

# Ep. #247: From Disconnection to Joy: How to Genuinely Enjoy Your Children



## 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 honored to be with you here today, and I'm gonna start today's episode with asking you something that might catch you off guard. Do you like your kid? Do you like your kids? Think about that for a minute. I didn't say love because I know you love them.

You wouldn't be here listening to this episode if you didn't love your kids. But the question today is, do you like 'em? Do you enjoy them as a person? Do you light up when you see them? Do you show them on purpose on the regular that you genuinely like being around them? I wanna get really personal with you here today in this episode because this topic is honestly close to my heart.

You see, I didn't feel liked as a kid. The people who raised me didn't seem to like me. They seemed constantly frustrated, exasperated irritated with me most of the time, no matter what I did. And they were focused on what I did wrong on my mistakes. Their expectations were high, and I don't think I met them, which felt like all the time, and they showed their disappointment.

And if I'm totally honest with you. I left a mark on me, a deep one. I grew up feeling unlikeable and that followed me well into adulthood. I had to do a lot of work to reverse that internal voice that told me I wasn't worth liking. So when Malcolm was a little kid, probably around two or three, I made a vow to myself.

No one else knew about this, but I made a vow to myself that I would like him no matter what. Not just love him, but like him. And I'd show it every single time I saw him. I would greet him with a smile on my face and light in my eyes. And you know what the truth is that when I did that over the years, I got back as much from that practice as I gave.

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It anchored us in true connection over the years, even during tense times. Even when he was going through tough phases, even when he was snarky, when he'd make a mistake and was facing consequences, there was always that foundation of connection between us that was derived from my likeness of him. And just last week I was coaching a mom inside the hive who's regularly struggling with her 14-year-old son.

Things have gotten intense between them. She admitted there's a lot of anger and a lot of disconnection, and it became clear during our session that she doesn't like him right now. She feels lost. She knows something's broken between them, and she desperately wants help building that connection. And as we talked, she owns something so honest and vulnerable.

She said, I don't know when it happened, but somewhere along the way I stopped enjoying him. I stopped looking forward to our interactions. Every single thing feels like a battle. And here's the truth that hit me as I listened to her. Our kids. Your kids, yes. Yours right now. One to feel liked by you deeply.

Now, they may not act like it moment to moment, especially teenagers with all that drama and attitude and eye rolling. But underneath the storming, the shutdowns, the pushback. What they're craving is to feel accepted, enjoyed, and appreciated by you for who they are, not just for what they do or don't do, but to be genuinely.

Liked by you right now, today, even when they're getting it wrong. And here's where it gets tricky. Sometimes their kids are not who we expected. Maybe they're more sensitive than we anticipated. Maybe they're more defiant. Maybe they have interests we don't understand. Or maybe, and this is a big one, they trigger us.

Maybe they reflect back parts of ourselves or our co-parent. We'd rather not see, spend time with and look at. And it's easy, so, so easy to fall into the habit of disliking them, of exuding frustration, disappointment, and resentment. But that energy, it creates distance and it builds walls instead of bridges.

Let me say that again. That energy creates distance. It builds walls instead of bridges. And here's the other truth, sometimes it's not even about our kids. Sometimes we stop liking our kids because our own lives feel overwhelming.

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Maybe we're stressed about money, we're juggling too much at work, revealing tension in our own marriage, or just trying to survive in a world that asks too much from us.

And maybe no one ever told us. It's important to, like our kids. No one taught us how. So we get caught in survival mode and we forget. We literally stop looking for the good. But here's the deal. When Peggy O'Mara said, our outer voice becomes their inner voice, I think a huge part of what she meant is this, liking our kids matters.

We have to make a conscious decision to like them. And then we have to give our brain the assignment. We have to tell our brain, look for things I like about my kid. We have to notice it. We have to name it and nurture it. And that my real world, peaceful parents is how we shift the energy. Let me tell you about another mom in the hive.

Let's call her Sarah. A year ago. She was exactly where the first mom that I talked about earlier is now. Disconnected going through the motions. She told me, Lisa, I feel terrible about saying this, but I don't really enjoy my daughter anymore. Everything she does irritates me. Sarah's 12-year-old with strong-willed, had big opinions about everything and seemed to question every boundary.

Sarah found herself constantly correcting, redirecting, feeling frustrated. The joy had leaked out of their relationship. So with my help, we started small, really small. Sarah practiced noticing things she genuinely liked about her daughter. It started out being about her curiosity and how things worked.

Then it turned into her sense of style, even if it wasn't Sarah's taste, her daughter had her own style. Then it rolled into her daughter's persistence. Even when that persistence felt like stubbornness in the moment. And then, and this is the key, she started saying out loud to her daughter, I like how focused you get when you're drawing.

