

# Ep #89 Special episode-Preparing our kids to navigate the world around them

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This is episode 89. Let's begin.

Smarter Parenting welcomes you to our podcast series, The Parenting Coach for ADHD. Here to heal and elevate lives is your Parenting Coach, Siopé Kinikini.

Hello my friends, how are you? I hope you're doing well. I am doing great. And actually, during this podcast, this is a personal podcast for me, because we'll be discussing some very personal issues and some of the things that are happening around the world, that are really shaping the way that you parent and you work with your child.

Now, during this podcast, I will teach you some specific things that you need to do in order to check-in and communicate with your child about everything that's happening. I will give you the tips that you need in order to approach this and to do it effectively, to continue to build that relationship, and to help them navigate their way through this life.

Now, I always like to start by giving thanks, and sometimes I do it on the podcast and sometimes I don't. But today, I want to start off by giving gratitude for this opportunity to share this information with you and to talk to you about this topic because it's super important. I'm thankful for you parents who are on the front lines of helping to shape your children's lives.

We are living in some unprecedented times, things have never been like this before. And so, it takes quite a bit of humility and grace for people to step back re-evaluate and pivot and do something that's different and something that's new. So I'm grateful for the parents who are willing to do that. And there are parents that are listening to this podcast because I've asked you to do things and I have received word back from you that you've tried these things. It's wonderful. It's absolutely wonderful. So I'm grateful for that.

I'm grateful for Smarter Parenting and the skills that we teach. Because these are skills that are universal. They've been used, tried, and tested. They're evidence-based. And these are skills that really will help you and your children navigate through this chaos. Everything that's happening. So, there's so much to be grateful for, and there's so much happening in the world.

Now, let's talk about what's happening in the world. I don't know about you, but for the past couple of years, it just seems there have been more and more things coming up that parents

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need to be aware of when they're raising their children, to help prepare their children for the world. Currently right now, there is a lot of protesting happening and violence that is happening in regards to the Black Lives Matter movement. And I mentioned this before, this is a personal topic for me, you probably can't tell from my voice, but if you jumped over to the website, you know that I am a person of color. You know I'm married to my wife, who's also a person of color and we're raising our child who is a person of color.

Now, I'm not stating this as something that we're going to talk about as far as what political views and agendas we have. However, what I have noticed as a parent in raising my child, is that the narrative and the way that things were done when I was being raised by my parents, they have drastically changed. The way that we have received information when I was younger, when I was a teenager, and when I was a child, we used to turn on the news at five o'clock, or six o'clock, or 10 o'clock in the evening and then that's it. That's what we got, whatever was on the news, was on the news and that was it. Today we are bombarded with information and bombarded with news. It's almost like there is a nonstop cycle of news, reporting of different things that are happening.

I'm just going to backtrack to last year. Last year we had the #MeToo movement, there have always been LGBTQ issues that have arisen and rights, that people are looking for. Just now in 2020, Australia was on fire, and we were seeking to help them. It was a world concern, we were praying and trying to send supplies and help them. We've constantly are dealing with refugees and terrorism. [Coronavirus came in March](#). We were quarantined for a while. The protests. Senseless deaths. Smarter Parenting is obviously in the midst of helping parents with their children, and this is the world that parents and children are living in right now. So it's important for us to address these issues because our goal is to heal and elevate lives through proven family solutions.

We do not discriminate against anyone, and the skills that I have taught here, on the podcast and also on the Smarter Parenting website, are skills that I have used with families from all cultural backgrounds. And the reason I'm so passionate about it, is because it has worked with them. It has worked with all families of different kinds and different styles. With a single parent. With a mixed-orientation family. With whatever it may be, these skills translate to everyone. Which is why I love it so much. I love it so much.

If you're like me and you go through that list of things that we have been confronted with during the last year or so, or even more, it can seem overwhelming to a lot of parents. And it can seem overwhelming to children who are watching this all unfold and not sure exactly how to respond to this. This is one of those times when I step back and I realize, "Wow, the world has completely changed."

When I grew up, we were focused on our neighborhood in our area, at the time. And now, it's a global world and we are raising, you are raising global citizens. You are raising children, who belong to a global neighborhood. It's no longer, the smaller localized neighborhood and your

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city, even though you have the most input there, but things have expanded and their world is going to be more international than what we grew up with. So this is why I said, I'm thankful for parents who are able to recognize these things and pivot, and make some changes, and adjust, for the benefit of their children, it is a challenging time.

