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## **Suzanne Tucker**

### *How to Shift from "Time Outs" to "Time Ins" with Your Toddler or Teen*

Welcome to Happily Family! I'm Cecilia Hilkey. And I'm Jason Hilkey. And we are delighted today to have Suzanne Tucker with us. Suzanne is a mom of four and has been a physical therapist and parent educator for over 27 years. She found a generation mindful when she noticed that parents and educators were loving the science of positive discipline, but we're struggling to use it in practical and everyday life in response,

Suzanne has created tangible evidence-based tools and toys that make connections a habit in homes and schools. Welcome, Suzanne. It's great to have you talking to you. Thank you, guys. Thanks for having me. Yeah. I wanted to start by asking you about this transition that a lot of parents do when they go from time outs to time ends first, before we launch into like how to do that,

I wanted to ask why that's an important transition to start making The shift from timeouts to time. Ins is monumental for us as a society. It is a shift in our behavior, and even more than that, it's a shift in our mindset. So a timeout says to a child, and I believe even to an adult, you did bad. You are bad.

I need you to go away. Think about what you did and come back and be more, be better, be more, be better. And then you can be a part of this over here. And as human beings, we're wired for connection. So for a little developing mind who is wired for attachment, that is a very challenging experience to go through,

especially when you don't have the skills in the moment for the challenge that you're facing. So you're acting out a time in says to a child and to an adult, you did bad. You're feeling bad. I'm here to support you, to educate you. And to kind of love you through this, those words may or may not be ever said, overtly,

this could be modeled at school and none of those words are actually being used, but it doesn't matter because behaviors, communication, not only for a child, but for an adult and our children

are learning from our actions. Not only from our words. So for me as the founder of generation mindful my greatest hope lives just in this one, single skill alone,

I think in five years, if we could shift the culture and mainstream a time in, instead of a timeout, we can change everything. We can affect suicide rates, bullying, self-esteem, everything that relates to mental health and human wellbeing. So thank you for that question because it really boils it down. Why time ins not timeouts for me, it lives in that relationship building and that skill building and that memo or that signal that we send the brain that says,

Hey, mistakes, help us learn and grow. What are we going to learn right now? What is going on? Can we stay curious? Can we get underneath this moment? So that's why I think it's such a profound opportunity. It really lives in our skills and our relationships Like this. This is like a big conversation. This is something that I think we think of as being pretty small,

where it's just about time ends. And we hear parents talking about one, do something different the time out and do the time in instead. But then you're talking like much larger that, and not just with kids. And I just want to point out, it sounds like you're getting that storm that you were just talking about. Was that thunder I heard yeah.

Are getting a beautiful storm here. Yes. It reminds me of feelings. Right. So I mean, what we're talking about is permission to feel. And so I guess, you know, universe has permission to rage. Like the storm is coming in. I don't know if that's just where it brings me, but yes, it's cloudy and it's loud and it's kinda messy and it's rainy and it's fast and it's hard and it's high energy outside right now here.

And I think the weather can actually be a really great analogy for kiddos to invite into what's going on in our inner world. So thank you universe. We've got some nice thunder starting going on. So I guess we're meant to talk about some of the, maybe the more challenging feelings. Yeah. And I, I do want to talk about kind of,

because you've expanded this concept of a time in to not just be something for like little kids. I want to talk about what that looks like for, for older kids. And even maybe even for us adults, if we have time to go into that, I'd love to hear that. But for people who this conversation is kind of new, what is the time in actually look like?

Like what do you do with your kid? Great. So I time in is a bit more global than what do you do, okay. Because there's your mindset and your action. So, and actually your mindset is even more important than your actions. So when we teach a time in, at generation mindful, we will give you a video, audio books and a little mini manual to refer to.

And the very first thing we do is something very silly. We invite parents to write down the word time out and to maybe if they have a toddler March around the house and then flush it down the toilet, write it on a piece of toilet paper, flush it down the toilet, something very dramatic that the child remembers. And then to create a new space,

a calming that like the thundering you're hearing, but when those emotions are big and you feel like a thunderstorm, what do you do with them? So we want to invite children in with our mindset and our words, and then our actions. Can you see where if I don't address, how do I feel about mistakes and big emotions with my thoughts and my words,

my actions, when I embrace a time in is going to basically be like putting lipstick on a pig, it's going to be a time out with the word in and I'm going to be like, what are, you know, get over there. And then you're going to have to have a time in right now. You don't hit your brother. Good time in that is the same thing as a timeout,

right? So we really want to pause when we get into the do for me, it is basically, if you want to really simplify it, it is recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating five things. It spells ruler, right? Recognize, understand label, express, and regulate. And before we can do any of this, we want to be in our body.

