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Mercedes Samudio

Stop Shaming and Comparing Yourself–and Your Kids–And Embrace Your Life

Welcome to Happily Family I'm Cecilia Hilkey Jason Hilkey. And we're delighted today to have Mercedes Samudio with us. Mercedes is a licensed clinical social worker, a parent coach speaker, and bestselling author who helps parents and children communicate with each other, manage emotional trauma, navigate social media and technology together and develop healthy parent-child relationships. Mercedes started the end parent shaming movement,

as well as coined the term shame proof parenting using both to bring awareness to end parent shame. Welcome Mercedes it's crates. Happier Mercedes, thanks for joining us. Thank you so much for having me guys. I wanted to start today by asking you about something that I haven't found in other people's work except yours so far, and that you talk about this,

the mainstream white American parenting ideal. What is that? And what's that missing when we attach ourselves to that idea? Yeah. You know, just like kind of everything that we notice in our world, there's definitely always this ideal kind of space. What I think has happened in the parenting world is that because many of our professionals and experts tend to be white or affluent or heterosexual or cisgender,

it kind of sets this tone that that's how families should be, or that's the ideal that families strive for. However, we're very aware that families come in all shapes and sizes and all different types of identities. And so I think it's really important for us not to just uphold kind of battle one type of Family. Why when heterosexual, cisgender kind of just that whole normative space and really the best way we can do that is to bring more representation into our ego.

And especially not just with the types of topics we talk about, but also the different types of representation of speakers. I really wanted to kind of highlight the fact that when we only have one type of speaker, it does set the ideal really indirectly without us really knowing it's not like, you know, I don't feel like my, my fellow parenting experts say,

Oh, you can only do a Family this way. But I think indirectly when all you see is one homogeneous type of person, you think, Oh, this is where I'm supposed to be as a family. This

is what I need to try for. And I think just bringing more representation into this field, especially in the parenting field where, like I said,

we know there are so many different types of families. I think that level of diversity representation will really show that we don't have to all be the same in order to help be successful. Yeah. I love that. And I love like the diversity and parenting conference that you've started. You've done so much to bring, to turn up the volume on other,

other voices. So that's fantastic. And we try to do that in our, in our like world over here too, because we all need to, to, to have some sort of, we only to have role models, it's hard to be what you can't see and it's hard to be. And then there's even like this kind of ideal that a lot of parents are striving toward and it's in social media and it's in,

you know, whatever books or magazines that we read and it's, and it's really hard to, to, to live up to that. Can you talk about that and that challenge, It's funny that you bring that up because I feel like both of the ventures that I kind of took on really addressed that idea of what does it mean to be the parent you want to be?

And so I've, you know, like I've done the shame proof parenting and parent shaming kind of space, but I think it really ties back into this diversity faith that there's a lot of shame and guilt that comes up when you're trying to reach an ideal, that really unattainable, right? And so you're looking at social media, right? You see all these parents who have these beautiful fall pictures and these beautiful pictures of their kids.

And I always tell parents that they chose to put on a social media, you did the whole day's worth of videos and photos that were taken. You didn't see what happened. As soon as that picture was snapped and the baby fell over and the brother hit the sister and everything kind of went into chaos, you know, and we only get to be on cultural media,

a very kind of cultured or not cultured, a very kind of cold. What's the word I'm looking for cultivated. You get what I'm trying to say, but a very like put together version of what people are inclined to portray. Right? We don't often share the pictures where we look our words or where our kids are at their worst. We often want to share the things when we're at our best and we look our best and we sound and feel our best.

