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Jessica Lahey

How to Prevent Addiction

Welcome to Happily Family I'm Cecilia Hilkey Jason Hilkey. And we're delighted today to have Jessica Lahey with us just as a teacher writer and mom, she writes about education parenting and child welfare for the Atlantic Vermont public radio and the New York Times, and is the author of the New York Times bestselling book, the gift of failure and the upcoming, the addiction, nodulation raising healthy kids and a culture of dependence.

Welcome, Jessica. Great to have you here, my early version of the book. So I thought I'd hold up the real version of thank you for sending it to us. It's been fantastic, but we're so excited to talk to you about it. And thanks for coming back with us. I'm so happy to be here. I have so much fun when I get to talk to both of you.

Thanks. So I have to be honest, a couple of years ago, when you were saying, Hey, my next book is about addiction. Yeah. I kind of thought in the back of my head, I think I kinda know what that book is going to be about, you know, kids. Right, right. And like helping them through their feelings.

And I bet it's just like kind of the basic stuff that we already talked about. And then I picked up your book and I was wrong. There was a ton of stuff in it that I did not know. And we were joking beforehand that like, I have highlighted like a ton. This is just like a random page. Like there's a lot in here.

One of the things that really, really surprised me is the kind of the, the risk factors that are the connections between addiction and other things. So can you start by talking about that? Like what should we be aware of? So when you talk about risk factors, one of the things I like to do is sort of make an illustration that usually when I'm talking about the stuff,

what I'm talking about is something that's like an old timey scales of justice kind of thing. So there's the risk side and the prevention side, and what you want is your prevention side to be heavier, right? So that you you're sort of, the balance is tipped in your favor and my kids. So I'm an alcoholic. I have seven and a half years of recovery.

And so my kids sort of just landed on this planet with a higher risk level of risk than other kids, because you're about 50 to 60% of risk they think is genetic. And when I say genetic, obviously I'm not pointing at like one gene and there's all sorts of elements to that. It's, it's complicated, but also really, really interesting. So substance abuse,

risks include genetics. And then on top of genetics, the next big thing we have to talk about is trauma. And what's called adverse childhood experiences. And adverse childhood experiences include a lot of things, but it's essentially things like violence in the home substance abuse in the home, physical and sexual abuse, things like that. Divorce and separation are in there.

In fact, if you want to know what you are, what's called an ACE score. If you wanted to know what your ACE score is, adverse childhood experience score can just Google A score and quiz and you can get, you take a quiz. And if you get a number from one to 10, and when I was teaching in an inpatient drug and alcohol rehab for kids,

the kids in my classroom, often most of them had scores that were pretty high, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10. And the higher your risk, the higher, your number on your ACE score, the higher your risk for all sorts of things, not just mental health issues, substance abuse, but all kinds of physical things too,

like having a heart attack at an early age strokes, those sorts of things are all linked to adverse childhood experiences. So trauma, adverse childhood exp sorry, genetics and epigenetics, which is kind of related and adverse childhood experiences and trauma. And then there's all sorts of other little things to think about. And I say little, I don't mean little, they're actually kind of big things like early academic failure,

aggression towards other children, social ostracism. The problem with some of these risk factors is that they get all tangled up together. And so, you know, social ostracism can end up looking like academic failure because of all of the stuff that goes along with it. So the earlier we intervene on these risk factors, the early, the better chance we have of sort of pinpointing what's going on and preventing substance abuse from happening in the future.

So those are the, those are the biggies. Anyway, One of the things that occurred for us as we were reading this and talking about it, let me, let me qualify that as Cecilia was reading this and talking to me about it, we, we were talking about genetics, the genetics piece. And while the thing that occurred for us was like,

well, we had just sort of discounted it. Hadn't really given much thought to it. But then we thought because of the book we thought, Oh, what about our family? Like not just us, what about our relatives? And that all sounds like, Oh, well, yeah, duh, why didn't we think about that when it all it took,

that's what it really took for us to start thinking about like, well, what is our history? What do we have as Family? Where are the black holes? Like, there's big gaping holes of like, we just don't know and what, what could be happening there. So that was really an eye-opener for us that I, I was surprised actually by,

because the stuff that we are, And also not just looking at genetically like, like, you know, how many people have struggled with substances, but also like mental illness. How many people have struggled with mental illness or Family? Yeah, that's actually a really important question because it also gets at risk because in a bunch of different ways, if you,

once you get reading the book, but for example, there's so also genetics are not destiny by the way. So my husband and I both come from a long line of people with substance abuse and alcoholism, and I happen to be one of the 10% that just, I just can't drink once I've had one drink, it's, it's, we're off to the races.

