

Episode 2. Manners

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

sign, sign language, parenting, feelings, manners, kids, people, child, work, reminding, interrupt, implement, day, talk, podcast, hand, raising, babies, polite, payoff

SPEAKERS

Deana Thayer, Future Focused Parenting, Kira Dorrian

-
- K** Kira Dorrian 00:03
What happens when two parent coaches, one a Christian and the other an agnostic Jew, sit down to talk about parenting?
 - D** Deana Thayer 00:09
I'm Deana Thayer
 - K** Kira Dorrian 00:10
and I'm Kira Dorrian.
 - D** Deana Thayer 00:11
Welcome to Raising Adults, a podcast about Future Focused Parenting.
 - K** Kira Dorrian 00:15
This episode of raising adults is brought to you by apainfreelifestyle.com. If pain is preventing you from enjoying time with your family allow Courtney with A Pain Free Lifestyle to help. Courtney specializes in getting people out of acute and chronic pain through corrective exercise from the comfort of their own home. Mention the podcast and

get 20% off your treatment plan. Okay, so today we're going to talk about manners and how each of us approached that as we were future focused in our parenting. So let's start. Deana, why don't you talk a little bit about why manners were important to you.

D

Deana Thayer 00:50

Yeah, and you're going to be hearing that really from us every time because the whole point of Raising Adults is that you have to know the why behind the what.

K

Kira Dorrian 00:59

Yeah.

D

Deana Thayer 01:00

I didn't create this saying, so I can't take credit for it. But I love it. It's that if you have a strong enough why you can tolerate almost any how. And for me when I was in the trenches of trying to maybe train on something that was difficult or felt like all I was doing was redirecting behavior all day, coming back to my why was huge. And that's going to be a real focal point, I think of everything we talk about. So in terms of manners, of course, coming at the perspective of where we are as a faith based family, it was a huge deal to us that we interact in a way that is loving to people that gives them courtesy that respects who they are as people, of course, for us also, we believe people created in God's image, they're hugely important, right? So we're going to be caring about people. That's, that's huge for our family. We are not going to be self centered. And in fact, when we have the opportunity to put others before ourselves, we're going to do that. And one of the things I did is, I was big into communication. I have a speech communication degree. That's my undergraduate degree. And so I'm really passionate about communicating well. And I know from, by that time, from some of my work in early childhood development and doing the birth classes and just infant stuff, that babies don't have that vocal acuity, but they do get hand dexterity first. So that was how the idea to do sign language came. And I had learned a little bit about that, and chose to sign with my kiddos. And that was our first exposure to manners, I taught them the signs for please and thank you so that even before they could say it, they could express it. And I will tell you, we used that well into childhood. It was so lovely to be able to be standing across the room, even, from my child while they're opening a gift at a birthday party. And I can just sign thank you and they get the memo to thank their benefactor, those kinds of things. So that was a practical way that we took the why - it's really important to us to be polite, we care about other people - and then that was our how, is in the beginning, right out of the gate, we used sign language. So that's just one example. What about your thoughts?

- K** Kira Dorrian 03:09
Yeah, we were very similar. Sign Language was our first gateway into manners and I actually remember my kids started signing - I signed and signed and signed some more, I mean...
- D** Deana Thayer 03:20
Isn't that the truth?
- K** Kira Dorrian 03:21
I knew all the signs, I could sign all of I am a Bunny, like, start to finish in sign language and my children did nothing. And then I gave up. I gave up right around their first birthday. I was like, fuck this like, no way. This is a waste of my time. And then like three weeks later, boom, they started signing and...
- D** Deana Thayer 03:38
We should actually tell our listeners that that's super normal.
- K** Kira Dorrian 03:41
Yes. It is. But I didn't know that!
- D** Deana Thayer 03:42
If you, if you've been trying signing and you're signing to your baby and they are not signing back to you take heart, it does happen. And actually, they'll understand the sign long before they'll produce it. So stay the course, stay the course, because they will eventually...
- K** Kira Dorrian 03:48
I did not know that and I was going absolutely nuts.
- D** Deana Thayer 03:58
You waved the white flag of surrender.

K

Kira Dorrian 03:59

Yeah, that's it. But it's such a, I mean, I'm going off topic here again, but it's such a testament to the long game. Right? I mean talk about something that you are putting in all this effort and you are getting nothing back, but personally I feel like the whole first year of, of childhood is kind of like that, like you're putting in so much and you're not getting that much back and and parenting is the long game like now I get so much back now that my kids are older. But anyway, so yes, I signed and signed and signed, I gave up, they started signing, and it was one of the first things I was like, great ,you can sign. We are learning please and thank you. And for me one of the things that I was very purposeful about was I didn't want them to just, just say those things, I wanted them to understand why they were saying those things.

