

Ep #117 I am not the parent I thought I would be

This is episode 117.

We welcome you to The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast. Here to heal and elevate lives is your parenting coach, Siope Kinikini.

Hello, my friends. How are you? Welcome to a brand new year 2021. We are looking forward to this new year; there are so many things that are in place for Smarter Parenting and for parents around the world. And of course, 2020 was one of those years where a parenting kind of went into high drive and overdrive. And 2021 will be another year that we are going to help you focus on the things that will bring about the greatest amount of change with you and your children. Specifically dealing with negative behaviors they may be feeling.

But also what I wanted to do during this podcast is talk to you about a session that I had with a parent. And this has to do a lot more with how the parent perceives their ability to work with their child and things that you can do in order to help you along this whole process. What are some internal things that you could be doing in reviewing the way that you parent your child and the way that you engage and interact?

So during this podcast, there are a few things that I want us to cover. First, I want to share with you the story of Jeremy and his 13-year-old son, Cameron. I want to talk to you about our conversation and about Jeremy's internal questions that he has because he loves his son, but there are some internal questions he has about the way he's going about raising his son. We're going to talk about Jeremy's story. That's the very first thing.

The second thing we're going to talk about is what skill we use to help Jeremy determine how to move forward. And that is the skill of Decision Making. We're going to be problem-solving around what he did in order to evaluate a better way to approach his child and better approach the situations that were happening with his child.

Then we are going to be talking about in what ways you can implement this in your own life and the ways that you can internalize Jeremy's struggle in order to help you. Now, I asked Jeremy if I could share his story, and he said, "Yes." So I'm grateful for him. Jeremy, thank you for letting me use your name and for letting me use what we discussed during our coaching session.

So those are the three things that we are going to be covering today. Now, the very first thing, let's talk about Jeremy and his son, Cameron, 13-years-old. Jeremy is a father; he's in his 30s, he has a 13-year-old son, and Jeremy is currently separated. And so Cameron comes and visits

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him and they spend time together, which is fantastic. I encourage that parents maintain communication and interaction with each other, even if the parents separated at the time.

So Cameron visits Jeremy on the weekends and during extended periods of times when there are holidays, he'll spend a little more time with his father, which is great. Now, Jeremy and I were talking about helping his son, who struggles communicating with him. His son will shut down. His son will get angry with him and will not communicate about what he's feeling and how he's going in about his day. And it's difficult for Jeremy.

A situation arose, and that's where Jeremy and I started to have a conversation. So, his son and friends were playing at school, and the school was closed, so this was after hours. And a neighbor call the police because the kids look like they were damaging property on the school property. Now, Cameron's friends ran away, but Cameron remained behind when the police were there. So the police pulled up, Cameron was still on the playground, and his friends ran away. And so the police questioned him and asked him. They called Cameron's father to come pick him up. And the police did notice that there was some damage on the playground.

Now, Jeremy was upset because he knows his son was taught not to damage property, not to do anything like that. And Cameron was terrified because the police asked him questions and being 13-years-old and being raised by Jeremy, which I need to give a shout out to Jeremy, he did report what happened and what was going on, he was honest with the police.

So they drove home after this whole incident with the police saying that they were going to have them communicate with them in regards to what happened and what was going on. Well, the drive home was tense. The drive back to the house was tense for Jeremy and Cameron. And Jeremy was upset, Jeremy was clearly upset. Cameron was embarrassed and frustrated at the same time about how this all came to be.

So when they got home, there was a huge argument. They began to blow up at each other. His son lost his temper, yelled at him, slammed the door, and Jeremy was yelling through the door and they were just going at it. Now, this isn't strange. In fact, this happens, and it's happened before. And with a lot of families, there are moments when children make mistakes and parents become frustrated. They act out. Children react as well.

And so with the door closed and Cameron in his room, Jeremy went and sat down in the kitchen. And as Jeremy was sitting there, all of a sudden feelings of guilt, regret, and anger started to come into him. He started to feel these emotions, and he started to feel sadness. And Jeremy contacted me, and we started talking about what was happening and how he could deal with this anger blow-up between him and his son. And one of the comments that Jeremy said touched me. It was really profound because I think a lot of parents feel this exact same way. Jeremy talked about how hard it was for him to parent his child, because he was very specific and deliberate in the way he wanted to raise Cameron. And he said the following thing, he said, "I am not the father I thought I would be." Let that sink in. "I am not the father I thought I would be." That's powerful.

