

Parenting Q&A with Kristen Volk

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SUMMARY

Kristin Volk discusses her journey as a single parent and her experiences with the Hand in Hand parenting approach during a live Q&A session. She addresses various parenting challenges, particularly focusing on helping children navigate their emotions and transitions, such as moving to their own beds or dealing with diaper changes.

- *Kristin shares her background as a single parent of two children, including a son with multiple disabilities.*
- *She emphasizes the importance of understanding children's feelings during transitions, such as moving to their own beds.*
- *Listening partnerships are recommended as a way for parents to process their own feelings and frustrations.*
- *Special time is suggested to strengthen the parent-child connection and promote cooperation.*
- *Play listening techniques are encouraged to make challenging tasks, like diaper changes, more engaging and less stressful.*
- *Kristin highlights the significance of laughter and play in reducing tension during daily routines.*
- *She offers practical strategies for parents, including setting expectations and allowing children to express their feelings.*
- *Kristin promotes upcoming classes and resources from Hand in Hand for further support in parenting challenges.*

hello this is Kristin Volk and we're doing a live broadcast right now on an advance Facebook page so I'm just here yeah to answer your questions so it's a question and answer session and you can write in your questions and I will get them in a comment section on here so feel free to go ahead and send me some kind of question you have about parenting and your children and and

please make sure that you include the age of your child or children that would be helpful so while people are doing that writing in their questions I will tell you a little bit about myself maybe my journey with hand-in-hand I am I'm outside of Denver Colorado and I have two children I have a 14 year old son and an 11 year old daughter my I'm a

single parent and my son has multiple disabilities and I came to hand in hand because I found parenting very hard and I I struggled because my family had experienced multiple instances of trauma in a couple year time period and I didn't know how to handle the behaviors that were coming out of that situation and I was reaching out for help and all kinds of avenues and we're all multiple

therapies and it really wasn't seeing a shift and the behaviors were really too much for me to handle truthfully so once I found hand in hand through a friend who just happened to mention it I I took us an online starter class

which is a six-week class that's done online you also receive a weekly mentor call with an instructor and I did that call for six weeks and just it started to turn things around in a major way and I

was so encouraged and so hopeful I jumped into certification and became an instructor and now I do hand in hand with my family on a daily basis and I love it and I can't imagine my life without it so that's a little bit about myself and so I'll just wait and see if there's any questions that anyone has for me so far we don't have any questions listed so and Jana maybe you could confirm that you're someone

from the hand-in-hand corporate offices here and you can hear me and this is working well it says that it's live so I think it is so I'm just going to wait to see what kind of questions come up and it can be about anything any age child any challenge that you're having

okay so I do have a question and I'm not going to mention any names but I have a question here I have a five year old son refuses to sleep in his own bed how can we convince him okay so it's time to move to his room okay so it sounds like he's he's sleeping with you and you wanted to go to his own room it's a great question and I understand

I absolutely coast left with my children as well and I needed them at some point to go to their own beds as well so when I would start with or what I'm really hearing is that your son has some big feelings about moving to his own bed that's kind of how I frame something like that right but he has these feelings about sleeping on his own and in fact what can many times happen for children especially with sleep is that

it can be the longest period of separation from us completely on their own so it can be a really scary experience to actually go in to sleep and do that by themselves especially if the habit is to be with someone else so it's a it's a big transition and it's a really scary transition for a child as well so I think it's really important to you know start with like understanding what is this situation like for him

because our experience is probably very different right we just want some freedom and a good night's sleep and so recognizing that he's probably very afraid and that he's you know in terms of going into his own room and going to sleep so there's many things you could do so we have several tools that that we kit that we use with hand in hand or the hand in hand has that can really support

the situation so the first thing is that I would recommend getting a listening partner because when we and we're listening partner is is a way to share support between two adults does not involve the children at all and it's just a way for us to talk about express share be witnessed around our challenges around parenting so it's a place that you can like with this particular situation you

can you know talk about how much you want your own space so whatever you know and there could be multiple things happening there I'm making some assumptions but there could be multiple challenges there for you and things that you worry about or think about or feel regarding your son going into his own bed so you

know what are some of the challenges with that and also what are some of the fears or concerns that you might have so in terms of him moving

into his own room will there be a sense of loss for you and heartache and sadness about losing that connection as well because it's a big transition really for all of us so having a place to work on our feelings and our thoughts around a situation can help us to approach the actual situation with the child in a much more compassionate open way that we can actually listen well to