And when I say it's a challenging time, each challenge also presents opportunities. And these opportunities for you as parents, is to help make the changes that you want to see in the world happen through your effective parenting skills.

The way that you interact and engage with your children, will say a lot about how they will engage and interact with the world at large. There's a quote from Mahatma Gandhi that says, "If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children." Mahatma Gandhi, absolutely beautiful.

The changes that we want now, the changes that people want to see happening, will be the changes that we can instill in our children to carry on. There's another quote from John F. Kennedy, it's attributed to him. I've heard it in various places, but it's beautiful for parents. This is the quote, "Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see." Isn't that gorgeous? We have the opportunity, we do as parents. We have the opportunity to create, change in the world through our children, by helping them navigate it safely and effectively. I know that seems a heavy way and a heavy burden.

And yet at the same time, if you are to think about the opportunity you have, to really effectuate change in the world, you have that opportunity as a parent, through your influence. Through your support. Through your confidence. Through your relationship. You are going to be able to make the changes happen, that you want to change through your children, by helping guide them through that. And they in turn are going to make the changes that are even bigger than that. I think every parent has this desire that their children end up better than they do, and that they are more successful and more happy than they have ever been. And I know that's true of me, as a parent, and I know it was true of my father.

Again, we have an opportunity right now to help our children navigate this and to confront all of these challenging topics and help them come out the other side victorious, and supportive, and helpful in this global world. So don't be overwhelmed by that, but actually think of yourself as somebody who is really there at the right time and at the right moment to make the right changes happen. It's just empowering to me, as a parent, as I think of my daughter who's growing up right now and helping her navigate that.

How do we do that? What is it that we need to do as parents to help this happen? [Effective Communication](#) is the skill that I use with my child and it's a skill that I want to talk to you today about, and share with you some of the experiences I've had with my daughter over the last few weeks in regards to this.

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As I mentioned before, I am a person of color, I live in Salt Lake City, Utah, which is predominantly Caucasian. And if you were fooled by my voice, which you probably are, I sound like a newscaster from somewhere, anywhere in the United States, don't be surprised, it's part of how I had to grow up. The African Americans know it as code-switching. People of color know it is code-switching. It's the ability to change things about yourself, the way you speak, or where you interact, in order to fit into the larger society, specifically in education or in certain jobs.

I learned at a very young age to code-switch. So I would code-switch. And raising my daughter, these are the discussions that we would constantly have with her. Because we have always lived predominantly in Caucasian neighborhoods where we are the minority. And that's not a bad thing or a good thing, it's just a decision that we made as parents. We wanted to provide her with experiences, and she's still very in touch with the culture, and with our families, but we also wanted to prepare her for the world at large because we knew there would come a time, when she would have to navigate the bigger world. And the bigger world included everybody else.

And so, again, we have had these conversations with her over, and over, and over again, and fortunately I use the skill of Effective Communication with her. And in this skill of Effective Communication, you get their attention. State your facts. You have reflective listening, where the person listens until you are finished and they repeat back in those words what they understood. They wait for affirmation or confirmation, and then they can share their point of view. [It's just really taking the time to listen to each other and to understand.](#)

So, we've grown up with this with our daughter and she's known how to do it since she was very young. We've talked about being able to communicate about the difficulties that she has had. And when the protests and when the violence started happening, she belongs to a group of friends that are again, largely Caucasian and they have different viewpoints and they have very, very succinct ideas about how the world works. And our daughter was raised in a different environment because she was exposed to different experiences that her friends were not exposed to. And during their discussion with her friends, they're on a group chat and they communicate, and don't worry, we check her phone all the time, we keep her phone with us.

But while they were discussing, my daughter was having a very difficult time communicating her own feelings about what was happening in the world, and she felt in a way misunderstood by her friends and it was really difficult for her. And we sat down and we used Effective Communication with her to get at the root of what is happening in her ability to communicate what she was experiencing and what she was feeling. And as we communicated, she started to reveal more and more of her own experiences with things that we were unaware of, but experiences that she has had, where she has confronted that racism or sexism on her part. As a 16-year-old. Shocking. But it exists and it's out there.

