Spoil Your Baby Ep 43 - Evolutionary Parenting: Beyond the Sleep Training Narrative ft Tracy Cassels Transcript

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Opening Thoughts on Sleep Training Research

Okay, we assess, parents do cry it out. They report that their babies don't wake. We come back and say, look at this, it works, right? And if you approach research with the idea that an outcome is a definite link to whatever you're assessing, then okay, like I get sick, I die.

Okay. There's a causal link that makes sense. You can follow it. But I sleep train and I don t wake my parents. It's a wide cloud of gray that you ventured there.

And okay, did you really not wake? Did you not awake your parents? That's the first question. Why didn't you wake your parent? And would you, you know, if you're crying, are you tired?

Welcome to Spoil Your Baby podcast today. I am here with one of my favorite humans in the world, Tracy Castles. Welcome, Tracey. Thank you. You are one of my favorite humans too.

So it's always so lovely to be here. As we said at the beginning, I could sit here and talk to you all day. I know, but we have to have a day where we do that.

And we live like a few hours away. We should make it happen in real life one day too? We could. Absolutely. Yes. Okay. That's the next plan. Let's get together and maybe do a little chat for part of it, like live, just together somewhere.

It'll be good. Love that, that would be glorious. I love it. We've mentioned it before, but let's make it really happy. Yeah. It's COVID this time, so I think it's a little easier.

That's right. it was COVID for a while. Lest we forget. Oh, we're still recovering I, think in a lot of ways.

How Evolutionary Parenting Began

So I feel like the best way to start our conversation is I think like how I found you, because I want everyone to know about you and your work and publications and podcasts and all the things we'll talk about.

But I remember so well, I was sitting in my lab in New York at Columbia, just furiously like, how do I get neuroscience out into the world? And everybody knew was sleep training their babies or talking about sleep-training.

And I was like, surely this is not gonna help the developing brain if not, like be a risk. and obviously found you. Like, I'm not crazy. Yay. Because back then it was…

You're like oh my God, haven't lost my mind. Yes. That it's only you At that point, really? For a while, it really was. It really felt like a long time ago, but it was really, and that was how it started, right?

I had the same thing as you. I'm sitting there, I am pregnant, doing my PhD in developmental psychology, looking at all the advice, being like, this, what's happening?

Hearing it, friends are sleep training. I mean, my mom never did, right? So this was like a whole foreign land to me. And, you know, I just came from such a different background and it didn't resonate.

and yet I was seeing it from like, even academics out there pushing, as we know all of the sleep training. It still is.

So like you, that was kind of impetus of like okay, we can actually talk about this because this is not making sense.

And this does not resonate with everything I read in the literature. The research I'm doing, none of it seems to align to what we're hearing. Yeah, and so much of this was like 10 years ago, I think, when this all started.

More than 10 year ago. My daughter's 15 now. 15 years. Wow. Like, yeah, evolutionary parenting was pretty much born with her. It was some things I went through, like thinking of, well, pregnant with her, talking to my husband all the time.

And then it was after she was born that, I mean, think I've told you before, right? Like I just kept ranting to poor husband. He was like my soundboard and he was the one that pushed, he's like, half jokingly, like you really have to just get this out in part because I think he just couldn't hear it anymore.

It was, it's just like yes, yes I heard it so many times. I agree with you. Can we please just talk to someone else now? That's kind of where we went.

Yeah. Yeah, amazing. 15 years ago. Incredible.

Limits of Sleep Training Evidence

And you, you know, through your website, which is, it's there for everybody to still access. I send tons of people there. We'll put the link down. It's actually, we had just a little crash the other day, so we're trying to figure out some plugin crashed a bunch.

So most of it is there, not all of its there but we are slowly figuring out how to get it all back. Yeah, I mean, it's always happening, right? It is there.

Most of it is, like, 90% is here, but a little bit is still missing. Okay, good. And you really went through almost every topic in fit brand development, in detail, referenced, and, you know, a really, really epic resource for parents, Right?

