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Dr. William Stixrud and Ned Johnson

What Do You Say to Help Kids Be Resilient and Self Motivated

Welcome to Happily Family! I'm Cecilia Hilkey. I'm Jason Hilkey. And we're delighted today to have Dr. William Stixrud and Ned Johnson with us. They are the authors of the self-driven child. And What Do You Say. Bill is a clinical neuropsychologist and a faculty member at children's national and the George Washington University school of Medicine. Ned is the founder of Prep Matters. A tutoring service in Washington,

DC is a sought after speaker and teen coach. Welcome Ned and Bill. It's great to have, And you guys are the authors of this new book, and I don't know, is this what the cover looks like now? We haven't actually seen the released cover, but you're the, you know, what do you say? Okay. There, it doesn't have the,

not For sale sticker on your early copy. Oh, it's so great to have you both here. We've enjoyed talking to you about the self-driven child. And I wanted to start talking actually about how we talk to kids about success and happiness as the first question, because there's a really great chapter on that, that I thought was, was, would be wonderful to share with people here.

You know, w I was, I was thinking while we were writing the book, you know, I, I was looking at some of the research on happiness and it was looking at looking at the videos of Laurie Santos, the psychology professor at Yale who lived in a residential dormitory with students, just the students who the, basically they have all these advantages and they're miserable.

And she started teaching this, this class on happiness. It yelled at it quickly became the most popular class in the history of Yale university. And we were out in Texas a couple of years ago and just asked the, the, these high school student leaders, how many of you want to be happy as adults? And they all raised their hand and we said,

what do you understand? It takes to be happy as an adult. And this one kid raised his hand and said, we understand that if you get into a good enough college, everything else has stepped, but

it just couldn't be farther from the truth. And so we thought, you know, how did, how do they get this kind of crazy idea?

And, and people, people just yearn to tell these kids who are in these high pressure, high achievement kids, they yearn to understand how to actually be happy. And we're thinking let's start early, let's start early talking about the pursuit of happiness and the difference between happiness and pleasure and that that achievement is important, but it's only one part of it being happiness.

In fact, it's in one formula, it's one fifth of the formula preventing. I think there's probably adults that have that same question about like, what is it that makes up happiness? I think that, I mean, you say that and I'm like, Hmm, I don't know if I have, I don't know what answer I would give to that.

It's really been more of a lifelong kind of pursuit of what that is for me. So I can't imagine like what a child or a college student would even think. Yeah. And what you point out in that chapter is like many parents say, like, I just want our kids to be happy. And yet then what we do to like help support our kids to be happiness,

to be happy is actually pushing them in the opposite direction. If we focus on achievement and the college and whatever, getting some job on wall street. Well, it's, it's funny, you know, the, the, to, to walk through just really quickly, the, the, the formula Martin Seligman who founded the, the study of positive psychology has this acronym of per month.

And so P is, is positive emotions. And some of us, you know, it's how you're wired for the glass half full or glass half empty, but there's practices of gratitude and CBT and all sorts of things that can change our thinking. There is engagement, you know, or the flow experience of the things that we're just deeply engaged in and find interesting,

just because they're interesting to us are his relationships, which is of course is such an important part of, of your happiness and, and the work that you all do to, to help us have happier and more full relationships with April M is meaning, right? So whether this is service or your faith, or how you contribute to the world and then AEs that achievement piece.

And there's the story in the book. I was meeting with that with a family who had given a multimillion dollar pledge to an Ivy league school. And they're telling me this at the start of the sophomore year. And so here's the plan. And then we need only the missing piece, just the test scores and blah, blah, blah. And dad goes on somewhere in the middle of the conversation to sort of,

you know, and all she wants to do is spend time with their friends and play soccer. I mean, it's not like she's going to get recruited for either of those. I mean, what's the point of that? And I thought, oh, oh, nine one, because she said this the most pressure cooker school in the DC

area. And these are the healthy ways that she throws off stress to go to balance off the intense academic pressure that she feels that she's under all the time and to this flow experience.

I mean, she was really good athlete. She wasn't physically at the level that she was going to be able to, to be at the highest, highest level, but she gets just deep, deep engagement. And, and I knew her friends, they were just really cool cats and they just had so much fun. And, you know, and we have Bill and I have,

you know, between the two of us have had just scads and scads and scads of people who are multi-millionaires, billionaires, many of whom have achieved everything except for, you know, peace and happiness, because they've sacrificed all those other things of engagement and flow and meaning, and relationships to get to the top and then what then would happen. So you've achieved everything and you're still not happy.

