

# Episode 11. Grief

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

grieving, grief, parenting, feelings, died, honoring, navigate, feel, mom, kids, experiencing, people, loss, children, kira, dad, dave, big, friends, beautiful

## SPEAKERS

Deana Thayer, Future Focused Parenting, Kira Dorrian

**K** Kira Dorrian 00:04  
What happens when two parent coaches, one a Christian and the other and agnostic Jew, sit down to talk about parenting?

**D** Deana Thayer 00:10  
I'm Deana Thayer,

**K** Kira Dorrian 00:11  
and I'm Kira Dorrian.

**D** Deana Thayer 00:12  
Welcome to Raising Adults, a podcast about Future Focused Parenting. Welcome, everyone. We're excited to be with you again today. And we're tackling kind of a big one. Today we're going to talk about grief and how we handle sharing grief with our children, talking through their feelings around that, and even walking them through the grieving process. But as always, we like to start with our why and our foundation and how we're approaching this. So Kira, can you share a little bit about that?

K

Kira Dorrian 00:40

Yeah, so my why is really a mental health why. And, again, because of the work I do with hypnotherapy, so much of my work is looking at the triggering event that's been causing this problem that they've come in with. And so often that triggering event happens between the ages of two and seven or eight. And it's usually when a parent is unable to see what was traumatic to the child, it's not always an obvious trauma. And they kind of miss it. And it's not a reflection on the parent. You can be it can be an amazing parent and miss a trauma, something that is traumatic through the child's eyes, but not necessarily through the adult's eyes. And so, grief and loss at a very young age is a great example of that, where oftentimes adult parents think, oh, they were too young to be affected by that. And that's not true. And I have seen in my work time and time again, where oh, my grandmother died at that time, or oh, my, my sister died at that time, or, oh, you know, my cousin died or whatever. And that was actually the triggering incident. And because the parents were either wrapped up in their own grief, or really just thought that the child was too young to have any kind of impact, it was missed. And then this issue arose as a result of this being a trauma to the child. And so the why for me was very much around wanting my children to navigate a big bump in the road, which grief is, in a way that was healthy and set them up for future grief experiences. Because unfortunately, we all deal with it. And it's not taught; it's really fascinating. Like, I don't use science ever in my life, because I was really bad at it. I did not need to learn science. But I did need to learn grief. And no one taught me that. So I kind of wish that all children were given a foundation for this. But that's a long winded way of telling you my why.

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Deana Thayer 02:36

But it's so good. And you're right. I love that, again, with the Future Focused Parenting idea that we're so big on, that you address that. Because while they're young they might have their first loss, but we know it certainly won't be their last. And in our home, my kids actually haven't experienced loss of someone close to them yet. So in terms of grief around death, we've only had kind of peripheral experiences with that, which I'm sure I'll get to talk about in a little bit, because that was unique in its own way. But we have had other losses, because they've been through a divorce. They've been through a remarriage, which by the way, for our listeners, that is another loss to the children. It's a gain to the adults, but it's another loss to the children. And we've got to be aware of that. That could be its whole own thing. But we've also had job loss, a lot of moves. Even changing churches is hard if kids are connected in their youth group or have friends there. So we've had some of that. And our approach, of course, is colored by our Christianity, but that really isn't all it is for, for Scott and I, in my marriage. Now, it's also a lot about how do we protect and give a safe space for the things that are going to come up, because they are going to come up and I can tell you with teenagers they come up in very different ways.

For instance, a lot of times sadness actually manifests as anger. So we've had to learn to watch for these different things and we wanted safety for that. Now that isn't to say that our beliefs don't come in at all. Of course they do. When we lose somebody - and my father in law just died two years ago - we, we do have this hope, right, because of our beliefs, we believe we'll see the person again. And there can be talk with our kids about eternity and all these big questions that come out of that. And I think that's great. But I just want to be clear that for us, while that's big, it wasn't the only thing. It was also us as parents creating safety for the thoughts and feelings that arise even out of something like oh, dad isn't working.