So with a new parent, what we're helping them do is take that toddler. Who's raging. And instead of getting overly logical and wordy, we're going to help them, help their toddler. Get back in the moment, feel safe, get in their body. Once safety and connection are established. And we teach that to scale just like any skill. Then you can dive into the part that everybody loves,

because it uses the prefrontal cortex thinking and words are used. And we as adults love logical things that we love words. So we move into that sort of processing, but we only do it when we're in our body. And so we have a live what we call the calming strategies and lots of other activities that help you get to that place where you can then even begin to work toward regulation.

And people start with regulation. Actually that is like chapter six. Okay. Getting regulated. It does not. If you're starting there, if you're like, okay, you're raging, let's get regulated. That's like me telling the storm to just stop right now. Just stop just don't rain just don't make any thunder, just stop. It's not going to happen.

Right. It would go against the force of nature, the laws of nature. And so your child's brain is wired a certain way. The good news is when you know that brain science and you understand the sensory body, you can work with your body and your toddler's body and their brain and even your team. And instead of working against it, cause if you've ever felt like I'm gonna make this big emotion step,

you feel like I'm going to make it stop raining. It feels about the odds of it happening are about the same. So It, it sounds a little bit like something that I guess is a different way of thinking for me that I oftentimes, when our, like, when our kids are, especially when they were younger, when they would be like raging or they'd be having these big emotions,

all I wanted to do was just make it stop. And, and once it stopped, then I was like, okay, I'm done. And then I'd move on or I'd be like, that's it. And now I can continue with what I'm doing. And it sounds like you're talking about doing more than that, more than just like, like once,

once that's kind of calmed once we've gotten through that part, then there's more to it than just moving on with whatever was happening before that is that, is that it? Absolutely. Because when we're in our thinking brain or feeling brain or hearing brain or loving brain, we can learn and grow and share and discover about ourselves and others. When we're imagined,

when you're feeling hostile or fearful, it's not accessible. None of those things are accessible. So the first step is that getting that baseline, and that doesn't mean we're done like tag we're out, we're regulated. We're done. That just means that we're feeling safe and regulated and we can process and learn. So the more that you can have predictability in ritual around these things,

the more safe, and a lot of my work comes back to what is safe. And I really believe in creating safe spaces and even using safe words, because I don't know if you've noticed, but we live in the information age and none of us out there are at a loss for information. Many of us are at a loss of confidence because there is so much information.

So information can be delivered in lots of different ways. And the way that we want to really look for is empowerment, education, education that lifts you up, that brings you closer to your center so that you can navigate parenthood from your center. Not from a disempowered, everybody else knows more. And if I could just be more, be better than I could parent my child.

So the time in process that generation mindful is, is, is inspiring in the world is from an empowered place. And I shutter sometimes when I go on social media, I ingest the stuff of the world right now in the world of positive discipline. And often I notice in my body, I noticed a higher heart rate. I noticed that a low-level anxiety almost like,

am I enough? Am I doing it right? And it looks so simple in social media. You know, you've seen that on Instagram. You know, if you could just every bubble, like things that pop up in these little ideas in the bubbles are like major mind-shift transformations. But when they pop up on the little tic-tac and like eight of them are on the screen and they're smiling,

it looks like no problem. That is cakewalk and you walk away feeling less. And so we are really careful in the way we deliver information with our words and our intentions. So my promise is when you interact with generation mindful, what the vibe you're going to get on the other end is you already are. And, and I hope that these training wheels,

I hope that these tangible tools support you and, and make it even easier. Because for me, I know all of this stuff, but it's not about knowing the stuff it's about living and being okay. So if you've struggled with shifting to a time in, from a timeout and you've struggled, you've been only working on one plane and you feel like you failed because you were only on the most superficial level and that's not where all of your power is.

So I feel really strongly that we deserve community support and education that inspires and empowers. So you nailed it. And the other thing you you nailed is that it's multi-generational, and that's why our name is generation mindful. This is a multi-generational approach. So every tool that we have is transforming that little minds alone, but through relationship. And that means that it supports,

and it educates the big brain in the room. That's the most important thing we can do is support, educate, and inspire adult brains, because we are the ones that our children have outsourced the ability to regulate to us. If you think about it that way, then we even have the part of the brain responsible for emotional regulation. We do because we're adults,

we may or may not have lots of big fat pathways that go there. But the neat thing is we can start to plump them up because we actually have the part of the brain that we're wanting to wire to, whereas our little littles and they haven't even created that part of the brain till age three. They're just starting to wire that connection. That's I think that's good to remember.

