Introduction and the behavior-as-signal approach

Hi, welcome. I am Dr. Rachel McConnell and I'm your host and the creator of our Masterclass series here today called Why is my child acting this way? So I' m a board certified pediatrician with over 20 years of experience and so there's a lot of information out there, a lots of parenting tips and tricks out here, but my approach is a little bit different.

Because I think that the behavior your child is showing you is a signal. It's not necessarily the problem It is just that there's something going on and this is how it's coming out and This is they're displaying that.

There's an underlying problem. So it is time to stop guessing and start understanding I'll see you soon. Thanks Hi Lori, it's so great to have you with us today.

If you don't mind introducing yourself and telling us a little bit about yourself for our audience. Absolutely, Rachel, thank you so much for having me.

I'm Lori Petro, I am the founder of Teach Through Love. And I, am a mom, my daughter's 20, and I an educator, as trained as a teacher. But my passion for Teach through Love came about because of me, unraveling and understanding a toxic childhood and why I felt the way I did and how not to repeat the cycle and it sort of evolved into many things from advocacy to community building and then into education and teaching classes and creating tools for parents to communicate with their kids.

It's kind of how it all came about. But it was a passion that just exploded into a movement when everyone came online back in like the early 2000s or like, the mid 2000's.

And it Was like a crowd supported movement of let's help not repeat the mistakes of previous generations.

Lori Petrou2019s background and Teach Through Love

So That is so amazing. Thank you for sharing that with me, because I think probably a lot of our parents may have gone through something similar. And then they're also trying to break that cycle.

So that is terrific. thank you so much for doing that work for everybody. Yeah, well, yeah, definitely. It's like, what can we give back and learn at the same time, right?

We teach what we most need to learn is that saying. I think an example of that, because I had to grow the skills. I have to learn why I was behaving the way I'm behaving, why i was so reactive, and why things were hard.

And I never even thought I would be a parent because i knew that I didn't even know what that meant because, I did not have strong relationships. So I do not even understand that parent-child relationship.

It has been a learning journey for the last. couple of decades for sure. Oh, yeah. No, I feel like that's what parenthood is like the whole time. Yes, you're right.

It's not like an end point, right? There's always a… I always say like in our classes, we would always talk about like, oh, just we learn so much and now we're going to peel the onion again.

What else is underneath there? Because there's like always stuff that is coming up as soon as we think we've like really got a hold on something and they're like oh wow why is this is hard now too nice something new has come up or my child is now a little older and They're doing something different, right?

I've conquered that phase and now it's over Yeah, I hear you. All right. So our summit is called Why is my Child Acting This Way? So you touched on it just a bit a second ago But when parents ask you that question, what do you tell them?

Or what? Do you want them to know? I think what I do, and this is not that I did this all the time. What I've learned to do is we think about the last time that you were upset with someone or short with them or frustrated.

Why were you behaving that way? I was in a rush. I just got in an argument. There's so many reasons for my behavior when I'm acting. Like we've all acted inappropriately at some point in our lives, right?

Even the most regulated chill person can be passive aggressive maybe. There's always, and so it's like, just look, think about that. there's a reason for our behavior.

And if we can just see our kids as those same humans who, there is always a reasons. It doesn't mean that their behavior is appropriate, but it means that there something motivating their decision.

Why children act out and behavior as communication

Could be a lack of skill, could be an immaturity, they don't have the self-regulation to actually do what's being asked alone, or a lack of support. Maybe they feel unheard or they Don't feel safe or They're scared or worried or fearful.

So if we can just remember that our kids, because I think we're always in a rush, like I said this, you got to do this. I Said this this is what going to happen.

You know this so you have to Do this and we just think it's like an on and off switch. It's not. And we know that. We know if we just sit back and think about it for a minute, we knew that, but when we're in the rush of the moment and trying to get the shoes on or trying the kid to put their books in their bag so we can leave for school, it doesn't feel that easy.

But if you can just think the last time you were short with someone, was there a reason and then just kind of remember that our kids are the same? They're humans and they're learning, so they don't even have as many skills.

Very true. Yeah, so that leads us perfectly into the next thing we're talking about, that behavior is a signal and not necessarily the problem. So how do you kind of really start to explain that more and really get parents to start understand that?