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Kira Dorrian 04:25

Right, because grief, we tend to assist associate grief with death, but we grieve all sorts of things. All...any kind of loss can create or change. I mean, it doesn't even have to feel like a loss. You can move to a nicer house that you're really excited to be in and you're still grieving your old neighborhood or you're grieving your old school or whatever it is. So yeah, I think grief is, grief is something we all have to navigate but there's just not enough time spent teaching our kids how to do that.

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Deana Thayer 04:52

That's really true. And you even as unfortunate as it might be - but had some really fortunate aspects to it - had a really cogent example where you got to do this in a really real way and a really raw way. So can you talk a little bit about that and how you helped Rhys and Rhiannon?

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Kira Dorrian 05:09

Yeah. So I'm pretty convinced I'm not going to get through this podcast without crying at some point. So I just need to, like, put that out there to our listeners. And so yeah, when, when Rhys and Rhiannon were 18 months old, my mom was diagnosed with a weird type of ovarian cancer. And Dave and I had sort of like, just found our footing with two babies at the same time. And so that was a really, it was pretty terrible timing. Not that there's ever good timing for something like that. But um, so my mom was diagnosed when they were 18 months old, and she passed away two years later. So she's been gone for three years now. And it was a really, it was just such a, I mean, it's an understatement of the century, but like, it was such a difficult time. And I was so aware that this thing that was so about me, right, I'm an only child, I was the only person out of everyone who was grieving the way that I was grieving. My parents were divorced. And my father who is just the most epic example of true love and unconditional love. So my parents were divorced, but my

mom, when she got sick actually moved in with my dad, and he cared for her until she died, which I just think is incredible. And talk about, talk about fulfilling those vows, even if you don't choose to be married anymore. But you know, so my dad wasn't grieving her in the same way that I was. My husband certainly wasn't; my kids weren't. So I was really the only one experiencing this loss this way. And yet, I had two very little kids. I mean, my kids were three and a half when she died. So I was super aware that I didn't get to stop being a mom. I didn't get to just feel my feelings and fall apart. I still had to be a mom and show up. And I was also really aware that that meant that my kids were going to experience some distance from me because I was going to be sad or need space or check out. That was my biggest fear was that I was just going to go numb and check out. And that they were so little they wouldn't understand why and kids at that age are so narcissistic. And I don't mean that in a bad way. They're, they're very self focused. So at that age, something like that makes them think they did something wrong. So I was trying to piece together all this, all this stuff like, okay, so how do I feel my feelings? How do I process my own grief? How do I continue to be a mom? How do I help my kids process their grief because on some level, I mean, they were very close with my mom. They saw her every week. So on some level, they were going to have an absence that they would be aware of in some way. And so all of it kind of came together in this perfect storm that was going to create a trauma that they were never going to understand when they were older. It's not like when they were older, they'd be super aware that hey, there's this scar that I know exists for this reason, right? And so it became kind of pulling apart, okay, let's look at each of these pieces and figure out how do I get what I need? How do I give them what they need? And so we were very fortunate that we stumbled on a program here in Seattle that offers grief counseling for children who are going through death, specific to death. It's totally free. And so we had a counselor who actually came to our home and worked with the kids prior to my mom's passing, to set them up for this is going to happen, and what's that going to be like? And she did a lot of art-based therapy and art-based play. But she was also a huge coach to us, to teach us. How do you talk to a three year old about death? And how do you explain to them what's going on? And so it was like, I felt like I was living two lives a little bit because I was so, so trying to deal with my own and going to my own therapist and being present for my mom, and it was just a very complicated time. And then of course we add to it the absence of faith or spirituality in our home. You know, my husband's a Christian. My dad's an atheist. I'm an agnostic Jew. So it's all very complicated. And, and so it also became okay, well, how do we have conversations with these children about what's going to happen? Because of course, they're going to ask, Well, where is she gonna go? Why would this happen? I mean, all those usual questions that we had to figure out how to honor everyone's viewpoint in the house, which was tricky.