Cause I think we have real high expectations sometimes for the younger ones, even for our teens where they're still developing these pathways, like you said, and we just have this expectation of like, you should have this. Why are you, like we say that, like you have this wire, you should have this figured out by now. You should have like,

like that. We have these expectations and remembering instead that we're the ones who are bringing that to the game and to that relationship helps in them developing that and really developing those pathways. I really, that, that just kind of had a, I had an aha around that when you said that, because that's one of the nice things is kids are learning this early on those pathways to become bigger and more,

they become more agile in being able to regulate emotions. And so the more that we're able to do that, the better they're going to be set for, you know, as adults, because they're going to have such a fluency with those pathways being developed early on. I, for whatever reason, that just occurred to me, as you said that I'm like,

oh yeah, that's right. That's why we're doing all of this. It's not just to survive. It's not just to get through this moment. We're actually trying to teach them and trying to work with them. So they have this as a life skill. Yeah. It's a great perspective. I just dropped my second child off at college. I've dropped my first off a couple of years ago.

My second one, for whatever reason, I had so many embodied aha moments this time, I think because my second one is my super strong-willed of my four. I lived my whole, I felt like, I felt like I had like Rocky. Like I had trained my whole life for this moment. You know, like Donna, like we're driving to Dayton then.

And like I was being challenged right up till like literally the moment where they opened the door and we were unloading the things I could tell you, these funny stories that were happening because one of her main triggers is his transition and like the unknown. And so all of her things were up. And, and I thought I got this, I know this.

I don't have to pick up the other end of that tug of war rope. I've done that. I've done that. I've done that for decades. I know that dance. And in this moment, I just I'm like, I'm a rock star. I got this. And it was not an easy moment. And we transformed it and it's like, what's possible on the other side of our predictable triggers is relationship and they don't look perfect.

They're fully flawed. I wish I'd had a camera on us. There may or may not have been some kicking involved in the car. Right. As like, mom, why are you so talking about like, I don't to trust you, you're dressed. It's like this whole thing, but I tell you this story because I am that person who early in motherhood wanted to do it.

Right. I just thought if I could just be good, right. I'm going to do it. Good. I'm going to do it right. I'm going to nail it. I'm going to get it right. Because that's how I was raised, you know, to do good, be good. Then you are good. So it's taken, I have a,

I have a lifetime of this sort of wiring to rewire. And I can't tell you how grateful I am for the tools and the journey and the realization that I don't have to do it perfectly, that there really is no perfect, but that I am the perfect parent for this child. And she is my perfect partner to, in this journey. So I just tell you that story,

anyone out there so that, you know, for me, it really does come to community tools and relationship. And I keep coming back to the same. Well, and it will serve you well for your life. And to remember that parenthood is a relationship and why we're here is we're here to work on knowing who am I? Who is this child?

And what tools do I have, right? It's this beautiful triangle. It's not something you do to your child. Right. It's a relationship. And that's how I define parenthood. It's this triangle, it's these three things. So if you're feeling challenged today, I would just lean hard into those things, your self-awareness relationship and then tools. Cause I really do help.

Yeah. So A question that I think a lot of parents struggle with and have is they know, okay, they know what they don't want to do. They don't want to do a timeout. They don't want to yell at their child. So they're trying to do this time in thing. And they might have the self-awareness of like, oh, I am in no condition to like,

be really present with my child. How do I like, what is, what are some of the tips That you could give a parent that has, that self-awareness, that they need to do some of that work before they engage? Well, wonderful question. And you, first of all, begin by saying I'm not alone. I think normalizing experiences is the one of the most powerful things.

And personally, I will breathe in, I am love and I would breathe out. I am enough before I do anything. So in those moments, when I notice my, this is what it feels like in my body. I want you to just notice what's happening in your body. Your child is really dysregulated and your dysregulated and whatever experience you could sweat,

you could cry. You could, you could run away. A lot of people that fight flight or freeze that flight in steep comes and they just want to bolt. You can be curious and notice, and then you don't have to do anything right. Or perfect. It begins with just getting back in your body and noticing, oh yeah, I am gone.

I'm just associated. I am not in my body for me in that moment in the car where I went is I went into my logical thinking brain and I was preparing my dissertation on why I'm right. And you're wrong. Right? So like, I am calm. You are stressed. You are projecting all blah, blah, blah, blah, blah,

blah. And so now I know myself right after decades of this. And I noticed, oh, look at you preparing your logical rebuttal that makes you right and them wrong. And I know that's where I go when I'm teetering on the brink. So I can notice and say, okay, I choose other than being logical and right, because I choose to be a relationship.