And so there's nothing wrong with that because I think it's great to see ourselves at our best. But I think when we're trying to compare ourselves to those versions of people's family, it's really unattainable because no family is perfect. Note Family looked like the filters on Instagram and social media every day, you know? And so I think when we talk about these dudes faith with the,

how do we bring more diversity into this parenting faith in terms of how our experts talk and what they look like? I think that will also change the cultural shift in terms of what are people striving for because we're seeing different types of families achieve healthiness in different types of ways. And I think that will give people that space to say, okay, the way I'm doing it,

isn't bad. Or what I'm striving for is just as healthy as when another family is striving for. Yeah. Yeah. And that's, and that's so hard. I find on social media or when I start comparing myself that I need to do a lot of forgiveness work, even in my own neighborhood. When I look at other families and I think, Oh wait,

like we're not doing it quite like that. It's, it's easy for me to feel like the not enoughness. And when I realized, or when other people realize that they're feeling not enough and maybe need to do like some self empathy or forgiveness kind of work, where do you, where do you help? How have parents go? Do you have some,

some steps that parents could take? Yeah. One of the first things we can do is really take a step back and ask yourself, what is your vision for your family? I love working with families. You talk about that really admittedly at up upfront when I'm working with them, because oftentimes everybody in the family has a different vision for how they want their family to look at.

Especially as our kids get older and start to have their own ideas about how the family should be run and how things should go. And so I think you should always kind of take a step back and ask yourself, is this family that I have right now, we working towards a vision together. Are we working towards things as a whole? And if you find that you're not,

I think that's where we can realize that's where those feelings of maybe envy or jealousy or comparison of feeling inadequate or feeling less than really come from, because we don't know what we're working for. So I often tell families, start off with just having a Family vision, get together and say, who's our family, what are our values? What do we care about?

What do we work towards? What's important to us, right? And have everyone talk about it. Of course, they're age appropriate. Three-year-olds might have a very important version of the family that we need to talk about. Right? And I think, especially as our kids get older and start to individually, it's really important to bring that together for them so that they go out to the world thing to look the core of themselves are who is my family?

What do we care about? What are our values? So like when we get together and we talk to our families, it really helps us to find a guidepost for where we need to go and what we need to be working on. And so, again, in terms of steps, I would say kind of periodically, maybe once a year, twice a year,

really sit down with your family and talk about, are we as a family moving along in ways that we feel good about? And I, and I really want to bring this attention to our teenagers too, because as our kids get older and start to go out to the world, if they don't know who their family, either what the core values are,

it might be really difficult for them to grow up to the world and know where do I come back to? What am I coming back to? And so I think really having these conversations, especially as kids

get older and start to individually, weight more, it's really important to say, what are our family values? What matters to our family? What's important.

So then as our kids and our teenagers kind of move into another phase of their life, they know what their core is. They know who they are at the center of themselves because we, as a family have sat down and fit with our family values, what we stand for. And they can go out to the world and have a little bit more foundation on who they are,

as opposed to not really knowing where they come from or what it means to come from a family. That makes a lot of sense to me, as you were saying, all that, I started thinking about, you know, we, Oh, maybe me, but I'll say we, I don't know which, but you know, I look for ways to measure how we're doing.

How, how are we, are we headed in the right direction? Like you said, and if I don't have clear guideposts, I don't have clear measures if I don't have clear goals, then what I, I think I fall back on is comparing myself, ourselves to other people and seeing like, Oh, okay, how are we doing versus them?

And versus these and that. And like, so I'm looking for those guideposts. And I like what you're describing there in that we're instead of going out and looking externally at other people, how about set for ourselves, our own goals and really identified, this is where we're wanting to hit. And then we have something to compare against. We have a comparison against like that goal against that guidepost against that measure.

And, and it, it doesn't beat us down. It's also not moving all the time, right. If I'm always comparing myself to other people, I can imagine, like they're always moving and shifting and I can always find something bigger and better and doing it differently. So I really, I relate a lot to what you just said there. That was really helpful for me.