I think first really saying that, behavior's not always acceptable. That is weird. I'm not denying that some behavior, you can't do that but we also can't stop someone before something happens, right?

All we can do is have influence and hope that they're making, you know, those connections in the brain are firing and they are going to make better decisions as they grow.

But I totally understand that all behavior is not appropriate, but it's telling us something, just like I said before, so behavior as communication is a foundational principle in what I talk about.

We call the ABCs of conscious parenting. So it's attachment, that relationship, behavior, being communication, always sending a message, and then C, the communication piece.

Growing those skills to really be able to communicate. Those are kind of the things that we work on. And in that same way, behaviors always telling us something.

I have parents look at it through this three-pronged lens of support, stress, You could always pinpoint behavior to one or more of those areas. Is this a relational challenge?

Like this kid has not felt heard for the last three months because there's always so much friction and we're always forcing control and now it's created a rotational gap.

So we have to kind of maybe work on the support piece. is there a real stress challenge. so many kids are running around dysregulated. And parents are told that's behavior, they need a timeout, They need more punitive.

And it's like their little bodies are completely overwhelmed, whether it is with words, because we're talking too much at them, or lecturing. Whether it was with the environment, a full day of school.

Like there's so much that I think, too media, social media screen time, like there is so many that dysregulates kids. and then we're just looking for that on and off switch.

I told you this, you have to do this and not considering that they're stressed, that's limiting their ability to what we ask. So it's not that their not listening, they are literally limited.

Now, maybe they aren't listening because they trying to, also going back to the support piece, communicate to you that this relationship isn't working and I'm setting a boundary for myself.

Again, we can work with that, like I can with the fact that you don't feel heard, that I know I've been yelling and I have been frustrated. And then I take responsibility for that and say, here's what I was hoping for.

Like there's just a lot more growing in our communication skills that we need to do. So also that child just might not have the skills to what we're asking.

Maybe they're frozen because they don' want to get it wrong and they dont know how to move forward. Behavior being communication, there's so much that could be going on.

If we just stop looking at something that we have to control and look at it as something we absolutely just understand first, then the solutions are a lot more, because we're in a different frame of mind, right?

We're not looking, I have stop this, we are looking okay I'm understanding what you're saying and now I know how to address it differently. That's the shift I think and the real purpose of behavior is a signal, behavior's communication and behavior as a message.

Beautiful, thank you. So you had mentioned something about like, oh, like maybe parents are trying to find the right consequence or if they have the words.

Do you have any advice for parents who are coming like I've tried all of the consequences. I have tried the gold star sheets. You know, I tried it all.

What would you tell them? So the challenge with the I've tried it all is all of those things that you've try to probably interrupted your child's ability to regulate, to be motivated by their own internal motivators, their their system instead of all the goodies out here, the rewards or fear of the punishment.

So I think If we start out punitive or we resort to punative because that's the only thing that really feels good or feels like effective and like we're doing something.

we then create this spiral of power struggles where I don't feel, you're not listening so I'm gonna be harder on you and I feel heard so, I am gonna dig in my heels even more and we go round and round.

Why punitive consequences often backfire

So there's people that get to that point and then there is kids that really need maybe a occupational therapy evaluation. Like there something going on that their system can't regulate.

There's so many kids who are like five, six, seven boys, a lot of boys often that don't get enough movement, they don t get to run outside and play and then they're like asked to sit still for six hours a day in a kindergarten or first grade class and they re like, just they can't, like their bodies literally can t do it.

Can we support them in different ways? Yes, my daughter when she was in I can't even remember what grade. She had an amazing teacher. They had everything in the classroom.

Supportive seats. Now, the problem with that is not every school district has money to do that and that's like a whole other issue that we can obviously delve into.

But when you can provide supports for kids so they can then be inside of an environment which stresses their system, you know, things that they could bounce on with their chair, they have those bands, there's all kinds of things we can do to accommodate those kids to help them be in those environments.

I think I got off track, so what question was I answering? I'm very passionate about that one. No, that's beautiful. Yeah, thank you. So I guess quick question.