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Deana Thayer 05:56

That's a tall order.

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Kira Dorrian 06:39

Yeah. So we had to get pretty creative. First and foremost, I would say that our how was very much about starting with what they could expect and what was normal, and really giving a ton of room for feelings. So I remember a really good example of this was the day my mom died, it was pretty clear she was going to pass that day. And so when we left for the day, we had told the kids - they called her Bubbie - so we had told the kids you know, Bubbie, Bubbie's probably gonna die today. And one of the things that counselor had said, is use the word die. Don't say pass away. You know, don't say she's sick. She has cancer. Because you don't want to confuse them at that little age. Sick could mean a cold. If I get a cold, am I going to die? Right, passed away? What does that mean? Right? She said we, and I think you said this at some point as well, that we grossly underestimate what children can handle. So she said, use the word died, you want to use the words die, death, died, cancer, you know, don't shy away from some of these big words. So we had said to them, you know, that Bubbie's probably going to die today. And that when we get home, Mommy is going to be feeling some super big feelings. And none of that is about you. And what was really important to me was I didn't want them to feel like they were supposed to make it better. Because I think our culture is really bad at that. They are really, really, really terrible. Like, can we please pretty this up and put a bow on it? So can I say this positive thing to you that's going to make the fact that your mom died better? It's not, it's not gonna make it better. And I think the people who are most comforting in times of grief are actually the people who sit in it with you, that just show up and are present and aren't trying to fix it or change it or make it better, or give you hope or anything like that. They're just willing to say, you know what, that really sucks. And I'm right here, sitting in the suck with you, you know, so I wanted them to know that it wasn't their job to make me feel better. So we said, you know, Bubbie's probably gonna die today. And when mommy comes home, she's gonna have some really big feelings. And you're probably going to see her cry. And that's not about you. It's just because she loves Bubbie and she's gonna miss her. And your job isn't to make her feel better. Your job is to help her be with her feelings. So the people who took care of them, my best friend and her mother who's like a surrogate mom to me, came and watched the kids while we went to the hospital. And so we said to them, can you guys come up with something that they can do when I get home that's them helping me be with my feelings? So that they have a job and they feel they're participating, but in a way that doesn't put responsibility on them to fix the problem or make it better. So one of the things that they came up with was that the kids, we had a big beautiful rosebush in our backyard at that house that we lived in at that time, and so the kids picked roses, to give me to surround me with something beautiful while I felt my

feelings, which was just so lovely, and they had a job and it was, it was really lovely and comforting. And, and, you know, we taught them, it's, you know, you're going to want to offer hugs and kisses. But you don't need to say anything, you don't need to try and make it better. Just love on her and let her, let her be with those feelings. And so that was huge. That was a really big, a big part of it all. And then of course, allowing them to feel all their feelings. And so in our house, because my mother was Jewish, and I sort of identify that way, we sat shivah, which is a one week event basically where you open up your home, and people bring food. The idea is that the grieving family doesn't have to do anything. You cover your mirrors, you don't wear makeup, you're not supposed to care about your appearance, you're not supposed to shower. I totally showered. And so we sat shivah for a week. And of course, so the kids had people in their house for a week, which was I'm sure very overwhelming. And so setting up an explanation of you know, we do this as a way of honoring Bubbie. If you get overwhelmed, here's your safe grown up who can take you out of the house, they always had a grown up that wasn't me that they could go to and find at any time and say, I need you to take me away or downstairs or whatever the case may be. And so just giving them, giving them some space around that. And then you know, sometimes they felt feelings, it was amazing, you know, they can't express it at three and a half the way that you or I could, or even my seven year olds would be able to express it now. But they definitely, you know, there were meltdowns at, at times that you wouldn't expect a meltdown. And so for me part of it was also being cognizant of what I was seeing and that was really hard because I'm now navigating my own way. And they're melting down. And I didn't always have the bandwidth, but just really trying to show up for that, like, this is them grieving and I have to, have to show up. It's, it's that Future Focused Parenting like, as much as I, as much as I wanted that time to be about me, it just couldn't be. It just couldn't be fully about me because I had these two people that in many ways it was going to impact harder, because there were so many facets. There's the loss itself, the loss of Mommy as she's experiencing her grief, the change in dynamic in the household, and, you know, as we've got all these people coming in, and so that was huge. And then in terms of how we chose to talk about it with them, you know, we picked, we picked friendly terms. So for me, the big thing was, I am not personally convinced one way or the other, that there's an afterlife, that there's a God. I mean, I call myself God leaning because I tend to, I tend to believe that there is and I tend to want to connect with that. But I I couldn't tell you that's my truth and I know it to be true. I live in a very agnostic place of like, well, it might be, it might not be. So I felt like I didn't want to give the kids something just for comfort. And that's what, it wouldn't have been authentic. Right? Does that make sense? So I didn't feel it was appropriate for me to tell them well, there's heaven, when I don't necessarily believe that. I felt it was totally appropriate for my husband to communicate about it that way, because that was authentic for him. And then of course, my dad's an atheist, so he was like, I don't believe in any of it. It's all just gonna go dark, which I was like, maybe, maybe we don't need to share that exactly. So there was this, we

