

What I wish I'd known about parenting featuring YPM parents

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SUMMARY

The podcast episode explores the transformative journey of parenting, emphasizing the personal growth and self-discovery that often accompanies the experience. Parents share their reflections on what they wish they had known earlier, highlighting the importance of self-compassion, understanding their own needs, and the impact of their upbringing on their parenting styles.

- *Parenting challenges often reveal unresolved personal trauma and require parents to confront their past.*
- *Self-compassion is crucial for parents to effectively meet their needs and those of their children.*
- *Many parents wish they had known that their parenting journey would also be a path of self-discovery and healing.*
- *The importance of trusting a child's readiness for milestones, such as potty training, is emphasized.*
- *Parents often feel societal pressure to conform to certain parenting standards, which can lead to exhaustion and feelings of inadequacy.*
- *Building a supportive community can help parents navigate challenges and foster personal growth.*
- *Effective parenting involves recognizing and addressing one's own emotional needs to create healthier family dynamics.*
- *The skills learned in early parenting stages are transferable and beneficial throughout a child's life.*

[Music] foreign [Music] Mojo podcast today's episode evolved out of a few conversations with parents in the parenting membership which I've been running for about four years now there are quite a few folks in the community who have been with me since the very beginning which is really cool for me to see how we've learned and grown as parents but also as people independent

of our role as parents we've built a really rich Community where we have so much trust in each other to bring things that are super hard and that we find embarrassing or even shameful to admit to each other and there's a strong understanding that what you're gonna get back when you share something like that is that you'll be held with a sense of compassion that you're not the only one who has felt this way and you will make it through

a few people have shared in the community recently about ways they've seen themselves navigating situations with courage and Grace that in the past would have caused them to fall apart and I thought oh that sounds like the makings of a podcast episode so I put out a call for members to submit short videos answering the question what did you wish you had known about parenting when your children were younger several members who have children who were in

the kind of 6 to 10 ish range responded and I think that's important because the toddler and preschool years are so hard in a lot of ways and these parents are through that stage now and they're starting to see the ways that they've interacted with their children for a number of years is showing up in their relationship now their children are older I'm pretty embarrassed now to admit how little thought I put into parenting before I got pregnant if it gives you

some sense of how I was approaching the whole thing before Charis was born we referred to her as the parasite and of course it was a term of endearment but I felt very little sense of connection with her and I went all in on my birth plan because I figured that's when the connection would start and I wanted it to go right and at that time I honestly thought the first year was going to be the hardest because I wouldn't be able

to understand what the baby wanted before she could talk but after that there probably wouldn't be very much to it I would just be the same person I was at that point but with a child and if you told me at that point that motherhood would not only rip me apart and remake me but that I would be supporting other parents on their own Journeys as well I would have said there's something seriously wrong with you

I do remember being in the shower when Charis was about three or four months old thinking how am I going to instill some sense of discipline in her without being the parent who always says no I assume that my husband who's generally the far more easy going one of us would be the fun preferred parent and I would be the enforcer and then I found resources for infant educare or rye which was the start of my respectful parenting Journey but the

toddler years were really the beginning of my own transformation I covered an overview of what is rye as well as the scientific research that supports it in episode 79 and 84. and my book's going to be published on September 5th and I recently sent a preview copy to the director of the preschool that Karis attended and she said she cracked up because she read the dedication which reads for Karis who got me into this whole mess in the first

place and the director was really on the receiving end of my early investigations as for a while I became that parent who would send emails gently asking why certain policies were in place and the reasoning behind certain types of interactions between teachers and the children and at home I definitely saw a lot of my own defense mechanisms kicking in during that period when Charis would resist and have tantrums and I would mentally and emotionally shut down just as I had

learned to do when I was a kid and I couldn't cope with what was going on around me and I know I'm not alone in that here's parent Elizabeth describing how this has showed up for her I wish I had known process of parenting would Transform Me just as much if not more um then it sort of transformed or changed them I wish I had known that as I attempted to fix their behavior or

control their emotions that actually there was a lesson there for me in terms of how I relate with myself when I fail or how I deal with my own difficult emotions um I wish I had uh yelled thank you each time some of the

more difficult Behavior or um feelings or encounters happened because

in many of those encounters were seeds for my own growth um I wish you know I had taken the hints about you know when they push back um is it that I hadn't set the the I hadn't you know communicated clearly um when the uh you know uh have meltdowns is it also that they are picking up on some level of discomfort

um that I'm feeling or is it also that I'm not responding appropriately to child appropriate behavior um I wish I had shared the responsibility more in many in many of the areas like let them also take uh quite a fair share of responsibility in our interactions I see so much wisdom in what Elizabeth shares here so many of us come into parenting with so much unhealed trauma

