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## Kim John Payne

### *Being At Your Best When Your Kids Are At Their Worst*

Welcome to Happily Family I'm Cecilia Hilkey Jason Hilkey. And we're delighted today to have Kim John Payne with us. Kim has been quietly and passionately helping parents find doable ways to build deep connections with their children that give families resilience and simple joy. He's been a trainer to independent and public schools, a school counselor, consultant, researcher, educator, and private family counselor.

He's the author of several books, including his most recent book being at your best when your kids are at your worst. Welcome, Kim. It's great to have you. Oh, it's lovely to hear my obituary before I die. Thank you. Yeah, I didn't read like all the media that you've been on. I tried to shorten it to like the best stuff,

but anyway, it's an honor to have you, our first session with you before was talking about kind of the first half of your book, which we talked a lot about when parents get triggered and this action reaction kind of thing that, that we get into. Can you recap us on that to lay a foundation for this conversation here? Yeah. You know,

one of the things that that so often happens when our, when our kids trigger us is, is that they are just so good at it. You know, you would swear in the morning, they wake up and look at their list and think, ah, number three today, you know, but the, the DNA things, they, they don't,

it's a part of the action sort of reaction pattern that so many of us as parents have with our kids. And it's, it's hard because you can hear yourself about to be someone you don't want to be. And then you are a person you don't want to be, and you hear yourself being it. Do you know that feeling? You can actually hear yourself saying the words that you think,

you know, Kim, this is not attractive. This is your gunner regret, this, you know, that kind of feeling. And yet we keep on going so very, very often. And so for me, it's one of the fundamental questions in parenting is actually not about the children in family life. It's about how, how do we get a better handle on our own emotional self regulation that the better we get at that,

or the better ish, you know, we get it that the, the better every day is going to be, it's just as simple as that, right? Our kids do stuff, you know, like little ones, tickets, they do things like naughty things, right. And then they look right at you. And have you had that? They just little rotters,

they just look at you, like, What are you going to do about that? And push something off the table. Yes, yes. With full eye contact as it, as it. And it's, and it's like, that is the moment right there that we define ourselves as parents. You know, we can do some wonderful things with kids and have wonderful celebrations.

And so on that, that defines us too, right. You know, building the tree forwards, doing great stuff, hanging out, you know, reading stories at bedtime. But when that bowl gets pushed across the table and drop, like you were saying, Jason, and down, it goes and, and you know, he, she, they I'll use those terms interchangeably.

He, she, they look right at you. There is a moment there it is right there of, of definition because one of the things that's silly, you might remember in this, in the first chat we had, I talked about this principle. There's no such thing as a disobedient child. I don't know. I've never met a disobedient child and I've been a school counselor,

family, counselor. I've met some right little buggers. I can tell you, you know, but I've never met a disobedient kid. I've only ever met a disoriented kid. I've only ever seen it as I don't. I simply don't believe in willful disobedience. It's very, very, very rare. We presume it's much more common than it is. What I see is disorientation and our children when they're emotionally disoriented.

Well, it's obvious how they're going to orient themselves. They ping us, they echo locate. They echo locate us. And when they're naughty and they're feeling like things, aren't going well, little ones, Twain ages, teenagers. When they feel like things aren't going well, that they're trying it on. They're pinging. They're trying to like Mariners at sea ping to get their geographical bearings.

But our kids are behaving challenged in a challenging way to get their emotional bearings. And, and that for me is a real shift. It's a small little shift, but it's a couple of degrees shift in consciousness around parenting because, and it does change things over time, understanding that we're being pinged, that we're being echo located, that our kids are lost,

because if we can look, if we can really take that on board and not just as a philosophical concept, but really know that they're disoriented. And we look at a child who's, who's just done something challenging we think to ourselves. Hmm. I wonder why you were so lost. Don't say that out loud, particularly to a teenager that I think is so,

but The, but if, but if we've we've, we've got that, first of all, we're doing some inside talk and in the being at the best book, Jason, that you mentioned, there's a whole section. I, I intended it to

be just a paragraph actually on inside talk. And the more I wrote about inside talk, the more I researched it,

the more I realized that when we do inside talk, it's one of the things that douses, the emotional flames that are coming from the amygdala, from the fight or flight brain, from that sort of reptilian, very ancient brain inside talk, douses, those flames just a little bit. It, it puts a, it just puts a bit of a damper on it.

But if we, if we look at our child and think, I wonder what's, I wonder what's disorienting you, there's a key word or two key words there. I wonder, I wonder because the wonder of wondering is how I think about it. The wonder of wondering is that when we wonder, we move ourselves into our limbic system and into our frontal lobes in our brains,

and the moment we do that, there is much less of a chance of us being, being reactive. We can move more easily out of old grooved in action reaction patterns, those ones that are just so hard to get out of. And, and so the, I wonder, I wonder why you behaving like this and the beauty of this for me,

the best part of it is that we don't need an answer. The answer doesn't matter. We, we, we may, the heavens may open and a great answer is received, Oh, you shouldn't have had that sugar or whatever it is. You know, some money, Monte Python, esque moment opens and whatever, but it actually doesn't matter because when our children little ones or older ones,

I don't know if you, if you know what I mean by this, but when they're naughty, when they're challenging, they're also very vulnerable. Do you know what I mean? Like, it's hard to remember that isn't it. When then when they're challenging, they're also vulnerable when they're revolting, they're also tender, you know, and they're scanning us.