I see that in other parts of my life, besides just family, like, I'll compare myself, how am I doing in athletics or whatever it might be. And I'm comparing myself to other people versus having my own goals or my own metrics. So I can really appreciate that. And I really also, as parents of teens can appreciate how helpful it is to talk to our teams about who are we,

what are our family values? What are we trying to do? And they can take or reject those. But at least it's very clear to them, like, this is what we have. This is what we're doing. This is what you can come back to this way. You can, this is what you can rely on for us. And I think that was nice that you said that they can come back to,

this is what they can come back to it. They know like this. And so it's not shifting and changing all the time. And they're like, I wonder what my family is going to be like this week. I think that's the ability really helps. Yeah. I agree with that wholeheartedly. Yeah. I, I wonder, cause I'm thinking actually of some friends of ours who they're new parents,

I'm wondering actually about, about, even though we're setting these values for ourselves, that sometimes we still might like meet, we might not meet our expectations. We might fall, our parenting still might fall short. Yeah. And even when I'm, when I'm cognizant enough not to compare myself to people outside and people on social media, I still might be comparing myself to some internalized ideal.

And I still might be beating myself up over that. And I'm thinking specifically about this new, these new parents that we have in our life. And I'm wondering if this new mom in particular has an expectation that her baby is not going to cry. So what do we do if even though it's the value or an expectation that we have that we've just given to ourselves,

How do we go about realizing, Oh wait, this isn't realistic and, and forgiving ourselves for that kind of like, it could also be like, as a teen, you know, maybe we have an experience of, you know, as a parent, this isn't for us, but like a parent could have this ideal of like my, my, my,

my teen will never rebel or my team will never argue with me or we have this and we may not even be like a recognized expectation or whatever we think our teens are never going to do. And then all of a sudden that happens, how do we be, be gentle with ourselves in not obtaining attaining the goals, maybe out of unreasonable goals, but not able to attain the goals that we set up for ourselves.

Yeah. So before I jump into kind of that explanation, I think this question is exactly why we need to have so much more diversity and what types of families we have and how we should build up. I think oftentimes we are looking for ideals because that's, what's been shown to us. I often talk to families and they'll say, when you were younger,

which family did you want to be like? And you know, people never are at a loss for words on, I wanted to be like, you know, this Family on the Brady bunch, I wanted to be like, you know, Carl Winslow and the, you know, Family over here. Like I wanted to be like fresh friends and have uncle feel kind of energy,

right? It's the, we have all of these ideal for what we want, even before we have kids. I think we always are like, what type of parent am I going to be? One thing that I often share with my parents. And it's something that I'm kind of developing right now called the parenting identity development model, which is your identity constantly shifts at the parent because you're raving or human,

whose identity is constantly shifting as they're growing up. And so the w the person that you are when you have a newborn is definitely going to be a different person than when you get the theme. Right. And I think as we learn more about who we are, right. I also tell parents, before you really dive into, I have to discipline.

I have to set limits. Let's pick a step back, and I want to know who are used. What type of person are you, how do you feel up in the world? What matters to you? What values do you

have now, let's take that your strengths, your weaknesses, your lived experiences, pick that, and then let's apply it to how you want that energy to show up in your family.

How do you want that energy to be expressed in your family? Right. I was working with a parent interest with yet, interestingly enough, a couple of weeks ago, around a lot of stuff that kind of goes on when you're trying to raise a kid who is responsible, gets things done on time. You don't have to yell at them all the time.

And that was the expectation. And I'd said, as a mom, I said, can you ask your child, the child was kind of off the slide. Why do you think they behave in this way? The child who is pre-teen came over and they're, well, I feel like I behave this way all the time, but you only notice it when you're mad at me and you could see the mom's face kind of be like,

okay. And I just asked her to, is that true for you? Do you feel like that's something that's true that can kind of always have the personality, but it only seems to really worry you when you're already kind of in a, in a state of stress and she kind of mad it. And then we talked a little bit about that. Like,

who are we as people? And how does that end up showing up in the way that we're showing up for a kid? Right? And so I think it's, sometimes people really think there are two separate versions of themselves. They're the parent, and then the person, but that's not true. You actually are one whole person all the time. And as I'm sure you got,

you know, you're just picking off and putting on hats at different points of the day. So I'm a parent right now, but I take this off and then I got up, you don't mind zoom meeting and be a professional that I take that off. And I gotta go over here and be a chef, you know? And so you're always kind of navigating between all of these different,

but the core of it is for you and how are these different spaces telling you who you are. And so I say all of that, when you are a parent who sets expectations for yourself, understanding you set those expectations and you can either modify them or accept them as be where they are. I often tell parents, or the difference between an expectation and a goal and expectation is something that we hope will happen.