our child and so that would be really step one from my standpoint and then the next thing I would probably recommend we have these four to olds parent-child relationship tools and you can really use any or all of them but I would really start with probably stay listening and I don't know what your you know how often your son's feelings come up but you can start with you know

helping him to express his feelings around going into his own room so with some kids just the mere mention of something like you know sweetheart and three nights we're gonna have you start sleeping in your own room from now on like even mentioning it can be enough to bring up feelings no no no I don't want to go in my room I don't want to sleep here I want to stay with you and what stateless Nina is is actually listening to his

feelings accepting those feelings because he really is scared he really does doesn't feel secure doesn't have the confidence enough to go into sleep and so listening to those feelings can be extremely helpful and then you could so I would start by mentioning it and see if feelings come up just by that and then you have the actual situation of that's him okay okay so so that's actually really great that

he can get to his feelings easily like that so I would start with you know maybe three to five nights ahead of time telling him this is what's when it happens you're studying an expectation and you set it with warmth to like you know just like I said sweetheart in X number of nights you're gonna be sleeping in your own bed and and be ready for those feelings to come back you know for him to offload those

feelings to you and what what you want to do while you're stainless need to you want offer eye contact you want to offer warmth you don't want him to bury his feelings in you so if you like falls in your lap and you know buries himself in your lap you want to try to avoid that so it happens you just might want to kind of you know let it happen for a few you know 30 seconds or 10 or 20 seconds

and then you might want to move over and try to make some eye contact with him and just because you want to signal to him in his limbic brain that you're there supporting him that he is actually safe because when he goes into his feelings he is truly feeling scared and depending on his background in his history and so for the experiences you've had in life that fear can be quite extreme it can be like oh my gosh

the wolves are me and I'm this is the end and so especially something as scary as being on your own at night can be extremely scary so you want to you're trying to do is communicate non-verbally for the most part to his

limbic brain that the the present situation of him going into his own room is actually not a scary situation and you do that by by

listening to him and he'll end and helping him to feel your presence that's the most important you want him to feel your presence do you do that through eye contact if you say something you want to have a warm tone of voice you want to have soft facial features and something that appropriate that could that you could say there is an article on our website called what to say during stay listening and hopefully that can pop up

here so you can see that as well it's a great article because you want to communicate mostly non-verbally but the things you say you want to be you know effective so something like I know it's hard sweet hard would be a great thing to say at that point because yes he is really very much experiencing a fear and it is hard for him and so but you're anchoring him by communicating to his limbic brain it he's actually safe in

the moment and that's what's gonna help him to heal his fear around going into his own bed into his own room and you and I would recommend doing that several consecutive nights especially if he can get to his feelings and that will help you in the in the in the night that you actually decide that it's time to go to his room and then once then you've got that night that okay tonight's the night then you're gonna kind of do something

similar where you bring him into his room and you go through your bedtime routine and obviously beforehand bring him into his room and his big feelings would probably be just as intense you know just as wild just as big as as the first time he cried and maybe even more so and that's okay it's actually really helping him you know his fear around going into sleep at nights by himself is

probably more than then going to sleep at night by himself it's probably related to or associated with you know other times in his life that he needed support and didn't have it at times in his life that he felt alone and it was really hard for him and and so I think that's another important thing to keep in mind and again that's something that you might want to get some listening time on it's really important to be able

because this is this is hard work this is emotional work and so being able to get support for yourself and get some listening partnership time could be very important and if you don't have a listening partnership yet there is an article too called how to find the listening partner that could be helpful to you that gives you ways to do that and you can also put something on the Facebook page but so back to just the

listening it would be the same thing when you're back in his room you would you know put him to bed you could sit there with him for a couple of minutes and face you know sweetheart now it's time to go sleep and he's probably gonna have some big feelings it helps to anticipate that as well and you can sit and listen to those feelings you don't have to have this hard core routine around you know time for bed turn out the light I'm

leaving and then you go you can actually you can sit and listen to those feelings this is the healing process that allows him to actually heal the fears that he has and the Hutt's that he's experienced in his life of being alone and

not feeling resourceful enough or confident enough to go into sleep so this needs so that and that might take several nights I mean I have lots of clients who it takes three

nights is like a pretty common scenario but there's also no guarantee of how long it might take [Music] but that's a really good starting point there's also lots of other things you can do around I'm just going to see if there's other questions here too to make sure that I'm spreading things out otherwise I'm happy to spend more time with this this particular issue okay um so another thing I would also recommend