They're totally scanning us because they've gone into amygdala hijack. So what Daniel Goleman calls it. They've, they've gone into amygdala hijack. So words at that point don't matter much. We could, like most parents know talking to a kid at that time is like, I don't know. It's like a Charlie Brown moment. Like<inaudible>, they just are not listening to the words.

What they're doing is scanning our face, our physiognomy. And they're scanning our body language, their face scanning our expressions and our body language. And when you wonder, okay, full circle, like when we wonder, then these little wrinkles come in the corner of our eyes, when we wonder about something, that's like, I wonder, and that you can't,

and your head just turns to the side a little bit, your shoulders round, you can't help it. It's completely involuntary. It's really rather lovely. Your shoulders round. I wonder. And you look into the middle distance a little bit. So you don't fix eyes with a child in a, in a kind of a Clint Eastwood moment. Do you know what I mean?

You don't, when you wonder your eyes, look into the middle distance, I wonder. Hmm. And that is a very non-threatening facial expression, very non-threatening body language, chest, shoulders, soften, and knees unlock a little bit hands soften. Now, a child's not working down a checklist, but they get the overall impression. My dad, my mom is not going to explode at me.

Right. And in that moment, you've just, they can co-regulate that's, that's the thing, because they've, if they're disoriented, if we can be even vaguely oriented, then they will co orient they'll co-regulate with us. And it's all, without any words being exchanged. That's sorry, Cecilia. That was a long answer, but that's your fault. Cause a really good question.

I like that recap. And I there's so many things you said there, obviously that were great. And the, the piece that you said at the end, I think, is so magical as parents, because we're so often looking at like, what should I say? What's the script? What do I say in this case? And often it's not about what we're saying,

but like you said, who we're being, how we're regulating ourselves, how, what we're, what we've got is that inside voice. And that gets picked up so much by our kids of all ages. And you know, you we've talked about, this is true for little ones, which I remember when we were in preschool, one of my, when I was first starting off.

Yeah. We were teaching preschool and that one, I was in preschool, but when I was teaching preschool, right. One of my exercises early on, as I was learning to be a teacher was just to be curious and to be looking at kids, not even, and this is like, not even what I'm hijacked or they're doing something that's like maybe a little bit like,

like you said, naughty, but just like in their day to day. And just being curious about what they're doing, what they're thinking, and that got me in this practice that I could hopefully use more often as I was being in a situation that maybe I would be more hijacked or they would be, and I still see it with our teenage daughters and this,

you know, at the very beginning you had talked about, you know, think of a time. And I'm like, I know right now, like there was just something happened sitting in the car. And I had to, like, I kinda had to be the adult and take care of myself and regulate my feelings and not just go into this spiral that I was going into with my daughters.

And as soon as I like got myself into that curious mode and did that wonder of what was going on? I felt it, like, it just felt like a, not like a flush, but like, like something just kind of let go. And the conversation just switched right away. And it was nothing I said it was just something that happened inside.

So I've had that experience, both with the being young and old. And I think that's magical because it's not about, I mean, it seems magic to me because it's not about what I'm saying. Right. So if I can't, I don't understand it. Exactly. So therefore it's magic in my mind, but it is, it does feel like that.

It's just, it's something that I can't quite put my finger on, but we talk about it and it's really, it really does shift things. Jason did, did this, did I catch him? You mentioned of that you, that with your teenage daughters, that th th this is still something that you sense makes that shift. Yeah, definitely. I mean,

I was still, it's something it what's interesting is because they're older, they seem so much more capable. And so I get into different conversations than when they were young. And so it's different for me now. And it really takes me looking inward more and not being caught up in the conversation of what's happening or the argument or whatever. It might be the heat of it.

You know, sometimes having two teenage daughters, myself at all. No, one's 20 now, but right. But I've still have one teenager. It's I think of the teen years, in many ways, it's like just, it's a second birth. The first birth as is, is that when they were tiny little, you know, one minute old,

there it is. There's the out of the birth canal. There comes this being, it's just awesome. And you hold that little one in your arms and think, Oh my goodness. You know, like, can I really do this? I think I can. And this is such a mirrored myriad of, of feelings of emotions. It's a more obvious birth,

but the less obvious birth is, is the birth of, of, of emotional consciousness. I think of the teen years as the birth of emotions and the birth of, of how to work with those emotions. And a lot of the early teens through the teens Are, you know, coming out of the birth canal and it's any, You know, any gynecology,

anyone midwife will tell you that there's, it's lumen hard work for a baby to come out of that birth canal. There's a lot of struggle. There's a lot of, there's a lot of help Needed, right? To sit here.<inaudible>, It's a, it's a lot, regardless of how the birth is, you know, there, there is a lot carrying that child and,

and, and, and in adoptive situations receiving that child, you know, it's it's And I find that the teen years are in a sense children. They have birthed that bird, Their emotions through about nine, 10, 11, it starts changing. Don't you think that consciousness starts shifting they're in the birth canal, 13, 14, they're born, but they're still incredibly vulnerable.

We, we, we, I find it Family helpful to remember of a 14, 15, 16 year old 17, 18 is still very vulnerable. They are emotional toddlers still. And, and, and I say that with absolute love and respect, we've got to remember that we're still spotting them at that age, just like we did when they were toddling and we're still speeding.