And now you're looking around like, what else am I supposed to do? I've achieved everything. And it's just because you don't know. And so we feel that we, as parents can talk about what are the things that really are fulfilling to us and talk in a very open way about our relationships and our hobbies and all these kinds of things to model to our kids,

that, that these things are important to us too. It's not just not only being a parent and having a job. It's these other things that make lives full and rich and, you know, happy. So I'm gonna a little self-disclosure here since the Leslie, you got the book, you've got a, you know, early release of the books. So you have really hasn't let go of the book.

And so I haven't had a chance to read it, forgive me if this is a question that I should know, but as a parent, and, and maybe this is covered in the book. And so it'd be nice to hear this as a parent, if I can't even figure out what is success and happiness, if I don't even really know for myself,

if it's something that I am personally trying to figure out, how do I support my kids in pursuing happiness and success without really knowing like, how to do that myself, but how does that happen? Well, one of the things that we talk about in this chapter is that all of us, children and adults are very poor predictors. What actually makes you happy?

You know, they, they do studies where you, you, you get, you get 20, you're given 20 bucks, or you get to get 20 bucks to somebody else. And you're much happier if you give 20 bucks to somebody else, you know, you're, we're happier if we appreciate what we have. And if we strive to get what we don't have,

we appreciate doing for others. We're happy to, if we do things for others, more than doing anything for ourselves, there's stuff that just is counter-intuitive, but we've all had that experience of how good it feels to help somebody out how, how satisfying it is to really connect with somebody, you know, personally. And you can be at an intense conversation,

helping somebody solve a problem and being useful to them. And you walk away feeling like life is really meaningful. We've all had those experiences, but I, so I, I, and I think they've finally what happened in psychology about 20 years ago was Martin Seligman said, look, we've been studying human misery in psychology for, for decades. Why don't we pay attention to people are happy and see what they're like.

And that's where he came up with this formula that this permit formula. And it's probably a pretty good working description of the things that contribute to have if you have really deep engagement. So, so with kids, what anxiety I told my own kids, because I care just as much about sports or the other stuff they're interested in, is it about their schoolwork in part,

because I knew it's so good for brain development to work really hard, to get better and better and better, it's somebody that you care about. But, but also it's just, it just makes life fun. It makes like<inaudible> talks about this. So many kids who you see is who are these high stress, high pressure kids. They just need something to look forward to in their day.

And so we can learn about that. There's a science of emergence of what makes people happy. And where's the, we're teaching a little bit in this chapter and suggesting ways that parents can start to talk about kids with their kids about it. So it sounds like, so if we consider the PERMA model from Martin Seligman and we, as we, as the parents,

don't necessarily have to have this figured out, like we do as parents in life with a lot of things, we don't have to have it all figured out to be a parent, but like, we don't have to have it all figured out if we can just be using that PERMA model as kind of a touchstone or as a measure of making decisions of how to support our kids or directions,

we can go, that's one and role model that ourselves like applied ourselves. Then that's actually something that we can do to support our kids, to be happy and successful, hopefully at some point in their life or to at least be pursuing those directions. Is that it? Yeah. I think that, I think that's right. And one of the things that one of the real challenges is that we live in a society that is increasingly materialistic and increasingly focused outwards,

right. Particularly with social media and, and really externalizes, you know, our, our perception of the world. And so we're always looking at the achievement of other people and, you know, social media, right? It's, it's, everyone's highlight reel while we're living our own blooper reel. And if we can, if we can turn away from that a little bit,

right. And look at where people really engaged. I have a good friend, who's a clinical neuroscience as a clinical linguistic psychologist, excuse me. And we were talking about happiness. And he said, I said, who are you see, who is kind of, you know, consistently happy? And he said, well, oftentimes people who win the quote unquote meritocratic race.

And he said, and he said, in my experience, a lot of African-American women who are deeply people of faith, because in that, in their, in their faith traditions, that's this deep sense of

meaning, but also this deep sense of community and all these people that are engaged when doing work, that feels meaningful. And I remember I was walking this few years ago.

