

Ep. #223: The Eye Roll, the Slammed Door, the 'I Hate You!'—Decoded



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.

Welcome, welcome, welcome, welcome to today's episode. I am so grateful to be with you here today. Today we're diving into something that I know so many of you struggle with because I struggle with it too. It's universal in parenting. Have you ever been in a moment with your child, maybe they rolled their eyes at you, or they slam a door, or they yell something like You're the worst parent ever, and it just cuts deep.

You feel disrespected. Rejected and maybe even humiliated. Yep. I've been there, and if you're nodding right now, maybe with a tight chest or a lump in your throat, I want you to know this episode is for you. Today we're gonna talk about the moment that everything shifts the moment you realize that your child's behavior is not personal, even if it feels incredibly personal.

So let's take a deep breath together. And dive in and let's start by letting me take you back. Way back, Malcolm was about five years old and he had just started an afterschool soccer class. I was so excited to pick him up. I mean, I'd been thinking about it all afternoon, couldn't wait to hear all about his day, school and soccer.

So there I was smiling big, totally in Mom of the year mode. He gets in the car, slams the door, crosses his arms and snaps. Why do you always have to make me come to this? I hate it and I hate you. I was stunned. I felt like he had just sucker punched me in the gut. Shame, anger, hurt. I could feel my chest tightening.

My inner storm started brewing faster and faster, and I did what so many of us do. I took it personally. Here's what I know now. It was never about me ever, and it's not about you. Let me share another story. This one from a client I worked with recently will call her Amanda. Amanda has a strong-willed 8-year-old son named Caleb one afternoon after what seemed like a completely normal day to Amanda.

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Anyway, Caleb came home from school and absolutely exploded. He screamed at Amanda. Slammed his backpack down and shouted, you never listened to me at this moment. Amanda was confused. She told me later, Lisa, I hadn't even said a word to him yet. She felt the sting of rejection, the gut punch of being blamed, let alone for something that she hadn't even done.

And in that moment, her whole body wanted to react, to yell back, to say, excuse me. I just picked you up. What do you mean? I never listened to you? How dare you talk to me like that. But Amanda had been doing the work inside the hive, so instead of reacting, she took a pause and she responded. She took a couple minutes to collect herself with some deep breathing.

She reminded herself to get curious instead of furious, and she simply said, wow, buddy. Sounds like something really big is going on. I'm here when you're ready to talk. A few minutes later, after some pacing and deep breaths, Caleb opened up. He told her that during recess he had tried to explain something to a group of kids and everyone kept talking over him, and then his teacher didn't call on him at all that day, even though he had his hand raised for what felt like forever and then.

He said this was so much heartbreak. He told her it felt like no one wanted to hear me today. I just want someone to listen to me. Whew. I mean, are you tearing up right now? Is a light bulb going off for you because what looked like disrespect and what felt like an attack was actually a child who just wanted to feel heard, right?

And then there's the teen version of this. One of the moms in the hive, we're gonna call her. Monica, came to me feeling completely defeated. Her 13-year-old daughter, Lily, had just started saying no to just about everything. No, I'm not going. No, I don't want to talk. No, I'm not doing that right now. And every time Monica heard that word, it felt like nails on a chalkboard to her.

She told me, Lisa. I just want my kid to do what I ask without an argument every single time. Ooh, I felt that. I really did. But here's the thing. When we broke it down together, Monica realized something powerful. Her daughter wasn't saying no to be difficult. She wasn't saying no to challenge Monica's authority.

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She was saying no because she was trying to reclaim a sense of control in her rapidly changing world. Middle school was overwhelming. Her friendships were shifting, her body was changing. She was constantly trying to figure out who she was and how to feel powerful without feeling unsafe. So when her mom came to her with the simplest request, unload the dishwasher, put your phone down, come downstairs for dinner.

Lily's automatic no, was really a cry for space. A way to assert identity. A way to say, I need to feel in charge of something in my life right now. And here's what happened when Monica stopped taking it personally and started responding with calm confidence. When she said things like, I hear your, no, we still need to talk about it, but I'm here to work it through it with you.