Whereas my husband drinks like a normal human being. And he comes from just as many people with substance abuse in their families as I do. So, you know, it's, it's one of those things where sometimes it's a crap shoot of genetics and sometimes it's, you know, what you do as a parent with the environment and essentially what it was, what it came down to is the experts say substance abuse is preventable.

And I just wanted to know what that meant. That's really what this whole book is about, but I'm glad you mentioned mental illness because mental illness and addiction are very closely tied and in sometimes it really matters and can be part of the information you give to your kids. So for example, you know, the link between marijuana and the developing schizophrenia is really quite low,

but not if schizophrenia is part of your family's history, if your family's history includes schizophrenia, then I would be having a lot of conversation about the link between pot use and schizophrenia. Whereas, you know, if you don't tend to have schizophrenia and you're in your family tree, then you know, I'm less worried about that. So there are good, good reasons to just do a little bit of thinking about,

you know, what's out there and, and how it impacts your children's risk. Yeah. So, so yeah, so one part is like understanding our own risk and kind of looking back at our history. Another part of prevention I think, is having, you talked about having conversations with your kids and what that looks like at different ages. I would love to make this like a day long Session and we can talk about it Each one of those ages and what exactly we can say,

it's in the book. And since you're talking ages, I have to say a lot of people look at a book like this. They're like, okay, addiction, we need to start talking about this. What in middle school? Right. And no, if we're starting in middle school, we're starting too late and it's not as if you're gonna, you know,

start talking about, you know, injecting heroin with your kindergartner. But what you do need to do is start thinking really in preschool, because this is all part and parcel of a larger conversation, about health, about autonomy, about protecting, you know, our space and protecting our bodies and why we do the things that we do when it comes to our health.

And so, and a lot of these conversations are really tough to have because they're scary, right? So the earlier you're starting them, the more normalized those conversations are and the less fraught they are. So, you know, for a little, little, little kid, it might include talking about why we don't swallow the toothpaste and we spit it out.

Why we wash our hands, why mommy's name is on this pill bottle on the countertop and daddy's name is not. And what if daddy wanted to take mommy's pills? Should he do that? And the answer is no, because we don't take pills that are prescribed for us because daddy, mommy weigh different amounts. Daddy, mommy have different bodies, mommy and daddy have different things going on in their bodies.

And that's why it's unhealthy to take pills that are prescribed for us. So these developmentally appropriate conversations can naturally lead, you know, up to having those really complicated conversations in high school. It's always so much easier to start early. I mean, whether it's about talking about sexuality or something about addiction, it's just so much easier because I can stumble through my way of figuring it out.

And they're still very simple with it. So it makes it just a whole lot easier for everyone if we just start earlier. Yeah. It drives me nuts when people talk about the sex stock as if there's like one. Yes. And so I love just your demonstration of the conversations we can have with young kids. What about for kids that are in like middle,

not middle school, but like elementary school, like they're just on the verge that, yeah, I think that's a really, yeah. Yeah. So the, the conversation that goes from it goes from like general health conversations, into conversations about chemical substances, you know, and keep in mind when you're talking about chemicals and substances, you still having conversations as kids or younger about like the cleaning chemicals you use in your home.

And you know why you don't eat those tide pods because that's, you know, those are chemicals and they make you sick. And so that kind of conversation that between like just general chemicals around the house and then chemicals that actually have that people put in their bodies on purpose, isn't that big of a leap. And also the, it tends to happen.