I am a pediatrician and I see those little boys and some of the little girls coming to visit me often, and they're usually coming tell me their concern about ADHD.

So what do you tell parents who like those are their concerns and like I'm gonna go visit my pediatrician talk about some ADHD Because maybe they just need medicine.

So, what would you recommend to them? Like maybe let's talk About or look at it this way first. Yeah, I remember the question how that you got back to like what are you telling parents?

There's there's because there are many reasons for why we got to this point of frustration especially people that have older kids that can be really challenging but relate for me The thing that aside, now if your kid has things that are going on and they need medication, you absolutely should talk to your doctor.

I'm an educator, so I come from the point of educating people about child development, about parenting, parenting kids that have challenging behaviors in their history or they had a really traumatic early start and then they come to you and have really challenging behavior.

For me, relationship is always going to be the starting point. Because when kids feel, and I've seen it time and time again, it's not just, oh, the research will tell us.

Dr. Bruce Perry, one of my favorites for trauma and that. belief that relationship is a healing ground. It's not the only thing, but it's the start. So I think a lot of kids come, a lotta parents and kids, come and they have such an adversarial relationship that that's first thing that we have to work on.

Like, getting this kid to feel like they're not going to be lectured, punished, and people are like, But they need to deal with consequences. And it is like They are right now because there's this constant level of fear about what might happen or conflict and if they're behaving in ways that are continually challenging they are saying I still don't feel safe or I'm still not skilled or something is stressing me sometimes it's their peer environment that they can't navigate alone but they don' bring it to you necessarily so there are a lot of always reasons that we get to that point, but I think starting at the relationship and how can we connect back with our kids so that they feel we're on their side instead of against them.

Beautiful. That actually leads me to my next question. So when you see parents like that, what are some of the ways you can suggest to them to start reconnecting with their children?

You know, when they fell like, oh my gosh, like we can't even be in the same room for five minutes before we are going at it. Yeah. That I think is is on us a lot.

And this is where it's where we then need to we need support. Who is that friend that I call when things are really hard with my kid and I can text them all the things I'm feeling so I get that out and then I could be there for them in a more regulated spot.

So I know for me I didn't have really any of that growing up. I did have like that feeling of you're the person I go to and feeling scared and feel safe with you.

In order to be that for someone, you have to also not feel scared. I mean, to the point of like you feel resourceful. It doesn't mean we're never scared, doesn' mean that we are perfectly regulated and calm.

I have enough resources to handle what's happening in this moment for this child. But I had to get to that place. And a lot of us don't have that starting point.

We just, we don t. Our fuse is right at the tippy top of our breaking point and we and so we have to slowly build that. So it might take some time to be able to there for those kids because we had figure out how can I Tolerate what's going on now.

Here's the other thing when I say tolerate what going? If there's something harmful, destructive, I'm not saying you tolerate that. I am saying how do we come in as a supportive, protective place without being controlling and dominating.

So I never want people to think that I going to excuse someone being unsafe, or I just gonna be like, ooh I gonna go regulate while you're unsafe. Like that's never what I saying.

We always do the best that we can in the moment to keep people safe. But a lot of the time we're fighting over shoes and homework and dishes and messy rooms and back talk.

who the big one like parents being disrespected is the one where they're like, Oh no, how dare you? Like I got to this point in my own autonomy, where no one can tell me what to do and you're not as the little person going to And that definitely activates a lot of stuff that comes up for parents.

I know that has definitely come up from me. Especially when we weren't given autonomy as children.

Relationship first: reconnecting with kids

And then it's like, no, we're not going to have that taken away again. So we have to kind of work with a little bit of our own baggage before we can come into that space and really build those connections.

You can watch, it's easier for younger kids, I think, for me. It was much easier when my daughter was younger to be okay while she wasn't okay. Like I'm like, okay, you're very little.

Your brain is very underdeveloped. But as she got older, when she was having a frustrating moment and either taking it out on me or being, whatever the behavior was, It much harder because you were like I know that you are bigger now and you more developed, but at the same time, This is your safe space.

This where I unravel sometimes, this is where let my ugly sometimes come out and then I repair. So I think repair is the next and final word I'll say on building connection is how do I make up for what I know?