And what happened was the learning that I wanted for her wasn't possible in that moment. But it was passable later. And guess what? I didn't have to use any words. We think as parents, the duties upon us, I need to teach her to be grateful and I need to have my boundaries and I need to blah, blah, blah, blah,

blah. And so in that moment, what I got was I get to regulate. This is a big moment. She's really up against it. And it's not about me. And I can't tell you how much peace and harmony I get in my body. When I say those words. So join me. Right. I was like, it's not about me.

I think that could be kind of like a symphony of parents says, this is not about me. I get a lot of power out of that inner experience. So notice how I'm starting with my mindset. And that leads me to my words and my actions and my words were very few. In fact, I invited her to go walk, to go get her little student card with her friend.

Why? Because I have been trained. I have tools that my time in kit from little to three-year-olds is, well, let's see, I'm feeling worried, stressed, anxious. What do I do? Breathe, walk, count, drink water, go out in nature. I know what helps me regulate. And I know what helps my daughter regulate. So she went and walked and got her little student card breathe,

walked in nature was less anxious. Things became more predictable mark in her control, more familiar. And she came back a different child, right? She regulated. And then after we unloaded, she was full of gratitude, a grateful heart and grateful words. So do you see how, if I had been in the mindset of it, she's not appreciating me.

I need to teach her to be grateful. And I, I could have used words in the moments like, well, you're being really this way. And you know, thinking I'm teaching her what really, what I'm doing is pouring gasoline on a fire. So I just hope that that sharing helps. And again, generation mindful, we are tangible tools play-based and we begin up here.

So you're never going to get a tool. It's just a widget a thing it's always like, why, what does this do for me? How is this deepening my inner experience? Because that's what mindfulness is, right? It's present to the moment with joy and ease. So we all deserve support to show up in this moment. It might sound easy.

It is not, it is not as no small thing. And our power really does live for us in this moment. So that's, that's how I see that. Nice. That's really quick. I want to say it's such a good reminder that it's not about us as the parent. Like it, when they're young and things are going south. I know that there was times when I thought they're doing this to me.

Like, why are they, why are they doing this to me? And then as teens, or as they get older, I hear them. And I'm like, why are you upset with me? Like what's going on? And it just, it's such a good reminder that it's not about me. It's not their deal with their stuff. I'm dealing with my stuff.

Let's work this out together. Let's work on that relationship. I think that's super helpful. Yeah. The evidence will point to you. You will look around and you will say all evidence points to me and you will start to feel defensive. And so that's why tools, community support are so vital. You have a beautiful community you offer support. And what I would tell parents is your super power,

your super power. Isn't only in that moment of crisis. Okay. You got to go, go fill up those tanks. You know, not in crisis, that's not the moment to go searching for the superpower. Like we can go fill our superpower tanks up pre pre crisis so that we are ready and able. And that's, that's probably why I was able to navigate that moment is,

is my tanks were at a place where I could navigate it and no shame on me if, if they weren't, because believe me probably an hour before they weren't and something else happened, it's a minute to minute, moment to moment opportunity. And there's no shame in being where you are only, only awareness, even the hard stuff, even when something really,

really hard or bad happens. There's still that opportunity for awareness after. It's a great reminder. So definitely I forget that all the time personally. Yeah. As we're wrapping up, I wanted to ask you one last question, because I think I'm kind of a recovering perfectionist and I think we're on the same page. Yes. Gotcha. So if you are people like us and you're kind of beating yourself up because you've done something wrong,

even in the moment. And you'd like, those words are coming out and you're like, oh, like take them back and put them back in. Or, or maybe there are parents that are listening to this and thinking, oh my gosh, I've been doing this wrong for years. What, what kind of hope do you have



for those folks, for folks like us that are trying to still try to do it perfectly still like really working at it,

but failing sometimes. Yeah. Yeah. So my first thing is, can we all just take a deep breath right now in, through our nose, out through our mouth? Because I think we all identify with that. I don't think there's a person listening who can identify what I do when I hear those words as I hold my breath because it's scary.

