

What does it mean to be an emotionally safe parent | How to be an emotionally safe parent

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SUMMARY

The Connected Families podcast episode features co-founders Jim and Lynn Jackson discussing the importance of emotional safety in parenting. They emphasize the foundational message "You are safe with me" as crucial for fostering a secure and loving environment for children, which ultimately aids in their emotional and behavioral development.

- The podcast celebrates the rapid success of its early episodes, reaching listeners in 50 states and over 40 countries.*
- Emotional safety in parenting is defined as ensuring children feel supported and understood, rather than judged or criticized.*
- Parents often confuse emotional safety with being overly permissive or passive, which can lead to a lack of guidance for children.*
- The Jacksons stress the importance of distinguishing between a child's behavior and their identity to avoid making children feel inadequate.*
- They introduce a framework of four key messages for children: "You are safe with me," "You are loved no matter what," "You are called and capable," and "You are responsible."*
- A testimonial from a single mother illustrates how applying the "You are safe with me" message transformed her relationship with her daughter, particularly during bedtime struggles.*
- The podcast encourages parents to reflect on their own emotional responses and how these affect their parenting.*
- Listeners are invited to access free resources and an online course designed to help parents implement these principles effectively.*

[Music] hey everyone welcome to the connected families podcast i'm stacy and i am so glad you are joining us here today you know connected families is all about helping parents receive god's grace and truth for themselves and then pass that on to their children through our framework for parenting if you are not familiar with it you soon will be and it's easy to remember we're going to get into it with jimin jackson co-founders of connected families in

just a minute but first of all i want to tell you some super exciting news you know we are really new to this podcast world it's actually this episode right now is actually only our 11th episode that we're recording but at the time of recording this we've only released four episodes and guess what here's the news after our first episode aired within the first 24 hours we made number 100 in the top 200 category

of kids and family it's so huge we are just ecstatic i'm so excited to be able to tell you that and then within the

first two weeks of you know the second podcast aired we have listeners in 50 states and over 40 countries and that's because of you our listeners and so we just want to give a huge shout out to you guys and say thank you thank you thank you for listening thank you for reviewing

thank you for sharing our podcast because you're the ones that we do this for and you're the ones that help us get to 100 well i just wanted to read quick a review that somebody named amico left just like two weeks ago and she says connected families doesn't offer formulas for making my kids behave they remind me of how god approaches us and makes that the pattern for how we approach our kids if your family story includes adoption

or you need to use trauma-informed parenting with some of your children like our family does know that this will be a great fit for your whole family that's what we love about it thanks connected families you've blessed our family and the podcast is a great additional resource thank you amica for posting that for leaving that for us and everyone we appreciate it and we just encourage all of you likes leave a review if you can it helps us spread the word

we really want these podcasts to be a place where you can get helpful tips to use today and we also hope that you will walk away feeling more peaceful and confident knowing that god sees you and knows you and he knows your exact situation today he's with you and has abundant grace and truth for your unique circumstances and so with that i just want to welcome jimin jackson to the microphone hi jim and lynn how are you good hi stacy we're great

isn't it just amazing the reach that these podcasts have had in just four released episodes i know it's so fun i was a little worried that we were sort of late to the podcast game but it's just been such a great start really fun to see this the team launched yeah it's amazing to us lynn and i as we think about this and our team together you know that so many parents thousands now have downloaded these podcasts and have

benefited and are being blessed and we've got more good stuff today right we definitely do you know how many years has it been since you started connected families well in 2002 so do the math yeah so just give us a word how does it feel that connected families is at the place that it is now after these years on one level it feels overwhelming like we never dreamt when we started i mean we we wanted to do a work that would

impact our community and maybe spread out into churches in the in the minneapolis area near where we live and here we are 17 years later with a worldwide impact and it's like what we're just regular folks and but then on the other hand like god is behind this and from the day we started it was like god don't give us any more or any less than what we can take responsibility for and we've done our best to be stewards of

what god's given us and share it and god has honored that and there's a lot of people benefiting and we want to share what we've shared in a way that doesn't depend on lynn and i to do it which is why this framework has been so critical for parents to learn the ideas not depend on jim and lynn's stories or expertise right and we're going to get into that framework we are going to start to pull apart one

of the first things that you teach in the course which is the message you are safe with me now today's episode is how to be an emotionally safe parent so i want to start off with my first question to you jim and lynn asking you how do we combine the ideas of how to be an emotionally safe parent and communicating the message you are safe with me like define that what does that mean well it's really helpful to know what

safety is not because that's where a lot of misconception gets started it's like i have to be my child's friend and never say no and or i give in or i'm passive or i just let life teach them and i never engage that's not safe because kids do need our guidance and our boundaries but it's also not about stuffing our anger you know it's like i'm going to be calm as i teach you a lesson i see your face

that's all tight and holding it all in uh-huh when we engage with our anxiety and judgments but we suppress them so that we're kind of coming across golf that's not safe either and that's that emotional safety that our kids really need yeah i really think safety is about our kids in the grand scheme of things knowing that we're for them not against them and an awful lot of what parents do in the name of being the parent