And I think it, It's great because, um, sometimes I'll get messages from people just like, can you give me something for like my husband to read or my mother-in-law to lead or like someone it's like they're not gonna read a book because you know, I could be like okay, here's 10 books.

You could read but this is like your your blogs are really topic focused and and like you no succinct right for people to to just get a good take, right?

Yeah. And that was always the point. Like, I do feel, and it's funny you say that about emails, because that with a lot of calls that I took for a long time was less about supporting, like, there was a lots of supporting families, don't get me wrong.

I love that and do that, wonderful. But some of it, it was like good chunk of call I take that were, hey, i'm gonna come on with my husband, with mother, my mother-in-law, even good friends who are kind of purringing some people.

And I need you to talk to them. Because they're just right into no, this is evidence. and they'll be like, This is I see it from researchers, everything.

So tell me why you think it's wrong. And it was a really successful a lot of the time because when you really dig into the research and you're honest about it, and that's something I think we can talk about in a bit, because I even think both sides get a little dishonest about what we know and what don't know.

But they, when people hear honestly what's out there without a lots of bias, I can present it that way. A lot of people like, okay, now I get it better.

Now I see the little nuances, the stuff that's missing the everything and it would lead to better communication amongst people and whatever they decided a lot those cases, I don't know where they went.

But I felt at the end that those I do know of that followed up, because some of them would start to work instead with like me to help but not do sleep training.

So I know it was successful that way. And a lot of cases just to be able to educate people on just the reality of what we know what, we don't know. and how it impacts our children and our relationships with them.

Yeah. And I love the point about being honest about what we know and what don't, because I say this all the time. We have not, mothers and babies have been supported by a good amount of research.

It's like pathetic. Um, we do have a ton of developmental psychology, developmental neuroscience, you know, all of those fields, but like, clinical study, like specific studies of interventions and things like this, very, very thin in the research.

And it's very thin and research in research that is there is really hard to sometimes interpret. That's what's always difficult is I can hear, you know, I won't name names, but certain people that are very well known and written books about evidence based practices where I might agree on some things like some medical takes and everything, but disagree on the more social science takes.

And I think some of the issue that comes up, and I always go to this because it was actually my stats professor that did this. I worked with Ralph. Ralph was my favorite.

Because I almost actually, when I went into developmental psych, I actually almost went in to statistics. So I did a minor in that instead. You're a brilliant because statistics are the bane of most people's existence.

And I love it. I loved it so I know I like, I always needed help with my statistics. Numbers speak to me better than other things. So it works well. It's your special talent.

He said, it was really interesting because he was talking actually, he's talking about economists to be fair. But he said that one of the problems that economists, others have with social science research is they're very used to outcomes being clear, right?

It's, it's health, its finances, is it you know, they look at global health outcomes, you look, and at a large scale population, You really do get to have some pretty clear cut defined outcomes that you can link to stuff.

Social science isn't really that way, Right? So like, I even think about our sleep training studies, okay, We assess, parents do cry it out. They report that their babies don't wake.

We come back and say, look at this, it works, right? And if you approach research with the idea that an outcome is a definite link to whatever you're assessing, then okay, like I get sick, I die.

Okay, there's a causal link that makes sense.

Sleep Problems as Symptoms, Not Causes

You can follow it. But I sleep train and I don' wake my parents. wide cloud of gray that you ventured there. And okay, did you really not wake? Did you not make your parents?

That's the first question. Why didn't you wake your parent? And would you you know, if you're crying, are you tired? Do you run at like what's happening with your energy stores?

You're all this stuff that comes into play that the outcome that we've measured is not telling us any of the underlying pieces. So we're assuming a causality that we have no basis for assuming.

Um, and similarly, when we talk about, I hear a lot of anti-sleep training people, which of course I agree with in principle, but taking research to be like, we know it damages the brain.