I was responsible for? Did I make you scared? Do I talk to you in certain ways that are unfair or disrespectful more? And that doesn't mean that we, and this is not the time for us to be like, oh, but if you would just do this, then I wouldn't have to talk you that way.

Don't do that. It's just going in and taking responsibility for that because that's what kids learn. Then it shows them then how they respond to other people.

And they go out and they don't try to control that person's behavior. is how I felt. This is what didn't work. this is, what I'm going to do next time because this, this.

Is how we should treat people. So that repair is a huge piece, I think to building that connection back. Now, I think that is super true. Do you ever have an issue with parents who are like, oh, if I apologize or take responsibility for some of that, then I am a weak parent.

Like, do you run into that issue? Of course, especially if i'm just talking to parents on like a one-off event or a onetime talk. It's much harder to kind of embrace all the steps because when we go through like our classes, it's much, by the time we're talking about behavior, we've already done that work to investigate.

There's so much investigating our history and why we behave the way we behaved, because then it is much easier to then be in a collaborative position and also be a position where I can maintain boundaries without getting so upset.

Where I could be protective without being harmful. So, but definitely if it's someone that I just met, those are the big questions because we're so conditioned from every other system, I think, in our world that we are used to, to have that frame of mind.

So it is hard to kind of break out of all of the cultural and the societal, like all the impacts and influences and we all come from different backgrounds.

So that's also really hard too, because I often, like someone will tell me something that they are stressed with and I'm like, wow, that something in how I grew up never even came up.

And yet it's a huge, meal time, for example, was something I remember people, not people like this one client really struggling with because it was such a sacred, piece of their childhood and their family culture that they didn't know how to re not react and help when they have little kids who wiggled and could not sit at the table and you know did awful stuff with the food and all of that.

And that was so there's so many we really talk about all those influences that made us think this is the way behavior should be and is that true for me or was that just something that is handed down to me and I just didn' ever question it but it really doesn't make a lot of sense.

So we do a lot of that work too, so that we can have that compassion and things. That's terrific. Do you ever have parents who, I guess, are feeling like they're making progress going forward with this, being more present for their child, but then maybe feel like their getting derailed by a co-parent or a grandparent, or some other important person in the child's life?

Yes, 100% that happens. There's no way around it. Like I said, we're all different. We have different experiences. It's great when there are parents who can parent together and they happen to be on the same page.

But that's just not like not everybody talks about those things or considers that or or even that comes up or that they would even think that. They would have to consider it.

Oftentimes you don't even. Think about it we just have families and we think oh this is just what we do. So that definitely comes out. There are. Excuse me.

There are a couple of ways that I always talk about this particular challenge. One of them is if it's a parent that is really, like if you're having trouble with a partner or spouse who, where there's other perhaps mental health challenges or relational challenges that are barrier, That's different.

Then you really do have to find a mediator of some sort, therapy, relational, whatever, to help that. We can't always work with people who don't want to.

But when you have parents who are on different ends of the spectrum but do really want work the process and figure it out, we really the same work that we do with our kids, So like in conscious communication, which is a big piece, it's always about trying to understand that person, share my needs without blame, um, shared requests that, that are actionable.

And when we're teaching that, when were practicing that. It's not like teaching, always practicing it. We do lots of exercises, practice it, it works just as well with everyone in our lives, including our partners and spouses.

So many people have come back and said, oh, I'm validating, recognizing, observing without judgment with my partner as our marriage has gotten closer.

And there are people that obviously that it also exposes a lot of really harmful relational stuff or challenges that is uncomfortable. And this will be like sort of the tip.

When you have a conflict, it's like, what is that one common ground that you can find with your partner or your spouse? I know that we both want the kids to be respectful to us.

Like, maybe you disagree on how to respond to backtalk, but you say, I that know we have this shared goal. here's how I see it." And then they can see how, and then we get to communication rather than, you can't do that.

Repair, vulnerability, and co-parenting challenges

Cause like parents will come in and they'll be like, I tried to tell my husband exactly why their brains won't grow if he does this. And it's like for lecturing our partners.