And one of the things That really struck me, I can't remember in our first conversation, it was a while ago now, but in our first conversation, I went to, I, I, I may have mentioned this, but perhaps just briefly now I was went to a conference by a wonderful man called Joseph Chilton Pearce. And he wrote this book,

but way back called the magical child. I mean, it was, but he followed up with this book called I think it's the biology that transcendent Biology may have that quite A bit. Those, the mixture of the transcendence of biology that Joseph Chilton Pearce. And he said something rather extraordinary. He was, he was Said, if you take a cell from a heart and put it on a,

on a dish and look at it in a solution, I look at it under a microscope, the heart will keep B It'll actually keep beating. And then it'll fibrillate, and then it will expire after a time. Now, as that heart cell is fibrillating. If you take another one, So from a, from an utterly different heart and put it close enough,

the heart that's fibrillating, We'll start coming back to life again and again, Co-regulate and start beating in unison with the, the other heart cell. That was interesting Juice. And There was a real silence after he can, because the metaphor, no, it's not even a metaphor right down to the center Level. There is this principle of co-regulation. And so I,

and that's, that's why I'm. So I did it our theme today because that's, that really is at the heart of it. And Jason, as you were saying, when you have that kind of curiosity, we're told curiosity, killed the cat, but at birth, The human, right, the I've Never thought of that before, but they were is That when we have that kind of when,

where inquisitive, rather than accusative, and we can go into that inquisitive place the moment. But we go into that curiosity, that wondering that wonder of wondering, we, our heart rate, literally our heart rate and our respiratory rate shifts, you know, that feeling that you mentioned, Jason, where you feel like you've shared Something, that's, I've had a long interest in neuropsychology and the vagal pathway that the,

that, that so often is, is, gets triggered. And the instincts, the gut, the gut level. When we wonder, when we're curious, we actually, you know, you're, you're completely accurate is that we actually come more back. We come back into ourselves, we shared, it's almost like shedding a neural tube. Awesome. We just let it go.

And we're back, you know, ish, Cause it's still challenging, you know, but, But we're back and that, that, So on a cellular level, when we do that, then our kids can come close to us because they need coming. Right. Full circle back to that first question, Cecilia that you asked, then our children are pinging us.

Then their echo locating their, what they're lost. And then they can somewhat find themselves Solves then where they can come closer to us. Like I watched, I watched a mama The park a little while ago and the child was being quite challenging. The mama stayed like it wasn't Zen. I'm not suggesting like, it's, it's sort of like, you know,

non-responsive it's but the child was, was clearly<inaudible> right. And The mama put some boundaries in place and I'm not suggesting as always is always gentle and soft. And sometimes

children need quite firm and loving boundaries, but they are from the moment, put some boundaries in place. The child really was angry And then ran over to the mother and the mother just sat and the child then threw herself into the mum is like right into the chest right here into this hug and just sobbed.

But it was the mama who, the mother who had put the boundary in place that was upsetting. And yet she was where the child came to be comforted. And I, you know, I watch scenes in parks like we all do, but, and it's a strange thought, but I thought of Joseph's beating heart in that moment that that child was able to co-regulate even though it was the mother's doing that she was upset about.

Yeah. Yeah. You know, it's actually think reminding me of, of something that happened with one of our daughters, it was a teenage version of that where I can't remember the exact situation, but one of our kids is struggling more than the other. And, and while it was easy for me to like, be with their naughtiness when they were little,

like I had so much compassion and capacity for that as they're growing older. And as I get scared about like what this might lead to, like this stuff is coming up for me a lot more. And there was one point where we were talking about something and I said like, I, you know, I can't control you. Like whatever you do.

And she said, mom, you have a lot more influence than you think you do. It was almost that kind of like, and sometimes she bumps up against us when we set boundaries and set limits where she will be mad and then, or she might even completely accept it. And she's like generally a pretty kid with a lot of autonomy. So it's,

it's interesting. It's like, it reminds me of like a, like a slightly, maybe it's still a toddler emotional version of what you're talking about, but, but I kind of reminds me of this pinging. Do you, in your experiences that what it looks like for teens to do that same kind of check-in and attunement? Yeah. My daughter at 17 wanted a tattoo.

We know exactly what that is like. Okay. And, and she had to get it right away because a kid in her school had a tattoo kit that, and he was a 12th grader and he was going to finish and move away any day now. And she also wanted to have the T a matching tattoo with her, with, with her best friend.

So, you know, it like, what do you do in those moments? Right. You know, like it is, it is clear that that for us, I mean, it's different for different people. Some people may be fine with that. I'm not sure, but, but anyways, I've got to say that to be polite, but, but so we put my wife and I put a very strong boundary.

We had to take it all the way on the Cecilia. We had to take it to the end game. We had to take it to the right, to the right, to the brink because it just wasn't, it wasn't good. It's not that I'm

opposed to tattoos. You know, I want you to, like, I don't want to, it's not that it's just that this was not the right thing.