We know, it does this. And we're like we don't, We don' have that research because of what you said. Mothers and babies are so understudied. Like, we just haven't gotten, especially to that emotional and mental connection.

Yes, we understand a bit of attachment, but even look at how little we really understand about attachment. Like it's still… Completely, it still like the strange situation is like, the only measure, which is bizarre.

Right, exactly. We really don't have, or we're looking at parental report of attachments. And we are getting the parent side of things, But we aren't getting child side things.

So, there's so much that we don' actually really understands, And so I always argue like the way I approach how I think about things like sleep training or any kind of parenting research as it comes in is my family is like a history of lawyers until like my grandfather.

So I take the legal side of things. I can see that in him. And I argue that I feel like it's a circumstantial case. It's an incredibly strong circumstancial case against sleep-training.

what we know and how it could piece together. It is there is a case for sure. The problem is, there's no smoking gun. There's No clear cut link. Like if you were in a court of law, it wouldn't pass.

But in any logical in my brain, I don't need to be in the court. I'm a mother, a researcher, and I am not thinking that way. but I think it's helpful for people to view it that, because there can be a circumstantial case that we all go, we, know you're guilty.

Even without that, we know it. We just don't have that super clear cut evidence. Yeah. It's so important because we have to trust people to make their decision based on the real information that we.

And the other thing is, is would, if we put on trial the experience of a mother during training, that might also be a pretty open and shed case. I would totally agree.

I just, I know there are probably some people that can do it quite fine, but I haven't met them yet. Yes. A parent who doesn't find sleep training incredibly emotionally difficult.

And if they say they did find it's okay, as a, you know, someone who works with parents a lot, You know they're not underneath it all because it is something that they are actually obsessed about.

and will perseverate over for years and years, and maybe their whole life. And that's a sign that it's not actually okay. Yeah, exactly. I think that what people get is, in so many cases, when I see people adamantly pushing it, it is because they need the validation themselves.

Yes. That's the thing. When we get too far out, I'm quite happy. So many people I know sleep trained. Close friends, family, everything. And always people seem surprised.

They're like, but you, don't they? And I'm like no, not everyone listens. Like, which is good. Not everyone should listen to me. I have one perspective.

Yeah. But I want people to look around and become comfortable. As you say, the ones that really get me are most of them that have done it. It's, they're still talking about it years later.

And trying to convince you that this was the best thing. you were happy with your decision, you're good, there you go, that's yours. You don't need my permission to do anything.

Like no one needs my permissions, except me. That's pretty much it, right? And when they're looking for that

validation from others and trying to push it you know it's that psychologically something there's a disconnect.

And so they desperately try to make it They're desperately trying to justify. And that is… And not everyone's like that. There are people at SleepTrain that aren't like, like absolutely, but when you see someone really, really into like almost needing to convince other people to do it, you have to ask yourself why, right?

Like, what is the reason there? Sometimes I do. I'm like it sounds like you're having a lot of feelings about this. What's going on? What is happening inside of you right now?

Yeah, if I'm working with someone who's done it I can. If it's someone I don't know very well, I tend not to die. I had a neighbor when my son was, they pretty much born the exact same time as my sun and just unsolicited would get reams of texts.

about it and trying to convince me, you know, I don't even think they knew what my deal was, professionally or anything at that point either. And I was just like…

I did sit down with her and talk about. Actually, scarily, her son left alone from sleep training, wrapped his monitor cord around his… He's okay. wrapped, she found him with his cord wrapped around his entire body and he had not signaled.

Horrific. These are the things that like, you hear the stories and I guess this is the biggest issue though and this where I always come back to where, I do get the issue is that we're sexy and especially in the U. S.

where i know I had a lot of families but even outside the US. Western culture, we are not supportive of women and families. Like, it is… I see it so much clearer now than ever, too.