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When you think about the way that we believe we are parenting our child or that we want to parent our child, it's an internal struggle because we want to be intentional. [And we want to perceive that our parenting skills are above board and that we're doing everything perfectly. And yet there are those moments when we are pulled into high emotion, where we question whether or not we have lost our bearings, whether or not we are on track, whether or not we are doing the right things. I felt this too, as a parent. There are moments where I feel this idea of, "Hey, I know better. And I did not intend to be this parent. And yet here I am."](#) And then all of those emotions, the guilt, the sadness, the regret, start to come in and sometimes it manifests as anger.

Jeremy and I talked about what he had just said, "I'm not the father I thought I would be." And we started to explore a little bit about defining what kind of father he wanted to be. While I was communicating with Jeremy about his emotions in the sadness regret and the guilt that he was feeling because he was not the father he thought he would be. We started to explore where exactly he came up with ideas about what kind of father he would be. And as we started to peel away the layers, we started to understand that he made some real deep observations while he was being raised by his parents. And it went back to the age that Cameron was, roughly around 12, 13-years-old, Jeremy interacted with his father in a very similar way where they would argue and complain and fight about things that were happening in Jeremy's life. And so Jeremy, as a 13-year-old told himself, "I'm not going to be that kind of a father."

Now, I don't know about you, but as we started to peel away these layers, I started to notice some very similar things with my own childhood. There were moments in my childhood where I told myself, "I'm going to do this differently than the way my parents did it. I'm going to and do this differently than the way my parents did it." And yet when I became an adult and I started to have more knowledge and understanding and a deeper sense of love for my own child, I started to recognize the wisdom and the logic behind the way my parents interacted with me. And it went counter to those belief systems. And that's what was happening with Jeremy. Jeremy started to see things from the other point of view, which is very, very different than the way a 13-year-old will look at a parenting interaction.

So as we started to explore this whole concept, we started to address in what ways can we bring Jeremy to a place where he can work on this with his child. And to also address the 12-year-old boy in Jeremy that made that commitment to himself, that he would not be in the same way.

Now, in order to do this, I introduced the skill of problem-solving, Decision Making and it's the SODAS Method. You can find this on the Smarter Parenting website. I've talked about this before, but it's such a powerful skill because it really does help someone logically come to a conclusion that is best focused on their values.

So if you're not familiar with the SODAS Method, I'm going to go through it really briefly. And then we'll go through what we talked about with Jeremy in regards to using this in order to help

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him move forward. Problem-solving, Decision Making, the SODAS Method. Now, the thing that you have to remember about the SODAS Method is that SODAS, S-O-D-A-S, each of those letters stand for something.

So SODAS is an acronym. The first S stands for situation. That's defining the situation that you're in. So in the case of Jeremy, the situation is he argued with his child and he stated, "I'm not the father I thought I would be, and I want to be the father I thought I should be." So S-situation, label this situation.

O for options. So what you're going to do is look at the situation and come up with three options that you can do in order to address the situation. Number one, Jeremy wanted to change everything, okay? Start parenting in new ways. He wanted to learn new skills. Option number two, it was to do coaching. And option number three was to work through his own perceptions. Those are the three options that he wanted to do to address the situation of not feeling like he was the father that he would be or that he should be.

Now, after you come up with your situation and the options to address those situations, you want to move on to disadvantages. Now, disadvantages, you're going to have three columns for those, and for each one of the options, you want to list down as many disadvantages as you can for each of those options. So the option for Jeremy was he wanted to change everything, he wanted to parent in a new way, learn new skills. So the disadvantage to though, under number one would be, it takes a lot of work. It requires a lot of time. He may not see the change happen as quickly as possible, and his child may not adjust to it. Those are the ones that he listed as disadvantages.

For number two, doing coaching on his parenting, he put as disadvantages, it takes time and it costs money. Now, we were writing all of this out in order to help Jeremy visualize it, and also to help him absorb what it was he was thinking onto a piece of paper. So those were the disadvantages. He came up for those two options.

Now the third option was worked through his own perceptions. The disadvantages that he put down for that was therapy costs money. It's a lot of personal work. I can fix myself, but it may not be beneficial for my son until much, much later. So those were disadvantages that he listed for those options.

Now, after you list the disadvantages, you want to move on to the advantages. So for each of those options, you want to list as many advantages as you can. So for the first one, he wanted to change everything and learn new parenting skills. The advantage to that was he wanted something to happen more quickly, and that was the quickest way to do it. And the advantage is that he would know more than he knew before. So that's what he listed as advantages. And you can list as many advantages that you want. I had Jeremy just list out what first came to mind. I didn't have them overthink or spend a ton of time. I just wanted him to go through the process and the first things that came to his mind, write those down, and then we would go back and revisit those.

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The advantage to getting coaching for his parenting, what he put down as advantage is he can get help from someone else outside of his family. And he can get objective feedback, which is helpful. You need somebody who's outside to give you a little bit of perspective because sometimes you're just in the mix of all of it and having a pair of eyes outside of that can be very, very beneficial. So he listed that as an advantage.

