

Ep #99 Creating connections with your child

This is episode 99.

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? I hope you're doing well. I am so excited today. There is so much going on here at Smarter Parenting that I can hardly contain myself. There are two things we are going to cover during this podcast. First, I'm going to talk to you about some new offerings that are happening, and that will be available to you as our listeners in the next week. So I'm going to talk a little bit about it and prep you, and then during the next podcast, we're going to go a little deeper into the offerings that we are offering here at Smarter Parenting.

Now, the second thing that we will cover is a skill, and it's a skill that I want you to practice throughout this week. And if you've already practiced it because you've listened to the podcast for a long time, I'm going to give you a different way of looking at this skill.

I'm going to share with you some personal examples of how this skill has affected me and made me feel. And also, an example of how this skill helped transform a relationship between a mother and her child who really didn't communicate much, but she was able to get into a communication pattern with her child by using the skill of [Observe and Describe](#).

So those are the two things I want to cover today. Stay tuned because this stuff is fantastic, and it's life-changing for you. First off, I want to talk about the new things that will be offered here at Smarter Parenting. The team here at Smarter Parenting is amazing, and we have been listening to the concerns and the questions that you have had and we are now able to provide a way that we can answer those questions and meet your needs as parents with the behavioral issues that you're facing with your children.

During the next week, a club offer at Smarter Parenting is going to be available. This club offer allows you to have some focused content on what you need as a parent. And there are different tiers and levels that will be available to you. So during the next week or so, just be prepared for the amazingness that is going to be happening over at Smarter Parenting on the Smarter Parenting website. But don't fret, I will cover it during the next podcast. I do want to give you a brief outline of what will be available during these different levels of care, these things that we are offering that are new, they're brand new. So depending on where you're at with parenting, all parents are at different levels. Some parents, they can walk through and self-coach themselves through things. Well, we have something to help you and guide you along that process. Let me

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give you an idea of some of the things that will be available to you. We will be able to answer questions that you submit to us and release that every Tuesday at three o'clock.

So if there are specific questions that you have, you can send them to us, and we will answer those. You'll have access to the parenting course. You will have access to exclusive content--blog posts, worksheets, podcasts. Some things that answer some very specific questions and needs that you may have. You will be able to access interviews with professionals on the model that we use, which is the [Teaching-Family Model](#). You'll also be able to access coaching sessions where I have coached other parents and walked them through things, and you can see the exchange and interaction, and I will tell you that sometimes you learn more by watching something and hearing something than you do by being coached.

So we want to invite you into all of this goodness. We want to help you as parents access all of this information and help you in every way possible with the struggles that you're facing every day. You'll have more information about the Teaching-Family Model. Now, some people may think that I am just sharing knowledge that I have accumulated over time, but let me tell you what I use and what Smarter Parenting uses are the skills from the Teaching-Family model. Now, what's the benefit of doing that? The Teaching-Family Model has been here for decades, and it has been proven to work. It is evidence-based. It is being used around the world by parents, by professionals, by foster parents, by teachers. This is something that has been proven to work overtime.

So when I say that I am sharing with you a skill that is effective in helping change and transforms lives, I am literally telling you, this has helped to transform lives for the past few decades. I mean, this has been able to really change lives on a large scale, consistently. You're going to get more information on the Teaching-Family Model, why this skill works. We're going to give you more of the history. We're going to talk about the skills in new and nuanced ways that will help you.

Now, if you need some coaching, we're also going to be able to offer you coaching sessions. Say that you need some coaching, but you don't need weekly coaching; we have something for you there. And then if you need weekly coaching, or you need something that's a little more intensive, then we have something for you there. So many offerings there. So coaching sessions that are geared around helping families that are struggling and also families that may need that one session a month. You're going to have access to that on a level that is feasible to you. And then we also offer more intensive coaching that will be available. We hear you, we see you, we know, and that's why we're offering this.

So this is going to be released next week. Yay! So share this with friends, share this with everybody you possibly know because this is an offering that you absolutely cannot refuse if you're looking into helping your child with behavioral issues. That's why we're here.

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I just want to give a shout out to the people who've made this possible. The sponsors of Smarter Parenting have made this possible for you. And it is with deep gratitude that I want to say thank you for really caring about people. Those who help pay for this, they're the ones with the huge hearts saying, "People need help and we're here to help jump into the trenches with the parents that are doing the work, and we're here to guide you along the process in effective ways to do that." So great stuff, great stuff. I can't tell you how excited I am. And I'm so excited actually to meet a lot of you. I feel like this will be a way that we can engage and communicate with each other in the long-term. So wonderful. So we've covered the first thing that I wanted to cover during this podcast.