Like, no, we don't want to do either. Nobody should get lectured. Everybody should feel heard. Obviously there's a limit when we're talking about, again, abusive behavior.

There are limits to everything where we have to take different steps, but you can still be respectful while maintaining those boundaries, right? It rarely has to be aggressive protection.

I should not say rarely. That's the wrong word. But in general, when we're talking about just our regular parent-child and behavioral stuff, and we are not talking more challenging, we don't have to get aggressive and often we get or passive or like shut down.

So either of those two extremes, I think, tend to happen and we do not have go to either those extremes as well. Excellent. No, that's very important because I think a lot of parents sometimes feel like, man, I'm making progress and then someone else from my circle is pushing back.

So that is great that there are great ways to kind of talk and navigate through that. Can I say one thing about that too? Of course. It's really important.

That, it makes, you hit on that when you said it, makes it kind of feel like all the work that I'm doing, or that's what you sort of led into it made me think of it.

People think all that work I am doing and then maybe you have shared parenting and they go to their other parent's house on one of the weekends and, they come back and their like, resistant or just all these things and you think, all of that worked I've been doing to help them regulate and it's all undone.

when we're the safe parent sometimes like if another parent is more controlling and those kids have don't have as close of a relationship where it is, more combative or whatever it.

Is more challenging to be with that parent. Sometimes we experience. Even more of their like we are the same person to offload all of those emotions. That was my point.

So sometimes it feels like well, well now they're disrespecting me and it's like, but maybe we were also that safe person. behavior message, deciphering that message behind their behavior, we can have an easier experience or at least have more knowledge that this is appropriate.

It's an appropriate response to what they're going through. And it's not that the work is being undone. it is just that they've had an experience that is very true for them and we're gonna have to work through it.

Okay, no, that's a very good point. So I would say, as a parent, I feel like we've all had experiences with our children and we thought we handled it the best we could and then we go to bed and just sort of ruminate about it.

Like, what about this? Should I have done this, maybe I should have You know, and then we realized like, maybe I didn't handle that as great as I could have.

Is there a particular like time limit on how and when to sort of reconnect and make those repairs with your child? I think it depends on their age and what's happened.

Some kids need a lot of space and some time to like really calm down and be ready to be open and vulnerable and that might, so I think that just depends on how And your child's personality, like some kids are snuggle bugs and some are like, please don't talk to me for at least one hour while I reorient to my space and calm myself down.

It really just, I think, depends on the kid. Little kids, that repair has to happen really quickly because of just their brain development and their ability to sort of then integrate what's happened and feel the connection to the actual experience.

But older kids you can definitely kind of see on their timeline. We would often set an actual specific time so that it didn't, it wasn't just like this ambiguous thing that will happen in the future.

It was like, let's talk after dinner. I think we'll both be feeling better after we get some food in our tummy and all of that. Like if you had a six year old or seven year or something.

then it's also like, they know that there'll be a time that we can reconnect. And if we need more time and your child's a little bit old, that's fine too.

Like we always extend, but I think having, like naming it and saying, would that work for you? You know, what do you think? Or asking the child often.

I don't like to pepper kids and interrogate them when they're feeling stressed as it is, But we could always also ask for their contribution and that often makes them feel eases the process of them feeling safe to be vulnerable and reconnect in that way.

Yeah, definitely. So sometimes parents aren't always so great at being vulnerable in reconnecting. Do you have any tips, any lines to open that conversation that are great to have them start with?

Because obviously as the parent, it's our responsibility to reconnect and make those repairs. Yes, it definitely is. But like I said, we don't always have the words.

It's often the skill that we're still learning. In our process of communication, We always talk about it's not even the word that were saying often. it is taking out the underlying stuff, whether it sarcasm, judgment, blame, shame, judgement, guilt, fear.

Like it about Once that's not part of the equation, it's much easier to come up with words that say, and I very much love the nonviolent communication, Marshall Rosenberg, in that process of observation, like just observe, say something nonjudgmental.

And so when I like even in my communication cards, which are here's what we heard growing up, probably. And

here is how we can say the same thing, but differently without all the blame, shame, judgment, guilt.

But it's not even the scripts. It's. Not the words that matter. Its above each sample script, Which will give you an idea of how to start that conversation.