Thank goodness less. So now in the course of natural living your life. So if you're at Thanksgiving and uncle Brian has to go out the front door in order to have a cigarette in the front yard, you know, you can talk about, you know, why do you think Brian left the house? Or if your kid asks that, or your kid asks what he's doing outside,

you say, you know, well, he's not allowed to smoke in the house. Why do you think he's not allowed to smoke in the house? Well, because the chemicals that are in that smoke are actually bad for all of us, which, you know, hopefully will lead to the question of, well, why does he do it? Which,

and then you can have this conversation about the fact that there are things in cigarette smoke that can make you feel, some people feel calmer, can make people feel more focused, but it does come along with all of these other chemicals. And let me tell you about those. So all of those, so really the late middle grade or starting middle grade and early tween conversations are really all about beginning to talk about vaping and cigarette smoke and cigarettes and things like that.

And then, you know, because most kids who start drinking and taking drugs tend to start in middle school. Those conversations really ha you have to get those conversations started really before middle school starts, because that's when they're going to be faced with the most of that. So then the next day Page, the question I have about the next stage in particular is with adolescents as they get older into those teen years,

they're less, oftentimes they're not looking to the parents and they're looking elsewhere to be influenced their friends, other adults, things like that. So in, and I, I, I know we could talk like for like a day about all this, but I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about that. Like how do we, as the parents address it when they're hitting this age where they're not really interested in hearing it for us,

or it's harder for them to hear it from us as the parent, and instead they're looking to their peers or do we, how do we enroll in other adults or what, what can be done in those cases? So while it is absolutely true that kids do look to their peers for some of this, even when you pull college age kids, they still report that they're the,

one of the trusted sources they go to is their parents. And as the, as the internet sort of, you know, has become more and more a part of people's lives and you can Google anything. I think that's sort of a part of it as well. And, you know, luckily, most search engines are putting the, the, some trusted stuff up towards the top.

But I think one of the big things that is going to be really important is to not address it in the ways kids dread it being addressed, which is a lecture, which is, you know, we know, I know as a teacher in education research at lectures are one of the least efficient ways to help a kid learn. They actually trigger in everyone,

me as well. It's sort of just shut down kind of thing. So coming at the kids from an unexpected angle often works. I tell the story in the book of how I'll do just about anything to get my kids, to talk to me. And I talk about a dinner that we had in our home that really got us talking and getting to know each other really well,

but coming at them from an angle that they don't expect coming at them from an angle that's at their level about the things they would actually like to talk about in a way they'd like to talk about them. So for example, you don't, if, if you suspect your kid is friends with someone who is abusing drugs, for example, I'm coming at it straight head on with,

you know, I think your friend is abusing drugs, and I want to talk about that. We'll just bring up the defenses, but if you could come at it from an angle of, you know, I'm curious what you get out of your relationship with your friend, Brian, like what's cool about Brian and what worries you about Brian and those kinds of things.

And that's in the peer chapter, in this book as well, you know, coming at kids from the side door seems to work a little bit better than walking right in the front door and bashing them over the head with a lecture. So I gave a lot of really specific advice in the book about that. That's great. That's so helpful. I,

and that's what I love about the book is that it's, it's not just like a, a book about, it's a reference book. It's like if somebody can go to and actually get the things to say, and that's, that's what makes us such a, I think a powerful book as well for parents. And I think the, you talked about a little earlier,

something that you did with your kids to get them to talking to it was involving some hot wings, is that, so we don't have to go into the whole story, but I just want to like leave that as like a, like an open loop for people. There's a hilarious story about Hawaiians. Well, it, the reason that coming at it from that particular perspective,

she you're referring to the show hot ones on the first we feast channel on YouTube. And the thing that was fun about that is the show hot ones is a family favorite. It's something that I knew they liked and that we liked. And so referring to it through the dinner that we had was just funny and it put everyone's defenses down and it was just fun.

And you can do that as well. The more, you know, your kids and the more, you know, what your kids enjoy, the easier it is to find ways to tap into those things without. And it's okay if you look a little goofy because it shows your kids that you're trying to talk to them from a place that they enjoy and understand.