I could tell it wasn't right. It wasn't the right age. She wasn't thinking clearly. But if she hadn't been thinking clearly another whole way, then maybe it would have been just fine, but it was very clear that she wasn't thinking about it very clearly, but fast forward a few months and the, the, the best friend that she was going to get this matching tat they're just not,

I mean, th th that, you know, that didn't work out and a whole bunch of complications came up, the kid who was going to give the tattoo it as a transport, wasn't such a great tattoo artist. He just had a kit. Right. So that wasn't so great either. And there was some other tattoos that were just look terrible and,

you know, it was, but we had to hold the boundary. We just had to, and years later, two years later, she's now talked about this and said, I'm so glad you held that, that boundary. I hope, I hope I can do that when I'm a mama. And, you know, you wait a long time to hear that,

you know, you must lay in, wait as a parent to hear that kind of thing. And it wasn't a terrible situation, but it was really tense for a long for a month or so. It was quite tense just holding that boundary. I think it's perhaps a Cecilia it's sort of more than a toddler. It's when a child, you know,

when children first start to run and they've, and they just they're they're they run with such abandoned, but that balance isn't great yet. It was about that stuff. It's about them. And so if I can just go on this just a little bit more, because I think this is interesting when we're talking about the pinging, where it requires us sometimes to set those boundaries,

that that can be really sometimes challenging to keep, you know, you talked a little bit about, like, you kind of had to go to the end game in a way, like, it's, I'm guessing it became really difficult. And at least with we've had some experiences where we've gotten to a point where I'm like, is this damaging relationship? Is this,

is this causing a Terra? Rip? Is, is this no longer me being solid and then pinging off me, but me actually just creating a significant, like separation in our relationship. And I don't mean that just for teens. I think that's true. Also when they're young, like I'm setting this limit, they're bawling, they're crying. They're like hysterical.

Am I just, am I creating some kind of a problem in our relationship, that's going to be long lasting. And I think, at least for me, one of the challenges is trying to recognize that when it's, when it's a pain, when it's like naming me needing to be solid and still knowing that the relationship or, or doing what I need to do to keep the relationship so that it doesn't doesn't suffer damage or long-term separation.



So I don't really, I guess I'm not really having a question as much as I am. Maybe my question is, how do you, how do I, how does one feel solid in that ping be solid in that, that boundary or in the B being that rock for them while also it being rough and Rocky and the relationships going through that tough time while they're pinging,

how does one still feel like it's, it'll be okay, it'll work out. I think it's really important to be in those moments is to be a big heart with ears. You know, it's just being able to say to a young person, can, can you help me understand how you see it? Just help me understand this. And, and,

and to, and to genuinely mean it. I love asking kids this, can you help me understand for little ones? It's, can you help me understand what's going wrong? You know, and they've often got a little bit of a story. Well, his scissors won't cut. And, and I just hate this thing and I can't finish it. And the project was,

you know, and my, and my brother took the end. He didn't ask. And, you know, you get a big story, right? So that's the, so can you help me understand what's going wrong for four, but, but for a teenager at the other end of the scale, it's can you help me understand how you see it can,

right. And can you help me understand how you're feeling? But if you ask a four year old, can you help me understand how you're feeling? Well, that's just a dumb question, you know, to ask a four year old, because just the straightforward brain science of it is that they feel bad. They might go to say bad, but if you're looking at them,

like, okay, now tell me that's all go to what your feelings are feeling. I always know what parenting books people are reading when they ask that sort of stuff. Can you help me understand what your feelings are feeling? That's a hard question to ask a little one, because the brain bridge that the movement across from right-left brain cause and effect social,

emotional, this happened, I'm feeling that that traffic hasn't really, it doesn't pick up pace until 12, 11, 12, 13, and yet, as a society, we think kids should know how they feel much, much younger, and it makes them feel kind of mad or in competent because they're not sure. And we're asking them something and we're so powerful,

you know, and we're asking Them, but For a, for a 14, 15, 16 year old, I think it's absolutely reasonable to, to be. Can you help me understand How you feeling? You know, and or can you Help me understand how you see it? What, where are you trying to, where are you trying to get to?

Because teenagers can be spectacularly disinterested in our opinions. Right. Really? But, But they're particularly the ones Cecilia, just like us. They're the ones that give us the trouble, But Very, very interested in their direction. Very. And so should they be, you know, when we often say, well, that's very self-centered. I think it's actually very self-directed I challenge that word centered,

but you have to be centered before you can be directed. And so I'm okay. I'm okay with the self-centeredness up to, you know, up to a point of course, but it's, it's necessary. And it's a little bit like, you know, one of the things I say to my kids that they've heard this frequently as we live not so far from New York city.

So we're often in the city And I say to Them, look, don't be taken across town bus. If you want to go downtown, don't, don't take across town bus, you that what's going on right now is across town bus. You know, it's taken you away Way. My job as a parent to a slightly older kid, too Twain,

particularly a teenager is to ask them was that, is that I want to help you get towards your direction. And what you're doing right now seems to me, it's possibly a distraction. Let's sort out direction and distraction, you know? And it's often a little bit of a, excuse me, a bit of a degree, but it's not black and white like that,

but there's, if there's a strong element of distraction in it, I think it's okay. Jason, I think it's perfectly fine. It's our job to sort of ask that question. Do you think that's a distraction? If we say, I think that's a distraction, then that's a whole different thing. It's like, aha. But, but, but do you think that's it?

What, what Parts of that era distraction? It's probably not all a distraction, but what parts. Okay. So how was it distracting you, do you think? Because it's about, you know, In, in the book I wrote called the soul of discipline. I talk about movement from When children are little Where the governor of the Family state. And we moved from the governor where the boundaries are fairly close,

you Know, and there they Are, there are the boundaries and as children go Grow, then when they're tween ages nine, 10, 11, 12, then, Then I, I believe the, the metaphor I use is, is that where the gardener Listening, whip, whip, pruning, We're planting, we're shaping, but we're listening, listening.