It tells you notice without judgment, prompt with a question, reconnect using empathy. There's all these like stage directions to tell you what perspective will help you reconnect in a supportive level, help them regulate stress or build skills, because the cards are separated into that support skills model.

And so they're examples, but the most important thing you can do is just take that frame of mind and practice No judgment, blame, shame, judgment guilt, because those are the four things, especially, and fear that get in the way and mess up our communication.

So we can still say the same thing. And once we go, oh, look, I'm saying that boundary. I am just not putting the judgment around it. Like, instead of if you don't stop doing X, Y, Z, i'm gonna do this.

It's like, Oh, it looks like you're having trouble not hurt, you know, not doing whatever is not being done. i am going to help you. So now I've set the boundary of let the kid know there is like some things going on that's not okay.

I see you're struggling and I'm going to come in and help you instead of that threatening position of if you don't ongoing to which yeah that works for little kids because they're afraid and they don' want you to disconnect or harm them and bigger kids don''t want their stuff taken away.

But over time that builds a kid who's sneaky who hides who doesn't want to get in trouble who runs and like tries to whether it's lying or just covering, they don't want to be exposed and then they can't.

ever. How can you be responsible when you're afraid of the consequences? It doesn't mean that there's not that we shouldn't have like consequences, but that might mean something different to me than it means to everybody else.

But yeah, I think I just think that We can say the same things we can set boundaries.

Timing repairs and using conscious communication

We could show how how things have been done wrong or how we've been disrespectful and then still guide a child without being mean. Okay, no, that's terrific because I think a lot of parents are worried like oh if I'm trying to be this vulnerable and open like, oh no boundaries.

It's just grief or whatever wants to happen. No, it's not. it s really like how do I take control of myself so that I can really be a good model for my child.

That is the goal of for me. People call it gentle parenting. I call what I do conscious parenting because we're becoming aware of our own interactions, we're becoming aware of our children, and we are able to then connect with them and empathize with without losing our self.

And parents who were raised in really strict environments often don't want to be that strict parent. And then they do become passive and kind of don' t know what to do when behavior is happening because they don t, maybe naturally they're not a yeller or like I came from a household of people who yelled and screamed.

Culturally that was just even when you're talking you are yelling. So, but my husband came from the complete opposite environment. So we have very different ways of responding to conflict.

And we've had to grow our own ability to either confront it or regulate before we come into a situation in very. Different ways. Like we said, there's always that learning curve, But it's never, never never about just like letting kids do whatever they want.

I want them to be autonomous, don't get me wrong. I'm still all about, you know, not forcing obedience for obedience is safe. That's, to me, doesn't work either, but.

No, no, at all. All right, so if you had like any of the children that you have worked with over the time, if feel like they could get together and tell their parents one thing that they really want to know during their hardest moment, what do you think that might be?

Well, I'm going to answer this with the way my daughter answered a very similar question. Back when she was maybe like six, seven, eight, and I used to ask her this question, the first time I asked her, what would you want parents to know about the situation, like if they were struggling with their kids, What do you think they should know?

And she said, just believe their And I think so often we think, you know, shouldn't be angry. There's no reason to be sad or why are you crying? And we don't, it's not that even though we believe them, but it really does feel like that to them as well.

And sometimes we do think there's, no, there is no for you to acting this way. You just had two hours at the park. you should be grateful that you had that time with your friends.

Instead of realizing the very real experience of being sad that your not going to see your friend for however long because now the Park thing is over.

And so I just think if we could just believe kids that when they're having challenging experiences, it's for a reason. Now, don't get me wrong, there are times when kids are like, I'm gonna cry because I know dad responds to that.

But you can address that. You can say, no, I would do this with my daughter because she 100% knew that she could get her dad to say yes to many things that mom would never say.

But she was, we were so connected that it became like, a moment of, like, I caught you, quote unquote, but it was just I allowed you to be truthful and vulnerable and not, and I didn't come at it and attack you and be like you know, you're being ridiculous, there's no reason to cry or something, it's like hmm, are you crying because you no dad will say yes, then she'd go.

