Cultivating Tomorrow's Leaders: Strategies For Fostering Resilience And Responsibility In Children Transcript

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Introduction and Guest Welcome

Welcome back to ADHD, Autism and Chronic Disease Parenting Summit. I'm here with one of my favorite people, Madea Saeed, who is a phenomenal physician.

You might know her as the holistic mom MD. Also the author of I don't know, a million books at this point. Holistic is is one of her her main books, lots of kids books.

Still working on more books. Again, thank you for being here. Thank you so much for having me. This is such a huge honor. So blessed. Because every time I spend time with you, it's like, makes my day.

So it's so. I always say, you know, you know, you're one of my favorite people. Like, realistically, one of the nicest, I feel like that I've ever met.

So I hopefully people will will feel your your passion and your joy. But this isn't, you know, a different topic, not something that I've specifically talked about.

And I know you, you've you've become a little more passionate about talking about raising young leaders and the next generation and, and how we can help our kids to, to thrive.

And it's such a great topic, one, because I feel like our kids are struggling more than ever, and mental health issues are worse than ever. And, you know, we were chatting a little before about how everyone's on their phone and, you know, there's all sorts of issues, but you have amazing kids who are doing unbelievable things, working on all sorts of crazy, impressive projects.

And I think that that shouldn't go without saying that, you know, you're the perfect person to really talk about how we can kind of move things in a different direction and raise some leaders.

So thank you again for being here. Thanks for chatting about that. And maybe you can start by talking about why you want to talk about this topic and what's going on.

Oh, absolutely.

Mental Health Crisis and Screen Time

Well, you know, as much as I do that we have a mental health crisis and in the world today, and we're 77,000 physicians and more than 200 children's hospital came together to really declare this a national emergency.

And it's it's getting like the rates of suicide, depression, anxiety, not even just that. Like just the rates of children cutting themselves have skyrocketed.

So since like 2010, there has been 100, 189% increase. Of hospitalizations due to non-fatal self-harm for teen girls ages 10 to 14. Now 189% increase.

Yeah. So this is like and and it's just continuing to get worse. You know every day statistic scarier and scarier. So what we're doing currently is not working.

It's not a medication deficiency because studies have shown that we've done there's been a 400% increase right. As an SSRI is an antipsychotics and antidepressant medication.

So that's not the problem. We don't have an SSRI deficiency. We don't have a medication deficiency. There's something going on. And what we're doing isn't working.

I mean, there was a new study that just came out where they saw that these children that were exposed to screen time for an average of two hours a day performed worse on attention.

Executive function. So and it's harder and harder for this generation to stay without a cell phone for an extended period of time. They're constantly checking this.

And studies again have shown, like I think they said, that 42% of millennials haven't gone more than five hours without looking at social media. Just just think about that.

That means they're constant. They're distracted all the time on these things. And how is that really going to change their life. Right. But and studies have found that that is there's a direct link between the screen time and anxiety and depression in our kids today.

And especially with those quick dopamine hits that they're getting that quick fix is just going to set them up for disaster. And this is where either we can raise children today to lead or we can raise children to the day to be led.

Either we give them the choices, you know, and the autonomy to make their own choices, or guess what? Someone else is going to make it for them. Because unfortunately, that is the society that we're living in today.

They're more and these children and everything that they're doing. Especially with electronics, we know that, you know, when we're not paying for it, we are the service like we are.

So they can they're our kids are no longer listening to us. They are listening to these devices. So we have to raise a generation of leaders. It is more important now than ever before, somebody to not just follow the social norm, but actually like go beyond the status quo and make their decisions for themselves.

And that is why I'm passionate of doing that and educating the world. But obviously when you want to educate the world, you got to start with your own brood.

So I have five boys 16, 13, 11, eight and now a one year old. But to really give them the tools that they need and to cultivate that soil that they're, that we're growing them in, right?

Five Steps to Raise Leaders

Not to not to make their decisions for them, but then help them give them just like we're teaching the kids, you know, how to brush their teeth and giving them like, just life skills to make sure that we also incorporate these leadership life skills and really help educate them and empower them to make their decisions on their own without being influenced by a third party.