And then we make a decision, but only after really careful listening and tuning. And then when kids are teenagers, we're the guide. So we moved from governor to Gardner to guide. And so they want to go to a place. And I found myself saying, And repeatedly to teenagers, both as a school counselor and to my own kids, look,

I totally want to help you get where you're going, where you want to go with some teenagers. It's figuring out where you want to go. Yeah. And I don't mean just college. I mean, just, just Things you're interested in things that you know, that where you can contribute. Yeah. So, and then, okay, So I want to be your guide.

I want To help you to get there and I want to help you not get Caught off, caught up in distractions. And then, you know, No, once they're in their twenties and beyond someone asked

me this recently, well, what about the twenties and thirties? And I said, Hmm. Then I think where the witness it's really the witness at that point.

It's a whole shift, you know, in relation, But that governor gardener guide those, The three phases. But honestly, if a teenager is Not, it's just, you know, A really bad place and not able to take our guidance and we're getting blown off. Then I think it's quite Reasonable. We bring them back to the gardener and say,

look, you got to share your plans with them. I mean, now I'm listening, but really tell me how you, and if They blow you off as the Gardner, Then it's, it's a hello governor. You know, we have to Th the boundaries. I mean, I know I get gay, the pitcher, governor gardener guide, you know,

You know, developmentally, but yeah, There are times when teenagers just can't handle that in that amount of space and we need to bring them back And then back, and, and as we do that, for sure, Shorter periods of time, it might be just a day or two or three. It could go on longer one dad. I was,

I was, I still have a, you know, a family counseling practice. And I was speaking to a dad a little while ago. And he said, you know, when I brought my son all the way back to the governor, I had to, because it was just wasn't going well. And it was getting edgy. And so he decided to bring him up.

He said, he didn't speak to me, not a word in six weeks, not a single word. And then he smiled and said, you know, and he thought he was punishing me. It was so peaceful. It was kind of, it, it must've been hard, but it was also peaceful at the same time. And then the sun relented and got some judgment back again,

cause it was edgy. It was starting to get just not okay. And then the, and then the guide principal can resume again. But, but to, and on our website, if anyone's interested in this, listening to this today, I know simplicity, parenting website, we've got this really great little quiz, know your discipline type. Am I a natural governor?

Am I a natural gardener? Or am I a natural guide? And the reason I really like this quiz is that identify where your natural strength that is because we all have a natural one. One of those three, almost all of us have a natural strength. But if you're a natural guide, like you're really good at coming alongside kids and guiding them being pretty hands off and you have a four year old that's,

that's tricky. You know, that's hard, your discipline style, your boundary style will be perfect when your child's 14, but when they're four, it's not. And it's going to require us to, to, to actually dig in and get some skills. However, if you're a really good governor and you stay in that space, if you're a good laying down of the boundaries,

sticking with them, no negotiation, just there, the boundaries and you stay with that through to 14, 15, 16, that relationship can break because we haven't gone with, we haven't expanded out. So it's good to know your discipline type. You know, one of the things I liked about what you said throughout was this idea of curiosity. Then you,

you know, you, you, you said it multiple times, but asking questions and listening and you know, seeing. So I find that super valuable regardless of where we're at in that continuum in supporting a kid. Yeah. I wanted to transition to talking about the compassionate response practice, which is like a good chunk. It's like the second half of the book.

And we haven't really delved into that much. You mentioned a golden moment practice that you could help give us here today. That would help in those moments when we find ourselves triggered hijacked. Can you talk to us about the golden moment? Yeah. You know, the, the, when, When we're being triggered, when, when w one mum described it Cecilia,

as she felt the red mists rising, I'd never heard that term before, but gosh, I knew what Often it's A little bit biographical, biographically Triggered. And in that moment, When we wonder, as you were saying Jason before, when we wonder, when we're curious, if we can do something that I think of as the parent athlete, The parent athlete,

what I mean by this is the Athletes. Really? They do two things. First of all, they train. And secondly, they very much use use affirmation and visualization. Now the, The affirmation That, that they use self-affirmations is that that's the first part of it. So when we're being triggered, if we can train ourselves to have a response whereby we remember in that moment a time when we got it right,

somewhat right, we do, you know, don't we get it right. Sometimes when it felt good, when it just simply felt good to be a mommy, to be a daddy, to be a guardian, It felt good. There was a, there was a flow between us and the kids or the child. It felt energetic. Typically if I can put it that way in flow,

do you know that that feeling of this is really moving along pretty nicely here, and it can be ever such an ordinary moment, just so ordinary. It like immediately I say this, I go to some of the moments I have with my children Baking was one in particular. I can tell you all About it. It was like, it was yesterday,

but it wasn't, it was a number of years ago, but it was a moment when we were, well, to be honest, we had a flower fight, but, but, but it was just so funny that we all ended up in this dough and flour. And then we had to try and clean it up before Nana we're into it. Cause we live in there and grandpa had to clean it up before Nana got Back and we were just giggling.

We were just giggling and giggling. And it was just a funny moment and, and help clean up wasn't successful because we were giggling and laughing so much, but it was just a moment of,

we were in flow. We were together. It was fun. We had a common enemy it to clean up before grandma came. But the, but the,

not that she was an enemies, dear friend, but the, Just to picture that moment, you know, it could be, It could be a myriad, anything, but You know, to have to establish a golden moment just to simply have it, remember it, hold it cultivated many, even if after listening to this today and you turn it off and you can say,

okay, for the next seven days, and I know this is hard, right. To do anything for seven days consistently with all the demands on our time. But I am gonna, I'm going to figure out one golden moment I had with my kids. I'm going to choose from the catalog. Honestly, as you start thinking about them, there's more and more that start popping up.