some of us know we have it others of us grew up in an hour highly functional family that nevertheless didn't meet her needs which is itself a kind of trauma when our children resist the thing that we ask them to do we naturally think that our role is to get them to do what we want them to do because that's what our parents did to us and in doing that we usually gloss over the big feelings we are having about our

child's resistance I think if we can shift how we see our difficult feelings from being something that we try to minimize and make go away as fast as possible to being a signpost that says over here healing needed over here then we'll be better able to show up as whole fulfilled people in all of our lives and not just with our children a lot of that growth tends to happen in terms of how we see ourselves and our

role in our family of origin as well as with our partners if we have partners many of us are fortunate to have had jobs and even careers that we enjoy and to see ourselves as pretty much equals with our partners before we had children we might not have even talked with our partners very much about our values because we just kind of assumed they were the same as ours I know that was the case for me

conceptually I'm pretty sure my husband saws as equals I worked full-time while I was in undergrad which transitioned to him supporting me financially while I was in grad school and then I earned more than him for several years after that it seemed like we were on an equal footing and then after Charis was born things started to shift possibly partly because I mostly worked from home we both interviewed the nannies that we were looking at hiring but then I would

manage all aspects of that relationship because I was at home more and then when we transitioned to preschool he assumed that I would handle all of the daily drop-offs and pickups and I honestly believe it was me not being the one who wanted a child that gave me leverage in that negotiation I quite clearly remember saying you were the one who wanted this child and there are five drop-offs and five pickups each week and you're doing half of them

he did do the daily drop-offs but after a while we pretty easily slipped into a pattern where I was the one doing almost all of the communication with the preschool and cooking the special breakfasts and making sure there

was a change of clothes in her bag and volunteering to make ice cream or dissect owl pellets in the classroom and it sort of seemed like a slippage that happened over time because I do remember probably early in karis's last year

there when I was doing all of that and still working full-time and also running the podcast and the parenting membership and kind of exploding at him because I was doing so much and I think that's a really important thing to keep in mind about patriarchal relationships which is about how males and masculinity in these arbitrary traits associated with masculinity are privileged above femininity and traits arbitrarily associated with that some books that have been released over the last year or so geared towards

female oriented readers have focused on how to get the readers male oriented partner to do more of the chores and seem to take the view that when the male partner is doing half the chores or maybe fewer than half the chores but something more than they're doing right now the patriarchy isn't a factor in that relationship anymore but to me the much bigger question is who has the power to decide who does the chores if the arrangements starts slipping who

picks up the slack in many relationships is the female oriented partner who picks up the slack and who does it at the expense of their own well-being here's member Jenny sharing how she used to put her own need for Sleep Last behind both her sons and her partner's need for sleep I would give my former self not only permission but probably in order to prioritize her own sleep sleep was a challenge for us for four years my son took forever to settle and

he would wake up multiple times a night and that left me exhausted and the exhaustion was made that much worse by expectations that I put upon myself I was of course prioritizing my son's sleep I was prioritizing my husband's sleep because he's the breadwinner I had ideas about Parenthood which meant that I thought evenings once the child is asleep were for work were for chores and of course I was looking for Sleep

Solutions online and then just beating myself up and feeling like a total failure when the things I tried didn't work for us so the exhaustion was compounded by all of these burdens and shoulds that I was placing on my own shoulders and I joined the parenting membership feeling really miserable and just worn down and at the end end of my rope and with the parenting membership I was able to realize that the best sleep

solution of course is the one that feels safe for you and your family but is also the one that gets you the most sleep because once you are well rested everything starts getting a lot easier and so when I joined the membership I spent the first months doing just that prioritizing my own sleep for the first time in years which for me looked like putting on pajamas and brushing teeth with my son when it was his bedtime and

then settling him and going directly to my bed not looking at my phone not looking at my emails straight to bed to get as much sleep as I possibly could fit into the night and in the beginning I felt a bit sheepish being an adult in pajamas at 8pm but it meant that I was getting decent sleep for the first time in years and from there things started getting better so now I totally embrace my early

bedtime I think the pattern that Jenny described at the beginning is such an easy pattern for parents to fall into where work that's financially compensated is seen as more valuable than care work that isn't financially compensated and that the earning partner's sleep is to be protected at all costs but somehow even when both partners are working it's very often the female partner who's the one who gets up multiple times in the night sometimes for years on end