It's like… Exactly. And it's, like, going backwards. Let's just be honest here. Where we were, I think, five, six, ten years ago, 10 years I'm gonna go back, is better than where we are now, but that's almost a topic for another day.

But I thing the issue for me is, I get that women are put in, and it's often women. It's not always. I've worked with families where it is primarily the father who's taking care or, you know, a gay couple where there's going to be one of them, like this is all.

But I say women out of the general population are not getting the support they need. So, therefore, they're expected to do everything during the day, the work, majority of women are the primary nighttime caregivers.

Yes. And not always, but that is a burden. So, I understand the push for sleep training to try and help moms, that it's like, because I know you probably get it too, people will come out and accuse you of not caring about mothers because you're not pro-sleep training, which is absolutely antithetical to it.

Because I don't think sleep-training can harm mothers. Completely against your research too. Sleep training can hurt mothers too quite significantly. Exactly.

Exactly, like this isn't the answer. It's just that it's the only answer that our society seems to have come up with. Yeah, it is the one thing, right?

A lot of people are under that impression. This is THE way, the ONLY way. Exactly. And there is no other way so if I don't do it this way all I'm going to do is suffer.

Family Context, Support, and Maternal Stress

Yes. Suffer or sleep drain, yes. There isn´t, exactly. and there's so much more out there as you know, as I know. is there are a lot of people out there now trying to counter some of this narrative.

But it is, it's hard because the forces against it, is like all of society. It's your work that's like, you've got to still be

productive and work, hey, minimum 40 hours a week.

You're lucky if that what you get and you're taking care of your kids and your doing it on no sleep and all it. I'm so sorry, I have a cat at the door I am listening to scratch at door.

That's okay. You can open it if you need to. I might in a minute. He's very needy right now. So he follows me to the office and everything. My dog does that too.

She might let herself in. Sorry, go ahead. I'm going to say we have four cats and two of them hate each other. So if I leave the door open for them both, I can end up in the middle of like a half cat fight while I am trying to work, which is like I have finally understood.

You know, i've always used the phrase, oh, trying heard cats being like, Oh, that's funny to think of. I've now tried to do it and I, have a whole new appreciation for that thing.

It is now a go-to for an impossible situation. I love animals. They're endless entertainment and mental health support, I find. Um… They are, it's true.

Yes. THEY ARE. Everyone needs a pet, especially mothers who need that extra love and support and someone to cuddle you and give you some of that good energy, right?

Exactly, right? That is… And kids need them to just do well with them, because then they entertain the children too. So, it's like a win-win situation.

They're great. Yeah. I know a lot of your research that you've done recently, you're continuing to publish papers. If I'm not, I don't actually remember the exact details of your latest one, but I am pretty sure your last one was looking a lot at the perspective of mothers and families.

It was. Um, it was one with Lovita D'Souza, who's a researcher out at Monash University in Australia. She specializes in attachment theory. And we did a paper together really trying to break down why…

Well, understanding why the push to sleep training actually ignores a huge swath of the family dynamic. So if we take a larger view of like parenting, you know, your child and then you have the parents and you then have their culture or their society and extended family, then the overarching culture and all this stuff going in and we put sleep solely on the behavior of parents.

Right? It's you have to, you are somehow responsible for how your child sleeps is the message we send. When in reality, it's influenced by their physical health, they can have allergies and tolerances, They might, have digestive issues for a while, feeding issues.

So we ignore the baby almost entirely. We treat them like they, can't have anything wrong. And I know that because so many families I worked with, had worked with other people who did nothing but push sleep training, including, in the most frustrating cases, physicians who should be looking at underlying causes.

Yes. And we actually have to force them to look at them, which is mind-blowing. Like, a baby who's not getting enough oxygen into their brain is being told by their doctor to go sleep train.