Now, advantages for number three, which was work through his own perceptions of his own parenting style. What he listed there was, "I can fix myself and I can be happier." But again, that went back to the disadvantage of "It may be a fix for myself, but it may not be beneficial for my son until much later."

So we listed all of this out. In fact, this is the SODAS that Jeremy filled out himself. And as we started to explore, we looked at the disadvantages and we picked out the one that was the least helpful for him based on his values and his goals. Then we looked at the advantages and which grouping of advantages was most beneficial for him.

So as we did this, Jeremy came to the conclusion that he wanted to do coaching and then he would do therapy later as things started to work out. He wanted more immediate fix for what was going on in his home, and also to get the perspective of somebody outside of the family and to get feedback. And then he would go and do some internal work about his own parenting style and how he can best address the 12-year-old boy in him, that told him, "As a father, I'm going to be this way." And then knowing that as he grew, things change and that's okay.

So, Jeremy and I went through this whole process of, "Let's problem solve." And I highly recommend that you take the time to sit down with a piece of paper and write this out. [In fact, you can get a copy of the SODAS Method on the Smarter Parenting website, under the skill of Decision Making.](#) So if you jump over there, there is a worksheet and it will walk you through each of those. There's also a video there that teaches you how to use this skill.

Now, this skill is not only limited to Jeremy. In fact, I had Jeremy take this skill as we worked on it and apply it to his son on what he could do when his friends are doing negative things like damaging property. So the situation would be, for example, for his son, it may sound something like, "Well, I'm with my friends, my friends are damaging property, what are my options? What are things that I can do?" The benefit of being able to sit down and rework a problem that has already occurred is that you can really help your child internalize other avenues for them.

Now, as Jeremy and Cameron communicated, Cameron did admit that he was uncomfortable when they started to damage the property. Cameron's a great kid, he stayed there, he communicated with the police, even though his other friends ran away. So Cameron internally has this goodness in him that he wants to do the right thing. And when he was confronted with friends, he caved into peer pressure, and he allowed those things to happen because he didn't know what other options there were.

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So Jeremy worked through Decision Making with Cameron in order to help him know, "Okay, this is the situation, what are my options?" And just by providing that, by sitting down with him and working through that, Cameron is more empowered next time it happens to do something. He knows he has choices. He knows he has options.

The thing I recommended for Jeremy to do as well as to Role-play that situation in order to help Cameron feel what it would feel like to say, "Hey, stop doing that." Or, "Hey, I'm going to leave." Or, "Hey, I need to tell somebody because damaging property is not right." This gave him a structure and a plan to address the situation as well. So they wouldn't be arguing and fighting about, "Hey, you know better, blah, blah, blah." I get it, kids do know better, but they still behave immaturely because obviously their brain is not fully developed and they're still learning things.

But by giving him a structure, problem-solving, which I used with Jeremy in his parenting technique, this can be applied in multiple ways. And I want you to think about ways that you can apply problem-solving to help you and your child move forward.

Once, for your own parenting needs, what are some ways that you want to problem-solve or make decisions on the way that you approach your parenting style. And then to help your children anytime they run into a situation that's difficult for them or where they've made a mistake, then you can use the skill as well to help them along.

So, we've covered a couple of things during this podcast. First thing is talked about Jeremy. We talked about his family. We talked about the situation that arose. And about Jeremy's concern that he didn't feel like he was the parent he wanted to be. And the guilt that came with that, we talked about the skill of Decision Making, problem-solving, and using the SODAS Method. I walked you through how Jeremy used it. And I also gave Jeremy the instruction to use it with his son in whatever situations may arise, where he may need to make a difficult decision.

Now, we're going to talk about how you can apply this. And I've talked a little bit about it, but before I do, I have this message for you.

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So, in what ways can you use this for your own benefit? I mentioned before, just based off the example with Jeremy and Cameron, that you are going to be able to use this skill very effectively with each other. It's going to be fantastic because I know right now you're already thinking ahead and thinking, "Okay, my child struggles with this; what am I going to help them process and work through?"

Let me explain why it's important to go through these steps. When we, as parents, have a structure, when we have a method by which we approach problems, and we teach this to our

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children, it gives them the scaffolding to know exactly how to approach difficult situations. When we approach and give them a structure for solving problems, they are more able to adapt and adopt this method in other areas of their life.