I've heard mothers say things like oh my husband really doesn't do well when he doesn't sleep well that's us protecting and enforcing patriarchal power structures where the husband's needs and his paid work are seen as more valuable than our needs and our unpaid care work I will say that that's one area where I actually feel comfortable that I'm not taking on an undue burden because I find any sound disruptive when I'm trying to sleep including my husband's breathing

and I have told him if he really loved me he would stop doing it so I wear earplugs and once I'm asleep I won't hear Karis calling from her room it also takes me an hour to get back to sleep if I wake up whereas he'll be back asleep in five minutes so it really isn't as disruptive for him to go as it is for me and so our Arrangement is that he's kind of gonna go for the first two

times that she calls out in the night and then he'll kick me out of bed for the third time if there is a third time which hasn't been too much of a struggle for us because she has slept fairly well what Jenny's also doing is she goes to bed early is acknowledging there are a finite number of hours in the day and that she could spend some of those hours between 8 pm and 10 p.m doing things

like cleaning up or doing paid work but that her need for rest is legitimate she is choosing to prioritize it above the other task that society says she should be doing to be a good person and a good parent care work might not be valued very much but in our culture the one thing care work is valued more than is rest one other thing to point out is that when Jenny joined the membership she was really having a hard time with her son's

Behavior there was a lot of hitting happening and so I think she felt pretty emotionally beaten down as well as the physical aspect when children are hitting the question I hear from parents most often is how do I get it to stop when I've told them to stop over and over and they just keep doing it and of course there is a piece in there about why the child is hitting what unmet need they're trying to express

through the hitting but there's also a piece about how the parent shows up in these interactions because when you're sleep deprived and you've been told your whole life that it isn't okay to set boundaries and you don't know how to set or hold boundaries and remember these are different from limits because with a limit we're trying to change someone else's Behavior with a boundary we're saying what we are and aren't willing to do then it's not surprising that you get

into difficult interactions with your child when instead we see what our needs are and take a step toward Meeting those needs more of the time we're better able to show up in our relationship with our child in a way that's aligned with our values parent Anne picks up a very similar theme as Jenny I interviewed her on the

podcast a couple of years ago here's the first part of Anne's video to some degree I think parenting is a leap that

you can never really be prepared for like slipping from calm Waters over waterfall that you had no idea was coming um I don't think any amount of advice or passing wisdom could have really prepared me for it um maybe if you come from like a trauma free family environment um and I don't know how common or rare that may be it seems rare but um I do I do know people um I know it exists uh but maybe if you

come from that environment you would know what to expect and how to handle it um you know maybe you had a model that was very effective um in your parents and you know ease and comfort and happiness would arise naturally as a result of these really realistic expectations skills and support that you have in your life um for the rest of us that is not me um here's what I wish I knew

um and you know not only that someone had said these things to me which would have been also nice um to hear them but you know I wish that I had known them on like a deep emotional physical mental spiritual level um to the degree that I could incorporate them in my daily life and practice and parenting um you know I know these things to some degree on those levels now five years

into my parenting Journey um and your parenting war of Joe has you know really helped me a lot with that um it was definitely the Catalyst that that started um to help me grow and learn in these ways um and and to some degree I don't know out to the degree that I would like but can and I do I do and I continue to to

improve so I'm very grateful um so yeah so I have a list here um first item I guess is I wish I knew on a deep level um that my needs matter that I shouldn't have overextended myself um and exhausted myself to be everything for my baby um I wish that I had known it wasn't my job to set him up for success in every possible way

and that um that I didn't need to expose him to every Walk of Life every skill that he might need um you know like if you've heard me speak before like coding in Spanish you know like at less than zero some things that were on my radar [Music] um or less than one so obviously you can hear the exhaustion coming out in Anne's message as well and

I think for Anne maybe it was less about sleep and more just this Vision she had about parenting and wanting to expose her child to everything that could give him a potential advantage in life like coding and Spanish Ann and I have had many conversations about white privilege over the years and she actually leads the anti-racist community across the parenting and learning memberships within your parenting Mojo So I wrote to her and I said that was about opportunity hoarding

right and for those of you who need a refresher opportunity hoarding is where white parents and sometimes parents of other races as well but very often white parents will go to any length to make sure their child is exposed to the right set of activities and experience that will give them skills that allow them to get ahead in school in college and then in the workplace in episode 85 we looked at how opportunity hoarding shows up in

schools

if you wanted to learn more about that and Anne confirmed that yes this is indeed what she was doing she told me she thought she'd been given a lot of advantages by her parents and felt a deep responsibility to pass them on Anne's Owen mom had paid for her college which she told and she did because her father had paid for hers and ancestors immigrated to the U.S from Eastern Europe several Generations ago and did face prejudice and