Yeah. I love that. Okay. So I want to shift a little bit away from conversations because you give a lot of great advice about conversations and different ages and stages for those. One of the things that you talked about in the book is really like, how do we prevent, or at least postpone the child from that first sip or that first smoke,

that first time, right. Using why is that so important? Well, it's important for a bunch of reasons. And the first huge reason being that adolescent brains are going through the second of the two most important developmental stages growth in terms of cognitive growth, in terms of

connections that are being made in terms of, you know, fatty sheets being laid down on top of nerve fibers.

I mean, it's like so many amazing things are happening in the brain. It's, what's called a very plastic time because the environment has the potential, both for the positive and the in net positive and negative ways to affect brain development. So, whereas, you know, in adults, and there's all sorts of really interesting books that are out right now about drug use and adults from Michael Pollan's book about psychedelics to Dr.

Carl Hart's book about a called drug use for grownups. Those books are really, really interesting, and they make some really great arguments for why drug use. Maybe isn't as dangerous as we think in adults, but that's not what we're talking about. We're talking about adolescent brains that are in this heightened stage of plasticity and uniquely vulnerable to substances substances that do both short-term and long-term damage to the brain.

And many of them are just not reversible. And it's not like once that period of development and in the early to mid twenties, you can't go back like there's no backsies to sort of fix and pick up the debris from what was left when you started using substances. So in that sense, some of the damage that's done is really permanent. The other problem is that,

so a lot of the, the way the adolescent brain works is also different from how the adult brain works from a lot of different. The way alcohol is processed in a younger person can be different. The way we weigh risk benefit ratios for risky behaviors is different. There's so much, that's different about the adolescent brain that makes this a conversation. That's really unique to prevention in children.

And I love the conversations about adult use, and there's all kinds of cool potential for using things like ecstasy and things like psychedelics for end of life care and helping with PTSD. It's, there's so much cool stuff out there, but as kids start to hear more about that cool stuff out there, and thinking about the fact that people are saying maybe drugs aren't as dangerous as we think they are.

It's really important to keep our heads and the Headspace of we're talking about the adolescent brain young brains that do not work the same way. Adult brains work. They're not fully functional yet. They're not fully cooked. Not everything is hooked up to everything. It needs to be hooked up to, to get around to the, the business of adulting. So until they get there,

until we can delay that, keep them, keep them off of drugs and alcohol, as long as possible. The other aspect is that the longer with each passing year, their risk for lifelong substance use problems goes down. I mean, dramatically. So if you look at the difference between a kid who's 13 and a kid is 15 and a kid who's 18.

I mean, it's a really steep decline in their overall life, life risk for substance use disorder. So the order of the day is delay, delay, delay. Yeah. And that was something that I was, I was like

reading Jason statistics or driving down the freeway, like, Oh my gosh, this is amazing. Like how much, if we can just postpone that first use that the risk goes down really dramatic.

And even if it's like just sips at the dinner table of like beer or wine at Christmas or new year's or whatever. Yeah. And that's a slightly different issue in the sense that that's sort of about, you know, a parent who has it, the research shows the parents who have the take a total abstinence until it's legal until 21, that those kids are going to be a lot less likely to have a substance use disorder during their lifetime.

And there are some causation correlation issues here with the, and some confounding factors in the statistics, but that's what they show at the moment. And on top of that, one of the other big issues is that parents have this. A lot of parents, me included, I did have this image of like this romantic image of raising my children as if they're like European children,

like letting them up sips, letting them have their own small glass of wine so they can grow up to be those wonderful European, moderate drinkers that we, you know, we fantasize about and sounds so wonderful. The problem is it's false. Not only from not only is that false because it doesn't hold water, no pun intended it doesn't, it doesn't hold water because it turns out those kids are actually,

parents. Kids have parents who have permissive attitudes around drinking do tend to end up having higher levels of substance use disorder. Europe has the highest level of alcoholism in the world so much so that France has had, for example, to go back and look at their recommendations about how much people should wine people should drink in a week because their levels of alcoholism were so high,

they needed to lower those standards a little bit. So yeah, it's a myth doesn't exist. You can't teach your kids moderation by loading them have sips early. And in fact it does the exact opposite. It increases their risk of having a risk substance use disorder risk during their lifetime. Yeah. And I'm glad you bring up the point about how drugs and alcohol can affect an adult versus the developing adolescent brain.