Now let's talk about Observe and Describe, and I want to share with you an experience that I had, a personal experience, and talk a little bit about it. And then we will talk about Observe and Describe, and I'll share with you an example of how it helped a mother, Melanie, with her son, Chris, who's 13-years-old in opening up their communication with each other.

So first off, my experience. I love music. I listen to all kinds of music. There is one artist that I really enjoy a lot. And it's an artist that I love to go to the concert and attend. I usually don't like going to concerts personally because I feel like I paid to go to a concert and what I usually hear are the people around me singing the person's song who's on the stage. And so for me going to concert isn't always that fun, but that's just me. I do like being around other people and enjoying the experience together, but when I go to listen to music, I want to be entertained, but I also want to hear the artist perform the music.

Well, there is one artist that regardless, I have always enjoyed going to their concert. And I have gone to this artist's concert, maybe three times in my lifetime. And each time was an experience. The artist is a country artist. So I'm a big fan of Garth Brooks. I don't know if you're a fan of Garth Brooks or not, but I'm going to share with you something that I observed him do, and I'm going to describe it. And you're going to see how this skill was just so amazing to watch him use it.

A few years ago, I went to The Garth Brooks Concert here in Salt Lake City, and it was cram-packed full of people. Upon entering, the lights were on in the big arena that we were in. You noticed people coming in with signs, people were dressed up, there was a whole section of people dressed in red, white, and blue shirts representing the flag. I noticed on the other side somebody had this big, huge cowboy hat with a big sign, "Garth Forever." There was a woman who was sitting beside us who had a sign that said, "I named my child after you Garth."

And so I was just observing because I love to people-watch. That's something that I enjoy doing. And as a person who works in behavioral interventions, it's just interesting to me to just sit back and watch. So I was watching these people come in, and the auditorium started to fill, and I started to notice people across the way, up at the top, over on the floor. And we were positioned fairly close to the floor. We weren't on the floor of the concert arena. We were off to the side, but

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

we were close enough where we could see details. So it wasn't far away. Excellent seats. I thought they were excellent seats. So the concert is going on.

Garth Brooks, he comes out, he starts performing, and if you have never been to a Garth Brooks concert, you are absolutely missing out because they are amazing experiences. He comes out, and he really does put everything out on the stage when he's out there. He performs, he sings. I noticed at the end of the concert, he does this thing where he comes back on the stage, waves to everybody, and then people are still clapping and cheering, then he comes back, and he'll play maybe one or two other songs then he'll leave. And then people are still excited and they're still clapping and singing, then he'll come out, and he'll start talking to the audience. And this is where I noticed something where the experience was elevated to a whole different level. When he came out the last time, the lights in the house were down, and he asked for the lights to be turned up. And so we could see everybody. And I looked out and I saw everybody there.

The guy with the cowboy hat across the way with the sign. I saw the guy who was wearing the red, white, and blue cowboy shirts as a group, all sitting together. And the woman off to the side with the sign that says, "Hey, I named my child after you Garth." So you could see everybody. And what Garth Brooks did was he walked up to the edge of the stage, and he just looked out, and he said, "Thank you," first off, and then he said, "I want you to know that I came here to Salt Lake City and that I see you." That's what he said. I see you. And then, he proceeded to point at people in the audience who he observed throughout his performance and he started describing them. So he's like, "I see you four guys up there in the red, white and blue shirts. I see you." Then he turned, "I see you, with the big cowboy hat and the sign. I see you."

Next thing you know, he's turning over to our side and he's like, to the lady who's holding the sign that says, "I named my child after you Garth," and then he points to her, and he's like, "I want to tell you I see you with the sign that says you named your child after me. I see you." I have never been to a concert where that has happened before. Where the performer makes this connection with the people that is far beyond just playing music and entertaining.

At that moment, the arena just erupted and people were just off the charts excited because they felt like they were seen. They felt like they were loved. They felt like they were noticed. It was so powerful. It was very, very powerful. Now, if you've been to a Garth Brooks concert, I'm sure you've seen that. Him being able to do this, and it's a wonderful thing. But I remember leaving the auditorium feeling elevated, feeling loved, feeling like, "Hey, wait a minute. Okay. This isn't a one-way interaction. This is an interaction where I felt like there was a reciprocation happening between the entertainer and me."