besides the stateless name is special time so let's go back to realizing that he's experiencing fear and a lack of confidence to go into sleep by himself and so one way to support that as well is to give him special time which will build his sense of connection with you that gives him a felt sense of you that he can take with him into sleep and so

what special time looks like is it's a set amount of time and you've actually used a timer and you name it and you will then do in that time frame you do whatever your child wants to do and your main role in that time frame is to just light in your child you just one of the ways I've heard it said is to luxuriate in him and what that does that in one way we talked about is that it fills up

his connection table so that when he feels more full with connection he can take you with him into his sleep and that will also be a very supportive process for him as well so so those are two great first steps there's also our other tools our playlist name and setting limits and the setting expectations was very similar to setting limits it's the same process but those

are also tools you can use so hand in hand also has a great sleep course that can help with that and it's only I think \$39 that is potentially something that you could look at and there's tons I know of articles on our website as well and blog post about sleep because it's a very common challenge because it's such a hard thing for children but that that's a good starting point and and it's a great question so thank you for asking

that so I do have another question here as well um advice for diaper changes almost two years old hates them and attempts to make it playful seem not to help okay so and that's a tricky one because if the child's moving around too much that could be hard right so so diaper change is off two years old hmm

okay so I guess my first thought on that would also be and I think people who work with me get to learn that my first thought usually is there's like what kind of support can we get for ourselves because I can't imagine how frustrating that must be to to have a child not going to have their diaper changed and and all that comes along with that right and so getting listing time on your

frustration and the lack of cooperation from your child would be something I think that could be very valuable that you can like have a tantrum or have a good cry with another adult and not put that frustration on your child and so could be very very helpful the next thing I would also recommend special time for sure

because what children's

system people might be surprised to hear this but children's natural states when they're connected is actually to cooperate and so they want to cooperate with us and when they're connected good and connected and that connection goes really internalized it's a very deeper level of connection they're gonna have a stronger sense in need of cooperation as well so special time would be very important here as

well to sort of just build that foundation you know helping him move in that direction and then the other thing that I would probably recommend and I'm a big fan of playlist name and I use it a lot in my family and it's been an important one for me so that the one that comes to mind is the way I sort of think about and frame play listening is

like how do you turn it turn the tables on something and create laughter so maybe with a two year old if you could it sounds really silly but like maybe you put on a towel or a diaper you know like a and then you know pretend a towel is a diaper or something to that nature a blanket or something like that and um and just you know start to be like oh god I can't get this out I don't know

what to do I can't get this back it's stuck on me you know some form of that early or you could just say oh this is thirties think you think he's dinky like and you might jump up and down you exaggerate you get really dramatic really goofy really silly like the the intention with the play listening the start of playlist name is to get laughter going so you want to do something really silly and get that

goofy around diaper changing and and what you're trying to also promote so you've got the laughter you want to give the child the more powerful role so what you'd want to do is to promote the child wanting to change your diaper because whatever is in his way of being able to for him to be able to change that diaper get that diaper changed um you know is

there's probably a lot of feelings around there right and maybe it has to do with loss of control or you know you're gonna be the better judge of that because you're an expert on your child and so so maybe so this is a playful way not in the moment of it the diaper change but to actually start to shift whatever his big feelings are around that diaper change so that he gets to be in control while he like

changes your diaper or you know or your towel or whatever it is and so that could be a playful way to start to break up whatever his feelings are and you could also have some fun to the process like you could yeah and I just want to make sure to remember if you do something like that that you would keep the laughter going so you're not trying to teach me thing you're not trying to

you know make something happen the really two main components are is to keep that laughter going the laughter is gonna break up his feelings and you want to give him the more powerful role so that he can overcome whatever you know challenge is there for him so so you just want to keep doing the goofy thing

you're doing you want to keep doing you know like oh it's stuck over here I can't get it you know something like

that um could be really fun for the child and actually he'll whatever is in his way as well so hopefully that's a good that's a good and there's a I know Jana is putting some things on the comments here about articles and so forth to help get things started for you too and playlist name so I'm gonna go to the next question here so you know I'm

gonna this is another person who's asked one question already which I'm happy to get back to but I'm gonna let someone else ask the question because we are getting lots of questions here so we live in the snow belt and getting out of the house with my two and a half year old is a total nightmare getting her dressed and out of the house is seemingly never-ending process I've tried making games of it by seeing if we can get dressed by the count to