For sure. And can you can you dive into that a little bit? So when you say, you know, teach them the leadership skills that that we want them to have or to work on on leadership?

Like what? What specifically do you mean, what kind of things do you think parents should be thinking about focusing on? You know, and I contrast that with, with, you know, what you're saying with this, like kind of passive, we're getting our information from screens and phones and kind of being connected through social media, which, you know, in moderation, you know, probably it's okay a little bit, but realistically not where we are.

I mean, we're definitely going in way the wrong, wrong path. And so these are some life skills which we're just, we're losing like we're we're not teaching our kids to be leaders anymore.

We're not focusing on being, having gratitude. We're not focused on community. We're not focused on getting out there and speaking or writing or any of these things.

It's like not not the focus of a lot of families anymore, which we have to turn back to what I think. But what do you think? What are you finding? What what is important?

Well, I would sort of consolidated all these and five steps towards raising leaders. And those five steps are we can like briefly go through each one of them.

But first we have to role model these behaviors. You know, if we are on these phones all day long, or if we're also listening to what everybody else is listening to, or not thinking for ourselves and not doing the research ourselves, they're going to follow our example.

You know, kids don't follow what we say. They follow what we do. And so role modeling these behaviors, giving them these leadership roles, starting them from very younger, you know, and I feel like what they used to do when we were growing up.

But there's less of that now. But, you know, give them responsibilities, giving them chores. Studies have shown that there's a direct relationship when kids are given chores and responsibilities to their success as they grow older and start them young, give them a.

These are the things that need to be done beforehand before you go to school. This is your job because if we can't expect kids to do the bare minimum, how are we going to expect them to change the world if they can't even set their beds?

And so for example and it goes with everything you know. So I'm giving them chores that they need to get done in the morning time. That I role modeled for them.

I get my stuff done beforehand. Like we all have a healing routine that we do in the morning. I prioritize my self-care. I want them to prioritize their self-care, but I also get my chores done.

So self-care chores. So before 9:00, before they go to school, the dishes are done, the laundry is folded. They've gotten their meditation, their gratitude, their sunlight.

They've they've all split up the chores. And who is going to do what? Which is so amazing because guess what? When I have no clock, they have now accomplished so much, right?

Like, look at all the things I have accomplished before I even went to school. That gives like a sense of, like responsibility. On top of that, it really boosts their self-esteem where like, you know, I am a constructive part of this family.

Like I matter and just like, what are you going to do? When do you start? When did you start with some of these things? Like did you start when they were.

Oh, as soon as they could, like I am, I've even do my one hero like you know it is. It's like, okay, we got to do this. Let's put the put the shoes over here.

You know, you slowly start to teach them and they, they know like even my by one year old does actually start. He cleans after he's done, he'll put the stuff back into the the bin when he's done.

So it's these these small things that you're slowly starting to teach them because remember, at the beginning, we are born, our children, and we are born with all of these billions, like the trillions of brain cells.

Right. And they're unconnected. At one year, these cells, you know, start to form these connections. And at two years, then it's like all of these that that's where like synaptic pruning can happen to, like, get rid of the stuff it doesn't really need.

Mindfulness, Purpose, and Decision-Making

But we as parents, every touch, every hug, every connection, every, you know, instruction, every anything that we try to teach them, everything that we do with these children, if we can teach them how to live balanced lives, they can develop balanced brains and connections.

So start again starting them young at that age. Because remember, that's when they're starting to build those connections. And again, to prioritize self-care.

So they they know when they wake up, we got to again they have a routine, you know, gratitude every morning I'm doing that too with them. Meditation, getting out in the sun, you know, grounding them like trying to.

We love to like whatever. You know, I'm in Chicago, so whenever we do garden, go outside and pick the vegetables and then use that in your food in the morning.

So again, these are small little things that really help prepare them for the rest of the day. And then to the next step is to educate and empower them, help them find their purpose.

And that is when we to try to fit, you know, that purpose right now, unfortunately, we are lacking. Our children are lacking especially I feel like our men are lacking.