I was, I for almost 30 years, I've worked six days a week, helping kids through these jury tests. Right. And it's a Saturday morning. It's like eight o'clock in the morning. And I've got this brand new family and I'm walking down my office and I'm sort of doing, like doing this aide morning. And the mom looks at me and she says,

are you always like this? And I thought, yeah, more or less, right. Because I have a job where I feel that, you know, I get to be helpful to people. There's a wonderful guy named Frank Martella. And he's a motivational guy. He's actually from Finland. You got to look at pictures of him. He think he's from the Partridge family from the seventies has got a wild sartorial choices.

And he says, the meaning of life is doing things that make you, that are meaningful to you that make you meaningful to other people. And I thought, my goodness, isn't that great? Like, you know, my mechanic is this genius, right? And he must take satisfaction out of fixing things. And goodness knows I can't be more grateful to him.

Right. And so it's not that we're opposed to, to success or to academic or academic achievement. It's just that the drum beat that so many kids get, it's just so ruinous. And there's a story in the book. I was working with this girl for almost a year. I know this is going into her senior year. And I stopped. And I asked her,

I said, what do you, what, what do you enjoy most? What makes you happiest? And she sat there and his book went across her face. And she said, you know, I really have no idea. I've spent all of my time and energy trying to meet the expectations that other people have of me. I really don't know. And,

but I was trying, I always do my work, try to pay attention to what the kids do outside of school. And she kept talking about this thing called punch at her school, which is basically kids. It's an all-girl school and they design clothes, make clothes, and then have a runway show with their friends as models for the clothes that they'd made.

And she kept talking about this, talking about this, talking about this, but she didn't think it was really important. And to me, I'm thinking, well, you keep talking about it. So must be pretty important. So I snuck in to go and watch, go and watch her, watch her, show her, run my show. And by luck,

I sat right behind her mom. And when this girl's friends were walking, modeling her clothes, her mom was, was head down in her phone. And I thought, oh man, well, there it is. Right. And so a year later I get an email from her that she had transferred from the highly selective important school that she was supposed to go to,

that she and her parents spent all this time and effort getting into. And she attracts should she had transferred to one of the most well-regarded fashion schools in the same Northeast where we attended. And now she was, she was a bright kid and was willing to work hard, but now she was working hard at something that actually mattered to her. That's awesome.

That's really cool. I, yeah, I can take a lot of this to heart just as a parent. It's I think that's important stuff for us to be figuring out how to support our kids in the things that are interesting to them to be a consultant with them. I think that's what you you've talked about that in previous books about being a consultant.

Yeah. And then what I like about that story, and so many of the stories in the book, I think that's one of the strengths of this book is that there are so just like the self-driven child, there are so many stories in sample dialogues, but what I really like about that story that you told is that if we get out of our kids' way,

if we take this role of consultant coach, that it actually is not only easier for us, it's easier for our kids. And it is so much more efficient from the standpoint of like time and energy for us to like follow their lead a little bit more. So, so for, for parents in the audience that are like, okay, this being a consultant thing,

it sounds terrifying what would be some first steps? Okay. So the main thing for the note is, is that the, the thesis of the self-driven child is that besides letting kids know that they're deeply loved, probably the best thing we can do for them is to nurture that sense of control and autonomy and their own life, because it's so crucial for a mental health.

And for motivation, when you think about really anxious kids, their thinking is completely out of control. They feel that their life feels out of control. If they're depressed, forget it. And I was taught, I was talking a few years ago with the guy who does who's the head of all the anxiety and depression, PA pediatric anxiety and depression research at NIH.

And, and he said the key to the solving our mental health problems is preventing mental health problems in children and teenagers. And I, so I think by focusing on happy sin, focusing on sense of control, really powerful, and the three applications of this that we've been talking recently about the industry implications of this idea of thinking about yourself more as a consultant to your kids that as their boss or their manager is number one,

is to offer, help and offer advice. We have so much to contribute. So if somebody to give our kids, but if we try to force it down their throats, it never works. And so offer help offer advice. Don't try to force it as much as possible encourage kids to make their own decisions that that decision making requires practice. And ultimately for kids to be independent,

we want them to be good decision-makers and thirdly is, is that we want kids as much as they can to solve problems. We can brainstorm, we can help them, but, but when they need that

experience of solving their own problems, in order to develop the confidence, they can handle hard stuff. And at our goal for kids is, is that they,