Exactly. This is the part that it's become the cat's tail. Everyone's like, oh, just sleep trains. Sleep problems are… symptoms, right? There's… Sleep problems inherently aren't…

Such a good point. I think that's the title of the episode, Tracy. But it is. Like, sleep problems are a symptom. They are. People do not… It's a symptoms of something else.

As you're adults, I get it. Some people have insomnia, but even insomnia can exist from a purely physical perspective, But very rarely is that the case, Right?

That's usually a psychological route. Exactly. And children when they don't sleep, like, well, when, they, don t sleep the way parents want them to, because first, there's always the reality of no, Don't expect your baby to sleep through the night.

There are unicorn children that do, but let's just be real about what to expect. But when kids aren't even doing that, cause most families I work with, that I've spoken to fine if their baby wakes two, three times a night.

They're there, they feed. You're functioning, you're okay. What gets problematic is when I would meet with families who are like, yeah, my baby, wakes 15 to 20 times the night, that you are not breathing.

And in all of those cases, I have never had one where we did not find the physical culprit. Sometimes it took longer. Sometimes parents would resist. I had one mother who just absolutely refused to believe that there was a melatonin potential melotonin issue with her child.

And I was like, it just, there were a lot of symptoms. As like I would get to the doctor, and she actually stopped working with me and I got an email.

like four or five months later, where they'd finally gone in for other testing. And guess what happened? The doctor did the test and he was like, yeah, he's not producing it enough or something's happening.

This was in conjunction with some other issues that came up. He was recommending that we get him on a dose. North America. So they actually needed a prescription for any melatonin.

It's not handed out over the counter. But the doctor was like, I want to do this. And she was, like do you think it's okay to that? I'm like yes, because this is exactly where we're looking for.

Exactly. But even when it comes out later, like we discover sometimes it's allergies, we've had sleep apnea pop up, there's been feeding, latch feeding tongue ties, all those issues coupled up together.

There's just so much and It's so nice when I see families who are really stressed. Well, it's not nice to see stressed families. Let me just say, I'm getting to the end part that's nice.

But you see, families that are stressed out, they're worried about everything. They really can't see how there could be something wrong. Because overall, we're not talking about catastrophic health issues here.

We're talking things that interrupt sleep. And as soon as they start to discover what it is, like, oh my God, things improve. Some of them are like, I can't even believe I thought about sleep training, because it was just out of desperation.

It would have been cruel, right? The baby's still gonna be waking up, still having the issues, the medical route is still there, but they're not having support, and the parents are, you know, probably in a place where they wanna be supporting.

Exactly, cause these, well, parents care. Like, they love their children. Every parent wants to do what's best for their kids. And it's just hard, like it is so hard.

we may have talked about this before, but I once a few years ago asked on social media, which I'm now off of, thank God. But asked parents, okay, what is the most important thing for your child?

And was shocked that every answer was sleep. And I started to challenge it. So I start asking online, I thought it was so shocked. I starts asking clients when they first when we first started working together.

It'd be one of my first questions, because this is the obsession we have about slaves in our society. And they would inevitably say, sleep. I'm like, really?

Okay. So you think sleep's more important than your love? Or proper feeding? Mm-hmm. Or… warmth? Comfort? And all of a sudden, you just see the brains, oh my God, wait a second.

Like… Everyone gets into this one track mind because our society is so sleep, sleep sleep. We tell new parents, oh, you're never gonna sleep again. Like, it's the stories.

You don't sit when someone says you are pregnant and go, Oh my God, the cuddles you were gonna get in the morning when you sit down and feel that child just, they lie into you in a way that other people don' because they just trust you so completely and you weather everything.

you will never know, like, that experience is what you should be looking forward to. That's not what we say to new parents. Oh, well, your life is changing.

It's almost like you're only gonna be successful once the sleep is controlled or fixed. Exactly. And so parents have that, and we tell horror stories.

Be like if your baby doesn't sleep enough, they will live under a bridge and they'll never be able to count to five and you'll be destitute forever. That's true.