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And in our discussion, of what was happening and in communicating with her, we were able to help her figure out exactly in what ways she could communicate and share her thoughts in an appropriate way with her friends.

And we did not push her to do that, in fact we said, "You decide if that's something you want to share, if you feel you're going to share it and then nobody's going to hear it, but you want to share it because you want to at least let them know where you stand, that's great. But we're going to let you decide." And that is a decision we make as a parent because, she's 16 and we need to allow her to make some of those choices on her own.

Well, she decided to share her views and she did on the group chat, and what happened was a beautiful thing. Her friends began to start communicating more openly about their feelings and about misunderstanding, and that they had never really viewed her as a person of color. They almost thought she was just one of them for some reason. And so that opened up this dialogue and this ability for them, to see the world through the eyes of somebody else. It was a beautiful thing, is absolutely beautiful. And it made me think back to the quote that Mahatma Gandhi gave, "If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children." And also John F. Kennedy's quote, "Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see."

I don't know if I'll see, harmony and peace in my lifetime, but I am preparing my child for the world the way it is, and preparing her for a way to deal with the world, and interact with the world that will bring about that peace and that understanding that I'm hoping will exist in the future. And I really honestly believe our children are the key to making the changes happen. I really honestly believe that. I believe we have a role to prepare them, but I feel they have a role as well.

Now, you're probably wondering, what is it about our [Effective Communication](#) technique, that me and my wife implement makes the difference? Well, there are three things. Three things that you use with Effective Communication and let me tell you what they are.

The first thing, is to be able to remove [emotion from your communication](#). You're probably wondering why would you want to remove the emotion from your communication? Well, emotion can taint the communication process because if you become over-emotional when they state something, what you do is you either bring them in, or you may actually set up a boundary, or set up a wall to say, "Hey, that's as far as you should go because I can't deal with it anymore." Okay. So removing your emotional response from whatever's being discussed is an important part of it.

Let me explain what that looks like, in more concrete terms. I was working with a young man who came out to his parents. He was scared to come out to his parents, LGBTQ issues and he was terrified. But he made the decision and he wanted to come out to his parents. Well, my job

was just to be supportive and to help facilitate the goal he had to communicate more openly with his parents.

And when he came out to his parents, his parents became emotional. The father was upset and then the mother began to cry. Like emotionally break down. That emotional response, during the 10 or so minutes after he stated something or said something, it affected the remainder of their relationship for 10 years after that. The emotion drew a boundary to what they could talk about, it kept them from actually delving deep and really trying to understand and work through the difficulties that he was going through and the difficulties that the parents were going through at hearing this news.

So, the recommendation then for parents is to remove your emotional response, from any communication that you have with your child. You want to look at things like they are facts. And you want to present information as though the information is there and let's draw conclusions from these. Now, when I'm talking to my child and we are looking at news footage or examining something like that, of course, I have emotional responses to that. Of course, I have viewpoints about that. But what I do is I actually keep those to myself, at her age, and I let her look at it, evaluate it, give me her feedback first, and then I share my point of view. The reason being is, it allows her to make a decision on where she stands on that and opens up her ability to communicate with me, without me overpowering the conversation and becoming emotional.

So number one is remove the emotional response. If your child and you are talking about difficulties that are happening in the news, don't become emotional about it. In fact, you want to step back and say, "Okay, here's the information, what do you think about this? Tell me what you're thinking about this? What do you believe about this? What do you struggle with?"

And then work from that point in communicating with them, further things that they can explore or examine. Your conversations and your communication is going to go far more deeper than it ever will if you're able to do that, remove the emotion. It's easier said than done, it is super difficult at times to remove the emotional part of it, but it is important, okay. So, that's the first thing.

The second thing, you want to answer questions honestly. Okay. So after you allow your child to communicate their point of view, if they ask you your point of view, communicate it with them. But communicate it with them in a way that inspires more communication about it. Be honest. Don't make things up. Don't let them fish. You want to let them know exactly where you stand on certain issues, right? After they've expressed it, and then talk about why you stand in that place, why you believe that way, answer questions honestly. In the world that we live in now, if you do not answer your child honestly, okay. If you skirt around it, they're going to find out the truth. They can sniff you lying, believe it or not, so it's best to be open and honest because if you're open and honest, they will be open and honest.