kind of came to this place where we called it the next place. My friend Lynn gave us this beautiful book called the next place that essentially is talking about heaven without calling it heaven and without a mention of God. So it was very much about the next place that I go is going to be beautiful. I can be fully myself. I'm neither male nor female. I'm one with the world. I mean, it was just beautiful. And that really resonated. So we decided we're going to call it the next place and everyone could kind of get on board with that, right? Like my husband to him, that meant heaven, but he could call it the next place. For me that felt like I, I definitely believe that there's something. I don't, I don't subscribe to the blackout theory. So that kind of resonated with like, okay, I think there's something positive on the other side of this. And then my dad just sort of for the sake of the family jumped on the bandwagon. He was really good about it. You know, he just, he wanted more than anything for the kids to come out of it healthy and happy. So he was really willing to engage in any way that we saw it. And so we called it the next place. And there's some great books for kids out there about grief. One is I Miss You. One is How Do Dinosaurs Die. And the other one is Water Bugs and Dragonflies, which is just beautiful. And all of them talk about the process of death. What it means when our bodies shut down. Like, I Miss You, for example, talks about the different ways that people die. So there's people who die of old age, there's people who die because they get some kind of disease. And then there's people who die suddenly and tragically. And I just love that. And it's very matter of fact, again, like the overall consensus seems to be, just speak the truth, they can handle it. So that was, you know, something that we sort of, we kind of gave them a framework of like, well, this is what mommy thinks, this is what daddy thinks. What do you think? We did a lot of that. What do you think based on that information? What do you hope? That was the other thing. We talked a lot about hope because I didn't feel comfortable saying this is, this is the truth or this is what I believe. I talked a lot about, you know, I really hope I get to see her again. That would be so wonderful. I really hope in some way we connect again. And then we found ways for her, for them to connect to her so they had like a little toy phone that they could call Bubbie on. They have a special toy that they bought on the day that she died that they can snuggle and they still to this day will say they miss her, express sadness around it or ask questions. They're in that very age appropriate phase right now of what happens if you die, mom? So we're having to talk through a lot of that. But the main thing for us was really feel your feelings. They're all really valid. The normalizing of... this is a grieving process, and mommy's not going to feel better tomorrow or next week or next year, right? This is going to be a process, and then creating a framework where they could kind of begin to dip into what are some of the different ideas around death out there, and begin to develop their own opinions.