D

Deana Thayer 04:45

What does that mean?

K

Kira Dorrian 04:46

What does it mean? So I would say things like you know, if someone gives you a compliment, it makes you feel good. And so we want to say thank you that someone made you feel good. So initially there was a lot of like, me jabbering on at them about why we say thank you for something. Or if you're asking somebody for something, they're taking their time to do something nice for you. We want to be polite and acknowledge that, and so we say please. So we taught please and thank you which, to our listeners, looks nothing like please and thank you. I don't know about your kids, but my kids signs, it was sort of like, you know, when you hear them when they start talking, and you know what they're saying, but no one else knows what they're saying.

D

Deana Thayer 05:24

The Mom interpreter

K

Kira Dorrian 05:25

Yeah, exactly. So our signs were hilarious. Like my kids, thank you is usually like a hand coming from the mouth down. And my kids would put their hand on their head, like they'd slap their hand to their head. It was a super cute, but anyway. And so we actually played a little game because my son loved DVDs, like just loved the cases and pulling them off of a shelf. This was like his favorite activity. So I would sit in front of the DVDs and I would make

him say please, and then I would pass him a DVD, and then I would make him say thank you, and we would just play this game over and over and over again. And then they caught on.

D

Deana Thayer 06:02

Such a great way to do it too. You have to do that reinforcement.

K

Kira Dorrian 06:05

Yeah. And it has to be fun. Right?

D

Deana Thayer 06:06

It does. Something he already likes doing...

K

Kira Dorrian 06:08

Exactly.

D

Deana Thayer 06:08

Attach the sign language to it. And I want to say too, because you mentioned this and I love it, just so the listeners know as well, that approximations of signs are absolutely great and normal and babies often at first will do a version of the sign that isn't exact, which is a-okay, because they'll get there.

K

Kira Dorrian 06:25

Yeah, I always thought, the sign for water is like you make a W with your fingers. I was like, what one year old can make a W with the, I mean, they're never gonna look like that.

D

Deana Thayer 06:34

Actually, a lot of them end up doing what ends up being the sign for wine, which is hilarious. But...there's so many things that can just go slightly wrong with that, but they're cute because they're babies.

K

Kira Dorrian 06:45

Yeah, exactly. I love it. And so yeah, so we played this little game and I taught them please and thank you and similar to you. I may have even gotten this from you. I still use it to remind for thank you. My daughter never needs reminding, but my son does sometimes, but I also will use it if they're doing something they shouldn't be doing. And I'll use the sign for no thank you...to be able to sort of discipline them privately so that they're not getting embarrassed. But they, I can send my message.

D

Deana Thayer 07:14

I love that. And we did that a lot too. We we used wait a lot. If I was in a more public setting where they were getting impatient or maybe starting to fuss, I could just do the sign for wait and it didn't engage us in any kind of struggle for power or control. And the other nice thing is, like you mentioned, just, just a really quiet redirection, that maintains their dignity. So you're not having to call them out in front, possibly in front of people or in a public setting. You can just let them know, you know, no thank you. We also would sometimes use the sign for stop if there was something they were doing that I needed to just cease. I didn't want to make a scene and another great pro tip right here is we loved it for avoiding that horrible moment in the restaurant when you'd like the floor to open up and swallow you because your child just said I have to poop. So we also taught them the sign for toilet. And just had them do that anytime we were in public so that we knew they needed to go to the restroom, but could avoid that festive...

K

Kira Dorrian 08:20

right? Well, and again...

D

Deana Thayer 08:21

...moment of embarrassment.

K

Kira Dorrian 08:22

...again, that's manners, right?

D

Deana Thayer 08:23

It is.

K

Kira Dorrian 08:24

Creating a polite way of communicating in the world because our world really does still revolve around this. I think it's fading a little bit. Yeah, but, but I think that it is still noticed and appreciated when people are polite. And that also again, back to this idea of we are raising adults. What kind of adult do I want to contribute to the world? I want an adult that knows how to say please and thank you. I want an adult that can send a thank you note. I want an adult that you know doesn't announce that they have to poop in the middle...you know, not that anyone does, but you know what I'm saying.

D

Deana Thayer 08:55

But that wouldn't be socially acceptable.