And I'm going to think of a moment when we were in flow emotionally, when we were in flow, energetically is the only way I can put it. You know, like I think the Chinese medical people call that G you know, when there's just a, kind of a energetic flow. And when I felt really in myself oriented as a daddy, as a mom or as a guardian,

I felt really oriented, like centered. So those three things I felt energetically in flow. I felt emotionally in flow and I felt flow within myself. I felt balanced poised, you know, those moments when w w when something like it. And then for seven days just P picture it, keep picturing it, keep picturing it before your feet hit the floor in the morning.

Just pitch it to make you smile. It's it's not, it's not, it's not heavy lifting this one. Just picture it before you go to bed, picture it. One mum said to me now, I couldn't do any of that before bed stuff. I just fell. I just collapsed. But, but in the mornings I have a shower and sit,

as I turned the tap on, she put a little bit of a, like, I think you should have like a hair tie thing around the tablet always reminded me and should, as I turned the tap, I would picture this golden moment every single moment. And she said, when I'd come down the stairs and greet my kids, it was, there was a noticeably different energy because,

you know, you, you, your kids are waking up and it's like, okay, I'm going in. Does that feeling? You know, but if we can just picture it, picture it, picture it, and just keep picturing it. Then when our kids really mess us around and they're pinging us, if, if we can just make this almost like an emotional muscle memory,

like a, like an athlete, because this is the power of visualization, the power of visualization lifts us out of the moment of conflict, lifts us out of that moment of stress as athletes or on the, on the blocks, ready to run. As, as a, as a, as a, I, I know from firsthand as an athlete for myself,

I was Really, we trained fairly well, but I was always not. I didn't do so well in games because of all the thousands, tens of thousands of peoples screeching and screaming, it put me off a lot and I was a national athlete and I was supposed to play for my country, and I was supposed to

be a good player, but I wasn't as good at nearly as good as I could be until a sports psychologist got a hold of me and taught me visualization.

Now that is really commonly known now. But gosh, that was new to me, you know, as, as a 16, 17, 18, and into my early twenties, that was very new, New to me. But I would picture The, and you know, when I was at my best, when I was feeling centered, when I was feeling like I was in flow,

usually that was in practice. Right. And I would bring that onto the pitch. And, And my game really improved, you know, very, very noticeably. If I I'm, I'm told that for me, it was just more fun, Frankly, there was The improvement of performance, but I was on the edge of quitting because it wasn't fun anymore.

You know, and we were traveling all over the world, know, doing little stuff that youth, the kids dream of doing and was just no fun until I discovered this golden moment, this, the compassionate response where it's self compassion, right? It's compassion for oneself. And if we can, for those seven days, at least, and beyond have that visualization,

what it starts to do is it starts to become second nature because when show child triggers us, it's really hard to say, Oh, could you just hold this? Hang on a minute with that revolting behavior, I'm just going to go and meditate. You know, it's like, we're going to do that. You're right on the spot. So you have to have practice Just beforehand.

You have, After we've practiced, we know it as musicians. We know it as actors. We know it as we know it as athletes. And I think we also need to uncover that we can do this as parents, because frankly playing in front of tens of thousands of people with nothing compared to being put on the spot as a daddy, doesn't even come close to to that.

Now I'd add to that. Also Cecilia. One of the thing is that if this strikes a chord, it that when a child triggers You and you go into That wonder of wondering that I spoke about that the first place we go Two is this Picturing this moment with our child with things were going so well. It changes us Biochemically. It, it,

you of Have a beautiful image without Of when your child was at their best, when you were at your best. And you were like, for me, giggling and cleaning up all the flour and dough that was, you know, parts of it got stuck places. And we, they'd probably still there to this day, but you know, you can't have that image without it like Jason before,

even when you said you thought something shifted in you, when you're curious, if we can turn our curiosity towards this visualization, like a parent athlete really seriously, like an athlete, like an athlete would then when the game happens, like when our kid does something that triggers us that's game on the whistles blown, If off game on. Yeah. If we can,

at that moment, imagine this situation, biochemically things change, Change. Now In the being at your best when kids are at their worst book, we, as, you know, Cecilia, we take this one step further. When we talk about when, when not at our best, when we really got it wrong, and this is more challenging, anyone interested can take another step.

If this, if this sounds at all interesting, we have this golden picture of yourself, this beautiful golden pitcher, and you think about it and you cultivate it and you walk around and you savor It. But then You have this picture of if, if we're up for this of when we were not at our best, when it wasn't in flow, but it was in what I call fever when we're in an emotional fever,

when we were not at our best at All, it just, it was jaggedy It, we got it wrong. We were no longer curious Jason, but we were, we were accusatory where just things were not going well with our Kids and just Have those two moments. Because honestly, that, that moment when things weren't going well is just as real it's,

you know, of course, stuff like this happens all the time. And if you start getting into this parent athlete mindset, what you can do is rather than push that away, rather than push away your negativity. Cause it's like, it's a last dictated. You push that away and it's just going to snap right back. You know, it just boomerangs right back at ya.