discrimination when working in the mining industry here but they were white and over time their status in society solidified and they were able to accumulate opportunities like wealth partly because of their skin color and passed that wealth down through the generations but the process of creating those opportunities in the way parents are supposed to do it today which does not just involve paying for college but creating all of the Avenues to secure the spot in college in the first place

was so exhausting for Anne that she couldn't actually be in a real relationship with her own son because she was so anxiously looking out all the time to make sure she wasn't missing any critical experience that he should be getting and wasn't getting Iris picks up this theme in her comment as well with a touch of classic Iris humor being the best mother I could be is exhausting and it's not sustainable for me so now my goal is to be a good enough

Mom and for me to accept that I'm a I'm Perfectly Imperfect that I can try and aspire to be dignified like marmy in the classic story Little Women I can be like my own mother who's generous and selfless I can try to be all those things but I can only be me um funny silly often generous but

sometimes not at this point I should explain for those who are listening to this on the podcast rather than watching on YouTube the iris removes her glasses before continuing asks for its selflessness I've learned over time that taking care of myself is a big part of taking care of my family and I think about the briefing instructions of flight attendants that you know if the cabin experience a sudden loss of

pressure and you are traveling with a child put on your mask first before you help your child you okay bud she's okay and now Iris has a nebulizer mask on and she's checking in with a big blue Teddy to make sure that they're okay I think what iris and Anne have both

discovered about parenting over the last couple of years is that we put so much of this pressure on ourselves some of it does come from outside with questions from well-meaning friends and the parents at preschool or school about what the activities and camps we are signed up for and how I'm just so busy is considered the default answer to the question how are you doing but I see the same process happening as it did with our inner critic which

started out being someone else's voice telling us how it's okay for us to show up in the world what parts of us won't be accepted and over time it transmogrified little Calvin and hove's reference for you there into our own

voice when we hear messages from society often enough about being the perfect mother doing all the things eventually we take on that voice as if it were our own and we enforce our own behavior we put this pressure on ourselves to put

ourselves last and to be the best mother we can be instead of showing up as our own imperfect and yet perfect selves we tell ourselves to do all these things that aren't aligned with our values which creates an enormous amount of stress even if we can't figure out why Iris went on to explain that she very often used to buy things as a way to try to ease problems in her life here She is again buying things solve a problem is not

always the answer it has always been an issue calming my daughter's hair and I bought many like this is just a dozen of the brushes and combs that I have bought and still the problem persists and I have realized over time that with this problem as with other parenting challenges there is no one solution um or one approach um sometimes it works to some some things works today and not tomorrow

and um what's helped me very much was um to reflect on why is this bothering me so for me I don't want to be perceived to be a neglectful mother and I asked myself is this solution or approach aligned with my values and um is this problem even really a problem at this given time sometimes I say okay this is not an emergency

we don't have to brush her hair I don't have to brush her hair she can go to bed or she can go on her day with tangled hair that's it because I don't want to be a dictator I want to be a respectful and um kind parent that's definitely a theme I've seen among parents who have contributed stories from my book as well although I do want to acknowledge the privilege that Iris has to some extent

and that I most definitely have when my daughter was at preschool we could send her with matted hair and even in pajamas if she didn't want to get dressed in the morning and nobody was going to call Child Protective Services on us I know there are black and Indigenous parents who do not have that luxury who make sure their children show up to school looking neat and clean every day even when they or their child wish they could

take a day off because the risk of being reported by a well-meaning white teacher or parent is too great so that's on us white listeners to really think carefully before making any of those kinds of reports about whether a child is really experiencing neglect or whether we would see a parent who puts their values ahead of social expectations if a white child showed up in the same way and went on to describe what she wishes she had known about her interactions

with her mother and with her husband and also with her son you know I I also wish that I knew that my parents parents um didn't do everything right um and that I shouldn't have subliminally tried to emulate their parenting um my mom specifically um I wish I knew about intergenerational Trump that how that shapes my everyday interactions

with my child um and how you know if I don't do take steps to like heal myself that yeah through the to the

Future Generations through through me and my child um I wished I knew I shouldn't try to change the way my partner and other people in my child's life interact with them and treat them

um you know I think when we do take steps to improve ourselves you know we want everyone to come on that Journey but it's not their Journey it's our journey and um you know it's totally natural and it comes from a good place but uh it's not effective and it's not kind and it's not considerate and it's not a way to build healthy relationships um and you know I think modeling you

know the ways that I interacted with my child was the most effective um and having him be treated in the ways that um I would like him to and then also yeah like knowing I wish I had known that I could learn from my partner from the people around me um that they're that they have um you know step parenting Styles ways of Child Learning ways of knowing that um that are also valid and different

and um and things can be learned from then you can incorporate some of that into your practice um you know of course not everything you don't want to adopt someone's entirety but learning certain things um that are valid and helpful from those around you um is really powerful as well um and similarly and most of all