So instead of whinging, instead of just trying out whatever we is necessary or focusing in on our emotional responses, what we do is we provide our children with a pathway out of difficulty. And you may be wondering, "In what ways does this really help a child?" I can tell you by working with children in the juvenile justice system. These are kids that have made choices that have them locked up behind bars. [These kids are in detention. They're receiving services to help them make better choices by giving them permission to use Decision Making as a skill. It gives them power in order to move forward whenever situations arrive because they don't feel stuck.](#)

They don't feel like they have to just react to everything around them. They feel like, "Hey, wait, I need to step back and process this." This goes a long way in helping a child develop mentally because then a child has to use the front part of their brain, the prefrontal cortex to process information, and then to come up with a way to work through things.

Now, if you remember, [I've talked about the brain and children's brain and how reactive it can be and the development of the brain over time. What we try and do is to help children use the more logical sides of their brain so they're not as reactionary.](#) It is so beneficial for you as a parent to use this skill, Decision Making and problem-solving, yourself even when you are trying to decide, "What consequences should we use? What type of motivation systems can we use in our home?" Very, very helpful for you as a parent to use in your parenting, but also for your children to see you using it and then for you to use it with them. Because they'll learn from watching you doing, and they'll learn from doing it themselves. [This prepares them for a path where they can start to think more logically about how they're approaching their life and the decisions that they're making.](#)

This is the call to action I have for you. I want you to think about one area of parenting, where you feel uncomfortable, like Jeremy did. I want you to go through the process of problem-solving, making a decision on how you can address that discomfort. And I want you to come up with a solution.

Now, for your child, I want you to think of a situation where your child has made a poor choice, a poor decision and I want you to use this skill with them, have them sit down. Now, the biggest warnings that I want to give you right now is that a lot of parents want to jump in and provide the answers. This is not a time for you to provide the answers for disadvantages and advantages and options. It's a time for you to sit back and allow your child to process this because you're going to learn more about where your child is based on what they say during this process than you will at any other time. You're going to understand their maturity level. You will understand how they process information through disadvantages and advantages. You're going to understand their values. If you allow them to go through it on their own, you sit there and be encouraging and say "Okay let's think about this. Let's work through this. What do you think? What do you think? What do you think?"

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You just want to open it up, leave everything open. You are going to learn so much about your child. You're going to learn about what's important to them. You'll learn about what's valuable. And once you have that knowledge, once you know, that's the game-changer right there, because you can help address that. After they come up with a solution and they say, "Yeah, I think this is what I'm going to do." If you disagree with the solution that they came up with, don't tell them that you disagree. What you want to do is you want to Role-play it so they can get a feel for it. And I will tell you, 99% of the time when I have done this, and I know that they chose the wrong solution, they figure out through the Role-playing that it was the wrong solution.

They're like, ["Okay, this doesn't feel right. Wait, something's off. Maybe I should change this." And then you explore again and help them make these decisions. Remember, we're giving them the method, but we're allowing them the freedom to explore and to understand, and to process the information based on where they are mentally.](#) It's such a powerful skill. I cannot recommend it enough. I use this skill all the time. I use it all the time. Whenever I have to make a decision, I'll sit down or write it out., Writing it out is very helpful. It gives me better understanding of where I'm at emotionally, where I'm at mentally and it also helps me really sit down and process what it is. I need to put it down into words, and then I need to write it out. We're providing a whole scaffolding for them to build their brain and to really strengthen those connections in their brain so it's not hijacked by emotion.

So good news. I do need to report that Jeremy and Cameron used this skill and that it was a game-changer for them. They were able to go back and instead of being accusatory and arguing about what he should have done and what needed to happen, Jeremy took a back seat and let him work through these issues. And as they did, Cameron felt like his dad was on his side and was there to support and help him through this process rather than him there, blaming him and arguing with him.

When I last spoke with Jeremy, he said, "Thank you." He said, "Thanks, I feel like I'm more the father than I wanted to be." And for me, that just meant the world because that meant that his whole perception about how he wanted to raise his children in a home of love and support was coming true. I just need to give a shout out to Jeremy. Thank you, Jeremy, for letting me share your story. Thank you for allowing me to share this with parents out there during this podcast.

I want to wish you a Happy New Year. This is going to be a great year for Smarter Parenting. We're excited to share what we have with you. So, looking forward to a wonderful new year, and again, during these next few podcasts, we're addressing very specific questions, very specific coaching sessions that have happened in order to answer the questions that you have.

We want to be able to help you. And in fact, my goal through the podcast has always been, you can listen to a podcast and you can apply a principle immediately after listening. I want you to take something away from it. In this case, I want you to take away problem-solving, Decision Making and the SODAS method. Okay? You need more information, jump over to the Smarter Parenting website. You're going to find this skill, a video, downloadable materials and printable

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materials that you can use, to use yourself, but also to help with your child. That's it for me. And I will see you again next week.

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