they are able to run their own life before they leave home. And because that's what you can go to<inaudible> we see so many kids and there's so many stories of, of, of kids who get to the most elite colleges and they're home by November, or you take a medical leave and they go to the manager clinic in Houston for treatment that they just can't,

they don't have enough experience just running their own life with their parents, not managing their life, but helping the kids figure out who do you want to be? What kind of life do you want? How do you, how can, how can I help you get there? I can say really quickly we talk, w it's worth picking up the book just to,

to, to explore. We talk about the neurological underpinnings of happiness versus pleasure, and these are different things. And so often we think that, gosh, if I just get, if I just get, you know, this thing's going to be, it gives me pleasure is actually what's going to make me happy. And so there's a wonderful research again,

in Robert Lustig who talks about four CS and three of them are connecting with just talked about contributing the meaning we've talked about and coping just as bill described that this, this sense of I can, I can make choices. I can make decisions. And when things don't go well, I can figure it out and fix it well enough. Even if it's suboptimal,

that it's a good enough outcome. Because that, that ability to cope is just, is, is, is vital to get through life. Because goodness, if, if, if the forums could sit here and say to everyone, who's watching this, the nothing profoundly bad, whatever happened to your kids, that would be, this would be the best use of anyone's hour.

You could ever imagine, but we can't promise that. And I, and I'm not going to draw on this, but, but really quickly, about six weeks ago, my 19 year old son, our 19 year old son was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Fortunately, he's a well-mannered child. So he chose the one type of brain tumor that's most amenable to treatment.

So we feel like we've got a good through line on this. Right. And we didn't go. We, we talked about in the book about the language of an, of a non-anxious presence. We handled this pretty well. He's got a pretty upbeat personality, and he has the sense that I'm going to be able to cope with this as well. And,

you know, any sort of wet bump bounce right back to, well, let me write a song about, you know, because when he has the sense that with help, fortunately medical people, not, not me, right. With, with a sense that I, that, that I can cope with it. It's not going to be easy. I'm going to be nauseated.

Yeah. I may lose my hair yet, but you know what? I can live with those things. And he's back to being the happy kid that he is. I hope at some point you get to meet him. He's, he's, he's a, he's a gem. Wow. Wow. That's huge. Yeah. And what a practice of being that non-anxious presence,

when your child's going through stuff like that, like that takes some serious skill. So, so net, like, how did you do that? Because maybe, maybe people listening, don't have kids with brain tumors, but people listening have kids with anxiety or depression. Maybe they're cutting. Maybe they're getting into drugs, alcohol, maybe they're younger. And they haven't gotten into that stuff,

but they're just scared that they will. So how do we practice being a non-anxious presence? Well, there are a bunch of things in there, but one of them is really trying to model courage and confidence, even when things are hard. Right. And part of that is, is taking the long view, you know, w with thinking, you know,

both in my head and for my son that, you know, most of the time things work out pretty well. I, you know, and, and it is, it is a great gosh, we had other plans for our summer, then this completely completely honest, but it's also for all of us as parents, we can reflect on the hard things that we got through.

Right. And we wouldn't want to relive them necessarily, but they're also the things that made us who we are. You know, my, my son was saying, you know, I've always wondered, you know, he said, I've had such an, such an easy life Rutland and so many advantages. And I always wondered whether I was going to what,

what I was going to face. Cause I really wouldn't want to have a life where I had no challenges. And I looked at him like, you're awfully philosophical sort of game. Right. But we can, we can acknowledge that things are going to be hard and, and say that this is hard and we can get through this. Right. And so,

and so, so I mean, th and I would say practices that nurture our own stability and mental health, right. If we don't have practices that allow us to throw off more stress than the world throws at us, you end up with bad outcomes of cutting of mental health issues of substance use disorder. And so for me and my wife, I mean,

we take really seriously being well rested. And we kind of organize our life around how do we get enough sleep and exercise on a regular basis? And my wife actually loved this. My wife, she have said to the other day, she said, I've now had three people say, how are you so calm going through this? And she said, honest to gosh,

I think if I hadn't learned to meditate, I don't think I'd be handling this the way that I am. And my pal bill stick shrewd, and the other little box over there gets credit for, for helping me discover the practice or are neutral friend, Mario or Saudi. I learned to do practice to him about 10 years ago and my wife about two.