You know and then it would come out and we could talk, we can then have a conversation. Am I saying that we need to sit and have 20 minute conversations with our kids every time something goes wrong?

But if that's our foundation, if thats how we solve family problems, If that how talk in our family, that we mostly resolve conflict, then it becomes a pattern and the outside really challenging moments are the exception.

And the rule is that this is generally how it goes. But yeah, we have challenging times because life isn't perfect and things happen and my parents are not perfect.

And we don't have to be. It's that our kids see us authentic and honest and not trying to tell them what to, tell to them to respectful and kind and this and that while we're actually being that in our delivery of that same.

Like that's the, that when it really want us to really recognize is when we're trying to share a limit, but yet breaking that limit ourselves in the delivery of the boundary.

I hear you. Yeah, I think as a parent, we've all been guilty of that. And then like what you said about like re like going over it over in our head, like you got to find that person where you can express all that it don't I don t want anybody like stuffing it down and try to put up a stiff upper lip with their kid like no, I really work on what, and I do a lot of like just really simple sensory stuff, like regulation tools.

We talk a lotta about regulation and there are so many amazing therapists and things online that talk about parenting and also tools to help our nervous systems feel more calm in those moments to actually down-regulate

so that we can be present and bring our thinking brains back online.

Yes, very true. Alright, so if a family listening today can make one small change this week, based on our conversation, what thing or things would you encourage them to try?

One small thing. I think just instead of saying the first thing that comes to mind, say that inside, use your inside voice to say and then see if that's really, if we can just slow down before we react to every situation, it's gonna feel uncomfortable for some people sometimes.

Small changes, grace, and where to find Teach Through Love

And that okay, like it not running from, we don't want our kids to run from the discomfort, yet we do everything in our power to control the outside and everybody else so that we have to feel discomfort.

So if you could practice feeling It's like just staying with whatever comes up for a second and not rushing to set a limit, unless of course there's something dangerous, obviously.

But if we just slow down and stop for seconds, say the first thing that comes, that wants to come out of your mouth and your head to see if it's really what you want to say, I think we'll notice a lot more.

One of the things parents do in our communication classes, and this is so funny, back in the day when we started, it was a little harder. everybody's recorded, but if you just even record like breakfast, like the breakfast routine, just set up like a phone out of the way and then watch it back.

Like, what do you, how do feel watching yourself? That was two things that they could do, But that one's really eye-opening because suddenly we're outside of this situation.

We're not all heated and our brains offline and just, you know, either yelling commands or being, being punitive or shutting down. we are really getting to watch.

Or, you know, maybe we're recognizing that we are letting our kids kind of run all over us and we aren't setting any limits. So we really get, I think, a different perspective of our own behavior when we kind watch it and forget that it's there, if you can, and then kind go back and watch.

Even without sound. What facial expressions are you using? Because our non-verbal communication says so much to kids. Yeah, no, that is a great idea, especially because we're busy recording everything in our lives now.

Right. All right. As we are wrapping up from our lovely interview, is there one message that you want to leave our families with? One message. Just give yourself so much grace for mistakes.

Like there's no perfection. Our motto has become conscious, not perfect, because it's not about achieving. I think we were talking about this before we started.

It's like some end goal. Its just this constant learning and unraveling, peeling the onion to learn what else is underneath and what is, and finding Yeah, that's what I would say.

Conscious not perfect. Just try to remember to give yourself a little bit of grace and permission to fail miserably. And then you get to learn about how to do repair.

Beautiful, thank you. For parents who want to find out more about the work that you do, where can they find you? Yes, you can Google Teach Through Love or my name and all my websites.

Everything is at Teach through Love on my YouTube. On my Youtube you'll find tons. I started doing YouTube videos in like 2009 and then consistently for like three years I did a weekly Q&A.

So there are hundreds. You'll see my big early 2000s hair. There's so much. I'm like, how does it look like these were made 30 years ago? But I guess it was almost 20 years for a lot of them.

But tons of free content. Go to my website and teachthroughlove.com and take the quiz on there and see what kind of… Are you a low battery parent? Are like I got to get this done, parent, and then find ways to sort of help yourself through all those moments.

All right, lovely. Thank you so much for joining us today. Ah, thank you for having me.