We prayed to happen. We wish will happen. A goal is something that we actually take steps to work toward. And either we get there or we don't, but along the way, we're constantly developing and we're constantly learning. And so I teach the parents, it's better to set goals for yourself in your parenting. And I need to be here because that can happen maybe,

but it's not something that there's steps to. There's not something that there's kind of, let's flip them in a rhyme or reason to, but when you set goals, like, I don't want my child to yell as much, then we're saying, okay, we can work towards that. We're not just hoping one day my kid wakes up and we don't yell at each other.

We're really working for, okay, what can we do to support each other on not yelling as much? Right? So if we, 10 times a week, let's get it down to eight and then lifted it down five, and then maybe have that sweet spot between one and three times a week. We yell at each other, right? And these are goals,

right? It's not like we're going to need it. It's a goal where it's like, let's work towards getting to it. And I think if we help ourselves with those different definition in that distinction, it really allows ourselves to grow, to make a mistake, which if you want to talk about that next year, you basically talk about that too. But I think it really gives us a healthy space to work forward and to learn more about our sales and our families and our kids as we work towards that goal together.

I love that. And I love how you talked about goals. It's like, I hope blank happens. Like not as much or more that, that even setting that as a goal, there's, there's looseness, there's wiggle room. There's the ability for me to, you know, not quite make it, but still be okay with it. If I'm just hoping that my baby won't cry as much,

or I'm hoping that I won't yell as much, or I'm hoping that my kids will Do their homework, or my teens will not drink as much. I mean, all of those wiggle room and looseness, even though they're coming from a values and all these hopes and expectations and dreams that we have for our children, that, that also, you know,

are there present for us? I want to distinguish just a little bit of what you said and what Mercedes said, Mercedes, you were distinguishing between expectations and goals a minute ago. And you had said like, goals are those things that you are aiming for. You set metrics and you, you put place things in place. You put the steps in place to do it.

And then expectations are the things that you just sort of hope are going to happen. And you don't really put the steps in place. And I think what you're talking about is I think if you kind of, I think what happened is you kind of, you said two different things. I get what you're saying though, that you holding some looseness around those goals.

The goals are not something that are so rigid and that must happen. And, and I think that's what your point was less, less about it being about hope or, or taking the steps. But I really, I, I really can relate to having those two definitions of things that we're heading for the expectations or, and the, and the goals,

you know, I can hope for something or I can actually set a goal and do something about it and see if it could actually happen. So I, I wonder, I wonder, what do we do when we've got young kids? Like, I can, I can envision these kinds of conversations with older kids, you know, whether it's, you know,

like even, even kids that are like, you know, seven, an older adolescent, you know, those, those are conversations that we could really have, but with the younger kids, how do we do this as a

parent? When the kids are young, you're not really having a conversation as much with a one and two year old or even a three-year-old,

but you, you can have some kind of a conversation. How do you do this? How do you together with a partner or on your own create these kinds of goals without involving necessarily a child who's not really at that stage yet? Or, or what do you do? How do you figure these out? Well, you know, we'll kind of challenge a little bit,

and I'll tell you actually are having a lot of conversations with kids at that age, when you looked into kids actively, as they began to then navigate their world. So kind of in that toddler phase where they're trying out a lot of things, and they're trying to figure out what are their limits, what can they do, right? You are actually having a conversation with them.