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And the third thing is to always keep it open. [There is no discussion that should ever have an ending with your child.](#) I've said this when I worked with parents who were struggling with children, talking about children about sexuality, for example. So, in discussing it with them, the idea of communicating about it at one time is a mistake. You never want to just say, "We're going to have the sex talk when they're 13, and then we're not going to talk about it again." No, the idea is that, if your child has a question, you answer them honestly, at the level that they can understand and the level of their asking, but you can always go and revisit it later when they have more questions. So keeping it open means that you will discuss something and you will always say, "Let's keep talking about it. I just want to know if anything changes, or your thoughts, or how this works, or what you're thinking about."

And then as they grow older, they're going to have more and more opinions, they're going to have more experiences with friends and with the world, and they will come to you for help and for feedback, if you're able to do this. So keep the communication open. You want to keep it open, and you want to address things at the level that they're at, the age that they're at, based on the questions that they ask, and what you are observing and what you are doing.

Those are the three things that you can use with Effective Communication, to help your child navigate through all of this. All of the things that are happening in the world. Quarantine. You can discuss it. The political issues of the world.

Parents nowadays have a responsibility to prepare their children to live in an international world, it's just the way the world is. The internet has made everything compact. Travel has been so compact. People are now living all over the world. We have a Brazilian neighbor now. We have neighbors from all over the world. There's an Indian family that just moved in down the street. The international part of their contribution to society is going to be super important for you to help them understand and navigate. When you do this and when you model this when you show your children that you are able to communicate this way, your children are going to be able to do this with their friends. With their spouse. And with their children. And what happens is this domino effect of us being able to open up more communication and understanding, and actually making the changes where they matter most. It increases empathy. It increases empathy. And it increases communication to where people are honestly changing because they understand and not changing because they're feeling forced or coerced.

Those are the three things, I'm going to repeat them again because I think it's super important. You want to remove your emotional response to things. If you're looking at a new story or you're examining something, look at it, take an emotional step back, but just look at it and then have your child discuss and explain how they feel before you provide your input. And really be careful, if you become overly emotional about it because that will draw a boundary for them on how they're going to respond.

Second thing, is to answer questions honestly. If they have a question, answer it honestly. If they ask for your opinion, answer it honestly. Just be honest.

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And then three, keep it open. Discuss issues as they come up and to the level that they can comprehend. Don't go overboard. Don't give them more information they need, but just keep the communication going and keep it open.

So you can have the conversation when they're young. When they're eight. When they're 10. When they're 14. When they're 15. When they're 18. This helps your child really navigate it and know, "Hey, if I have a question, I know a safe place I can go to, to get it answered."

I know I've shared a lot, I've shared really, really a lot of information in here. I hope it's useful for you, in fact, I know it should be useful for you, if you're able to apply it with your children in communicating about anything that's difficult. Anything that's happening that may be surprising and hard for them to deal with.

It has been a really rough year. 2020 has been a really rough year, I have seen it all. I have seen the anxiety rise in parents. I've seen the anxiety rise in children, in learning how to cope and deal, how to find ways to rest and sleep because of everything that's happening in the world. And I'm here to provide more help for you if you sign up for [coaching](#). So, I want to coach you through that and walk you through that, if you need it.

Again, I know that we are in a world of a lot of difficulties, and yet as Albert Einstein said, "In the middle of difficulties, lies opportunities." And the opportunity for parents now is to really shape the world of the future by preparing their children for the future. It's the way it works.

I just want to thank you again, for joining me for this. And I'm just sending you all the love I possibly can for the work that you are doing. I know it can be hard. I know it can be frustrating, and I know just how much it takes. And yet, I know this is the only way that we are really going to make the changes that need to happen in the world is through your work. Keep it up. Keep it up. And join me next time. Have a good one, have a blessed day, and I will talk to you later.

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### **PODCASTS MENTIONED IN THIS PODCAST**

[Ep #72: Nonverbal communication and the messages we're sending](#)

[Ep # 49: Compound effect of Effective Communication](#)

### **RESOURCES**

[Behavior Skill: Effective Communication](#)

[Blog post: Helping kids understand Covid-19](#)

[Blog post: Our goal as parents is to give messages our kids understand](#)

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