Meltdowns Explained: Mood Swings and the Nervous System in Kids Transcript

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Why Parenting Advice Fails

Here's the uncomfortable truth. No one is telling parents. Most parenting advice fails because it starts after the nervous system is already shut down or on fire.

You're told to connect more, discipline better, stay calm, but no one explains why your child literally can't respond in those moments until now. The real problem and why this feels never-ending is parents are stuck in a behavioral whack-a-mole.

Some same meltdowns, arguments, power struggles, new strategies that you try but give you the same outcome. Like most parents, you're thinking, what am I missing?

What's actually happening is you're trying to change behavior while the nervous system is still stuck in survival mode. That's like trying teach somebody to swim while they're drowning.

I think we've all been there with our kids, but we're try to teach them something. They're just so dysregulated that they can't hear us. And what if the problem really isn't your parenting style, but the actual order you've been taught to parent in?

Because that's what I've seen. And this is why regulation first is so different. Most approaches say behavior first. Rewards you got to connect first.

You got a talk first you gotta validate feelings Oh, no, you need skills like coping tools or guess what? You've got two charts.

Behavior vs. Nervous System Regulation

We're like inundated by all of these parenting coaches and influencers who are using Chatchie BT to tell you this, but you know me, Dr. Rowe, I've been working with thousands of people over three decades and we have to do something different because you I know we're all living it.

We are in a crisis and we don't have to be. We're making parenting way too hard, right? So regulation first is different because it's telling us, we know this from science, nothing works until the nervous system is stable enough to receive it.

This isn't a mindset shift about parenting like, oh, I need a different parenting approach. This is using biology, the science, to tell us what exactly is the sequence how we should be parenting our kids.

And so what does regulation first actually change in the brain? Yes, because when we are parenting, by keeping that nervous system in mind, we can actually our kid's brain.

We can change our own brains because, when you regulate first, the amygdala that's at our emotional center, it stops running the show. It stops hijacking everything.

Your stress hormones begin to drop and it's yours and theirs. Their prefrontal cortex, I can't talk enough about that because as soon as you go into the red, your pre-front cortex goes offline.

That's why your kid doesn't hear you. And when we start to regulate, it comes back online. You're a reasonable kid. Maybe you're more reasonable. The brain regains flexibility, not just calm, because we need those executive function skills.

We need that neuroplasticity. That's the difference that most parenting advice misses. Because calm alone isn't the goal, flexibility is. regulated and flexible brain because a flexible can do a lot of things.

It can pause. Why is the pause important? So you don't run high. So, you can think about things, You can shift. problem solve. You can recover next time faster because we're never saying kids should never dysregulate.

We're saying, kids dys regulate. Some of the times they learn from it, but you're not going to learn it if you constantly dys regulated you or your kids.

how does behavior changes? How does it actually change when you're regulated? Not in the middle of a hot mess because we're all walking around. I mean, I think the more I talk to people, it's like this dysregulation hum.

How Regulation Changes the Brain

You're hearing the word dys regulation all the time. Your hearing nervous system all time because the science is catching up. We're starting to make sense out of this.

A dys-regulated brain is going to repeat patterns. healthy or unhealthy. A regulated brain is calm enough to learn from that experience. It's about creating that capacity.

I always talk about those cups. And if your cup is always full, you don't have capacity for everyday things. For our kids, every time you go and learn, your stretching yourself.

Think about the last time you went to go learn something. When I wrote my book, we're going to talk about it, I'm in this amazing group of authors with my incredible editor, AJ Harper, adore her.

She's amazing. I don't want to get verklempt, but she really is a big deal. And when she read this book She told me that it completely changed everything she thought about parenting and just I want you to rethink parenting.

And that's what this about. But when the brain is is regulated, it can learn, as I said, can tolerate stress. big stressors and little stressers because it's got that capacity.

The learning rate is so important and this is why, right? So we start to see less meltdown, they get shorter, reactions soften, Kids bounce back instead of constantly spiraling, as well as you getting into a co-disregulation cycle.

That starts to calm down. And parents stop escalating, of course, unintentionally. Who hasn't ever had just this reactivity back and forth with your kid?

Of course. But when it's your go-to, you got yourself a freaking problem, people. Neither one of you wants it. You don't have to be there, and it doesn't to have be that hard.

And that's really important because we're making, again, parenting way too hard, this is why I'm doing this, is this why wrote this book. You're not just managing behavior when you're doing regulation first, you rewiring responses.

You're changing the biology of the nervous system. All of this back and forth reminding not to say our kids don't need scaffolding. They do, right? It's important to understand that.

So let's talk about the parent nervous. And I don' think I even talk enough about it, and I really want to talk. Here's what makes regulation first radically different.

than other parenting approaches. And we're not just talking about co-regulation. But I want you to really understand that's an important part. Regulation starts with you, not as a strategy, but as biology.

Because kids are barring your regulation. You truly are their emotional anchor. Through your nervous system,

stress is going to transfer faster than words.

Parent Nervous System and Co-Regulation

And we know this. It's like when you go someplace, and I recently had a client tell me, just telling me how lovely it was to work with us one-on-one. And they have a kid who's physically disabled.

They have pants kid. Mom's got stuff. I mean, they're just the nicest darn people. She was telling how rude this doctor's office was and how we are the opposite of that, which you all know I'm retiring.

So, you know, these are final days. Because this mission is so important and I need for parents to stop choking on overwhelm. We need to we need a lifeline and that's what this book is.

But those words make such a difference to people and the person if they had just said, hey, listen, we are so busy today. I don't want you to think you're not important because you are.

