

Help, I'm Failing At Parenting!

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SUMMARY

In this episode of "Parenting and You," Dr. Shafali discusses the pressures of perfectionism in parenting and the importance of self-awareness and connection over striving for an unattainable ideal. She engages with Derek, a helicopter dad struggling with anxiety about his child's development, and Carol, a mother navigating parenting post-divorce, emphasizing the need for open communication and emotional honesty with children.

- *Perfectionism in parenting can lead to anxiety and over-control, inhibiting children's natural exploration and growth.*
- *Parents often project their fears onto their children, which can create a sense of paranoia rather than safety.*
- *Acknowledging one's own imperfections and emotional struggles is crucial for authentic parenting.*
- *Open communication with children about feelings and challenges is essential, especially during difficult transitions like divorce.*
- *Children need a stable environment where they can express their emotions without feeling burdened by their parents' issues.*
- *It's important for parents to confront pain and challenges directly, teaching children resilience and coping mechanisms.*
- *Building a supportive and understanding relationship with children fosters healing and growth for both parties.*
- *Parents should aim to be allies and guides rather than best friends, maintaining a balance between support and authority.*

[Music] hey everyone welcome to a new episode of parenting and you with me Dr shaali every parent wants to be a perfect parent but guess what I have never ever met one yet and when parents look at me they have an image or a fantasy of me being impeccable and then when I reveal to them how absolutely human I am and how many mistakes I make they get confused because they want me to be on a

pedestal but they also appreciate that I'm a real human just like them I always tell all my clients that our children don't need a perfect parent they just need a self-aware and connected one so if you are a parent who's struggling believing that they're just not getting it right and they're bearing hard on themselves they're judging themselves they're angry with themselves because they think they're failing at this job then trust me this episode is going to

ring true for you joining me now is Derek a self-described hyper helicopter dad who's struggling with his three-year-old's fear of using the toilet hi Derek welcome tell us what you're going through hi Dr shafali thank you so much yes hyper helicopter is a good way to put it I think I am extremely fearful around my son he's almost three and he's hopping he's

jumping he's got so much energy he's such a beautiful soul I want him to be able to explore and move yet I am finding myself often saying you know don't do this stop running calm down sit down and I think I'm starting to inhibit him I'm I'm not sure I just I've been listening to your show and I I consistently hear things and I say oh that's me oh that's me my wife and I have been sharing almost every episode

and getting so much from it so I just wanted to know what do I do how do I be less fearful and how do I let him explore at the same time keep him safe and in terms of Yeah you mentioned the the fear of the toilet he's scared to poop in front of me and at one point I put him on the regular toilet instead of his small toilet and from that point on he's been kind of resistant he's been

putting his diaper on and I think I've messed him up for life and I'm scared so I don't know I don't know where to start but I figured take a shot and ask you what I can do wow yeah I feel your anxiety I understand so here's the thing when we're super uber anxious like you are and and most of us are when our children are young we have this misunderstanding this misguidance that it's our job to keep them super

amazingly safe and super successful and super happy you've put so much burden on you to manage this boy that you are indeed you are indeed clipping his wings because you're constantly hovering micromanaging over producing overdirecting over supervising do you think you could live with you oh uh that's a that's a difficult question I think that I would be extremely annoyed and most likely I'd want to escape

so when you were a child did you grow up with extra dictatorial or dominant parents I knew this was coming because I've listened to your show and I've been meditating and thinking about this a lot and yes I have and I don't have a recognition or recollection of this kind of thing at that age however I do know later on in my life when I was becoming a teen there was a lot of control on me

that I was very frustrated I wanted to break free I remember not being allowed to go to the mall because there was a stabbing there once and it was just all my friends just wanted to go to the mall and I felt extremely restricted I was a good kid right got all the grades and everything so that's what I recall I don't remember at this age though so you know when parents or adults say that they don't remember their childhood it's

okay there's no need to panic however the way they are now we can safely say emerged over years of their childhood so the fact that you have these small memories they are indicative of a larger Trend right so you weren't allowed to go to the mall because of some stabbing that tells me your parents were anxious that tells me your parents were kind of emotionally reactive and catastrophic in their thinking and so are you right you're like oh my god I've ruined my