Even though we were distant, even though we were far apart, he was able to observe his audience, and describe them, and point them out and let them know, "I love you, and I see you." Very, very powerful. The reason I bring this up is because you can create that same dynamic by using the skill of Observe and Describe with your child. You are observing your child and

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

whatever's happening in their life. You're able to be sure that you have their attention, and then you can describe to them what it is in order to let them know that you are present. To let them know that you see them. And to let them know that you feel value in them. I want you to think about when you walk into a museum and you stand in front of a piece of art. Some pieces of art I can walk by really fast, but there are some other pieces of art where I will stand and stare at it for a while. Why does that happen? And it's because I find something interesting and of value in that.

Can you imagine how a child feels when you are able to do that with them? When you are able to take some time to observe, and really observe and be present and value that engagement, and then describe it. The ability to describe it, right? The ability to describe it gives you the opportunity to let your child know, "I am paying attention to what's happening. I'm paying attention to what you're doing."

Now in the past, when I've talked about this skill, I talked about Observe and Describe, usually when there are behaviors happening. But I'm going to give you a challenge to use this as a way to be present, to be absolutely present with your child. Absolutely present with the person you're with. Absolutely present for your spouse, for your partner, for your coworker, for whoever it may be. [You can send a lot of love through Observe and Describe](#). Just observe somebody's behavior, observe them, take a snapshot in your head, and describe that.

It communicates that you're paying attention. It communicates that I'm here and I see you. It's beautiful. It's such a beautiful skill. Now, if you've jumped over to the Smarter Parenting website, Observe and Describe is the second skill that you will see outlined in the order that we want you to learn it. And that's because Observe and Describe really is a skill that you use in pretty much every other skill that we teach. And why is that? Because it helps bring two people together, and it really makes them present in the moment. Absolutely present in the moment. I want to say this, how you notice your child changes the dynamic of how you feel about your child and about how your child feels towards you. I need to say that again because I think it's absolutely profound and it matches Observe and Describe. How you notice your child, how you observe them changes the dynamic of how you feel about them, and how they feel about you.

And when you're able to describe it, it tells your child everything. It tells your child, "Hey, my parent is here. They see me. They feel I'm of value. They're present. They're with me. I get it. Okay." It's such a powerful place to be as a parent in order to help you move along the path of correcting a child's behavior, opening up communication with your child. There's just so many things you can do once you do Observe and Describe correctly. So with observe and describe. Again, those are the three steps that I told you, and I'm going to explain them again and let me share an example. So Observe and Describe is that you are going to observe your child's behavior, positive or negative. You're going to observe your child's behavior. You're going to be sure your child is paying attention, which is the second step. And then third is describe that behavior. Super simple.

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I want you to try it, all day with everybody you meet today. Now, I'm going to share with you an example of how this helped change the dynamic and relationship of a mother with her child. So I was working with Melanie. She has a son named Chris, who's 13-years-old. Chris is a quiet child. He doesn't like to communicate much. Not very verbal. And so Melanie was having a hard time knowing exactly how to engage with him in a positive way. She tried talking to him. She tried playing games with him. She tried all these things, but for some reason she didn't feel like he was communicating or reciprocating in the engagement. And so what I did and what I usually do for parents who don't know what to do or what to say is we go back to this particular skill.

Why don't you just spend some time Observing and Describing? You're not going to make any judgments about what you're observing, okay? So you're going to leave out any judgments, and again, you're going to pretty much take a mental picture in your brain of what you're observing, and just describe what you see in that picture.

So I [Role-played](#) it with her. I practiced it with Melanie, and we practiced what she would say when he returned home from school. So it took a while for Melanie to be able to observe and not stick her own feelings and emotions into it. We had to talk about how you're only going to Observe and Describe.

So we did the example, he walked in and he put his back on the table. So all she would need to say is, "Hey." Got to be sure she observed, and then she was able to get his attention and say, "Hey, I noticed you put your back on the table," with a smile. That was it, right? Observe and Describe, super simple. So we practiced that, and it wasn't about her saying, "You look sad," or "You look frustrated." We left all of that out, left it all out.

We were just going to Observe and Describe behaviors. What he did at the dinner table, what he did after TV. And then helping her understand other parts of communication, which included being pleasant and communicating, and being sure he had some eye contact with her. Those are the things that we were working on with Melanie.

So I said, "Melanie, you're going to do this for the next three days, consistently. You're not going to overdo it, but I want you to at least do two things when he comes home. Two things before dinner. Two things after dinner. So that's what you're going to do. You're going to observe and describe two things, two things, two things. So by the end of the day, you will have Observed and Described six different behaviors, but you're not going to attach any emotions or your own thoughts to it. You're just going to Observe and Describe."