And it's, it allows us to, in these hard situations, keep our cool. And when our kids are a little bit spun up, rather than adding energy to the system to kind of be stressed sponges so that we don't fix things for my kid, we can take the energy allowed out prefrontal cortex activates, and he can figure things out for himself.

And again, that's, what's wiring brains to be able to cope. Okay. Well, you know, talking about being a non-anxious presence is, and we're talking about big stuff here, you know what I mean? I'm talking about like a brain tumor or we're talking about like, maybe some big mental health stuff, but I think that applies, and I'm assuming we're all talking about like,

just even the day-to-day like figuring out like how homework gets worked out and just stuff like that. Like as a parent, we, and especially people that are here watching this, you know, they care a lot about parenting. That's why they're here watching this. Right. And so they take it really seriously. And then when something's coming up, they're like,

oh, this is the time when I really need to apply what bill and Ned said or whatever else they just read or, you know, like, and then I think it just sort of self perpetuates in some way of like, oh, now's the time. And I got to make sure I do it right. And we get anxious about not being anxious.

You know, like, it's, it's almost like it's, it's, it's, it's hard. I think for parents who care a lot about parenting to then also not be anxious about it, and I'm not talking about, like, our kids are going to turn out to be, you know, whatever on the street, drug addict, whatever, like,

I'm just thinking like, how did they get the river? Or they just, we just want them to be happy and successful. Like we've talked about. And so meditation is one way exercises and other rest is another one that you've talked about, but it sounds like taking care of ourselves as parents is important. And if people ask us a lot, Jason,

about, about the, about the pandemic and kids going back to school, and one of the things about the pandemic is that, you know, as we say, as we pointed out in the self-driven child, you're one of the world's experts on, on stress says that that summarizes what makes life stressful, their acronym nuts, you know, it's novelty,

unpredictability, threat, and a low sense of control and cook COVID clearly meets all four. And, and so we focus on what, what do we have control committed? And, you know, we, we, we, we like the serenity prayer. Did that give to being clear about accepting the things we can't, we can't change. And it focuses on what we can in the chapter on communicating a non-anxious presence that we talk about that we have control of our thinking to some extent.

And certainly if we find ourselves repeatedly, go down the rabbit hole of my kids, not doing homework and sixth grade is going to be on the street. We've that, that kind of fortune telling error, catastrophizing and there's, and there's mental habits that we can just take. It becomes a practice in the same way that many people have adopted a gratitude practice,

which is so, so strongly associated with happiness, that actually focus on the things they're like, they're happy, happy with it's a practice to, to pay attention. And we described three kinds of thinking that that leads you down rabbit holes. And it's, it's, it's the Cuttack catastrophizing the fortune telling, like, I know this is going to have this effect in the future.

And the idea that things that, that my kids should be different, or this shouldn't be happening where where's the evidence to that. And so that brings us back to the acceptance piece. So in the book, you know, we, we, we tried to make do in the second book was try to make it easier for people to do what we were recommended in the,

in the first book, but give me more language. But here's the, for example, that the parent is consultant. You know, we talk about the language of getting buy-in. So rather than just, rather than telling kids a million times, you get louder every time. We're just to keep trying to convince them, you say, you know, I've got an idea about that.

You want to hear it, or can I run something by you or for whatever it's worth I was thinking, or I wonder what would happen if you did it this way? Where, because when kids feel forced, when kids feel we're trying to change them, we're trying to influence them, but we mainly get as resistance. And we try to share some strategies and some ways of talking with kids that let them know I'm not trying to force you.

And I think doing that way, we actually have much more influence and build that influence our kids in a positive way. And we'd greatly reduce the stress and frustration and anxiety that we are doing this, right. Maybe if we realize that I'm not really, I could make my kid turn out a certain way, that can't be my responsibility. I don't have to be perfect about this.

I just have to do the best I can. Yeah. I guess if I, I was going to enter that really quickly. You know, when we were writing this book, we talked with dozens of teenagers and ask them, who are you closest to in the world? And sometimes it was mom or dad, but other times there's an older brother or sister and aunt and uncle,

my grandma, you know, my soccer coach, my minister, or what have you. And so what is it about them that makes you close with them? And there's two things that came up over and over said, they listen without judging me. And they don't tell me what to do. And these are things that we can all be, just do a little bit better,

but no one needs, no one's going, needs to be perfect. And kids don't need perfect parents. Otherwise we're all probably screwed, right? But we need to, we can move in the direction of that in part, because as we, as we start the, the, the, the first, the beginning of the book, a close connection,

a close connection that a kid with the parents is about as close as you get to a silver bullet against the effects of stress on developing brains. And, you know, I'm a guy who helps kids get

into college, but goodness knows for me, the most important outcome of high school and adolescents is developing the brain that you're going to carry into adulthood.