tends to start costing them a sense of closeness a sense of connected relationship with their kids because the kids less and less trust their parents in the discipline that their parents put in place for any variety of reasons and so it's not to say don't discipline our kids when they ought to be disciplined it's to say that when we discipline our kids let's be mindful about what it feels like and is experienced through the child's lens

and that really starts with our heart as a parent if we go in engaging with our anxiety you know it's like picture a beautiful scene you're walking through the woods and then you wind around and you come across a lake but in the background is jaws music by the time you get to the lake you think something's gonna leap out and grab you you know you're on your defense then picture that same scene but instead your head is

it's playing ode to joy or something at least peaceful and as you and that might be a bit of a stretch right because i'm a dad and honestly i never heard ode to joy in my efforts to be safe but okay so we connect this image to a daily experience with your child right so well it's the thing of if you see the sibling conflict or you see the big mess and in your heart you're going

well this is part of life and how can i help my child learn something right now you know and there can even be a little eagerness in that yeah so that's what i'm talking about okay so lynn so that picture through the woods really should be littered with lego toys all over it is that what you're saying you're trying to get through the legos in your house and you don't want jaws right you want the ode to joy it's

like wow i have a really creative child don't i and i have some skills in the area of cleaning to learn yeah and for me it gets most practical when i recall my own experience as a young dad replaying how i was taught and my parents loved me they were very well intended but i was scared often and i remember myself as a young dad coming into a misbehaving child who was doing that thing that i had told them

not to do several times if not more and i would say what is wrong with you that's a loaded statement and i wasn't thoughtful about it at the time but that kind of statement leads kids to feeling unsafe like daddy thinks there's something wrong with me now there is something wrong here it's the behavior it's the choices but it's about behavior not about identity and so at the core we start right away in our brain to pick apart

the difference between labeling behavior and labeling identity for our kids you're a problem you're a pain there's something wrong with you versus there's a problem here that needs to be taken care of and you created the problem how can i help you take care of it you know a lot of parents they know not to go in with what's wrong with you but they do things that really communicate that message like this is not okay or why did you do this

again the underlying message is still what's wrong with you as opposed to wow we've really got quite a problem here don't we and in the course we do role plays that really take this apart and help parents kind of start to understand what kind of messages their kids might be getting from them that are unsafe and start to examine whether those are the messages they want their kids to get or not right and i know that this is the

beginning of the course which is also the bottom of we call it the framework it's the first message that we want to communicate to our kids you are safe with me so why is this the foundation why is this where you start well it's because the other messages really don't land if kids feel unsafe and those other messages the other messages are your love no matter what if kids don't feel safe they feel manipulated by any kind of affection sure and then the

message you are called and capable you know of a wiser response that without a sense of safety safety and love then that just becomes i want to fix you because you are bugging me and then a message of you are responsible can just become i really just want to punish you to satisfy my need for control so we do want to get kids through kind of that whole process of letting them know they're safe and loved but

they are capable of a wiser response and they're responsible to make right what they've made wrong if we don't give them that safety message first then we usually get derailed because then it just becomes about the conflict between mom and child as parent is trying to punish the child and the discipline efforts get derailed and the kids don't learn what they need to learn from the situation right so i know a lot of parents come into the course and they're

like i need help fixing this yeah i need to keep my kid in bed at night i'm just you know telling me how to do that and yet we spend a lot of time on all of those messages right especially safe in the beginning there's two sessions there and there's loved and called and capable and then we get to you are responsible where we work through that yeah so when the child doesn't go to bed what

unsafe tends to look like is how many times do i have to tell you nine o'clock is your bedtime and if you don't get in there right now you're gonna be grounded or you're gonna be spanked or you're gonna be punished somehow and you're gonna lose privileges like crazy and the child just withers in fear and they either act out or they

comply because they're scared and then eventually they go to bed and putting kids to bed at nine o'clock

might be a thing but safe might be like this you know i know you don't like a nine o'clock bedtime but even before i would say that i would go okay i want to be a different parent i want my child to receive messages of grace from me and truth from me and so lord help me know that this situation doesn't define me so that's checking the music that we talked about right there's the music yeah music right and then there's like

the deep breath and you know child i know nine o'clock is hard for you and getting ready in the last five minutes has been difficult so how can we work together tomorrow night to get you started sooner so that you can be successful at bedtime at nine o'clock for tonight i'm going to be with you through this process let's just get you in bed as quickly as we can so that tomorrow night we'll have a better plan

i love that and so as a mom let's make the bedtime seven o'clock gym not nine o'clock okay i was like nine o'clock he said nine o'clock way too late nine o'clock was the last imprint in my brain from my own childhood yeah but whatever the bad time is it doesn't matter but what's the process and how am i sure to be safe and to be loving while holding my kids accountable to grow in capability and take