child for life right you have this very anxiety produced catastrophic way of thinking and kind of negative so do you want to disrupt this pattern that's the first place to start and how badly do you want to disrupt it oh terribly bad I I that's why I'm on this show and taking the chance to talk to you I wish everything to be able to let him emerge let like you said fly you know I I don't

want to be the one to clip his wings I worry a lot that I'm doing that and is it too late he's almost three right hopefully not what can I do to let him go and also be responsible of safe parent well let's take the safety out of it because that's a given okay you're not going to leave him in a forest you're not going to let him walk across the street on his own you're not going

to leave alcohol in his sippy cup so let's not talk about safe you're obviously going to be safe that shouldn't even be mentioned okay it's like the basics so that's out of the way now what is stopping you is your desire for Perfection see what's creating these behaviors you think it's oh I'm just keeping my kid safe that's you justifying and rationalizing your big insanity and anxiety right like all your craziness you're justifying it we can't

justify it as justifiable we have to understand this is not protection this is paranoia control over Obsession perfectionism right I'm giving you big words to wake you up not because you're bad not because almost every parent is like this okay so I'm waking you up because we hide behind the disguise that this is for their own good or this is to protect them I'm such a loving parent that's on one end of the spectrum what

you're doing is because you're a perfectionist you want him to be perfect you're trying to get him to potty train perfectly you're trying to get him to move on perfectly you're trying to get him to do things like be safe and do it this way and do it that way you're micromanaging his every move as if he was a robot that you are fine tuning every day correct yeah that is that is what's happening so this

is not love now it is control so you're not being loving you're being controlling you're actually not even focused on him you're only focused on yourself and he is sensing that this person's pressure of his gaze his obsessions his thoughts his speech is all directed at me I need to run and hide like imagine being followed by a strobe light everywhere you go that's how you are with your son you're strobe light following him everywhere he feels

like a fugitive on on the run but he's always been caught so becoming aware of our inner need to control the situation through perfectionism is really going to wake you up and then make you realize wow I'm all about me and lastly when you tell your child through your non-verbal language that the world is unsafe you actually make it unsafe for them so do you want him to grow up with paranoia do

you want him to grow up feeling unsafe no I mean I am afraid of that as well so of course you are coming from this protection and this deep adoration for your son you are so committed but in our commitment we can sometimes smother right so I know this is bringing up emotion for you and I want to just allow you a moment to tap into that

let's just go there because I think your own inner child is activated and you're feeling some pain so can you talk about the sadness you're feeling I can see it on your face yeah it's a disappointment in myself I would say I'm a little bit angry at myself like how could I do this I don't want to do that I mean of course I don't want to do that and the backs of my knees and I don't

know if you know what this means but whenever he's about to trip or fall the backs of my knees start to tingle it's a physiological reaction I don't know what that is every single time I feel that tingle and then don't do don't and so you know in terms of what I'm what I'm feeling right now is I'm angry that you said that because I feel like yeah I just failed already three years you know and all I want to do is love the guy and

give him the best so a little bit of a little bit of probably like kicking myself but yeah I mean how do I fix how do I do that how do I make it better is the question right but again this is your own harsh inner critic the perfectionist in you right so the way to do better by him is to let yourself not be a perfectionist it's your desire to do

everything to protect him from every possible pain that is causing this it's you're putting too much pressure on yourself and therefore he's feeling the pressure so yeah do you find that you're a perfectionist in other areas of your life too I've thought about that I think I've let some of that go I suppose I was a perfectionist but I think what I did was I took the opposite and kind of said I'm just not going to care about

anything because then I won't you know I won't really try because then I can't fail type attitude wait wait wait wait wait do you see a parallel with what's happening with your son tell me well he just gave up trying the potty yeah you see yeah when we feel too much pressure that we may fail we give it up and that's what the perfectionism is so you're not a bad parent you're a beautiful parent you're such a sensitive

man you think I haven't messed up my kid you think I haven't overcontrolled micromanaged yell scream done horrible things I have let me tell you but because I'm not a perfectionist I take it in stride I go of course I'm going to mess up because I'm human but you don't take it in stride because when you were young you were told you had to be superhuman and that superhuman is trying to parent this child and that superhuman

is going to struggle because no one can parent at that level so the way to get your son to succeed and to be free like you were never allowed to be is to allow your son to fall and fail and make mistakes and get hurt and actually not obsess over him because then he learn his own resources his own capacity I do know that in the brain and then when in a situation it doesn't happen that's a big