I just am not going to have time for you." Can you imagine how different that was? Instead, she was just transferring this stress and this hurriedness.

She didn't say anything rude to her. she just was impatient. It was coming across much more than the words. That stress was transferring to somebody who actually works very hard to be regulated and is very aware.

But we have to do more then what we're doing in a different way. COGIS regulation creates double mount downs, regulation breaks, and that emotional contagion loop where you're just transferring that anxiety and irritation.

And when parents regulate first, their tone changes, their body softens, the reactions slow, and their child's nervous system follows, because you both have more capacity to do everyday things, hard things.

Because life is hard. And this is happening not because your calm, but because their bodies feel safer from the cues that you're showing. As Tony would say, it's easy with the mouth.

That means, I talk about this in my book, that we can say things, but are we doing it? And so we have to show our kids this. And don't worry, I show you how to do it.

So after working with thousands of families, this pattern is just super clear. It's really unmistakable that when kids and parents don t know how t regulate their nervous system first, what am I going to see?

I'm actually gonna see an increase in mental health struggles. They don't just show up, they actually snowball. It's like a guarantee. If you don' have that capacity, that stress tolerance to deal with everyday things, you're going to have at a minimum clinical anxiety and maybe even other issues.

Mental Health, Boundaries, and Real Change

We make it like anxiety is no big deal. But it is a big deal. Hold you back and hold your intelligence back. And hold you from taking risks, from connecting with others.

It can make you irritable. Can make your depressed. We don't have to participate that in our nervous system and regulating it, is truly the key. I really mean that.

We don't want to have shutdowns and explosions and focus issues, but that's what happens. They turn into school problems and families start living in survival mode.

And parents will tell me I've tried everything, you know, therapy, charts, consequences, medications. but more patients, less patients. But here's one thing that you need to understand.

Dysregulated brain can't cope, it can learn, can quote unquote behave, no matter how hard the child tries. And what I see over and over is this, when families learn to regulate first before correcting, before teaching, before reacting, nervous system settles.

And when the nervous systems settled, those symptoms ease, not because behavior was forced, but because the brain is finally regulated enough to function.

You're not stuck in the over-under stimulation. This is where real mental health and mental wellness begins. Not in controlling behavior, becoming the Nervous System that drives it.

And this isn't permissive or passive. Regulation first doesn't remove boundaries, it doesn' ignore behavior, It doesn''t excuse actions. It creates the conditions where boundaries can finally be felt instead of fought.

And discipline without regulation equals a threat. Discipline after regulation is guidance. You've got to think of it this way. Your child doesn't need more motivation, consequences, or charts.

They need a nervous system that has the capacity to grow. And once that happens, skills stick. learning accelerates emotional merge maturity actually emerges not overnight please but with each moment of calm that adds up like bank deposits can you hear a ching on that and that's actually why i wrote i'm going to show you if you're if That's why I wrote The Disregulated Kid.

I'm so ridiculously excited about this book. You know, I've been working on this actually since June of 2024. And I know you don't need more tools because you're choking on tools.

You probably have a lot of courses and you probably a have lot a things. But I wrote this so that you can focus on doing things in the right order for all those thousands of people that came to work with me on one on A lot of what I did certainly taught them regulation first, but it was doing things in the right order and regulation.

First isn't just a trend and it's actually a form of parenting that I trademarked because it is I want people to understand it. Is the missing foundational piece that makes everything else finally work.

It's like when you make that beautiful sauce. And you're like, I went to Roseanne's house.

The Dysregulated Kid Book and Pre-Order Message

True story happens all the time. Why did her sauce taste so much better? And I'll give him those ingredients. It's that order. That's how you do it. Maybe it's the way I'm bringing the temperature up.

And so think of nervous system as like the best pasta sauce you ever had. Regulating your nervous is really what makes everything work much, much And it's so logical.

It's right there. I feel like we're looking for the glasses that are on our head. And this is what regulation first does. Its common sense. its not working harder.

it is truly working smarter. When you change that nervous system, you're changing the behavior. and when you changed the order, changing outcome. So, I hope this is like a mind-blowing aha moment that you're realizing only when the nervous system is regulated that YOU can change behavior.

And that's the heart of the dysregulated kid. It's really about simple things that you can do, micro steps that can implement into your everyday life.

We're really never going to achieve this. I think it's this big mountain that we're never gonna achieve. And so, what I've done in this, again, is create simple, doable steps, that, you could do in less than 10 minutes a day, because otherwise, we'll never be able to do it.

When you pre-order your copy, Then you can learn how regulation first creates last income connection and mental health, because what's more important than our mental.

And it's not just for today, but for your adult child, whether your kid is one years old, I want this to go home with every new parent. We have to make things so hard.

And we're thinking, if your kid is five, you're think about the future. I know you are, because I'm a neurodivergent kid, so we worry. But this is how you create these great, happy adults.

Here's the magic part about this. you get to change all the generations that come after that. We don't want to think we're going to be a grandparent. But we are, very likely, and it's all of these steps that add up.

And that's what is all this book is about and making it a lot easier for parents. I know you're filled with parenting advice and I knew you were filled worry and you are thinking, I've done a lot of things, but the dysregulated kid is your path to making it a credible exclusive pre-order bonuses that come only if you buy it before launch date and I'm so excited for this and i know you are too and thank you for all the people all over the world because we hit 2 million downloads and corner of the globe for my Spanish speaking families to the people in the UK and Europe and all over the United States.

Let's make regulation first, the standard in parenting. Want more insights and solutions? Well, subscribe to our Disregulation Insider and it will show up in your inbox every week.