responsibility for being in bed when they need to be in bed and the online course gives lots of tools doesn't it for asking that question so we've framed it as far as the music in your head right but in the online course we ask the question what's going on in me we talk a lot about that and we dig into that quite a bit there yeah because that makes the difference between gritting your teeth and trying to act like you're calm

and really going in with god's grace and truth in your heart that's the key to this whole thing is going in with god's grace and truth in your heart so good lin so good jim well you know we have so many free resources on our website we love giving lots of free things don't we we do and one of them that i just want to talk about right now and offer to all of our listeners is a free download ebook that we call

four messages every child longs to hear so we've talked about the messages today in the framework that you are safe you are loved you are called and capable and you are responsible and this is going to give you just a quick snapshot of them so i just want to offer that to all of our listeners go to our website connectedfamilies.org you can also find that in our show notes while you're on our website check out the discipline that

connects with our child's heart online course it runs for two and a half months and we do that it only runs two times a year but we do that so that we can build community in that place and so i just welcome you to find out that information well jim and lynn this message of you are safe is a really powerful one and it is the foundation that we were seeing and there was a mom who took

the course last fall this mom has gone through some really hard times in her life she's a single mom right now her husband just left her and her and her daughter have really gone through a lot of trauma and so i get to be the online course moderator and i walk all of the families through the course which means that i email them and

answer their questions i comment and reply to their questions on the course and so

i got to know her on the course and i called her find out more about her story and ask if she would give a testimonial and she said she's more than happy to because of her situation we've been careful to change details of her story but i want you to just listen in everybody to hear her story of how she has applied this message you are safe with me to her and her daughter's situation dealing with trauma so we've had someone

else read this to disguise her voice that's right listen in my seven-year-old daughter and i are recovering from the trauma we experienced with my ex-husband who recently left us he had addiction and mental health issues and my daughter saw an experience saying she should not have had to this made her anxious and led to many intense verbally hurtful and even physical blowouts mostly at bedtime when she'd start to think and remember i usually dealt with her behavior by urging her to just get

under control and just to stop it but it just kept getting worse i found connected families online after reading a ton of other parenting books and when i heard the teaching on the message you are safe with me it changed my perspective and totally transformed our lives i started to understand how important safety was for my daughter especially at bedtime before the course i used to either leave her alone or just lecture her about stopping her

aggressive words and actions but this just seemed to get her even more angry since taking the course i'm learning to use empathy and validate the total unfairness of what has happened and i've learned to say things like i understand there is so much going on i even started to stay in a room until she fell asleep every night it was hard because she didn't fall asleep until 9 30 or 10 most nights i made a big sign and

i hung it in a room that said child you are safe with me and another one that said i love you no matter what i cried when i made them it was like i was putting a stake in the ground and no matter what her and i had gone through i'd be there for her in the way that she needed and that we would get through this it took 10 months but just this week my daughter said that she didn't need me

in the room anymore and she fell asleep on her own she still has big emotions and anxiety but the more i give her that safety the less anxious and angry she is it seems so simple but when we put it into practice it's so powerful as a single parent going through a really difficult situation it was intimidating to join this online course and community even though i brought up difficult issues my questions were met with grace and compassion and i

felt like i really mattered to jim and lynn and when they did the live online question and answer session they answered my specific questions more than anything this course gave me the belief that i can get through this time and raise my child well through it all i will recommend it until i'm blue in the face so i just love that story it's about a mom who just came through the worst of stuff right and it really started

when she had that realization was easy to just blame the dad and blame the situation but she even said well what

am i contributing you know i just never thought the way i was handling was part of the problem but that self-realization that authenticity that look at her own heart was just it was the starting place for it and then how that worked out was just you know when she then went and changed how she responded to her

child i loved it that was the point where she said i just put a stake in the aft yeah i put a stake in the ground and wasn't that just so powerful when she said it was tears in my eyes as i wrote the messages you are safe with me it was powerful and now without mom being forceful about it in the lease child goes to bed without difficulty peacefully it took time and persistence like this isn't the magic fix that's not the

quickie solution that makes me feel in control it's like i'm parenting the way i know i want to parent and over time this is going to get us somewhere yes and it did and you know a child that goes to bed with high anxiety is not going to sleep easily a child that goes to bed with a message you are safe and loved capable of doing this you're responsible you know just all those things it's so

such a game changer so thank you so much to this mom for allowing us to share her story and she told me she just wanted to be useful to so many people and so we know that it is by sharing it today and when i coach parents i see that when parents start by looking at themselves going inside and determining to be safe then it's just that's the first domino in really powerful changes in their family

so good thanks jimin lynn thank you it's really fun to be here and to get started covering this very important topic i know we cover it in depth in the online course so if we've created some thoughts if there's some stirrings going on in you by hearing our conversation today i just really recommend that you go to our show notes and check out our discipline that connects with your child's heart online course and i'll be there with you going through

the course so i hope to see you there our next episode we're going to cover the message you are loved no matter what that's the second line in our framework that we talked about today it really is all about connection even when it's really hard so thanks for being with us everyone you