You know, these boys today, really lacking purpose, but helping your child find purpose and educating them that they have been put on this planet for a unique purpose that is different for everybody.

And through like the next steps, mindfulness and gratitude, we can help them develop this positive attitude. We tackle their side. We tackle their any of the problems that they're having, reframe their stress stresses and really help them clear out the clutter in their brain and help them to start thinking beyond themselves, finding a higher purpose.

And research has found that a strong purpose in life actually reduces the chances of your self-esteem fluctuating with the like. Some social media. And again, studies have also shown that the lack of purpose has been linked to higher levels of stress hormone, with the cortisol leading to, you know, increase abdominal fat and other negative health health markers.

So looking at your child and saying, you know, what can you do to make this world a better place? How can you contribute, contribute? What can you do? Like what are you?

What are your what are you? What are you passionate about? And then helping them and educating and empowering them with different tools and tactics. So for example, like one of my children love to illustrate, like he loves to draw my second loves to draw.

And so, I actually I was like, okay, I'm mom is writing a book. Do you want to illustrate that? And he did. And he found so and actually I think he like he got up to the challenge like I gave him this huge responsibility.

You don't think. And I'll go, you know, he's like an, he just turned 13. How is he going to create all my illustrations? Give them those. You want to do this?

You got this. Okay, let's try it. Let's educate, educate them and empower them with these decision. Give them, things that they can live up to. I think that we don't give our children enough credit, right?

That if we truly gave them those stat like those responsibilities, they would be able to live up to the challenge, you know? And so, he felt amazing, like he did my illustrations for the book, which one of my children like, who they love to educate, like my oldest, he has been he loves to like, read and learn and educate himself.

Right. And we have been, you know, he wanted giving again, teaching him those. We put him when I put him in, you know, speaking classes early. At the beginning, I would start doing videos and we're like, okay, you know what?

Let's do this together. And again, helping them. What are their purpose in helping them fulfill that? Like how can you benefit others? And I to say, I mean, I know, you know, people don't know you.

You have a podcast, you know, with your I mean, really you kids run it. I know you were like, I think it was the first guest when you, when you guys started it.

Yes. And, and it's so cool because, you know, they interview people. I know you're, you're kind of in the background helping. Obviously, but but they're doing it, and it's really cool, to be questioned by by kids, you know.

It is and again, that was another thing that like, oh, hey, if you wanted to talk to people and learn about these topics, how can we make that possible?

And especially when the pandemic hit, I did I again, how to educate and empower them. I thought the best way to do that was to learn from all of these amazing people like yourself.

I know you were like, so thankful. I was so thankful to you. That was one there that was like four years ago. Can you imagine? And so now they have gotten to the point they don't even need me.

They don't need me at all. Background. Because they're like answering the questions. They're, putting everything together, but again, giving them that space that, yes, I believe in you, that you can talk to New York Times bestsellers.

Right? Like you can talk to all these people. So that is what, is super powerful. And now they've done over 140 interviews raising. So it is it's so powerful.

And now they're speaking, they do have a book that they're writing. And, so they will be traditionally published. And then also they're speaking at like one of the largest functional medicine Institute of Functional Medicine conference at the Bellagio this year.

So again, because this started off slow, I started off slow teaching them these small like they're going to the kids are going to use social media anyway.

Like what is your purpose? Let's use social media for the better to get out to, you know, really take your message to the next level. And that is where, okay, how are you going to help them find that purpose is to really be help teach them mindfulness, because I think that today in this day and age, our kids are not mindful.

We're like, just just like us. We're like running on this hamster wheel without even thinking. And we're just following the herd mentality. You know, if somebody is telling us this is good, then we're going to continue following the whatever's on the advertisements.

We're going to start to do that. Right. It's we're not thinking for ourselves. And that is where. What we want to do. And this is why I wrote a book called The Holistic R for Kids Parenting Healthy Brains and Bodies in a Changing World is bringing back that mindfulness strategies, giving your kids a run, teaching them mindfulness.

Help. Like I call it holistic parenting, where we can give these kids the tools that they need to know and first to know what their body feels like when it feels amazing.