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Deana Thayer 18:24

Yeah, there's so much there. It's really multifaceted. It's really complex. There's a lot of

layers. But something that might be a little bit of a side issue but was really beautiful and I think would be great for our listeners, because they know we are coming from some different spots, is this event actually gave us both some experiences with seeing what was lovely about each other's culture and beliefs and, and in a way that was really non-threatening. So you mentioned that you sat shivah and that was not an experience that I had had before. But it was really important to me - because by then we had been friends for several years - that I'm somehow just alongside you sending this message, I'm going to walk alongside you, even though I know I don't get it, I still have my mom. And so I came. And it was just really special not only for me to see you and get to just kind of love on you in this quiet way. But I want to really commend you and your friends and your neighbors who were there. Because I also really got to see this unique aspect of your culture. And I know you've said you identify there culturally, not necessarily spiritually, but I got to see that and I was also invited to participate, but at the level of my own comfort, so nobody asked me to read anything. Nobody asked me to say anything, but I was able to be present and it wasn't like oh, now we're at this more formal part. So you're not Jewish, you need to go. And I never forgot that because I felt really included and valued and almost that there was the unspoken message that this is okay. Kira's friend is here and she's staying while we do this part, and there wasn't even anything about it, it was so normalized for me. And I just wanted to thank you again, because I got that beautiful peek into that culture and got a window into it without ever feeling marginalized in the least. It was really beautiful actually to get to sit in that. And I think some of the things that are hardest in life are actually also the most beautiful. So that was a really, really fascinating viewpoint for me, and I was glad to be able to, to witness it.

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Kira Dorrian 20:37

Yeah, I think for a lot of people, it was their first shivah. And I mean, Jews, you got to give Jews some credit. Like, first of all, they know how to party, like, we know how to have a wedding and a bar mitzvah. And then, I mean, we go up on chairs, I mean, like, we we're party people. We also really know how to grieve, and one of the things I love about the Jewish culture is so you wear, you either, you're supposed to rip your clothing the moment that you find out someone has passed. But a lot of us, a lot of us modern Jews, rip a piece of black fabric and then you wear the ripped fabric with a pin on your, over your heart. And where you place it is dependent on who you, whom you've lost. But then there's also rules about how long you wear it. So for losing a parent, I believe you're in mourning for a year, or 11 months. And you wear the ripped fabric for a month, and I always saw that ripped fabric as a way of saying to the world, I'm not okay. Like just a gentle, like, something's not quite right over my heart right now. And I mean, most non Jews wouldn't know what it was, but that other Jews would. And that felt like just a really great way of, of just acknowledging that I wasn't okay, I couldn't just go back to work. I couldn't, you

know, we have again in our Western culture, this idea that like oh, it's been three days; you over that now? And of course, that's not how it works. So it is, it is a beautiful part of the culture of the shivah and I was so glad that you were there and that you brought Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, which were - and are - my favorite candy. And so Deana Deana knew exactly what to do.

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Deana Thayer 22:09

And Kira, you had recently embarked on the no sugar, right?

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Kira Dorrian 22:12

But then my mom died. And I was like, well, whatever, all bets are off.

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Deana Thayer 22:15

There's, you know, there are times for sugar. I felt like this was one of them. I'm glad you were okay with that.

K

Kira Dorrian 22:21

Absolutely. And that was the other thing. I remember going into the grieving process myself thinking, I need to get through this without becoming addicted to something, or gaining 100 pounds. And I was like, if I can do that, then I will have done a pretty good job of surviving the grieving process in a healthy way. That was sort of my attitude. So it was like, you know, a Reese's Peanut Butter cup? I'm gonna go ahead and eat that, because that tasted good. So it's like, what about you? Because I think you have had to navigate a lot of grief without it being death specific. Yeah, what's that look like for your family? And I'm curious how faith has played a role because I actually think it was one of the hardest parts for us was, it would have been so nice to have that framework. I can understand and really appreciate the beauty of having a faith based framework to navigate that territory.