Because I think, and I've heard this from other adults is especially with the marketing, that's happened with a lot of legalization of marijuana. There's not as much this talked about it, how it affects adolescents or kids. And so the adults think, well, Hey, you know, this isn't going to be all that bad because it's not all that bad for adults.

That's what all the research shows. And I think that's so powerful to be saying that because I think that that is not what's being put out to the public that's Risk. There are things that happen in the adolescent brain that do not happen in the adult brain or happened much more rarely in the adult brain. And some of the big ones are, for example,

it, the, so we have cannabinoids in our, these chemicals in our body and they're called endogenous. We have these endogenous chemicals that are the same chemicals that are in, that

are in the pot. And so we have these naturally occurring in our brain and the receptors for those high hangout in our hippocampus and near our hippocampus. And our hippocampus is where we process,

especially emotional memories where a lot of that sort of short-term memory processing and emotional memory processing happens. And so you can imagine then why the stereotypical sort of short-term memory loss, pot, smoker sorta comes from, because if your hippocampus is not working properly properly in the cells, aren't really talking to each other, then you're, you're, you're not going to develop,

you're not going to maintain your short-term memory processing in the same way, and you'll have gaps in your memory. And that just isn't as much of a risk in adults as it is in kids. Yeah. Right. Yeah. I wanted to shift. Okay. Before you do that, I have a question. I will, everyone knows this already about me,

that I read Cecilia highlights and I, I Cecilia does the book reading and I, I get it from other sources, whether it's a course or talking to people or reading her notes or her talking to me, but as a parent. So I'm just putting it up as a display, Listen to the audio book, you know, That's good. I even read it.

Yeah. I'm here for ya. Here's the thing that I think some parents have run into is they don't, they're just not educated. And they're like, okay, I need to be talking to my kids about this, but I don't even know how I thought I was educated. I was trained to be a peer alcohol and drug counselor in college. I was like,

one of the, I love that, you know, researching stuff. I wasn't educated either. I had no idea. And I, and I think even just the practical, like what is CBD versus THC, I've never even heard of that. Like, so Like vaping and there's like pens and dabbing. And like, So as a parent who is,

this is new to them or their kids are in that age, what do you recommend for them to do, to get educated? Is it in your book or is there some other source that is a great way to be able to, to understand it as the adult? Right. So one of the most important things we as adults can have is correct information because there's this really cool.

There are a couple of things that happen in the human brain, naturally, not just the adolescent brain, but the human brain naturally that really mess us up when it comes to gauging what's going on with drugs and alcohol. And one of those is called this thing called a pluralistic ignorance, which is that everybody is doing it argument, essentially my perception that everyone else cares more about drugs and alcohol than I do,

and people drink more than I do. So there's some really cool research about this. That's in the book, mostly in the college chapter, because that's sort of where the biggest impact for that data lies. But if we, as parents know that, for example, the answer, if your eighth grader comes to you and says, you know, everybody everybody's tasted alcohol by now.

Why can I, you, our answer can be actually based on data surveying actual eighth, eighth graders themselves only 24% of eighth graders have tasted alcohol by the time they've graduated from eighth grade. So everyone's doing it. It's not really, it's not accurate. There are all sorts of misconceptions that we can rebut with data. So the best places that I go for data is any sort of stuff having to do with attitudes about adolescents and alcohol and drugs.

I go to a report that comes out once a year in August, usually from university of Michigan called the monitoring the future. And it's a report that gives all kinds of attitudes. It surveys eighth, 10th, and 12th graders about their attitudes around all kinds of risky behaviors and alcohol and drugs being a couple of them, obviously. So that's how we know,

you know, we can really, it's, it's a high, it's a huge survey, so we can get at some fairly accurate and fairly accurate look of what's really happening in kids' heads and what they perceive risk to be, which is also interesting because what if their perception of risk is different from actual risk? That's important to know too, but above and beyond that,