I wish I had known that I should try to change my child um this gets this gets me pretty pretty hard um emotionally because it's the way I wish I had been treated as a child I wish I want my child to know that they are great the way they are um that they don't need to be changed they

don't need to be shaped and molded and you know everything you want them to be will arise from treating them with respect compassion love and support to help meet their needs um it's all that they need to grow to develop to learn to be a whole human that is kind and respectful and um and skilled in all of the ways that they need to be

to to thrive in this world and talked quite a bit when I interviewed her about her relationship with her mom which was difficult when she was growing up and still difficult as an adult and in the early years of her parenting Journey her mom has a pretty strong personality and so of course Anne had never learned anything about how to set boundaries because boundaries are usually pretty threatening to someone who is in charge of you and who has a strong personality

so it's no wonder that as a new parent and still had no idea how to set boundaries and I think it wasn't until she went through the taming your triggers Workshop that she realized she even could set boundaries in our last conversation she told us about a time not long after that when her mom said something about blue diapers being for boys and pink diapers being for girls which Anne found offensive and normally she would have

just walked away or sat there steaming but instead she said I'm upset that you said that and that was the first time she had stood up to her mother about anything and since then she's been able to say these things more directly as they come up things like I don't want you to treat my son that way or another time when her mother

was controlling how Ann's son played with some blocks and Anna had a flashback to being a child herself when

her mom would buy her porcelain dolls that Anne wasn't allowed to play with instead of dolls she could actually play with and Tara Mom's credit she acknowledged what had happened and apologized and their relationship has dramatically improved since then you can probably imagine how all of this was playing out in Anne's relationship with her husband with her on this journey to be the best parent she could be and wanting to control every aspect of his interactions with their son as

well because of a fear that if everyone around their son didn't interact with him in just the right way that he would be harmed somehow I see this a lot in the female oriented parents that I work with who are very often the ones who are doing a lot of work on themselves to understand their intergenerational trauma and heal from the trauma that they themselves experienced and they want their Partners to come along on this journey too and

their partners aren't always ready in our patriarchal culture this kind of healing work isn't something men are supposed to do they're supposed to use power to maintain control over their family not heal their wounds so in an Ideal World yes maybe we do want them to do some of that healing work and yes it sucks that they even have to do it and it doubly sucks that they very often don't see themselves as hurt because they still hold power and

as long as they're holding power it seems like there isn't really anything wrong but each person's journey is their own and Anne is actually saying the same thing about her son and her husband when she says they're great the way they are they don't need to be shaped and molded nobody likes to be shaped and molded we arrived here today with so much trauma because other people tried to shape and mold us instead of being with us as we

figure out how to live our lives in alignment with our own values so when we try to shape our partners interactions with our children we try to shape how our children turn out in a way we're reenacting the same trauma that happened to us even if we're doing it with the best of intentions which frankly is what our own parents were doing as well as they tried to shape us they didn't do it because they hated us

they did it because they loved us and wanted the best for us but how do most of us want to receive love we want to be supported as we make our own way in life and make our own decisions and sometimes fail and learn how to get back up again and to know that we'll be loved no matter what I think that when we can show that Grace toward our family members which I grant you is not an easy thing to do

especially when there has been trauma involved but if we care about how they interact with us and with our children we have to let them figure that out in their own time and the most effective thing we can do is to quietly model what we believe to be the most respectful way of interacting with our children I think a big part of respect is doing things when our children are ready to do them parent Laura was the first person

to submit a video when I requested them she is on a mission to try to prevent parents from struggling with parenting in the way that she has struggled which was almost certainly entirely preventable here's Laura hi I'm