work I know well it doesn't happen because you are still working from your inner boy perfectionist self that is the boy who shows up with you when you're parenting in fact your son doesn't know the real you he's probably only met the little boy that's a perfectionist in you and that's hard for him to handle your inner perfectionist is making it hard for your son to be a child but it's

not all of you it's just a part of you so if it's a part of you you can recognize when it shows up and say hello Mr perfectionist how are you let's not be too loud today Mr perfectionist let's go to the corner a little bit let's go to the back seat you need to become aware that this voice is the voice of your perfectionist but if you're not even naming it how can you tame it

so what's coming up for you as you listen to this well again if I'm being real with you it's still like I'm so mad at myself we're doing this so let's practice right now okay what voice is this this is the voice of the inner perfectionist boy very good so I'm going to be your inner perfectionist boy and you're going to try to talk to me okay okay you know what how could you do this what look

what you've done done I cannot believe you've done this okay just go to the corner and sit down why should I go to the corner I am you I'm in charge here no you're only part of me well I'm a big part of you because till now I've been in charge I'm going to love my son more than that how are you going to do that because I'm going to come and haunt you every day you can talk but I won't

listen very good so you this is what you have to do okay see when you just said I'm mad at myself you thought that's a real voice that's not your real voice that's your perfectionist giving you a beating yeah so this is your job now and you're going to see wow you have more of a perfectionist than anything else in you all your negative self talk is the perfectionist all your mean comments about yourself and the world is your

perfectionist all your judgments about yourself your son your wife anybody it's not real it's the perfectionist but if you don't catch it you're going to let it drive the car and steer the ship like if I didn't stop you right there what you would have said is I'm just really mad at myself and I'm just really sad and you became really sad before and you'd become really sad and you would shrink correct that's why I cut it right there

I said no no no that's your perfectionist you're letting it overrule you now you're going to think how the hell am I going to do that that's your perfectionist too your perfectionist is going to say you can't do that because you're not Dr shaali oh my gosh this is a big one so this is how embedded your perfectionist voice is as your voice and it's pretending to you that it's you okay so you have to cut it and cut it so

part of Awakening is to notice what's coming up and attribute that voice to the right title oh this is my mother's inner critic this is my father's shaming voice this is the procr Fator part of me all these different voices are not you they are parts that you've inherited from childhood and we need to now talk to them and put them back in their place so this is the work of Awakening it's not easy is it well it's not easy no

definitely not but this is how you're going to free yourself because nobody suffers your inner critic and perfectionist more than you so step by step with selflove self-compassion and we can grow and you know maybe you'll work with a coach maybe you'll take more courses I have an amazing Institute maybe you'll learn how to deal with this there there different ways to do this but your Journey Begins now because now you've identified ah I

see what is driving me because if we don't understand what's behind our words we'll never be able to break free well thank you sir thank you for joining me thank you thank you very much oh I just could feel Derek's pain when I revealed to him that his anxieties were coming from his inner perfectionist self and then guess what he went more perfectionist on me and then got really mad at himself because that's what the perfectionist does the perfectionist is

really harsh on themselves very critiquing very judging and I could just see that he was getting overwhelmed by that voice and so you saw right in the moment I interrupted his mental process and that's what Consciousness really is I was his conscious voice saying hey stop stop let's get off the train let's take a pause and let's become aware of that voice that is the voice of the

perfectionist and now he has to learn painstakingly step by step how to identify the voice of the perfectionist and this is something we all need to do in our Awakening Journey we need to realize that the voices in our mind are mostly unconscious and inherited they are not our authentic self so Derek has now begun his journey of understanding who he really is coming up next a mother

who is trying to navigate parenting her kids after going through a divorce joining me now is Carol she's finding parenting more challenging after having been through a divorce hi Carol what are your challenges hello Dr shafali so good to be here well after being married for quite a long time and then having a divorce my two daughters were and we were facing challenges communicating I

was feeling a certain kind of way because of what I had been through but also explaining to them or communicating to them my feelings and then also taking in their feelings and then how we were now going to get through what we were going through at that time and because of the diverse age that my daughters are it needed me to have two separate conversations one is older and one is younger and there's 15 years apart so

