How To Help Your Kid's Meltdowns, Tantrums and Big reactions Transcript

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Feeling Fried and Overwhelmed

You're not just tired, you're fried. You wake up racing for the next meltdown. And somewhere in the middle of the chaos, You are thinking, how do I make this stop?

Let me just say this clearly. If you feel overwhelmed by your child's melt down, it doesn't mean you are failing. It means your nervous system is overwhelmed too.

because kids don't just get dysregulated, so do parents. And that's why we're having this conversation. The real question isn't, just how do I stop it?

The question is, why does it keep happening over and over despite you doing good things? That's the question I get all the time. That is why people reach out to me, fly in all over the world.

That's why they find me in this podcast and soon to be amazing book, The Disregulated Kid. Because if meltdowns were solved by stricter discipline, better consequences, more connection, gentle parenting, and more patience, allowing kids to have demand avoidance, whatever you're doing, you'd already be done.

You wouldn't be searching for me. And what's missing isn't effort, it's order.

Why Meltdowns Keep Happening

That's what I want you to really reframe and think about because what is actually happening during a meltdown when your child explodes or is irritated or gives you back talk, the amygdala gets hijacked.

It's our emotional center. As soon as you move into that stress activation, I mean you, not just your kid. What happens is those stress hormones spike the prefrontal cortex or decision making or boss in our brain goes offline.

And biology is kicking in. And that means that no logic, no listening, No learning, just calm down or your sister can do it, whatever. I didn't do when I was a kid or all the things that we say to our kids.

It just doesn't happen. So from the outside, it starts really looking like defiance. manipulation, disrespect. But in the inside, what it feels like for your child's nervous system, and yes, understanding those breadcrumbs and the clues make a difference, but our children's, nervous systems are dysregulating a lot.

this is why you're here, this why your gonna get my book, This is Why You're Searching at 2am. But your child's nervous system is seeing these things as a threat.

They're feeling the overload, the loss of control, which is what you see some of those really odd controlling behaviors because when we have a sense of control, we feel calmer.

We feel happier. It doesn't mean your nervous system really is. But your child's nervous is in survival mode and survival does not negotiate. What if the goal isn't to stop a meltdown, but actually to change what happens before them?

How about that? Mind blown. I hope you're hearing that because we're always thinking about how can we just stop them.

What Happens in the Brain During a Meltdown

But I actually want you to stop. Them from happening. Not that kids shouldn't have meltdowns ever. Please stop thinking that. I've even had parents who were teachers tell me one of my all time favorites and they were lovely people, but their kid was having about 20 melt downs a day.

Of course they came to me. And we get to the meeting, I hear all about it, the way our program works, which by the time this is released, our former program probably is the case.

We did is concierge where everybody had their own brain reset specialist. So I would hear from our brain respect specialist who was in constant communication, phone calls, meetings, whatever they wanted about what was happening.

And so what I heard was the 20 meltdowns a day weren't happening, and we had gotten down between three and four weeks, plus we have rating sales. So I get on the call and I was like, are you so excited?

And they're like well, actually Dr. Roseanne, we're not. And I'm like what's going on here? What do you mean? They said well they are still having meth downs.

And I said, wait a second, we're having three or four a week. And this is only 20 sessions after, oh, only twenty sessions of neurofeedback. We still had the other half of the program.

They said well, they didn't think they'd have any meltdowns. I'm like, am I not remembering that you're both teachers? And they're like yeah. Aren't you elementary school teachers.

Yeah. Do your students have melt downs? Of course. Why are your kids any different? And they're like, oh, yeah, thank you. And at some levels, a meltdown are normal.

But we want to… Meltdowns that happen 20 times a day or are very long, you could have one melt down a and it's two hours or they are just happening with such a scary intensity.

We got ourselves a problem. Why are you so overwhelmed? Because this isn't just about your child's nervous system. It's also about yours and that's important and I want you to hear that.

So repeated meltdowns create hypervigilance, anticipatory stress on your part, dread even, okay?

Why Stopping It Mid-Meltdown Doesn't Work

It is okay to admit that, just don't want to live there. Walking on eggshells. and that becomes your go-to in parenting. Emotional exhaustion and your body starts bracing before the meltdown ever happens.

Two dysregulated nervous systems in one house feels like chaos. Yes, it is chaos! when you're in that cycle. Please, mamas and papas, caregivers, grandparents, and teachers, I have been there.

The first chapter in Disregulated Kid is the bitches on the bus stop. It's my part, too, in understanding and just how dysregulate I got and anticipating The rejection from those bitches on the bus stop and my kid's behavior.

And who hasn't been there? You don't need a kid with a clinical diagnosis like mine of pans. You need to kid who's struggling at that moment. We're so afraid, most of us, I hope some of you aren't, but the judgment that we receive from when our kid is having a hard time is it feeds into all of this.

So these aren't weaknesses, the level of dysregulation that we have and the codis regulation that occurs, it's biology. Understanding it and then taking action on it are really important for you to do.

So why stopping it doesn't work? So when you try to stop it mid-meltdown, what winds up happening is you raise your voice, you add a consequence, and you lecture.

Who doesn' lecture once in a while? When you're lecturing all the time, Nobody is hearing you. You don't even hear yourself. Some of you are serious about But here's the truth.