there's all kinds of, there are all kinds of resources. You can look at your, you know, obviously the national association of alcohol and, and, and AI and substance abuse. We can look at all kinds of government websites that actually have pretty good information. One of my favorite books, though, for kids of that age is a book written by,

and it's actually just really easy to understand. So it's great for us too. It's really good, useful information. David chef and his son, Nick Sheff wrote a book called high, and it's aimed at adolescents and young adults, but it's also just a fantastic resource. It's really sort of plain English explanations of what all the, it has, all of the,

the lingo, all of, you know, the, you know, the nicknames for drugs and alcohol and stuff like that. And because those are constantly changing, it's really hard to sort of stay on top of that and have a book stay current. So instead of, you know, giving you all of those, what I do is say, check here,

check here, check here, check here. Because all the most up-to-date stuff is at those sources. And believe me, I taught kids in an, in a rehab for five years and there is no more clueless person, or there was no more clueless person than me. So they taught me all of that stuff. And you wouldn't believe the number of words and how fast they change.

You know, there's new terminology for everything all the time. So I recommend going online because by the time a book gets printed, you know, who knows how, you know, how up-to-date, it's going to be with the system. Yeah. Yeah. That's great. Oh, thanks. Great resources. Okay. We talked a little bit talked about prevention and conversations.

I wanted to talk before we wrap up about what do you do if you realize, Oh gosh, I, you know, my kids are maybe a little older and I need to start changing how often parenting. And maybe

even from one kid to another, like the older kids got like a little more permissiveness and the younger kids like are getting us like more kind of controlling approach.

Like, what do you, what do you do then if you realize you're going in a direction and you want to shift Yeah. Or you write a book and you say, Oh, I should change things. Yeah. So I have a 22 year old and a 17 year old. And I wrote the gift of failure when the 22 year old was like 15 and the 17 year old was like nine.

And then obviously been working on this book and both of the kids have been in both books and we've changed a lot. I mean, we've changed a lot about, you know, how much autonomy give we give our kids and stuff like that. But on the other hand with this book, you know, I raised our older child. We raised our older child in with a little more permissiveness and tastes and,

Oh, you should try this, taste this, and taste that. And you know, it, wasn't an, especially as he got to be an older teen, it wasn't that unusual for him to have a small glass of champagne when we all had championed that sort of thing. And then I found out what I found out for this book and the rules changed,

but I didn't just like pull the rug out from under the younger kid. What I said was, here's what I have learned. And that means that in order to be the best parent I can be, I have to change my approach with you. And acknowledging that, that feels unfair, acknowledging that, you know, yeah. Ben didn't have to listen to me,

explain, you know, over and over again, what certain substances do to his brain. You know, luckily I have two kids who are really responsive to the Y. They really, if I do a, just because it is over in my house, like there is no respect for that whatsoever, but here's why, here's why not doing that. Here's why doing that would impact the kind of parent I am and,

and you know, all what all I'm doing through that is modeling exactly what I want to see in them. I would hope that they would be the kind of people who would, if they found out that they were doing something wrong, would use that information to try to be a better person, better learner, better, whatever. And so I'm just literally modeling exactly the behavior I want to see in my own kids.

It's fantastic. And that's the answer with Gift of failure too, when people say, I think I've been doing too much for my kid for too long. I say, that's totally cool. If your kid is older, they will appreciate you coming to them and saying, you know what? I think I've been doing this wrong. I learned some things I want to use the things I learned,

because I think that'll help you be a more competent, capable adult. So here's what we're going to change. And, and that approach really, I think garners a lot more respect than wham, bam, we're shape changing things up and you just need to do what I say. And I think it underscores the relationship as well. And that's, you know,

you've talked multiple times about the value of that relationship and modeling for them. And sometimes that takes some humility on our part and some introspection on our part, which isn't always that easy. You have to come at it from the perspective of someone who's. I talk about my addictions and, you know, that's, that was so, so scary in the beginning that it made me ill to even talk about it.