K

Kira Dorrian 08:58

So yeah, I completely agree. I guess sign language for both of us, that was a huge way of implementing these, these different, these different things. How did you, did you use manners...so putting sign to the side once you then kind of transitioned into, okay, my kids can talk, you know, what, what kinds of things did you do around manners?

D

Deana Thayer 09:20

Right. Well, actually pretty similar to you. We, when they were able to handle a little more rationale and background, we spent time explaining the why. So again, coming back to that why behind the what, and talking to them about again, it was with an others focus. So once they could talk and could say, please, thank you, those kinds of things, politely ask to do something, knew how to politely even ask me to change my mind. If I had maybe given an instruction we taught them a "polite appeal" is what we called it, mommy may I please appeal. And we always talked about the why so with the manners, a big one I loved that you said you know, it makes you feel good when someone gives you a compliment. We're gonna thank them. You gave me a good feeling.

K

Kira Dorrian 10:03

Yeah.

D

Deana Thayer 10:04

And so we talked about otherwise around that with gift giving was a big one. Even, we

talked so much about even if you open it and you know, inside, it wasn't really what you were hoping for, or you already have one, that that person spent their time and resources to go out and they were thinking of you and they chose you something and it is the right thing to do to thank them for that energy and effort they put forth, regardless of whether the gift brings you inherent joy. It's really again, it's about the other and how can we honor that so we talked a lot about that once they had that verbal skill. Then we got really more into the why so that they could make it an ongoing habit and not just once the sign dropped, oh also so did the manners we didn't want that to happen, right?

K

Kira Dorrian 10:45

I love that. I love that. We do, back to the waiting thing. So we, I don't know if you've heard of this or if you've even seen my kids do this, but they, if they want to interrupt if I'm having a conversation, one of the manners that was really important to me was this idea of politely interrupting. I appreciate you're a kid, I appreciate you need my attention. But you also need to learn how to navigate that and be patient and wait. So my kids put their hand, I did not come up with this. I'm just going to tell you all that I read this in an amazing blog, but they put their hand on my arm. And then I put my hand on their hand to let them know that I know they're waiting. And I think with all of these things, though, one of the things I want to talk about, is that what it like, what it looks like to implement this, because what a great idea, isn't that a great idea? Wouldn't it be nice if that worked the first time, but it doesn't, it works like the 50th time.

D

Deana Thayer 10:58

Absolutely.

K

Kira Dorrian 11:05

And so let's talk a little bit about what it was like to implement because I get, I go crazy with these parenting books. I don't know how many you read, but I read like, just too many when I was pregnant...

D

Deana Thayer 11:48

More than I care to admit.

K

Kira Dorrian 11:49

Right. And they're great in theory, like that's such a good idea, but then the actual

implementation is hard.

D

Deana Thayer 11:58

It is hard.

K

Kira Dorrian 11:59

And so one of the best parts I read talks about when you're implementing something new, you don't get to relax for three days. That was her view. And this worked really well for us that there's a three day learning curve for kids. And so the first day is the hardest, because you literally have to redirect, redirect, redirect, right, it's your entire focus for the day. So you want to implement something new on a day where you can handle that, not on a day where you're running around doing errands, not on a day where someone's coming for dinner, implement it on a day where you have the bandwidth to be completely focused on teaching please and thank you, or be completely focused on every time they try and interrupt me, I am going to prioritize reminding them to put their hand on my arm, reminding them to wait, right and that's going to suck, but being willing to focus on that. And then she talked about that the second day, it gets a little better. And by the third day, usually it's resolved. And we have found that to be true in parenthood that if we kind of focus on those three days, that oftentimes by that third day, the kids have got it, like, they've started to figure it out.

D

Deana Thayer 13:02

Yeah, it's so interesting. We did that, too. We called it the interrupt rule. And it didn't necessarily have to be my arm, but they put a hand on me- on my leg, my arm, something - and I put the hand back over theirs. That's like I notice you, I acknowledge you, I'll be right with you. And I also love that you mentioned the three day rule because even with my sleep consulting clients, if they're gonna do what I call the rip the band aid off approach, and really try to get baby on some kind of a routine, I always tell them, you can probably expect three rough nights but no more. Because if you're really committed to it, most things with kiddos don't take longer than that. And there's actually even research behind that just in terms of their rhythms. Adults, you've probably heard, everybody's heard. You know, it takes about 21 days to create a habit. Kids have a quicker uptick, they can really on ramp pretty fast with things. But it does mean in the moment, you're focusing almost entirely on that. It was the same way for us, which I'm sure we'll talk about in a future one with our house proofing are babies.