And as Bill said, for both mental health and for motivation, and if we know that we can get those desirable outcomes, really just by focusing on our relationships with them, that close connection boys, that is that a Bonanza. And that's why we wrote this book because it had given us the language to really foster those close connections, even when things are hard.

Yeah. And the, the book has some really beautiful stories of just what you're talking about here, where we're, when we can take on the role of consultant Bill, there was this story about you working with the kid who had ADHD, who didn't want to take medication who eventually agreed to take medication. There's another story about a school psychologist that was working with a student who was smoking a lot of pot and eventually like,

worked with her to, and she, she decreased. So that it's really, it's very, very powerful stuff. And the, the book has so many hopeful stories of how just every day, mere mortal people like parents and other helpful people, and in our kids' lives can make a big difference. If we're following kids leads and being a consultant, You know,

it's, it's interesting because both those stories, they start out with the one with where I talked to this kid, who'd been refusing to take medicine for ADHD for six years. And his pediatrician had come to Jesus meeting with him the year before said, you got to take this. He said, make me. And so I started out by simply saying,

I don't want, I don't want anybody to try to take, make me take medication. I said, in fact, if anybody ever tried to make it, all you do is you put in your putting your cheek and you pee and you swallow and you go spit it out that you, I don't want anybody to try to force you to do it.

But I think you ought to make an informed decision. I think some people it's like turning out a light switch. It's like life changing. You might probably like to know whether you would use would respond that way. So when I took force off the table and I said, it's completely your call. He, why did he, might've made an appointment the next day to go,

go see his doctor and get the medication. And it was, it really was kind of life-changing for him. And the other story, this woman, this high school kid's spoken pot all the time, the counselor starts out your story, but her interaction with her by saying, I'm not going to try to, to tell you not to smoke pot. I'm not going to be another person to pile on.

And just say, you're just as bad as bad for your brother, that kind of stuff. But I'd like to understand, I'd like to understand better what pot does for you, how it works in your life. And that's is that taking away for us. And then we have a couple of chapters where we really talk about that. If you really can't change somebody,

including our kids against their will, unless they really want us to help. And when we stop trying to do that, we start skillfully communicating in a way that's respectful. That has more listening than lecturing. It's just so, so useful. It's so much less stressful for the kid and for the parents. Yeah, absolutely. And I just can't emphasize enough that I want everybody to get this book,

and there's so many things that I wish I could ask you about still. And, and I gotta be respectful of your time, and I'm going to have some self restraint, but this book has so many great strategies, like the part about motivational interviewing as a really great powerful tool. Yeah. We have just like skimmed the surface here. So I hope that we can have some future conversations,

but I really appreciate the time that you've taken today and all of the work that you put into this book, because this again will be next to the self-driven child on my nightstand for some time to come, unless Jason steals Self-driven child is like, really it's changed parenting, at least for us. And for, I know a number of parents, it really has.

It's, it's really, I think, monumental in what it puts out there. And I'm so excited that this is following that because parents are so looking for it and it's written in such a way that it's understandable and it's something that they can apply and they can relate to. And using stories is so powerful in it. So thank you for writing it.

And as we're wrapping up, I just want to check in, is there anything, any last words or a big ask that you'd like to make for folks that are here? Well, I want to say, we're going to send you another copy, a signed copy. So you have your own, We'll buy it. It's okay. We want to support you.

We'll buy it, but thank you, You know, for, for, for one thing for me is, is simply that, you know, w all parents talk to their kids, right? And, and w we're always doing the best we can, right. With the tools, with the tools that we have. And as parents, we have so much warmth and so much wisdom that we really want it.