ten I give her a choice to dress herself or I dress her and even resorted to leaving her behind if she's not ready nothing seems to work any advice okay um I know that scenario extremely well um and my daughter was hard to get of the house so and in the snow belt you have lots of layers to put on w so so there's obviously something you know I don't know many times there

can be lots of tension about getting out of the house again I would recommend listening time on that because the tension we carry affects our children because of how we're connected through our limbic brains the emotional center of our brains and so the tension that we feel our children can read it and they know exactly how we're doing internally and in reality what they really need is connection soft warm connection and I love that you're trying to find playful

ways to do this so and this is what we would call an emotional project so it's something that you know might take a little bit of time but I think it can make some great progress so the first thing I would recommend after a listening time is again I would also recommend special time because um what I'm hearing is that this transition from you know being in a safe warm home

environment out into the world is a scary experience for her for whatever reason you know and then we're adding tension and for the parents the adults on top of that right because it's frustrating for us to try to get this child out of the house he's not cooperating and so we wanted to help her to start to you know to feel you at a deeper level so that she can adjust and adapt to like this shift from blame

you know so it's not so scary for her to go from this warm home environment out into the world and so so sorry I'm reading other comments here but um so I would start with special time so that she can again create because what happens is is that as that transition happens connection is breaking for her and so when connection breaks our limbic brain which is the social emotional

center of our brain tells and they're thinking part of a brain not to work so that's why she's not able to like put

her shoes on or get dressed or do those things is because she's not able to think clearly and so what we want to do is help to build up that internalized sense of connection fill her connection cup so that her thinking her limbic brain doesn't flood so easily and her thick part of the brain can work more

so special time can do that it can start that process to help her feel you know have a felt sense of you and more connection so it's not so easily broken that would be one step the other thing I would recommend is I'd like you to take a look at play a little differently so the the so rather than thinking of making things a game think of play to

connect and to create laugh as I explained play listening before it's to create laughter for her and to give her the more powerful role so one of the ways that I've used play my own family is I think of it as I pepper my morning with play so when and again play means organic connection like play is the way I keep my children close to me so they

can function better more often more of the time and so the way that might look is like for example getting dressed is you know rather than counting to 10 it becomes you know like you take a pair of pants and you're like ooh here's your pants do they go here and then you put them on your child's head or oh oh good these are Europeans wait because it's cold outside we got to put these on your

ears and your opportunity to put them on your child's ears or oh did they go on your elbow these are arm pants right and like you just put them in goopy places on your child or on yourself you could be I think these fit me don't these look nice so you could put it on yourself as well but the whole idea is to create laughter so that's that first step in creating the laughter and then you as

you get that laughter going you keep going getting that laughter going the child will oftentimes responded like no mommy no mommy they go here and so then having a more powerful role your daughter having a more powerful role what would be her putting the pants on like that's gonna be what she really wants to do because she wants to show you how capable she is and that laughter has helped to break up the tension about going into that transition process and

so you can use that you know over and over again for each step of the way and I will also there might even be something on our website I think that someone has written played about playful ways about getting out of the house that can be really helpful for you as well to give you some more ideas and I've also noticed a relationship between like the amount of listing time I get and my

ability to be playful and so because it's exhausting trying to make things happen right and we've got all these things to do and so in order to find our own funny bone the find our own way to be you know playful and fun and have laughter is is hard to do so being listened to can really help us to create that capacity and then and then you also have just a one little tiny and we're really out of time here this

is a 30-minute broadcast but the one last comment is to get to also stay with them and so if so what you do is you you know set an expectation for your child it's time to go sweetheart you do it with more and then you let your child have the big feelings because those big feelings are directly related to her inability to you know transition into from home going to outside so that would

be another process that you could look at as well so we're out of time here and I see there are a lot of questions and I just really you know hopefully we'll do more of these and I can do more of these and hopefully I can connect with you all at another time just to also know that there's some links that are being shared here as well about I have an online starter class that's starting in

February if any of you are in Denver I have a lot or a free - free talks coming up in January and which at 1 is going to be on setting limits and the other one's going to be on positive communication and I also have a starter a six-week starter class beginning in January 26 as well so you can find that all either there's links that will be provided if you want more information on any of that

so I really appreciate being here today I love the work of hand in hand and all the amazing support that it provides and the shift it provides and helping film is be closer and do well together too so so thank you so much and I hope to connect again another bye [Applause]