If we can say in that moment, when our child is triggering us and we're honestly, we're feeling frustration, even rage that might be just welling up inside us. If we can see if we've pictured a moment over and over seven days more picturing it when we weren't doing well. And then just for, you know, 30 seconds. And then for 30 seconds,

picture a moment when we were doing beautifully. So now it's getting a bit more nuanced, right? So we've got those two. And then when our child's really triggered us, we just reach out to it and just say, come on in, come on in, come to this. Because it's those moments when our kids are triggering us are often very jaggedy.

They're fragmented, they're hot. And by, by just reaching out with what I call one's heart's arms and just bringing that feeling of failure of frustration. Sometimes I think it's shame. We feel like the sense of shame or that, you know, that feeling that you were talking about before Jason, I think it was you mentioning like, am I really damaging my child here?

That, that feeling of like big self doubt, you know, my damaging the most precious thing in the world. If we bring that in and just, it's all jaggedy sharp, hot, and we bring it in and we just bring it into us and just say, come on in old friend, you're a very frequent flyer. I experience you often and just be still and,

and be come to this, the edge of it, to the edge of this Lake of compassion that I have within me, because we all have that compassion within us. We have a friend who's very ill, a parent who's suffering, you know, a friend who is really in need the compassion in us as human beings is remarkable, but we only tend to activate it in extreme moments.

I think our children need us to activate it on a daily basis. And if we can bring in that feeling of failure, frustration, whatever it is and bring that in and just say, come, come in. I, I, I accept you, frankly. You, you you're welcome here rather than push it away, because if we push it away,

it's going to weigh on us. Any weight we hold away from us, it's waiting, it's heavy. And if we can train ourselves, and this is what the compassionate response does, is it trains, oneself to just very quickly in the moment you're feeling that sense of, of, of overwhelm, let's say, and that's coming up a lot at the moment and you you're feeling that sense of overwhelm.

And you just bring in that overwhelm and you still it, and you quiet in it. And then you release out this gorgeous picture of yourself in flow. So you bring in the fever that, that picture of yourself when you're just that visualization, when you're not doing well, and you say, okay, gotcha. And now you release that picture of yourself.

When you were in flow normal little everyday thing, then that's the parent athlete. Then we're doing something that is very, very different. And it's not easy to do this because it is a practice. It actually is a practice. It's like practicing an instrument. It's like practicing your lines for a play it's practice. It took me a long time, you know,

just now Cecilia to explain that, but actually as you practice it right in the moment when you're being triggered, you can say, Whoa, I'm being so triggered here. And you just like, you sit with that and you say, okay, come on in triggering, like, come on in. I was about to do something less than attractive, you know,

just come on in and then, you know what, I'm good. I can be really good with my kids. I can be good. And then we turn to our child and say, you know, he's being very, very challenging and say, you know, a tiller, I don't know what his name is, a tiller Gangas, whatever it is,

you know, what, can you help me understand what's going wrong? Because that was really hard words you just said to your brother, but then we're saying it, we can say it very firmly that we do not speak like that in our family. We can be quite fun, but a child can hear the firmness, like, but we're not going to lose it and start screaming and shouting.

That's the, that's the beauty of this is often our kids need us to be firm, but we don't go there because we're afraid we're going to lose it. What the compassionate response does. And this we have, like I was saying earlier, we have well over a thousand simplicity parenting coaches around the world. So this is not just us centric. This is in many different cultures all around the world is the one piece of really consistent feedback we have is,

is how parents are able to put boundaries in place, be firm without losing it. And that for me is just beautiful to hear. So this is detailed more in the being at your best book, but honestly all just full circle all the way back. If all that sounds too much, if you just, the one thing, if I had to choose from all of that,



the one thing is that if you can picture a golden moment and just work at work at work at when you were doing pretty well and your child triggers you, and when you feel the red mists rising, just remember, actually we have a lot of fun together. I'm a pretty good parent guardian. I'm doing it right? Just that if you work that there's a little trajectory shift and it means not much will change within a day or two,

but in a week, a little bit in a month, in a year, you're in a whole different relationship with your kid. I like that. I, I have my golden moment. And it's funny that you spurred it when you were talking about throwing flour. Cause can you tell us? Sure. So we were learning a new video game, Sierra Sicilian,

I, and part of that game was you are working together to make the recipes in this kitchen and we're trying to figure it out and Sierra, and I figured out like, Hey, you don't actually have to make the recipes. You can start throwing the stuff at each other. And so we were throwing noodles at each other and cucumbers and chasing each other with a fire extinguisher.

It's a silly start to make the rest of sincere. And I are laughing, like crying, laughing, just having the best I just, and I, I, I hold that really dear and we bring it up every so often, which I also liked because it kind of reminds all of us of how we also do have fun together. And we,

we, you know, we have those moments, but that's a, that's an easy one for me to bring up and we didn't have to clean up quite as much as what you described, but You remembered that like it, what do you think if you took that on? And you said, okay, every time I turn the shower tap or whatever it is,

I'm going to remember that moment. I'm going to coach myself to remember that golden moment. And then when Sierra w you know, if she triggered, what, when she triggers me next, like this evening tomorrow, I am going to train myself to remember that. How does that, how does that even feel viscerally, just even thinking about doing that?

Well, it just, it gives me a clarity. I mean, like the, the, it one, it, it, it, I think goes back to what you had said. Like I recognize, like we have a lot in common and we have, we have great times together. And also, like, I'm not a quote unquote, bad parent.

I don't have to start beating myself up. I can be like, Hey, you know, I can work this out. And it helps me for, at least in, in this case helps me connect with her so that whatever it is I'm saying, I feel connected, you know? And that, that shifts me. That for me, that that's what works is when I'm feeling connected and I can be over there with her.