We want to get into our kids. They're their, their minds, they're their souls. Right. And there can be nothing more frustrating than feeling like you have the solution to the problem or something. Some kind of must hear information and you try to share with your kid and, and they just fight you on it. Right. And then, and then you get frustrated because,

because they're not hearing it, and then everybody's upset and you kind of feel like you're, you're, you're worse off than you started when all you want to do is help. And, you know, if anyone hasn't ever had the experience, you know, I'd, I'd love to hear it from you because you're very uncommon. And so the point of this book is really just to,

to help people have other tools in their toolbox, because if w if we're using tools right now during our effective, we're using it, cause that's what we got. Right. And you know, this book is so much of our, you know, 65 years combined of talking one-on-one with, with other people's kids, as well as our own. And,

you know, as you point out to, so, you know, motivational interviewing and, and John and Julie Gottman, and so much of the great wisdom, the, the literature of talking effectively with kids and, and it's, it's our dear hope that we can, we can share that information with parents so they can simply be more effective because it's so upsetting and so stressful to be ineffective.

And we just want people to be effective. So the big ass would be, you know, but it is as you point out Jason, you know, to, to, to, to buy the book, because you know, our interest, we wrote the first year of it's self-driven child, because it there's this kind of constant trend of, of stress going up and up and up and up in young people.

And this isn't to blame any parent anywhere because we see these challenges everywhere across the country. But rather to say that as parents, we individually and collectively can be part of the solution. So we make it just a better system, a better ecosystem for all kids to grow up in where they feel more supported and they don't feel as nagged. And there's just less stress in their lives.

Cause that's that's, that has to be good for all of us. Yeah. I love what you said, Ned. And I'll add that. I was talking with the parents of a 15 year old girl, extremely high achieving anxious, perfectionistic, and was so anxious and, and live in her own skin. And she did some self cutting was hospitalized,

had a psychiatric hospitalization in April. Yeah. So she isn't pretty intensive therapy. Her parents are in therapy, learning how to impart learning how not to be so reactive to her learning, how to validate her feelings. And they told me a couple of days ago that she, she, she, she acted in a way that normally they would have, should,

would have landed on or tucked right in and said, that's not why I don't know why you feel that way. And it just validated a feeling is that I understand that I can see why you feel that way. And she wrote them an email the next morning and said, I can tell you you've been working so hard that you need to change. And it helps me so much.

And I just think that's because of the Mississippi. So when we used to lecture alive before the pandemic, so often we talk for five minutes in 10 minutes and somebody say, what if I've already screwed up my kid? You know? And, and the thing is, yeah, we can change it. We can always, if there's a way to do it better,

we can change it. Anytime that if we feel like what we're doing is not the best thing, you can always apologize. So, but my feeling is that, that the stuff in this book, I mean, it's not, we didn't make all this stuff up. I mean, they're just, but there's a lot of useful stuff in it. My big ass is I'm going to pile on dad's,

which is by the book, but also by a friend or a family member or a known enemy. Because I think that what it's going to take is not enough of us who can communicate courage rather than

fear. And I think that the book helps, I think it can help parents not be so fearful and be able to communicate that courageous attitude to kids and let them know.

I have confidence you can have. Yeah. It's funny you say that. I was just going to say, like, in, in the, in the spirit of contributing to others, buying the book for someone else would be a really nice gift and also be very satisfying. And I think there's parents out there that feel good about giving to other parents.

We want to support each other a lot. You know, we're always looking for a pair of support groups or ways to be together as parents. And this is a nice way of not just supporting them, but also having a common language and having a common understanding of what we're working on together. If you have a parent group or, or start a book club and do this as part of the book club,

go through this book, it's it really can shift parenting. And as a result, as, as we're committed doing has changed the world through parenting. And this is really possible using tools like this and through a book like this. So thank you for spending the time and the energy and the effort, everything you've done over the years, but also right now for this book to put this out,

it really makes a difference. It makes a difference for the lives of not just the parents, but the kids and the people that they're affected by and throughout the world. So thank you for that. And how can people find out more about your books, your work, and this book in particular, what's the best way? Well, we haven't, we have a Facebook group for the self-driven child and that it's actually kind of a community where people can ask questions and support one another.

We have a website. What do you say, book where you can learn more about the book? Of course. And you can follow us at @NedJohnson or @selfdriven child on Twitter. Great. We'll include that links and speaker notes. Thank you. Thank you for taking the time to talk to us. Thank you again for writing the book. Thank you for what you do in the lives of parents and in the world of supporting kids.

And thank you for spending the time talking to us here. It's always great talking to you and we'll talk to you again, hopefully in the future. We'd love to talk with you guys. We love your mission too. Thank you. Bye-bye bye. Bye. Bye.