K

Kira Dorrian 14:00

Right?

D

Deana Thayer 14:00

So that took a lot of focus too... walking up the stairs after baby every single time and following them back down. I mean, tiring, but payoffs are later. And with the interrupt rule, I just wanted to say another really helpful thing when you're in the trenches of that if you, if you listen to this and you find yourself thinking I'd like to try that. Really don't despair, even if you haven't implemented while they're toddlers, they can pick it up even as young grade schoolers, I'd say and even a little bit older, and it just means that probably for the first day, every time you're reminding, you're saying, oh, we actually put our hand on Mommy, and then you'll feel my hand, that lets lets you know that I know you're there. And then I need you to wait. And reminding, reminding, reminding. So I actually did combine it at least at first with verbal reminders until we could just have that beautiful silent hand, hand, wait. And so for, for a good, I think we usually would pick to do these things on a weekend. It just meant that then both partners were on point, not somebody having to rush off and go to work, both of us can be saying, really also showing, hey, look, we're a united front here, we're both on the same page. If you come to talk to daddy, you're going to get the same. Yeah, situation. Right. So that was really important. And so I did, I don't know about you, but I did back it up with explaining what we're doing a lot. I mean, I would say dozens of times at first that first day, day and a half.

K

Kira Dorrian 15:20

And I think that's the how that you're talking about right? So you know, your why, your why is I want to be able to finish a conversation. I want to teach my children to interrupt politely. And for me, it was always and you know, I want them to be seen by this world that's judging them from day one as the polite children and the lovely children that I know they are. So that's the, that's the why. The how, like you said, sometimes you have to tolerate a pretty nasty how, and so that's the how right is like, oh man, I'm gonna have like three days of this nonsense. And I'm gonna have to be totally focused on that but the payoff is so huge.

D

Deana Thayer 15:56

Well, and again, that's why you go back to the why; it helps you when you're in that, you remember, oh, this is going to be so worth it when they are seen as those polite kids and when they have a skill to be able to interrupt politely, but I also think part of the why also

is for them, to give them, you have a way to get to your parent, you're never going to be just ignored or pushed aside, you have a way to get to me. But you may need to sometimes wait a little bit while I wrap up that sentence or finish that thought.

K

Kira Dorrian 16:23

Right. Exactly, and they feel honored and acknowledged. You know, when you, when you put the hand on, you're saying I see you, I acknowledge that you need me. That's half of what they need is just to know mom's coming right, she's gonna be there. And yeah, I think that where, where it can be really hard is the when we, when we jump into feeling like I just have to, I just have to fix it. And if I can't fix it, well fuck it. Right because it's so hard and I'm just trying to survive. And and I get that I really, I really do. And I think that that's where a lot of parents they give up kind of like I did with the sign right. I'm like I've been doing this over and over and over again. Forget it, forget it. I'm all done. But this perseverance, I think the more you put into it and keeping your eye on that long game, it does it makes those days where you're like, oh my gosh, here we are, again. It makes those days a little bit easier to weather if you can see the payoff.

D

Deana Thayer 17:17

That's right. And if you're having a day where you already wonder is this day over yet, and it's 9am. Congrats, you're normal, first of all, but I think it is also wise to take a little step back again and get that big picture. Because it might be really hard even maybe into the third day, you might, you might go the distance with a 72 hour hard situation, but really three days in the grand scheme of raising a person for a couple decades? Doable.

K

Kira Dorrian 17:46

Exactly.

D

Deana Thayer 17:47

Easy? No. Doable? Yes.

K

Kira Dorrian 17:49

And worth it.

D

Deana Thayer 17:50

Absolutely.

K

Kira Dorrian 17:50

And worth it. And I also think there's a piece here that I want to talk about because I haven't talked about this yet. Around the feelings that might come up for your child as you're navigating these new things. I used to live in London. I lived in London for a long time. And I definitely want to talk about that at some point in our podcast because it's really interesting when we go back to London to visit my husband's family is all there. The parenting styles there are so different from here. And so one of the things I've noticed this is totally off topic, but worth sharing is that here we are, Dave and I, my husband and I, are seen as like pretty strict parents, like who give a lot of room for feelings, but have pretty high expectations and set really strong boundaries for our kids. In England, we are seen as pushovers. Yeah, people think that we just let our kids walk all over us. And I think it's the feelings aspect. Like the the sort of emotional intelligence stuff hasn't, hasn't quite crossed the pond yet. Yeah. And so people sort of can't understand why we'll just sit with our kids while they're crying and let them feel their feelings. And so I think they see that as being pushovers. We like to joke that we're super strict. And then we really want to know how our kids feel about that. So there's this, we set these really strong boundaries. But then we also want to allow them all their feelings within those boundaries, because kids are going to push boundaries. And we're going to do a whole podcast on that. I am sure. They're going to push it, and they're going to have feelings about it. But that doesn't mean that it's the wrong choice. And I think that's where parents can sometimes give up as well if they're like, oh, this is really upsetting my child. Like, they really don't. This isn't working.