Like, this is all fear-mongering. And when we get parents back to thinking about what's really important for their children, sleep is important. I'm not trying to dismiss it.

Sleep is for all of us. But there's so much more that goes into it that has to be considered.

Supporting Children Through Sleep Without Training

That brings us back, that was what that paper was, was all these other contextual things that we're looking at family culture, because not everyone even comes from a culture that believes in sleep training.

They might live in a country where it's pushed. It's very difficult. we have health issues that aren't being looked at. We have just general family preferences, right?

Like we're a bit of a later nighttime household where not early, but like all of those things influence how families behave together and how family sleep.

And I talk about how a family sleeps because whether you're co-sleeping or not, sleep is a familiar thing, how it's all structured, set up, and you have to still consider that.

You don't put a child and just think that they sleep somehow without any other context around them. So it was a real push for us to try and get more so for other researchers to start thinking, can we start looking at these things?

Can we change the way we think about to have this much broader perspective? Yes, it's going to make everything a bit messier to talk about, a little bit more complicated.

But if we just focus on this narrow little area, you're not getting what we need to help families. We're not getting the answers that we needed or want to helped myriad families across different perspectives, right?

It's not saying, it's like they're looking for the one size fits all solution and there just isn't one and they shouldn't be one. It is really hard to study humans and this is the reason and that's the truth.

Yes, exactly. Yeah. And we mean to, this the work that has to come out is to really help Like research is supposed to help us. And I've always believed that, right?

Like as a researcher, you are trying to study things that make life a little bit better for everyone, like that's the goal. You want to do something that adds a positive impact.

That's why everyone's in it, and you want help, You wanna improve health, improve happiness, fix the world in your own little way. Exactly. The research as we have it structured right now, I don't think is doing that.

A lot of it is set up to just continue to support sleep training and ignoring everything you just said, but also ignoring the huge percentage where sleep-training does not silence a child's cries and they end up crying every night for their entire infancy, in some cases.

And it's not taking into account the emotional experience of babies or mothers or fathers or the other siblings in the home. And I'm pretty sure you mentioned in your study or on your podcast, I believe, that there was also a movement in The Sleep Research where people are trying to support mothers to suppress their feelings even further so that they can be successful in sleep training.

Yes, that was so, it was, so fascinating. And that is a lot of that research kind of came out of Michael Gratisar's lab. Yeah. Um, and it, was it really interesting.

Cause I actually spoke with, uh, Michal Kahn, one time on the podcast and she's a pro sleep training person. Yep. The research, because she'd done a piece where it is really an interesting study, cause the results weren't what she expected.

Um, cause it was talking about the difference between a supportive kind of for mothers that were high anxiety. They could do, they, put them into two conditions and I'm trying to remember everything that was a few years ago.

So details, I am giving my high level memory. I can listen to the podcast for all the details. But there was kind of these conditions. So half the group was put into pure extinction sleep training.

Half were put in a more milder, lying next to the crib for the night the first time with arms through, touching babies and slowly moving away over the period of time.

And then they also assessed anxiety and had kind half of mothers in each group were higher anxiety, and half were lower anxiety. Right? So they're seeing how this all goes.

One, the more supportive method was more successful all around, right, for everyone. But it had a massive effect for, like, it was way better for mothers who had greater anxiety around stuff.

So it supported them with it. The take they took from it and where this research has now gone is, oh, so we just need to help mothers not be anxious listening to their babies cry.

It was not maybe we should actually have more support of methods. It was now we need to be able to stop moms from feeling that anxiety of listening to them cry.

Because it was not anxiety in general, so I should specify. It with the anxiety around being, having a distressed baby around. Yeah, the more people find their baby crying distressful, The more they want to comfort them.

Because that's evolution. That's not all like, our babies, we could react that strongly to our baby's because that is their only means of telling us something is wrong.

