: Okay, I'll see you inside the Hive. Take care everyone. Thank you for being here today. 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](http://www.thepeacefulparent.com/welcome). I can't wait for you to get started.

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