And as soon as it starts to go off balance, we as parents have given them all the tools that they need digestive health, detoxification, stress, sleep, social, spiritual health.

All of these pieces that as soon as their bodies start to feel off balance, they're able to be mindful of those. And we because we have provided them with those tools that they can put their bodies back into balance.

So what holistic parenting also teaches is how to develop this mindfulness on multiple different levels of perception all at once. And so when your body starts to go off balance, we've then given them the tools that they need to put

their bodies back into balance and to again be mindful not just of what's going on inside their bodies, their emotions, their thoughts, the friends that they're hanging out with, even their social media, and how that starting to affect them.

Are we becoming. And you know, I would becoming addicted, are we not? Is this what what kind of things am I actually taking in.

Practical Gratitude and Daily Habits

So very similar, just multiple different levels of perception all at once. And how are we going to do that? By constantly having these conversations with them about that, like teaching.

And this is where in the next, the next thing that I talk about is the decision making. Because when we optimize their decision making, there's two main pieces.

There's their prefrontal cortex and their I'm delayed. The prefrontal cortex is responsible for, you know, looking at the full picture and like of what's presented in front of you, making a rational decision.

After taking a look at the examining the pros and the cons. And it's that emotional and social intelligence, it's where we rational thinking, we reflect, we reason, we think before we act.

While the amygdala is that primitive fight and flight type of response. And you need both of these pieces to make a logical, rational decision. But unfortunately, because today we are living out of balanced lives, like all of take food that we're eating, the chronic stress, the lack of sleep, the lack of exercise, the negative social environment, excessive screen time all of that is actually disconnecting the prefrontal cortex from from the amygdala.

And that you're a big deal that takes over. We have limbic system driven decisions and that leads to chronic inflammation of the brain. And it's us versus you mentality.

These children lack empathy, poor decision making, accelerated brain aging. They act impulsively. They're unable to control their actions. They have less control over their emotions.

They have, you know, impaired cognitive function. Or why? Because of the fact that they're living these out of balance lives. And that has been taken over their decision.

So these children that were trying to raise, because they live out of balanced lives, like they're like limbic system driven, they like fight and flight all the time.

You can't really have a rational child if they're in that flight, fight and flight mode all the time. And so if they live balanced lives, then they have these balanced brains and, and when you do that, when, when both pieces work better, guess what?

You can control your emotions. They're self-understanding. They're mindful. They're empathetic. They make sound decisions. They're flexible and adaptive.

They're energized. They can manage their anger. They're kind. They're compassionate. They can, you know, monitor the actions of what's going on in the lower brain.

Right. Because again, that mindfulness, they have fulfilling relationships. They experience a deep sense of calm. And they have the motivation and the will to follow their dreams.

Guess what? That child is also really easy to parent. And so now that you have all of the junk out of the way, we can now really cultivate that brain and that body.

And now you have a child that is not a crazy monster, and you can really reason with like an adult and help them

find all of the other pieces. So helping our children live these balanced lives by teaching them what chronic inflammation it is.

You know, it's your body's response and they can cause all of these chronic, you know, chronic diseases and a lot of the pieces, again, your your house of your immune system lies in the gut.

And how fake food, all this fake food that we're eating actually can destroy this balance. It destroys that gut bacteria and nutritional deficiencies.

It leads to poor decision making. It destroys our future, destroys our soil. Along with, you know, stress madhouse, stress management, teaching them stress management techniques, gratitude.

Every single solitary morning social like through their relationships. How are those, how is their sleep to optimize their sleep, to lower the toxins in their environment and be mindful and conscious of all the around them?

Because again, when we live a balance, when we have the kids have balanced foods and lifestyles, they have balanced brains and bodies, and then they make the right decisions.

And those are the kinds of leaders that we want, the ones that make the right decisions. Or making any decisions or even. Make any decisions. Themselves at all. Absolutely.

Because right now, you know, the food companies know that they can if they can create a customer for life, that's where that's where their brain is. So then they put these commercials on.

And so you we need our children not to get hooked, to use their own brain when it comes to what foods are putting in their bodies, the environment, their social stress, sleep, you know, spiritual health because we don't want anybody else to make those decisions for them, right.