Everything began to shift began. So here's the truth that I want you to hear today. Loud and clear. Your kid or kids or child or young adult. Is not giving you a hard time. They, he or she is having a hard time. Let me say it again. For those of you in the back, your child is not giving you a hard time.

They're having a hard time. And when our kids are having a hard time, when their emotional backpack is bulging, when their nervous system is flooded. What they need most is not correction or judgment or demands in that moment. What they need is connection and then correction or redirection, but connection first, I want you to imagine this.

Your child's behavior is like a red flashing warning light on your car dashboard. It's not there to annoy you. Just like the light on your dashboard isn't. It's not there to ruin your day. It's there to tell you something is going on under the hood. Maybe they're tired, maybe they're overwhelmed. Maybe they've been holding it together all day at school and they just can't anymore.

Maybe they're scared or lonely, or overstimulated or jealous or resentful. They don't have the words. They don't have the awareness. What they have is you, let's pause right here for a moment. I want you to think back to a moment this week when your kid acted out, maybe they yelled at you. Maybe they refused to follow a simple direction.

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Maybe they hit their sibling or slammed a door. And what if, just for a moment, you imagine that behavior was never about you, what might have been going on under the hood? Can you see the behavior as the warning light to check under the hood? Could it have been fear or sadness or disappointment? What if your child wasn't attacking you but reaching for you the only way they knew how?

Right? Oh, it's such a better way of looking at it, and I didn't know this until someone taught it to me, so now it's my mission to teach it to you. Here are three takeaways I want you to really let sink in. Number one, behavior is a clue, not a verdict. It's a flashlight pointing to what's unspoken, unseen, or unmet.

And your job is to be the detective, not the judge. Number two, your job isn't to fix. It's to see. Get curious, not furious. When we sit in that discomfort without storming ourselves. We give our kids space to make sense of their big emotions. And number three, you do not have to be perfect. You just have to be the safe place.

The goal is imperfection, it's presence, and you're the soft landing. You're the calm in the storm. Yeah. Okay. Let's do a little homework. Grab your journal, your phone notes, or just pause and reflect with me. Assignment number one. Think of a recent hard moment with your kid. What did you say or do? Now ask yourself, what might they have been feeling that they just couldn't say out loud?

This is your chance to get curious. Assignment number two, catch yourself in a moment this week. Next time your kid pushes your buttons, pause and say to yourself, this isn't personal. There's an unmet need here. Let me try to figure out what it is that one little pause. Believe me, it's a total game changer if you change nothing else, but add the pause and stop taking their behavior.

Personally, I promise you it's a complete, it's game changer. Now, I wanna take a moment here and say that if you've been taking your child's behavior personally, if your feelings get big and loud when your kids storm, you're not alone. There's no judgment. It makes sense. Of course, you get angry. Of course you feel disrespected.

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Of course it hurts. You're a human being, a parent who loves fiercely, a parent who's doing their best, and the truth is, your own central nervous system might be carrying a whole emotional backpack of your own, maybe from your childhood or busy life today, and just trying to hold it all together. I get it.

I see you. We're gonna talk more about your feelings in an upcoming episode because they matter and you matter, and I get it. But for now, just know this. You are allowed to feel and still choose to respond instead of react. That is 100% possible. You can hold both. This hurts, and I'm still the safe place and I'm here to support you while you're learning this tool.

Bringing it into your parenting. Before we wrap up, if you're nodding along and maybe you're even tearing up and thinking, Lisa, I want to parent this way, but I don't know how in the moment, or I'm trying and I don't seem to be getting it right, then I want to personally invite you to join me in the hive.

Join Inside the Hive, I teach parents how to build the tools to stay regulated. I will teach this to you. I teach you how to respond instead of react, how to decode your kid's behavior through a peaceful parenting lens. We create personalized strategies just for your family, and we can do it together. You do not have to do this alone.

So if you're ready and this is your moment, head on over to the [hive coaching.com](https://www.hivecoaching.com). Us. Your family deserves this kind of peace and you deserve this kind of support, and I promise to be with you. Every step of the way. Yeah. Awesome. Okay. Until next time, 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 the [peaceful parent.com](https://www.peacefulparent.com). See you soon.