those were the challenges and just kind of having different conversations but then I at the same time bringing it all together so those were the challenges I was facing I can see that I can see one is in her 30s and one is still a teenager right yes correct well one of the things that I found out is and I think this was the biggest thing is that I really needed to face a couple of things myself before I could come into

the table and speak with my daughters and that was a really hard thing and my question to you you was as parents especially when we're dealing with children who have seen us you know evolve into different parts how do we communicate our fears our inadequacies and also what we hope for our family during a time like that are you still going through the divorce is it still happening now the post divorce or was it many years ago no it's four years back

it's about three and a half years back so we're still on the threshold of finishing off with it and they live with you yeah yes okay the 17y old lives with me but my older daughter lives on her own okay and so your question is how do you communicate your fears and insecurities correct having as I go through this and as they see this new us this new family Dynamic that they have never seen before well you know they are

not your therapists and they are not your mediators and they are not your best friends so they should see the human part of you but I think the 17-year-old is a bit too young to see too much I think she needs to be left free to be a teenager and to have her own life the older one maybe will be more interested but really you can't use them too much as a sounding board do you know that yes so if anything you have to

be the receiving board for their emotions for their insecurities and ask them questions like how are you feeling what's going on with you this is not about you getting to dump what you feel as it is they are probably going through an emotional turmoil so adding your own stress especially to the 17-year-old you know at least if she was in her 20s it's a different story but right now she's dealing with a lot of her own identity

crisis and she needs a stable safe consistent place to fall back on if she sees that her mother is chaotic and emotional that's going to be very hard for her that is true and and that is exactly what did happen she did definitely take a couple of steps back and it was really difficult because she actually because of everything that did was going on in the home and everything she actually went mute for a bit and she

lost all her light it was really really difficult because again like I said I had to set aside myself like you have said and be able to just be with her and ask her questions you know like how is she feeling and she was not being able to express herself you know I could see she was hurting how long did this last for it lasted all of like three years so it was pre before and then a year after

we had kind of moved on M kind of moved away so during that one year is when I was able to like sit with her because previously we tried to talk while we were still with her but it was she was losing you know kind of receding farther and further and I realized that it was going to be almost too late if we didn't do something about it yeah it's hard because I imagine that she felt

sandwiched in between the conflict and it may have been too much for her it's very hard for children between the ages of 11 to 17 actually that is the hardest age because when they're young they're still young when they're older they're older so it's this middle age where they're neither too young and neither too old so they're trapped in the house and they are witnessing everything that's happening and they're absorbing everything so now do you see her coming

out of it a little bit oh yes I have seen her coming out of it and she has started getting her light back it's still we can say like a 50/50 that she's been able to talk about some experiences I don't push her but I let her come to me whenever she feels safe to do so and I've tried to create a space where she's free to talk to me at any time but I do know these are things

that she will have to kind of deal with as even as she's older well a couple things can help her number one it's always good if you can take her to a therapist or a coach and even if she does doesn't talk if you can talk but here's the real thing if you yourself are going through hell still if you are still anxious if you are still resentful if you are still shaky then how can she create a good

narrative that this was a good thing this was a positive thing how do you the mother see this do you see this as a positive thing or do you see this as a traumatizing thing I see it as a positive thing I see it as a positive thing Dr shali because I been doing the inner work for myself and because of that I'm able now to see others and see where and how I can be there to support

them and I encourage her and initially I was very upset but now I've let it go so that we can heal together I heal and she is also healing and and just create that space for us to heal that's it so if the mother especially is walking around with a new sense of lightness and buoyancy and abundance and healing that is what's going to heal her but let's not bypass that she has had a hard time so when she's lying down and

if you can lie down next to her and stroke her hair and tell her you don't have to talk but I just want you to know I'm so sorry I know you've been through a lot Mama's here for you I'm really really aware that you've had to struggle that you're a warrior that you've survived you can acknowledge these things in her even if she doesn't express it because that way you can give words to her pain and she feels like

she's being heard so don't wait for her to articulate it what if she can never articulate it you can see that she must be in pain so tell her I know you must be in pain you don't have to talk about it it is painful you are right to feel pain I am so sorry for my part I'm always here for you this is what I've learned from the divorce you can talk about it and give it a language because