You want a baby? Crying is a frickin tigers coming and ready to eat them? You wanna hear that and get there? This is how they survive. And our reaction to their cries is evolutionarily tailored so that we do respond strongly.

So I get very nervous. And quickly, right? Like millisecond response. Our brains are especially attuned to a cry. We, you know, our brain immediately sends energy into our legs to go running when we hear it.

Exactly! We hear those phantom cries in the shower. Oh, my God. I'll… And then any baby that cries when you're out anywhere, You're like, is that mine?

Is that my? I get adrenaline shooting down my legs. Anytime I see a baby fall or cry still. Yes, you just get it's like it starts in your stomach and you get propelled into motion right away.

That the idea that we are doing research to dampen that is mind boggling to me because the entire idea of just cutting people out, cutting mothers out of being like you should learn not to I don't wanna say you should learn not to care, but that feels like what they're trying to do is…

Your child's distress is not your problem. You need to learn to step back and… You're weak, you shouldn't have these feelings. It's also mind-blowing in this age of mental health awareness.

where most adults realize that all of the natural emotions and feelings and instincts and intuitions that they suppressed or were led to suppress as a young one are those exact wounds that need to heal now.

That approach is teaching parents how to wound themselves by not listening to their natural rhythms. Exactly. But I think I can see almost what we were saying earlier about those who push sleep training because of their need to justify it.

That's how so much gets repeated. People were suppressing, even though they have to work on it now, they still, I mean, it's hard to put that connection of, oh, that was bad down there that that happened.

And even harder because our conscious memory… It has to be right, because it was like hazing, right? It was so bad, but I did it, and it has be worth it because I something like that bad.

Exactly. And that's exactly how I feel like is what we're asking families to do is, hey, that'd be great. I hadn't even thought about that analogy, but that is almost exactly what it is.

Then we perpetuate this, well, I did it and everything's fine. So everyone has to go through this and this is why they should do. If you choose something different, it threatens my story, threatens, my cognitive dissonance, and so I will not let it go.

Exactly. And you know what? Some kids, like, take longer, to sleep more comfortably or overnight. Some kid's just, my daughter's never been a great sleeper.

She's still, she's found all her ways of doing it now, but even as a teenager, She is not the deep sleep everything. she has just always been the lighter sleep.

But she found, we found our ways with guided meditations and really like calming routines and she had like aromatherapy stuff going on in there. Like, it's just, she's really found things, so she is comfortable.

She's not tired, not stressed, but she also needs things a particular way. she doesn't like sleeping over at other people's places because she wants her room, things.

And we totally support that. That is absolutely, She should find what works for her. My son, on the other hand, once he falls asleep, he's dead to the world.

I don't think, like… I-I don' know anything that could wake him. So, you know, the two opposites here. It's different, right? They're different. People are different and you've got to be there.

But I always think like, you know, she struggled with sleep, but she was always open to talking with us about it because we were there for her through it all.

So we've been able to find the things that help her cope as she's older, because she knows and my son to the fair, sometimes he struggles to fall asleep.

But he knows, he's younger by quite a bit, but he still comes, gets me, and I go into bed with him. And we snuggle

until he falls asleep. At some point in the middle of the night, I wake up, because I always fall asleep too, cause I can't lie down next to any young child who's falling asleep and not fall to sleep with them.

It doesn't matter the time. I'm done. That's it. But I get up and then I move, you know, middle of the night, that's fine. And it's once in a while, but I love, and I know those are gonna end.

But, I loved those moments. That's why when everyone thinks, oh, God, the pain, like, Oh, my God. I got it one more time. and, And I don't know when the last time is gonna be, right?

Like, it is one of those things that I always caution people to think about. Like I haven't slept with my, haven' snuggled my daughter in years.

Upcoming Book and Closing Remarks

So I know at some point with my son, it'll be the last time and I'm not gonna begrudge that I have to do something that, I'll know I will be sad about when it ends.