Laura I have a seven-year-old son and a four-year-old son when my oldest was two years and two months old the teacher at his daycare said that she thought he was ready to start potty training while I have worked with thousands of children

in my career I have worked with fewer than 20 children that were not yet school-aged so I felt like this was not my area of expertise and these people have worked with thousands of other children that are of this age and I thought well they must be the professionals if they're telling me he's ready he's ready they were wrong he wasn't ready over five years later my son still has regular accidents he has um daytime

accidents two or three times a week he has nighttime accidents six or seven nights a week um potty learning before he was ready has caused a lot of long-term problems he is chronically constipated um and he's had so many accidents in his bedroom that we are going to have to replace the carpet um I learned after all of this potty problem or potty trouble that several studies say that potty training before the age of three is harmful one of the

doctors that we work with says that a child's bladder keeps growing to its standard size until the age of three and it grows faster and stronger when we don't disrupt the process by inhibiting filling and emptying my son's pelvic floor physical therapist that's right my seven-year-old has a pelvic floor PT she says that the muscles to void aren't and haven't developed yet and they aren't in the right place until after age three so potty training

before those muscles are in place is detrimental to child's development I wish I had known this before we waited to potty train our four-year-old and one day he said he found the Underpants that I had um bought for him in preparation for the day that he was ready he decided that would be the day I put the Power into his hands I put the ownership of his body into his own hands

and when he decided he was ready which was that day that he found the underwear he potty trained potty trained himself he has only had one daytime accident and he is dry six or more nights of the week um and me letting go of the societal expectations of potty learning and re any societal expectations regarding the potty has put the responsibility into his hands it has allowed him to learn how his body works and he's taken complete ownership

off his body this is a complete 180 from his older brother so research potty training potty learning make sure that your child is ready don't do it until you're ready no matter what anybody else says trust yourself and trust your child Laura had such a hard time figuring out why her son was peeing all over the place because for a while it seemed like it was a behavioral thing and she just needed to get him to stop doing it a

doctor told her there was nothing physically wrong with her son a therapist told her she should punish him for peeing inappropriately and reward him for appropriate behavior but that just didn't sit right with Laura she wasn't sure why but she had an intuition there was something physically wrong she had a doctor friend referring for an x-ray and there it was a massive stool in her son's colon then began a journey of daily enemas and she and her son really got the hang of

the problem-solving process that we teach in the parenting membership through the course of navigating that he started out hating the enemas but they were able to find ways to make it more comfortable for him like using warm water and having one of his parents touching him while the liquid was going in and finding different ways to stay occupied in the toilet afterwards all of this helped to give him a sense of autonomy over the process and he now

knows that if he can come up with a strategy to any problem that will also meet his parents needs they will probably do it I can't overstate how important that respect for both people's needs is there have been several articles published recently in online magazines like the cut where the journalist describes gentle or respectful parenting is a tool that parents can use that benefits the child but the journalist tries it and finds themselves frustrated and resentful and essentially says I'm going

back to a middle ground where sometimes I just tell my child what to do without listening to them and to me that's a fundamental misunderstanding of how we can be in relationship with our children if we're seeing gentle or respectful parenting as something that helps our child at the expense of meeting our needs we're missing a huge piece of the puzzle and the reason these journalists go back to their middle ground is because their needs aren't being met so

let's work towards doing that Lucinda picks up on that theme in her video I think there are a lot of things that I wish I had known sometimes I kept myself thinking about how I wish I could go back and and tell myself some of those things give myself some of that learning um but I try to give myself my past versions of myself lots of compassion as well as my present self lots of compassion

um you know I knew what I what I could then and the way that I showed up was good enough um so I I guess one of the things I would love to tell my past self is that I'm deserving of compassion The Compassion that I can give myself now and that I can give myself in early parenting and even prior to Parenting is something that I wasn't able to access before so I would I would go back and

and just give myself a hug and say you know early parenting um I was parenting multiples um early parenting is really hard newborn parenting is really hard um I would tell myself it's it's not hard because I'm doing something wrong it's just hard it's a big change it's a big transition um another thing I would tell myself is to trust my gut to listen to my body to

slow down um to really just tune in a bit more to what my needs are and that listening to my own needs is not selfish um taking care of my own needs is the foundation for then being able to tune into others needs and to be an authentic relationship with other people my children my spouse my friends my community yeah I think those are the main ones I

mean there's lots of little things I would give myself a copy of some of Amanda grouper's books I I would introduce myself to Rye sooner I didn't Discover it until my kids were about a year and a half old but you know I just think the the foundation of compassion of slowing down of being aware of my body and what it's telling me

all of that stuff unlock so much for us in all of our relationships

so Lucinda referred to Rai which is the resources for infant Educators approach to being with infants and toddlers that I mentioned at the beginning of the episode some friends of mine told me about Rye when Charis was about four months old and just like Lucinda I also then mourned the early days when I didn't know about it and I interacted with her in ways that really were not based in respect you can also hear Lucinda echoing what