And so bringing up something like that helps me shift and be over there with her and provide compassion for whatever she might be going through. Beautiful. Well, you will get some practice at this soon, sir. I have no doubt that I will. We, we obviously could talk for quite a while about all that you have so much work that just really so it's so feels so true.

So like, we relate so well with it. And it's so nice to talk to you. Cecilia has been loving your book. I think that I usually like to hold up people's books, but this is my Kindle, because your book is the one of those special ones that are like my 3:00 AM books that I like on Kindle. So I can read when I'm can't sleep and it doesn't wake up,

Jason. So this is what your book looks like in my life. And, and so there's several books. I, and as we're wrapping up, do you have any final words for us, or do you have a big ask? You kind of gave a big ask there about people, you know, looking and considering this golden moment, but do you have anything else that you'd like to wrap up with?

No, I think that is, that is the, the, the, the big suggestion, you know, is, is try it try really. Cause we are so hard on ourselves as parents. Oh my goodness. We're so hard on ourselves. And just try it, just try and, and let in the light and let in the flow and work it that it's.

So it doesn't become a random moment of flow. It's you're a member. And this is the wonderful thing about remembering flow is if you remember it and you create a picture of it, you can almost, some people have called it, tricking the brain. I don't know if that, but it is, it is a switch. You flick a switch.

And when you met, when you remember that flow moment, that golden flow moment, there is definitely a switch or one person described it to me as a choice, like a path. And you choose a different path when that happens a neural pathway, but otherwise this was going to go into angry shouty person. This is going into from boundary person and right at the right at the,

at the juncture of those two things is this ability to have this flow moment. You picture the flow moment, and then you flow. It's just, it's just, it's just what happens. So that's the, that is the, really the, the, the heartfelt suggestion for the next seven days or so, spend 10 to 30 seconds imagining that. And then as your children trigger you,

because you get lots of personal development opportunities with this, with your kids, as your kids trigger, you go to that moment, reach for it, you know, and you might not. And then, and then if you don't train yourself some more really train yourself. That's the big suggestion. The other one is a lot of the stuff that is triggering.

One of the things Jason, that I, that I do, these podcasts is called simplicity parenting, and almost every single one of those podcasts are about triggering moments and what we can do about them. So that would be another place to go to. That's another suggestion to there's, you know, to, to extend this a little more. And then if you,

if Anyone gets really interested in it, like silly, we were talking about reading the book, but if you're someone who's more auditorily oriented, I have recorded a home practice guide, which is much more than just the reading of the book. It's me talking about a number of the exercises

and pretty much just talking as we are today, but, but just moving through the content of the book,

occasionally I'll read from it too. But what I particularly like about the home practice guide is that, that compassionate response that you mentioned that is in the kind of corridor. I actually walk people through that, that practice. Some people have called it a meditation, but you don't need to be reading it, putting it aside, trying to do it. I actually just sort of talk,

talk you through it. That's a lot of people have said that's been helpful. So there's those various ways to take this a little further, if this is of interest. And we talked just briefly about that before we started recording. And I didn't know about that home practice kit. And as I think people probably know by now, Cecilia usually is wondering the books.

I show up for these interviews and I read her highlights and she tells me what I should say and what I should ask. But that sounds like something that would be fantastic for people like myself. How can people find out more about that, your books, what you have out there? I know you have some, some free offering, at least a free offering that you'd mentioned beforehand that people could get.

Yeah, there's, there's this, the, the young people in my office code at the starter kit and it's, it's audios videos, you know, various selections from the various books, overwritten, all of its brief, all of it's kind of fairly crisp and brief. Even this home practice guide. I just mentioned Jason, all the modules on it.

Well, most of them are Le like seven to 10 minutes, something like that. So that that's easier if one says driving to work or back when we used to do that. But so that's starter kit. I find they put, they put it together really well, but the feedback has been that just even that just even working through that, just watching or listening to those things there has,

has, has been helpful. So I think that's a starter kits, a good place to start. Okay. And where can people find that starter kit? It's just it's simplicity, parenting website, right, right. There. There's a ton of stuff. You know, there's things like there's a little documentary kind of lecture app at the moment called the overwhelm of boys.

For example, that's, that's, There's all kinds of stuff. They rotate the folk in my office rotate round. Yeah. So that's the simplicity parenting website. There's also similar to what you guys have. There's a community. If people really want to exchange and go deeper and there's a ton of stuff there, but the website, you know, there's,

this there's a lot there. I hope not too much because it it'd be ironic, right. With simplicity for it to be a whelming. Yeah. I would encourage people to check it out. We'll put a link in the speaker notes and I would also encourage people to sign up for your podcast subscribe, because I think there's very little, I can think that'd be better for a parent as a parent to hear it,

your easy listening voice in a podcast. And to hear what you have to say, especially about triggers. So check that out. We'll put that in the speaker notes and Kim, thank you for all that you have, you have so much out there. You provide so much for parents. I've gotten a ton out of this time together. I know I have a golden moment that I would be practicing with and getting some,

getting prepared for it. You know, the opportunity to use it. And I'll be doing that for the next seven days. And thank you for sharing with us here and sharing with our audience. We look forward to talking to you again, maybe in the future. Oh, what fun. Yeah. It's so great to speak with you guys again. Thank you for the invitation.

Thank you.