It's hard. It's my fear. It's my pain. It's my wound. So I stopped breathing. So my first invitation is to simply breathe. A lot of my healing in motherhood started about five years. Then when I started to just be aware of the bar I was setting for, that was always two inches higher than I could ever reach perpetually higher constantly,

no matter what, no matter if I was steaming the baby food and grinding it, it wasn't right. It was, it needed to be two inches more or higher or better. So notice that your power lives in the noticing and you can breathe and you can cancel the goal. If you can notice the goal that is running you like octopus sucked up on your face is just like right there.

Okay. When you can see it, you can say, oh, I see you perfectionist tendencies. And don't pay that them. First of all, I want you to love this thing because most of us are taught, oh, once we notice it, you know, make it bad, make it wrong, make it go away. Well, I noticed that's just another form of shaming yourself for even feeling that way.

So what if we love it? What if we thank it? What if we say, Hey, you over there, I know where you came from. I look at my childhood, I'm one of seven, I'm a middle kid. I was in a very high functioning Christian family with very high goals. Not a lot of yelling, no yelling, in fact,

a lot of regulation, but I didn't see a lot of highs and lows being modeled. And I was always very curious about, look at these parts off the screen. You can't even see my hands. I'm wiggling my hands like this. You don't even know it, right. This was my life. And I was like, where is all this stuff?

You know? And the wiggly step up high and down low. I didn't really have that much experience with, but I had a lot of experience with this place. So that actually set me up to be a really great, curious Explorer about all this other stuff. And so I have a super power to, well, I don't know if it's a super power,

but I noticed I have a tendency to want to do good, be good, you know, right here. So instead of judging this, I can thank it and say, you know, you served me well, you got me through whatever life challenges I was facing. And thank you. And now I'm an adult and I have a whole new part of my brain and I have other skills and I have other systems in my life to support me.

So I don't, I don't need to rely on you so much anymore. And you know, that could be lots of different defense mechanisms that we have on here. Not just perfectionism, but that's what I do.

I, I think if we can notice it and thank it, kind of look to be curious about it and get underneath it. That is a way to make it,

help it integrate, not make it, help it integrate. And that's really what we're doing with our kids. Isn't it. We're not making them feel or do that's a very hierarchical tap down time out situation where we control them and we're responsible for, for what they do or say, as opposed to them being a human being with self control, you know,

control of their own selves that we lead and guide and limit and shape. So I think that's so helpful to hear that and to be reminded of that for those of us that have heard it before. And if we haven't heard it before to really soak it in and to live that, and it's, that's a, that's a lifelong skill to be developed,

I think. And Suzanne, I, I know that you have a lot of tools and you have a lot of things that are available through generation mindful as we're wrapping up. Do you have any final words or a big ask for folks that are here? As part of this, My ask is to join what I see as a revolution. Really, it's a mission of ours to raise an emotionally healthy world and we do it together.

It matters to me that we hold hands. I would love for you to be a part of the generation mindful community. It's it starts with our mindset and we share in so many ways online in newsletters, and yes, we have tangible tools, but that's not our only way. And for me, it's about creating a critical mass. And I said it five years ago.

My dream is to, is to, to be the thing that pushes mainstream culture, to be able to really wrap their head or hearts and their actions around at time, in our real time and not the superficial one level, but actually really move into what it means to raise children with positive connection based tools, as opposed to a fear and shame. And so I invite you to join the revolution,

the generation mindful community. And I just thank you for doing the work I see you. And I just thank you for seeing me and, and Cecilia and Jason and the work they're doing. So thank you. Just thank you for doing the work and thank you for being in community. Yeah, absolutely. I mean, you have so much to offer here and,

and I have just been amazed with the community that you create. How, how could people find out more about in particular about time mins? What could they do? Do you have a place for them to Go? Yes. If you go to our website, Genmindful.com, G E N mindful.com. One of the first things you'll see is a free time in kit Sprite.

So we'll give you a free starter, just start you on that journey. And then from there, there are so many opportunities we'd love to have you sign up for our virtual calming space. So if you're curious, like what does that mean to have a calming space in your home or classroom? Come see one that I set up virtually with my team specifically for tots and young children up to about age nine or 10,

we have a whole set of virtual fun things you can do with your child and just begin the journey of shifting the narrative from punitive to positive. It doesn't matter how old you are in your home. You can make that shift. Great. We'll include a link to that in the show notes here. And, you know, he showed it to us a little bit before we started.

It looks really cool. I encourage people to check that out. Thank you for sharing everything with us today. Thank you for sharing your storm, the lightning, the thunder, thank you for sharing about who you are and what genmindful is. And, and for us and reminding us as parents, where we can really connect with our kids and how we can get the support we need.

And we look forward to continuing the conversation with you in the future. Thank you again. Thank you both. Bye bye.