Anne said about being able to be in authentic relationships with her immediate family as well as her wider community and how her ability to do that is directly tied to understanding her own needs when she's able to do that she can take steps herself to meet them as well as ask for help from others and set boundaries with others as well when that becomes necessary and I will say I've seen Lucinda make enormous strides in that department over the last couple of

years through things that we've discussed on group coaching calls as well as with the support of her Action Group which is a small group of five members on an experienced peer leader who meet on a weekly basis to break down the big challenges that they're facing into manageable next steps so often parents who are new to the membership wonder whether they'll really get anything out of those groups and they end up being foundational to making the changes they want to see

I think the reason for that is a quote that Carl Jung is famous for which is the Curious Paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am then I can change he goes on to say it's a universal truth that not everyone will love you or what you do seeking approval is the surest way to disappointment because loving yourself as long as you live up to a certain way of being isn't self-love as Lucinda said she now knows she is

deserving of self-compassion but a lot of parents I meet don't know that here's Melissa who didn't even know what self-compassion was before we met I had vaguely heard about respectful parenting before knowing Jen so this wish list was quite long for me however looking back now there are some things that help me have more space to even see a way out of a difficult time I wish I had known about the link between self-compassion self-care and my

own window of Tolerance when I first heard Jen talk about self-compassion I literally had to Google the term because I had no idea it was a thing or what it looked like slowly but surely I realized that my inner critic was just one voice inside me and that I could also practice letting other more Kinder voices show up as I learned more about how to practice self-compassion I was able to see the link between meeting my own needs

through self-care and widening my own window of Tolerance this in turn open up a whole range of realizations and possibilities that I had not been aware of before not all of them feel great but were helpful to know like the fact that my relationship with my husband was far more triggering for me than with my children than the times I had practice self-care before this I would do it with a sense of guilt and even defensiveness

that I don't deserve to be punished when I mess up with my children none of us do that's just the cultural conditioning I hope to interrupt with my own children this type of parenting can sometimes feel lonely and overwhelming but I recently had this awesome reminder from the community that I can trust the signals my body sends me no amount of in the moment blind obedience with my children has ever given me the joy that I feel when I see

my children starting to problem solve on their own and that makes it all worth it so yeah good luck Melissa is in an action group as well a different one from Lucinda and what I see happening in the groups is a sort of practice to work towards self-compassion when you're new to it if someone says oh just be compassionate toward yourself you don't know what to do it goes against everything we're taught to do in our culture which is essentially that if

we're not getting the result we want to beat ourselves up about it until we get it right and we don't want to always seek approval from others in place of having self-compassion because that would be essentially doing what Young is telling us not to do to seek approval through others eyes but what I do see happening in the action groups is that other people who share our values can act as a scaffold for us to build our own self-compassion

when we can be with other people who reflect back to us on a weekly basis you are a good person and a good parent who is having a hard time your inability to make this big change you've set your mind on making is not indicative of your worth as a person Let's help you to break it down into more manageable steps then you start seeing yourself in that way too when I work with parents on exercises to

develop self-compassion they almost always have a hard time doing it at first it's much easier for them to direct compassion toward another person and then when they flex that muscle a bit they can start to replace the other person with themselves and direct compassion inward instead of outward being in community with others in the action groups has been a key part of the scaffolding that helped Lucinda and Melissa to direct The Compassion they felt for others inward as well

Benson and Amanda went into parenting having done just about as much thinking about what it would be like as I did and started interacting with their children in pretty much the same way that they were raised until they realized that didn't fit with their values now but they didn't know what else to do especially when these patterns of interacting with their children seem to come out of nowhere and were so hard to break what we wish we knew about parenting

a lot of it for me is I said the main thing would be I wish I knew about respectful parenting and kind of the principles I'd say so understanding like needs feelings including our own as well as our children's um how limits and boundaries are involved in that and also values and kind of determining what's

actually important um in each interaction with your kid and what values you're trying to instill in them we went into our parenting Journey without kind of doing any research and we stumbled onto respectful parenting

when we joined a parenting membership that Jen runs and that really setting on us on the course we we got lucky in that

way and we when our kid was two years old so we were able to start implementing some things but there was a lot of stuff that we encountered as we parented that we did without realizing it which was how we were raised and that's a constant battle to re-parent ourselves more than even how we parent our kids which kind of ties into your stuff yeah um what I wish I knew about parenting

was how much stuff I would have to go through about myself and my past and past experiences with the way I was raised um how much I'd have to confront that before I could even parent in a way that I'd want to um it's kind of scary how quickly I fell into some habit sets my parents have in terms of kind of ignoring blatant sad feelings and trying to use distraction instead um