You can't consequence your way out of a nervous system meltdown. It's not going to happen. Because no regulation equals no access to executive functioning, you're talking to a brain that just simply isn't online.

So what actually changes it? Number one, You know what I'm going say. This is the basis of the book. regulate first. You, not them.

Regulate First and Catch Early Signs

They need to regulate too, but if you are dysregulated and you're telling your kid to be dys- to being regulated, it's not going to happen, okay? So before you step in, ask Am I calm enough to help?

If you are not, pause, take a breath, do some somatic work, pray, but do something to release it. Drop your shoulders, soften your tone. Your nervous system is actually the intervention.

It's not medication. Its not threatening. its not lecturing. And kids are going to borrow your regulation before they build their own. it is that powerful.

not saying it's easy to get to, but the more you do it, I swear the easier it will be. Number two, we're going to catch it earlier. When we start to see the little signs, Maybe that's gonna happen.

Meltdowns don't just start at screaming, they start an irritability, some rigidity, so whining, complaining, avoidance, shut down, and speeding up or zoning out.

These are yellow light moments. This is where we intervene, not at the red. When you try to intervene at red, it's not really gonna work, people. You know that it's biology and you could be the best parent in the world.

And every kid goes in there red once in a while. Okay. I got a kid that came out like a 57 year old man. He still dysregulates. It got really annoyed at us yesterday and then he's going to go back and listen to these someday.

Mr. Hodge and I said, we looked at each other and we said seems like you need And he was so mad at us that we gave him hugs. Then he always cracks up.

And you know what? That's what works for us. Not telling you to go hug people that don't want to be hugged, but it's part of our parenting humor and love for our kids.

Number three, we're going to reduce the stress load. Think about that stress cup. Every demand, transition, sensory, social interaction, expectation fills it.

When it overflows, the trigger looks small, but it isn't about the triggers, it's about load. So ask, is my child over scheduled? Are transitions abrupt?

Is their sleep solid? are they too overstimulated? Maybe they're not getting enough time to release energy. These are the questions that we have to ask long before that stress pattern that happens.

And you can think, is it anxiety that's simmering all day? So you don't shrink mount downs by controlling behavior, you shrink them by lowering the baseline stress.

Okay, that's how it works.

Lower the Stress Load and Teach Skills in Calm Moments

Now, we don't want to be stress avoiders. We want it to stress layers, but we do have to look at those patterns in

the stress cup. If there's no room in stress cups, there is no capacity.

Your child cannot physiologically do it. You must lower that total load. Number four, you're going to teach skills in green, not the red. Not even the yellow.

You could start to do it in the Yellow when you're co-regulating together. But stop trying to teach kids in… the red. I mean, it's just so silly. We do this at school, we do at home.

Again, It's not gonna happen. They're gonna get frustrated, they're going to give up. And I think the saddest thing that I see is when hope runs out. Truly, the saddest thing.

So coping skills do not work in meltdown mode. They work regulated mode only. OK, so you're going to practice breathing, reset rituals, flexible thinking, problem solving, when calm, not during chaos, and repetition during safety, actually rewires the brain.

You trying all these strategies when they're not in a regulated mode is not going to stick. This is why kids learn in one place and don't show it in another, because we're creating regulation across the board.

So I want you to think, my child isn't trying to make my life hard. They're having a hard time. and you're not weak for feeling overwhelmed, you are likely dysregulated too.

And when you both dys-regulate, the nervous system can't become. But when your both regulated, your nervous systems can become together. That's when behavior shifts.

So what changes when we regulate first? You're going to notice the meltdowns may still happen, just like in the family I talked about, from 20 a day to three or four a week, they're still going happen.

but they'll shorten, recovery is faster, escalation reduces, shame decreases. You really also start to see, I love when I would work with people and then a certain point I'd say, you're gonna start noticing, they're going to talk more about their feelings and emotions, because they are not hijacked.

And I said, You might misinterpret it that they actually more upset. Instead, their going be more connected and they want to process and work on it.

What Changes When You Regulate First

So this is a beautiful cue and we would see this a lot with our autism families and the parents would be so excited that they were actually perceiving things without us trying to shove it down all the time and reinforce it and re-enforce it.

They were creating an awareness because their nervous system began to regulate. So, one of my favorite parts about all of this besides hope increasing is connection starts to really starts happen and you start really living in the moment not in reaction you started leading the nervous system and into a place of calm.

And that's huge. So you don't get to say stop, you change the system, driving it. And when you changed the nervous system again, the behavior softens, flexibility increases, emotional tolerance, frustration tolerance starts to increase.

overwhelm decreases. And that's sustainable change. It's not suppression. That's important to realize that. So if you feel overwhelmed, it's because no one taught you how to calm the nervous system.

first. And this is exactly what I'm doing. Meltdowns don't mean your child is broken. It means the brain is overloaded. Calm the And if this resonated, this is exactly what I teach inside the dysregulation insider.

It's weekly tools, nervous system first strategies, less chaos, more clarity, and it's free. And you get it in your inbox

every week and you go to drrosanne.com forward slash newsletter.

I hope this was something that inspired action. got you thinking very differently about your kid's behavior. And as always, you're going to start regulating first and the change will start to happen.

Want more insights and solutions? Well, subscribe to our dysregulation insider and it will show up in your inbox every week.