And connect to us. So, you know, just to kind of close this all together and to finish up, I like to finish with, you know, practicality, something that we can do right now.

So maybe we can kind of tie it all together with, you know, when we want to raise leaders, we we want to move things in a different direction. What is your biggest tip or few tips or things that you would want somebody to do today?

If they're like, okay, you know what, I've been kind of slacking on this a little bit. I really want to push my kids a little bit more. I want to give them a little more responsibility.

I really do want them to be leaders. So what should I do today or this week or right now that can move in that positive direction? And that comes in the fifth one.

And that's like the most important gratitude.

Books, Podcasts, and Upcoming Projects

So immediately when they wake up in the morning, say ten things that they're thankful for every day, because right now our children are being raised in a world where they they open up with negativity like their their social media is all negative.

Their, go to school. People are telling them all the things that they're doing wrong. They're, you know, coming home. And unfortunately, sometimes, you know, we're we're like, Tom, do this, do that, do this, and then or the TV or the news, like everywhere around them, they're like bombarded with all this negativity.

And to change that and to empower themselves with the positivity to change our subconscious from instead of thinking negative all the time to thinking positive, because that is what's really going to help drive all of the rest of

the things.

And we ourselves have to be positive too. So that's something that we need to strive ourselves. And it. Really, it's like getting off on the right side of the bed every day.

Because remember, your perspective can either be your pain or your power. So our children, if they are living in a world of negativity, then they can just barely just get by.

But and then by just not. And then like the stress hormones and every it puts everything else I like. What's the point of eating well if you know the world, you know that it just throws everything else out of balance.

Because I've had people where even us as a physician, seeing patients, that they've done everything else. But if they are living in a pessimistic world like they can't heal, like nothing's going to change, it doesn't change, right?

So really, our brain and our mentality and everything that we think is the most powerful thing that we can do today to really raise strong leaders. A little bit.

I mean, it's it's very practical. It's something anybody could do. It doesn't cost you a cent. You know, when you wake up in the morning, this is not just for kids.

I think even, you know, for somebody watching right now, like before you go to the next video, you know, just think like, what is one way what is one thing I'm grateful for?

What are three things I'm grateful for? You can wake up in the morning before you do anything, before you get to bed and just be like, oh, what is one thing I'm grateful for today?

Because at least you start the day with some positivity. Because as soon as you touch your phone, then you're going to look at the news you're making up, you know.

The patients that come on there. Exactly. That's what they do. Before you look. Yeah, I think that's that's a good a good tip. And then, you know, you have a positive to counterbalance the negative that you're inevitably going to see an.

Absolutely. And then through that positivity and that gratitude, then you can see hope in the world. And then that creates purpose and then you want to do things.

So it really does really ignite a healing revolution just by the power of gratitude. And that that will just create a ripple effect through the entire day in your house and then create possibilities for change, changing the world.

Because we need this now more than ever. I love it. Well, well, thank you for for being here. Thank you for being a part of it. Thank you for being a beacon of light, as always.

You know, before you go, maybe you can tell people where to find you, where to find your podcast, all those good things. Absolutely. We have, my channel is holistic mom and I also have for the audio audience.

It's holistic, although me. But my kids have their podcast called The Holistic Kids Show that can be found on all podcast platforms. And, and then all my books are on Amazon, the kids are writing a book, the The Teen Health Revolution that should be coming out next year in 2025.

My next book is called, it's I have a children's book series called Adam's Healing Adventures, and the latest one is called Real Food Versus Fake Food that is coming out in August of this year.

And, again, to any of these tools that we have to really empower our children, we do have a change Making Kids conference in June, to give us, to give these kids these tools, but lots of fun things coming up because my brain never stops because I'm like, there a there we need to empower the world so they can keep, you know, in contact

with me through my Instagram and then through my social media.

But mostly yet my website to the holistic Holistic Mom Indeed.com. I love it. Well, again, thanks for being here. Thank everyone for listening. And, I really appreciate everything that you do.

Thank you. Me too. I appreciate you.