And I actually encourage parents have this conversation. You're not like that dialogue that obviously you have with someone who's older, but you talk to them, you let them know, Oh, I see that. You're really interested in that, but that's not safe for our bodies. Let's try it over here. Right. You're really talking to them because the whole reason why we have conversation is that,

so we can really understand what the other person needs. And so, as you talk to your child and teach them words, each that feeling, I'm a huge proponent of feelings, vocabulary in the Disney movie, Pixar's inside out, I think is a great movie to put on in the background. Even if your kid's not sitting, watching, having it in the background where they can kind of pick up every now and then on some of the things that are going on really begins to teach them these emotions,

that especially once they hit three and four, they're going to have a whole surgeon's up. And they need to be able to say, you know, mom, I'm mad. I don't like this. And they are great at saying no, right? But really helping them learn how to convey what it is that they need. Right? It's a back conversation.

As, as with younger kids really becomes about how do I support them in communicating with me? What do I think is really good for them? Now I can help them. Right? We teach them things like nose, mouth fingers. We teach them how to think. Use. We teach them how to, you know, ask for things, but we also need to teach them how to express how they feel.

Right. I also think that with younger kids taking more time to play with them and observe them actually is another form of communication. Because at that age, especially younger kids are able to tell you, I feel this way are not able to reflect on these deeper spaces, but when you watch kids play, or when you play with kid, you really get a good understanding of how they feel about things.

I love playing with younger kid needs, nephews and client for like, because it really shows you the way that they're starting to conceptualize the world, the way that they're starting to understand their body, the way that they're starting to understand what relationships with other

people. And those are that's valuable information for you to say, wow, my kid really knows how to manage this play,

or wow. I could have a really hard time sharing or he's having a really hard time getting his needs met on the playground. And so that gives you this understanding of how to set a new goal, right? So let's say I want my kid to be potty trained, which is the goal that we want all of our kids to have. We also want to have a goal of,

you really know how to tell people how they're feeling. Do they know how to communicate what's going on with them? And that really starts with us as the adults in their lives, really helping them to see and understand. It looks like you're crying right now. Are you sad? Are you upset? I see your little fist balling up. Are you frustrated?

Are you sad? Are you mad? Right. And you're really trying to help them figure out what am I, what is what's going on with me? And that kind of space really against that the foundation for when they start to get older and have a lot more words and a lot more cognition, they've got that foundation of, I know what my parents expect of me.

I know that they they'll listen to me when I'm not having a good time. I know that they will hear me when I'm trying to communicate different things. And I think it really also gives kids a safe space to know that as I'm figuring out what to say, I'm not going to get punished. I'm going to be redirected in a way that's going to help me to get that need or that feeling expressed in that house.

That's great. Yeah. Gosh, I so many questions that I know, or we're going to need to start wrapping up soon. So I wanted to circle back around to something you said earlier about what we do when we make a, can you talk about that and how we can go back and reconnect? Yeah. Well, I think one of the things that many parents find,

especially as their kids get older is that our kids have a really hard time with failure with making mistakes and without win with that idea of coming up short. And we talked to our kids about back. A lot of times they talk about the expectations and pressures that have been placed on them by it to piety school, their family, their community. And oftentimes when I go back and talk to the parents,

I will always ask in the group, how many of you know how to fail? Just raise your hand. And in a group, I always get maybe one person who feels like they know how to do it, but the rest of the group does it. They don't know what it feels like to fail. They don't know what it feels like to make them fake.

And when I talk about bidding, how many of you failed and made a mistake? Everyone's hands go up, right? And so that difference of knowing how to manage it versus if actually happening it kind of what we've been talking about, the expectation versus goal kind of space, where I think we all know we're going to fail and make mistakes, but we really don't put any parameters,

our systems in place with how do I take care of myself when I have made this mistake? What do I do when things don't go the way I want, or I've come up short on a goal or a task that I was trying to complete. I think what we really need to incorporate into our families is when someone makes a mistake not to be punitive right away,

whether it be the internal kind of punitive mist that we give to ourselves or the ex Durnell kind of punitive Ms. Where we like will, you know, punish someone or take things away, which would really sit back and say, okay, so that was a mistake, right? You did not do that. Well, I don't hate the word failure,

but we can play. We failed on that. That wasn't that great. Right? And then to flip back and say how, now that we know what the end result is when we go this way, what do you think we can do next time? And really realize that the process of learning is not once I held it to you, you will do it and execute it perfectly.