Melanie practiced it with Chris, and she didn't tell Chris. She was just practicing it in order to get more attuned to how to use the skill and more comfortable with it, which is something I also recommend. Parents need to practice these things over and over, so it becomes second nature.

And after the third day, I talked to Melanie and she's like, "Wow, it's a lot easier. And sometimes I do it without even thinking about it." And I said, "That's perfect. That's exactly where we want

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

to be." And I said, "Well, tell me how your interactions have been." And she's like, "Surprisingly, it's been interesting to notice that he does make more eye contact with me." I said, "Well, that's a step in the right direction." I said, "I want you to continue to practice this skill." And so she practiced it again for another three days. And then I asked her, I said, "How are things going?" And she's like, "The funny thing is, is he starting to do it to me. He's starting to Observe and Describe things that are happening to me." And I said, "Well, that's wonderful." And I said, "Well, does that mean that communication has opened up?" And she's like, "It actually has."

In a weird way, he's just copying what she's doing, but unconsciously doing so. And there's no arguing because you're just Observing and Describing a behavior, but the communication started. And from there, the communication continued to grow between Melanie and Chris.

And this was a starting point of where Observe and Describe really does communicate to your child, "Hey, I see you, and I'm present, and I'm here for you. And if you need to talk about something, I'm here. I'm here. We don't have to delve into anything other than, I'm present and I am here with you."

Now, the reason I shared this story with Melanie and with Chris is because I followed up with them. I followed up with them a year after and in communicating with Melanie, she's like, "That skill really was the one that changed everything for us. [Because through Observe and Describe, I know now that if I don't know what to say, I can simply do that.](#) And I'm used to it. It helped us open our communication up with each other. We were able to communicate more."

And in the other part is, she felt like she could only do it if she put her phone down or if she was paying attention to what he was doing, which in turn helped her notice him and his behaviors. It helped her focus in and remove the distractions that usually surround parents and our busy lives and everything that needs to be done.

In talking to Melanie, this was the skill that helped her, that really helped her be present in the here and now. Helped her know exactly how to engage and interact with her child. And then also was the introduction to additional skills that she was able to implement, that had parts of Observe and Describe in it.

Later on, in this podcast series, we're going to talk about combining some of these skills, because remember, all the skills are tools, and you can use tools in different ways. They're not the same tool, but you can get a lot of leverage in different tools when you combine them. When your toolbox is full as a parent. So we're going to talk more about that, later on.

But for now, I want you to focus on Observe and Describe. I want you to be able to do that any time, anywhere, with anyone. You can even do it with a cashier, or you may be walking into a store to buy something you can use, Observe and Describe. It communicates something very powerful. I'm present, I see you, I notice you. Much the way that I felt during the Garth Brooks concert at the end, these are the types of emotions we want to cultivate with our children. We

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

want to help them feel and help them understand and help implement. And in turn, they will feed us.

[Once we take the time to plant these seeds, you're going to find that you're going to reap a whole lot of harvest from it because your children are going to be able to reciprocate this with you. Super, super powerful skill. So that's my challenge to you.](#)

My second challenge to you is to come back next week as we introduce more of the offerings at Smarter Parenting that are really going to help you as a parent. Wherever you may be on your spectrum of parenting. We've done so much parenting during this pandemic. I mean, a lot of parents have really done so much more parenting than we anticipated at the beginning of the year. And we need to up the game. We need to continually up what we're doing in improving things for our children.

This will help you in your relationship with your child. It'll help with your relationship with other people. It will improve behaviors in your child's schoolwork, whether or not they're at school, or whether they're at home doing distant learning. This will help them engage with your parents, with your in-laws, because it helps your children learn the social skills necessary to be successful.

So let's start with Observe and Describe let's build from there. Build. Let's get this tool. Let's know how to use it, how we can wield it, and how we can get the maximum out of it, and then we'll add additional tools to your toolbox. So, so many things, so many exciting things happening at Smarter Parenting. I am bursting at the seams to share it all with you. So those are the things that I want you to practice this week. Tune in next week, and if you want to sign up for coaching, and you have questions, jump over to the Smarter Parenting website and just log in. Sign up for some coaching. And let's talk. Let's individualize this to your specific situation because that's why I'm here. That's it for me, and I'll see you again next time. All right, bye.

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[Ep #47: Mastering Observe and Describe](#)

[Ep #11: What is the Teaching-Family Model?](#)

RESOURCES

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