D

Deana Thayer 19:33

Right. You wanna throw in the towel.

K

Kira Dorrian 19:34

Right. And I remember someone said to me once when my kids were really small, like, if your kids wanted to play with Drano. Would you let them? No. What if they cried and cried and cried about it? What if they were so mad that you wouldn't let them play with the Drano? Would you still let them play with the Drano? Well, no. And she said, that's what boundaries are. They're not gonna like them. Of course, they're not gonna like them, but you set them to keep them safe, you set them to keep them healthy and well, you set them

to set them up for adulthood in society. So it's the same thing. So all that is to say that when you're teaching your child please and thank you, and you refuse to give them the thing until they say, please, or you're teaching them to wait by putting their hand on you, and you're refusing to deal with whatever it is they want to deal with until they have followed the rule. They're going to have some feelings about it. And first and foremost, that's normal. Don't think that that means it's not working. Don't think it means you're a terrible parent, because you've upset your kid. They're gonna be upset about it. Of course they are. But that doesn't mean it's the wrong thing. So then the next part of that, I think, is to allow them those feelings, they're allowed to be upset about it. They're allowed to feel frustrated, and you can honor that I can see that you're frustrated that you can't have my attention right now. I need you to follow the rule, and then you will get my full attention. Right. So acknowledging how they feel leaving room for their feelings, not trying to shut those feelings down. Those two things can coexist. You can set a boundary and allow your children their feelings at the same time.

D

Deana Thayer 21:00

Yeah, they can coexist and even more, and I think you would agree they should coexist, because we don't want to tamp down their feelings around it, even if it means that that boundary does still need to stay there. But the feelings are allowed to be there as well about that. And in fact, for those of you who do have little people, a little window into the future, I can just tell you that when your teenager is having some strong feelings about a particular consequence you've chosen, you probably picked the right one. Because if it doesn't bother them at all, it didn't get to whatever that issue was. And I've really come to see that as I've kind of started navigating these teen waters, that when they're most feisty, or feel really strongly about something. Oh, I probably hit the nail on the head there. Yeah, that really got, it really got to them. Yeah, that was the appropriate loss of privilege or whatever it might be.

K

Kira Dorrian 21:52

Yeah, I think we have to let go of this idea that we are supposed to be their friends. I hope one day I get to be their friend. But right now I'm their mom. Absolutely. And that means, that means sometimes they're not gonna like me and I have to be okay with that, which I'm going to tell you is super hard. Like, I'm not suggesting that's easy. But I think that time and time again, when I'm, when I'm up against a wall, and I have to make a decision between being their mom and being their friend, I will always say, this is one of those times where I don't get to be your friend, I have to be your mom, you know, and that means X, Y, or Z.



Deana Thayer 22:24

Yeah. And you're right back to the whole point right with raising adults is that when you're playing the long game, you're willing to be the parent now so that you can be the friend later. I've sadly seen some people try to circumvent that process. And they work hard to be their child's friend and actually lose the ability to be their friend once they've reached adulthood, because that child has lost some respect for them, frankly. And it's really hard to want to be friends with somebody you don't respect. And so if you try to do that too soon, you can even jeopardize that special opportunity to be your adult child's friend.



Kira Dorrian 22:55

Yeah, absolutely. So we'd like to finish up today's podcast with a thought, and that thought is pick something to give yourself direction. We don't really care what it is. As long as you're headed forward, you're future focused, you're working towards your goal. That's what matters. So for our purposes, however you come at manners whether you're signing or doing something else entirely. Having that eye on the goal, picking something to give yourself direction is going to be the key to raising an adult. Raising Adults is produced by Kira Dorrian and Deana Thayer and recorded in my laundry room. Music by Seattle band Hannalee. If you like what you hear, please give us a five star rating, tell your friends, share it on Facebook and Instagram. It's amazing how much those positive reviews and word of mouth is the key to a successful podcast. So if you like what you hear, give us that five star rating and we can bring you more of it. Thanks for listening.



Future Focused Parenting 23:48

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