That's not how life works. Usually what it looks like. And once we defined it, how we want things to go in our Family, there'll be some trial and error, some push and pull until we find that Steve thought that works our family. And in order for that push and pull to happen, we really have to be okay with people making a fake.

We have to be okay with people failing. We have to be okay with people, not always doing it. Right. And we have to have some stuff in place to fail when we don't do well, let's not turn on each other, but say, I did not do the best. I thought I could do this time. And I'm sorry, or I need some more time or I was going through something and I really wasn't paying attention,

everyone else in the family. But if those things aren't in place, then we ended up doing the more negative things to ourselves. We begin to internalize negative narratives about ourselves. We begin to maybe lash out at people in the family cause we don't feel safe making mistakes around them. And so then it becomes this whole chaotic thing where no one feels safe making mistakes.

And so I often encourage families to really put things in place when the one make them a fake in the family, whether it's intentional or not. Right. What do we do? What do we, how do we talk about it? Where can this person go? Is there any space that we can sit down and say, okay, that didn't work out the way we wanted,

how can we move forward? And I think if you put that in place, then when those things happen, people don't let, they have to hide. People have to lie and they have to do other negative things to kind of get out of it. People will say, well, you know what? I messed up and I feel bad about it.

And we can really work through how to do this better. And then again, the key here that it's going to maybe take a couple of times, there are certain things that, yeah, they get resolved the first time we come up against them. And there was some things in our families that it does take

a few times to manage and have conversations about before we really understand that this is how we're going to move forward.

Yeah. As you say that it reminds me of the importance of us being role models for our kids. And that sometimes it's hard because you know, you're, you're talking about making mistakes. And you know, when I talk about my kids, what I want, if they make a mistake and how I want them to handle it, I have to remember.

That's also how I should be handling it for myself to be a role model for them. And that's sometimes tough to do. And, and it also reminded me, as you were saying that, that sometimes it's not obvious for kids to know what's going on over here in the parent's head or in anyone's head for that matter. But as a parent. And so sometimes I have all this stuff happening in my head or I'm processing things,

but they don't know that's actually what's going on. It's just recently, I was actually had an experience where I was actually kind of talking through out loud what was happening and what had happened in a, in an experience I had where I had messed up. And I was just talking it through, out loud so that our kids could understand what I was kind of thinking through.

And then when I resolved it, like the next day I did kind of the same thing. Now I could've kept all that internally. They never would have had any idea what was happening, but like in order to, for them to be a role model for them, and I wasn't doing this to instruct them, this is really like what my experience was.

I share my experiences, our kids, but like I processed this and that. I also processed processing out loud for them. So they could actually hear what I had been dealing with and what I had, what I had done to resolve the problem. So I really appreciate that what you're saying there and that we, you know, we need to be gentle with ourselves and be able to make mistakes and know how to handle those mistakes,

because that's also good for our kids to also be able, not just good for us, but it's also good for our kids to be able to see how to do that for themselves. They know how to do that in their lives, as they, as they grow and develop. I think, yeah. I mean, that example actually reminds me of like teaching our daughter had a drive and that we had to start explicitly kind of narrating our own process of,

Oh, I'm watching this, I'm watching that. Okay. And now I think it's safe to go forward that we can do the same thing in a social, emotional context. Oh, I realized before I said that This is what I was thinking, and this is what I was feeling. I was scared about this. That's why I said this thing.

And I regret saying it, I really wish I could have said this thing and said, or gosh, I can't deal with this situation right now. I'm going to, I love you. I'm going to go take care of this. And then I'll

come right back. And we've kind of laid some expectations for our kids to know what's kind of going on over here.