But now my, my younger son reported actually that when he was in biology a couple semesters ago, as human biology, his teacher said, you know, raise your hand. If your parents ever talked to you about substance abuse and, you know, Finn just laughed. He's like, when doesn't my mother, talk to me about substance abuse, because it's a part of,

you know, their genetic legacy for them to have to be a little more vigilant about their use and, and what that means for their life because of me, because of the people that came behind before me. Yeah. And it's interesting. I think our kids are growing up in a different era. I mean, they, every kid does, I think every generation does,

and it's a different time yet again, with new substances and new access to them and new legalization. So this is very, I think, important book. It's an very well-timed book as, I mean, just as we're entering into this new era of legalization of marijuana and a lot of thought about drugs. It's it's We moved to a stove in the middle of this whole process.

We moved to a state where it's legal. So, you know how I joke all the time that I ripped the rug out from underneath my kid. Cause we moved him right before high school, during a period of transition that's of highest risk for kids to a where it's legal to smoke pot. You know, it's just, we, you know, there are things that we do in the course of our,

of living and raising our kids and doing what's best for our families that aren't optimal. But the idea is I don't ever want to make parents feel bad. I want to, I want parents to feel like, okay, I have information. I know what to do with it. I feel like I actually can use this information and I don't have to react from a place of shame.

You know, I could feel really, really bad about my substance abuse and never talk about it, or I could use it as a very real tool to talk to my kids about their potential, to have substance use disorder. And you know, how we're managing that as a family. And I'll just, I'll build on that because with your book, this book,

this book being a little bit different than gift failure in that, you know, you do a fantastic job of taking all of this brain science and statistics and the science side of it and making it so accessible for the non-science type or just to distill it down for the parent, have them understand it. But with the, with this book in particular, you also add the additional piece of your own personal story and it just makes it so powerful.

And so, and, and so easily readable. I mean, it's really nice Favorite nonfiction that the confluence of memoir and research-based nonfiction, I have to say in the past couple of years, I

just keep collecting these books and saying, these are the books I want to be writing. So it's it's so it's, I'm so happy to hear that because that,

that balance between those two genres, that's my favorite. That's my happy place. Well, it's very powerful, I think. And I appreciate all that you did to go through, to write the book. And as we're wrapping up here, do you have any final words or do you have a big ask for the audience here? I just, I w the,

the thing I, the final words I have is that there are two people in the book who are now adults, but were children. When I first met them, Brian and Georgia, who really were so brave and gave their stories for this book in a very detailed way. And over and over and over again, I kept saying, seriously, guys,

I can give you a pseudonym. You don't have to use your real names and you don't have to get this detailed. We can sort of hide some details so that you can be anonymous. And they both were very clear. They said, no. I went through this for a reason, and I want to help other kids. And both of those people actually are either involved in substance abuse prevention or potentially one potentially wants to build his own substance abuse treatment facility for kids.

And these are, I just tried to take their bravery and be as honest as I could be about my own experience, which came as a little bit of a surprise to, you know, my spouse and my parents. And that was a little nerve wracking. But I think the more I talk about it and the less shame I have attached to it,

and the more proud I am, a frankly, that part of my life and what I've been through, the, the easier it's going to be for more people to talk about it as well. Our kids need us to, to be free of, you know, the shame and the secrets. Cause that's what that's, what's going to make them and make them sick and keep us sick.

And we got to get over it. We got to get over the shame. Yeah. Speaking of role modeling, I think the modeling that you're doing by doing that is really powerful for others. And so how can people find out more about the book and give to failure and all that you have available online? What's the best way for them to find out about that with you Always@jessicalahey.com.

Always, always. I tend to on social media, I tend to be on Twitter a lot because that's where all the educators are. And when you fall as a profession, teachers have some of the largest, biggest users of Twitter. And I follow like 12,000 teachers over there. And we just talk about all kinds of cool stuff that I'm at, justly,

he over there, and I'm at teacherlahey on Instagram, which is mostly pictures of my dogs. Therapeutic. Thank you for taking the time to talk to us here. We'll include you. Who knows? It's always fun talking to you. Thank you for such a powerful book and for all that you put into this and thank you for sharing it with the world and look forward to talking to you again about what's coming up next as far as your next book.

So thanks for your time to talk to you about it too. Thank you so much. All right, I'll see you later.
Bye-bye take care. Bye-bye.