even though knowing that we wanted to create a safe space for our kids to express their feelings or to acknowledge and and okay those feelings even knowing that I still fell into that habit um what I was raised to do or and going into the parenting thing like you said we kind of went into this blind um we didn't the values that we had

for our that we have and we want to instill in our kids we're different than what we've had growing up having kind of a set not a set but having a plan of kind of viewing viewing our kids Behavior as an expression of unmet needs versus what we were raised of thinking of what it is and having a plan has helped us

helped us like parenting at least more manageable while also confronting the Demons of our own past that idea of having a plan is so important it's not like we're baking a cake and we're gonna mix the right ingredients in just the right way and we're gonna bake the perfect child who's perfectly well adjusted and always happy and never needs therapy it's more that if we don't have any idea of where we want to go it's almost certain we won't

get there so if we want parenting to be joyful and fun and warm and collaborative and it isn't any of those things right now or it isn't those things most of the time then doing the things the way we've always done them and the way we were raised is probably not going to get us where we want to go I think of the journey more like having our eyes set on a distant Island and we're in a sailboat with no motor and we

tack one way and then the other to head in the general direction of our overall goal we might not end up where we think we will we might end up one or two or three islands over from the one that we were aiming for and that'll be okay because they're all lovely in their own way but we have to understand what our values are and most of the time have the ways that we're interacting with our

children be aligned with those values if we're going to have any chance of making it to any of those islands instead of feeling lost at sea and maybe ending up with a similar relationship with our adult children as we have with our own parents which might be based on a whole lot of intergenerational trauma and hurtful things that

have been said and healing things that we think we could never say to them I'll come back to Elizabeth for some

closing thoughts I wish I had known that it gets easier and then it doesn't that they are some challenges at every stage but that the skills that you learn when they are younger are in many cases transferable right an example is an ongoing challenge that I have about responding to my children's difficult feelings and I think it's that blend of accepting

letting the feelings be not trying to fix things and I think this applies to the crime of newborns it also applies to the meltdowns of Toddlers and applies to um how you respond to a five-year-old who's had a difficult time at at preschool right so yeah so what I wish I had known there was that is that you

know some of the yeah some of the skills would be that had better land the skills well enough because I'd need them for a lifetime um I yeah I hadn't anticipated um that at all I think what Elizabeth is saying here is both a caution if that's the right word and an opportunity it's a caution in that we might think we can sort of skate through the next few months and just get by with the skills

that we have as we're navigating whatever stage our child is going through right now thinking that we don't really need to do anything differently ourselves and I get that it can feel like a bit of a weight to think so I might need to learn some different skills so I can do things differently and I have to add this to my plate which is already feeling overloaded but the flip side of that is once you do

have those skills you have them for life and for your child's life and once you can be with a meltdown with a sense of calm and acceptance you can do it whenever you need it and chances are your child is going to have a lot fewer meltdowns when you can do things like problem solve to meet their needs and your needs but dysregulation still happens they get sick they get tired they get overwhelmed Things Fall Apart and that skill of

being with them in their pain is one that we will find useful when they are 3 and 13 and 30. before we conclude I wanted to point out what we didn't hear in this episode and I had no idea it was going to turn out this way I didn't know what people are going to submit until I saw the same videos you just saw or heard if you're listening on the podcast we didn't hear anyone saying my baby was

a month later than my neighbor's baby to roll over and it turned out to be a really big deal nobody said I wish I'd bought that one sippy cup that we didn't try when my toddler would pour water all over themselves every time they tried to drink nobody said I wish I'd worried more nobody said I should have put my baby or my child ahead of me more than I did nobody said my child's Behavior was

driving me up the wall and I finally figured out how to punish or reward them in the right way so they would stop doing it and now my life is so much easier the thing I see in common across all of these parents and I include myself here is that we had absolutely no idea that being a parent was going to crack Us open in the way that it has I don't think any of us knew that

becoming a parent would make us completely reassess what's important to us and how we show up in our relationships and how we can start to heal ourselves so we don't pass on the same hurts that were passed down to us by our parents and it's really hard to do that work alone it can feel like a huge weight is lifted when you're in community with other parents who share your values and who have felt similar things that you're

feeling and you can say I've been there it sucked here are some things that helped ideally we would have those kinds of communities physically close by us but I have not met many parents who have been able to find or create that it's far more common for me to hear a parent say I'm the only one around here who parents like this the neighbors look at me cross-eyed when I don't tell my child off for having a tantrum

so if you're looking for a real sense of community as you navigate parenting challenges I hope you'll join me and Elizabeth Jenny and Iris Laura Lucinda Melissa and Benson and Amanda in the parenting membership we would all love to see you there thank you