So they're not left guessing or wondering that we're going to come back and we're going to figure this out together. They else in there too. I think when we do that for ourselves as the adults in our, in our kids' lives, it actually developed to this level of empathy. One thing that I noticed with a lot of parents that they had with expectations have been fails,

that unfortunately will leak over into their kid where it's like, no, I want to be perfect. So of course, I'm going to make my kids also meet that standard. So when we start to give ourselves some empathy and say, wow, I'm not always perfect. I don't always make the right decisions. I don't always do things perfectly. Right.

Then you have that layer of empathy that when you see it in your kid and you see that they're not always making the best of the business, you understand, because you've given yourself that empathy tooth, you're not being punitive to yourself. You're giving yourself grace to say, ah, I didn't do that well. And so when your kid doesn't, you don't jump down their throat,

you go, right. It's okay. We're all human. We don't always do things. Well now what do we want to do next? Or how do we want to manage this next? And I think it starts with our own internal kind of discussion like you guys were saying, because on one and remodeling, but on the other end, we're also developing our own self empathy with spend that also gets to be poured out into our children.

Right? Yeah. I love that. It's kind of better. We're like parenting ourselves and parenting our children at the same time. Oh, so good for me not to be hard on myself. I'm hard on myself too. Okay. So much good stuff. I wanted to make sure that you got a chance to talk about the diversity and parenting conference so that people can find out about what that's all about.

Like who is that for? What kind of people are you hoping to get there? Yeah. So the diversity and parenting conference, I was the first of its kind that came out, it started in 2018 and the conference, the first annual conference was in 2019, but what it actually evolved into was it non-profit now. And so this whole nonprofit really it's focusing on helping bring more diverse voices into the parenting and mental health world.

And we're really starting with professionals in that space where the nonprofits really going to have a focus on training professionals in this space to be more inclusive, to be more diverse. And we're doing that by again, having a lot of different experts, talk about a lot of different spaces and these experts won't just be talking about diverse topics. They also are going to have their own diverse identities as well.

Because again, like I said, at the top of the interview that I really want us to showcase more representation in this field so that we families have different identities and different kind of eight

with, to really look at it and say, can my family be like this? Well yet, because there's a person who is speaking about the, talking about my unique family issue.

I think about the fact that we don't always talk about adoptive families or foster families. We don't always talk about single parent families. We don't always talk about Family who are an LGBTQ community. We don't always have these discussions. And so I really want to bring more awareness to these different types of families. So that way they can see themselves reflected in the parenting and mental health landscape.

That's wonderful. It's a great opportunity for people. And I appreciate you putting that together. I was so excited when I heard about it. We talked to us about that something once before. So I'm happy to see it coming to fruition as we're wrapping up. Do you have any other final words or a big ask for the folks here in the conference?

My one word would be that parenting is not a sprint. It's a marathon. And so don't ever feel like because you messed up today that that's, it. There's no going back. You can always go back. You can always repair. Even if your kid gets out of the house and you realize something you did when they were 15, you really feel sorry about never feel like you can't go back and talk to them and share with them and grow with them.

And then also give yourself grace, this is hard. This is hard. This hard. Give yourself grace. Remember that you're human too. And you're trying to support and help another human become their healthiest version of themselves. It's all valuable. I wish I would have thought about that earlier in parenting. And I still can apply that. Now I'm terrible at pacing myself.

I've just spread. Everything's a spreading to me. So it's really good to think about that and keep that in mind that it's a marathon and that there's, there's always, there's always take back. There's always go back to get ready to go back and have a, have a conversation about it. Thank you, Mercedes, for this. This is such a great conversation.

You have great content. That's available online. You're doing so many great things. How can people find out more about you and all that you have available? I love the internet, but if you type my name and you'll find me everywhere, but you can always get started at my website. So my website for my parent coaching and mental health work is shame proof,

parenting.com. And if you're interested in knowing more about diversity and parenting and the work we're doing through the nonprofit, you can go to diversity in parenting.org. Awesome. That's great work. You're doing thank you for doing all of it. We'll include links to those in the speaker notes. And thanks again for joining us. Thanks for the conversation. And we look forward to hug you again in the future.

Thank you guys so much. Bye-bye.