I love the way your brain works. When you ask those questions, your creativity amazes me. I'm so glad you're my daughter. Little by little things changed. Her daughters started seeking her out more. She began sharing her thoughts instead of

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just arguing, and her daughter seemed to relax into being herself around her mom and Sarah.

She started feeling more connected because she was actively training her brain to look for the good in her daughter, the things she liked, instead of scanning for problems. So what do we do? How do we get back to genuinely liking our kids, especially when we're caught in a season of disconnection? Well, here are five steps to reconnect and rebuild.

Step one, own it. If you're in a season of not liking your kid or kids name it, there's no shame, no need for guilt, just honest recognition. You can say to yourself, I've gotten into a pattern of focusing on what's wrong instead of what's right, and I commit to changing that. Step two, accept them as they are.

This my real world peaceful parent is big. See them as they are right now, not who you want them to be. Stop arguing with reality. Maybe your son is never going to care about being on time. Maybe your daughter is never going to be the quiet compliant child you imagined. How do you wanna show up for the child?

You actually have accept them as they are. Step three. Remember, they're still developing. Your 14 year old's brain is only 56% developed. Your 8-year-old is still learning emotional regulation. Your teenager is figuring out their identity. They're not done growing. They're not supposed to be perfect or finished.

They're in process and they're supposed to be learning. Step four, give your brain the assignment every day, and I mean every single day to look for one thing you genuinely like about each of your kids. It might be the color over their eyes. It might be their laugh, it might be the way they eat ice cream with pure joy.

It might be their athletic ability or their kindness to animals, or how they think through problems. I believe that you, yes, you can find something you like about every single human being in the world, including your kid, even on the hard days. And step five, say it out loud. This is where the magic happens.

Verbalize every day, what you like about them to them. Show them. Let them feel liked. By you, by you. Now let me be clear. I'm not saying we need to be happy go

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lucky all the time or become permissive parents. You still get to should and have consequences. You can still feel your feelings, including frustration and anger.

You can still hold your boundaries, but even when you're upset with the choices they've made. You can treat them with respect and make sure you're finding things you like about them on the regular. Ironically, this actually helps when you want them to acknowledge a mistake or take responsibility because they feel your fundamental acceptance of who they are.

I make it a point to comment regularly on things I like and appreciate about Malcolm. They're not performative things like good grades or winning games. They're about his effort. Little things I notice like his kindness, the fact that he takes time to call me, that he asks me how I'm doing, how he owns his mistakes, how he thinks through challenges, how his communication skills keep growing.

Every single time I talk to that kid on the phone, I find something I like about him and I communicate it to him. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. I have two assignments for you this week 'cause you know, I love handing out homework assignment number one, write down three things you genuinely like about each kid. Not things you love because you're their parent, but things you actually enjoy about their personality, their quirks, or their way of being in the world.

Write down three things and then assignment number two every single day this week. Verbalize at least one thing you like about them directly to them. I want you to say things like, I'm so glad you're my kid. I like how your mind works. I like how your fashion, I notice how patient you were with your brother today.

Your sense of humor makes our family better. I love watching you figure things out. Every single day this week verbalize at least one thing. You like about them directly to them? And if you're thinking, Lisa, I don't know. I'm not sure there's anything I like about my kid right now. I hear you. I really do.

That's confirmation bias. You've trained your brain to only see the problems. So again, start with one tiny thing, the sound of their laugh, the way they pet the dog. The music they like, because I promise you there's always something. And if this episode is hitting home for you, if you recognize yourself in that place of

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disconnection, of focusing more on what's wrong than what's right, then this is your invitation to come join us inside the hive.

In the hive. I will help you. You. Immediately rebuild connection and genuinely enjoy your kids with personalized strategies that I will create just for you. We will work on shifting from problem focused to strength focused parenting. We will practice finding the good and saying it out loud, and I will help you break the cycle of frustration.

Build the relationship you crave with your kids right now. This is exactly the kind of transformation work we do every day inside the hive, helping parents move from surviving to enjoying their kids. So if this speaks to you in any way, once you two run, not walk, but run immediately to the [hive coaching.com](https://hivecoaching.com) and join us.

Finding the joy in your kids is literally one click away for you. And I want you to remember, your child is craving your genuine enjoyment of who they are, not your approval of their behavior, though that matters too. But they are craving your fundamental appreciation for their unique way of being human when you make the conscious decision.

To like each of your kids and then train your brain to look for evidence of that likability every single day. You're not just changing the relationship with them, you are changing their internal voice about their own words, that smile on your face when they walk in the room. That light in your eyes when you see them, that genuine comment about something, you appreciate those moments.

Are deposits in their emotional bank account that they will carry with them every single day. I want that for your kids. I want that for you and I want that for your family. 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://peacefulparent.com). See you soon.