100%. There's all those videos now of people posting like, when I am 80, this is what I gonna think about and it's them snuggling their baby to sleep or their child to asleep, right?

And this such a great place, for us to end, like I think… Yeah. the approach that we, you know, support, supporting our baby sleep, our children sleep until they tell us, I don't need you anymore.

Um, because that's how it works in my house too. It's not just taking sleep from it being a problem to being okay. it's actually being able to turn sleep into one of the most beautiful sweet, precious experiences that you will hold with you for the rest of your life.

It's not just making it terrible to find, it's making like something that I don't think anybody on Earth should be missing out on because it is just indescribably incredible.

Yes, It is. And the way they feel about sleep, my son said to me the other day and I was just so happy as he got into bed and he's like, okay, good. Now it's my favorite time, sleep time.

With all the resistance that kids have about the sleep as they get older, he hops into the bed, and feels safe. He feels that. He knows if anything happens, he'll come get me.

If for any reason he has a nightmare, there's no fear of that or fear being alone after that, and therefore he finds sleep to be amazing. And I love that because…

That's what we want. It's the basis of all health as we grow. Yep. But it's still not the everything, right? I want him to love it. But even more, I want him to…

I think the crucial part to me is you can only love it, because it's important, if you feel supported through it out. Right? Through it all of it. If you are looking at sleep as a place of, okay, i'm alone for the next 10 hours.

Yeah, let me muscle through that. Like, and all the time, like, uh, I'm going to stop myself. I'm ready to go back on another rant about, you know, see it on social media, people's kids who threw up in the bed and just didn't signal.

There's something so fundamentally wrong with that, We should have our kids know that they can come to us, know they feel safe in their bed, in the room.

stay there because they have to. They stay because want to, and when they don't want or don'feel safe there, they're perfectly comfortable coming to us.

That is healthy sleep. A hundred percent. Healthy relationship and healthy sleeps and relationships happen when

the sun is up and down. It's not conditional.

Exactly, yes. And, you know, the other thing to remember just last little bit for families is A lot of times we're so busy during the day and getting out, that connection at nighttime should never be dismissed.

Sometimes that may be, if you're working all day, I always see the families who co-sleep a lot later, often some of that's the reason. I had friends and clients I've worked with where they work all-day.

The idea of only spending a few hours when they get home from work with their babies, or even their young children, like toddlers, they're like, no, but if I sleep with them, I get that whole contact and you can be asleep, but that contact is still, you're transmitting so much.

You're still just having this experience even while you are sleeping. I love that. And I feel that in my own experience and see it all the time too. Amazing Tracy.

Well, we'll have to have you back when your next paper comes out. Oh my, well actually we have a book coming out Oh! Not a full, but it's an academic one.

Yes! I know about that. That's exciting. Jenny, who I've also written with, is the editor on it, and it is all on sleep, we've got Darsha Narvaez and Lovita as well, myself and Jenny and some others all wrote chapters on a variety of issues, all related to sleep.

I'm not sure exactly when it coming out, it goes in, in like 15 days. Is it called something like, can we finally end sleep training? Is that the title?

You know what? To be honest, it might be. I'm really bad at naming those. So, like, please don't… Yeah. But it is like a, come on. And my chapter's the last one, which is all about the things families can do in place of sleep training that might help.

It's still out for a bit, but when it does, we are back on and we will chat about all the… Oh, yeah, you're back. We'll get all of the contributors on as well, I hope.

That would be fantastic. Oh you should. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, we'll post your link to your website, your podcast, and when the book comes out, will let everyone know.

And yeah, anyone who is in this realm or curious about supporting your baby's sleep and forming that close relationship and all kinds of things like daycare and, you know, Tracy goes deep on everything.

So, very good. Yes. Very, very good resource for families, especially if you need to send your husband or mother-in-law or aunt or whoever's meddling in your business some great resource.

Awesome, Tracy. Thanks so much. We'll talk soon. Oh, thank you, Greer.