giving things a language and a story allows you to own the story and then allows you to direct the story in a new way later but let's not not talk about it or let's not not address it or knowledge it okay all right so I'll bring it up and I'm able to share with her whenever we have a moment and we just talk about it and give it the language I like that word I give it

language cuz maybe she doesn't have a language at her age she doesn't have a language for it and she doesn't know how to transform a painful experience to a more empowering positive experience so you have to help her do that let her know that even though we've had pain even though we've had struggle this family has survived and this is how we can alchemize and transform our pain into meaning and a mission and connection but you have to do that for

her you have to show her that this was pain and she's right to feel pain about it but here's how we can transform it right thank you so much that is such a good tip I had looked at it like that and I have been saying to her that you know a family will change many times over a lifetime and uh we are now moving into our new phase and we are moving into this phase with a lot of like joy

and happiness and we're going to do all the things that we always have wanted to do so it's good that I Alize that pain into that so that is such a beautiful uh thing and I'm definitely yeah I definitely want to do that I think also another thing I was just wondering Dr shafali is it important how important is it for you know me and her being able to move forward knowing that we have this baggage how important is it for her to

also understand that this is not going to be forever you know how do I show her that because sometimes it looks like it's still hanging over us and she's always like oh you know it used to be like that so how do I do that well you can just say you know I'm sure you feel like this is too painful and the old family is still hanging over us I feel that too I understand we will never

forget the old family we will always have that in our heart but now we're transforming and we're going to mutate or transform into a whole new new kind of family so we never have to say goodbye in our hearts to the old family we can keep it in our hearts and now we're in a process of transition and I know it's hard and but let's see what happens next and nothing stays forever you're not a child you were a child but

imagine if I had clung on to you because I said I love you as a four-year-old no I let you grow up so we as a family are also growing up but part of growing up is also changing and sometimes we can be angry with each other but then we can learn to forgive and you're going to see this in our relationships everything is going to change and transform so let's flow with it instead of resisting it but

yes it is painful it is difficult you're always acknowledging the difficulty and the struggle another question that she has like um dealing with her as she's growing at the same time in the midst of this whole change she's also growing she's also getting to know her self she's also figuring out who she is what she likes what she doesn't like and at this stage in her life you know of course being a teenager there's a lot of

things that you know come at her and she has different kinds of conversations that she wants to have with me and one of the things that I have tried to do like I said is be willing for her to talk to me about anything whenever she's comfortable and one of the things that she does which is very interesting she she has come to me she says I want to talk to you as a friend today and I'm like oh okay today is our

friend and um I want to know like is it okay like I know there are many books that people have written and said that we should not be friends with our kids is this something that you know is a thing or is it okay well you can be her friend but you don't have to make her your best friend so you should be her friend meaning you have to listen to her give her unconditional support you have

to be her Ally her her guide her sounding board her you know best friend that loves her for who she is that's what a friend is a good friend but she doesn't have to be that for you you see the difference yes and so what she means by can you just be my friend which means don't judge me don't be strict with me don't control me don't micromanage me that's what it means to not be a parent

and to be a friend so I hope this helped you a little bit yes it do definitely has and uh I'm definitely going to utilize those those points with her and you know we're going to continue healing and becoming better for sure we really appreciate thank you so much for coming yeah thank you so much for having us when we as a family with our children go through a hard time sometimes we get really scared to talk about the pain

because we want our children to be in a good mood or just forget about what happened whether it's a fight whether it's an argument whether it's a divorce it doesn't matter we as parents have an instinct to try to make our children feel happy and not deal or confront the struggles but here's exactly where we go wrong it is in our desire to bypass the pain what's often known as a spiritual bypass that we often disable our

children from coping with the pain it's when we as adults are able to confront the pain head on you know say this is hard this is really difficult but we're going to get through this I know you're in pain I messed up I effed up I'm so sorry when we head on confront and acknowledge whatever the isness of the moment is no matter how painful we actually teach our children that they don't have to be afraid of pain and that

they are actually just like we are quite resilient to manage it I hope you've enjoyed this episode and I can't wait to see you on the next one of parenting and you with me Dr shaali parenting and you with Dr shaali is for educational and informational purposes only it is not intended as a substitute for professional medical psychological psychotherapeutic coaching health care or other qualified

professional advice diagnos nois or treatment