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Deana Thayer 23:13

It is, it is helpful. And I think, again, I love that you've talked about the authenticity, because if it wouldn't feel authentic, I think it can sound almost kind of chintzy and cheap to just throw that out there. Well, you'll see them again. Please don't say that to someone who just lost somebody. But I will say if you really do believe it, if it really is your paradigm, it's, it brings a whole level of comfort, but also hope, because you don't quite go to this level of despair. Doesn't mean we don't question. My husband actually went through a

season of saying he was pretty angry at God. And the cool thing is where we sit, that's fine. God could take that. That's fine. That doesn't threaten him at all. And he was really mad. He felt he'd really been robbed. His dad was only 69. That is young. And I felt pretty robbed. I'd only gotten to know him for five years because I came in on the scene late as the second wife. Right? So that was really hard. And there were a lot of feelings. But there's this underlying, it's similar actually, for me into the why and the foundation. I'm into having a foundation. My foundation with Scott is my commitment. So my feelings might ebb and flow, but my commitment to him is that foundation or my feelings about my kids and frustrations might ebb and flow, but that foundation and the why of Raising Adults is there and this was really similar. The foundational belief that we have that there is an afterlife, that we'll see our loved ones again, and that we can trust that while we're feeling yucky, God's got us, was really comforting. I do want to speak just for a minute though, about being the partner of someone grieving because that was really new for me when my husband lost his dad, I felt that I was navigating a very strange water. And I wasn't grieving the same as him, of course, because it wasn't my parent. And I may have been even - and I would say I was - even more removed because I'd only known him for five years. It's a second marriage for us. It's not like we've been married for 20 years, and now parents are starting to pass away. It was five years in, and here you go. And there was a real learning curve there. I was very thankful to have you in my world at that time to also lend me some advice on how you had helped Dave navigate, and what was helpful that he did. What maybe wasn't so helpful, so that I could learn from some of those things. But I will say if you have somebody close to you and a loved one that's grieving, your role in supporting them is really important too. And it doesn't mean you're not going to have feelings and you're not grieving. But that presence is a big deal. I know. I can't count how many times it just mattered to Scott that I would just come sit by him. And particularly for him, he didn't always want to chat about it. And, and so presence was really big, but also to not be afraid to ask, because he may actually want to talk about it. And I'll never know if I don't say, how are you doing? Do you want to chat? Do you... anything that is just on your mind? How are you feeling today? Even, even comparatively, sometimes I would say, how has this week been compared to last week? And he might say it's actually worse. The passage of time doesn't necessarily... it's not linear. We learned that in a hurry. And so I think being alongside of a grieving spouse is also something in itself. And as we're raising our kids, that's something to pay attention to, because I had to have my teenagers seeing me come alongside and get to demonstrate this example of our couplehood and our relationship, and how do I love him well. And also take good care of my stepkids who'd just lost a grandparent, leave room for them to talk about it. Although teenagers also are, in general, you never want to make that sweeping generalization. But in general, they're not going to have these long heart to hearts necessarily, but they need room to just be sad or be mad, go up to their room and slam the door. And so I would say that if you're a peripheral person who maybe the grief isn't as directly affecting you, it doesn't mean

you're not important. In fact, your ability to support that grieving person is ....really almost can't be understated.

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Kira Dorrian 27:30

No, and you have the hardest job of all honestly, because it's really... as the grieving person, you have this awesome card like, yeah, I don't want to cook dinner. My mom died. Yeah, I'm just gonna yell at you. I'm so mad. Because it's funny, you said about, on one of our episodes about how with teenagers oftentimes, instead of sadness, you get anger. I must be a teenager because that's me. Like I think sadness scares me. Sadness is a scary thing that exists within my body and anger goes out. It gets out. And so I tend to get angry instead of getting sad. And so you know, but hey, I could get... my mom died, I'm just gonna yell at you. I'm just gonna yell at you because my mom died. Whereas as the partner, you just have to like, take that number one, and give so much grace for that person who's just been through this thing. And you're trying to support them and figure out what they need and it means you have to be vulnerable. Like you said, like, I have to ask and be willing to be shot down because that's not what he needs, because he actually needs me to ask, right, and that is really tricky. And I know for Dave, one of the biggest issues we had is you know, Dave comes from, he's from England, and which we will talk about at some point. And that's a whole other culture, and England is a stiff upper lip, brush it under the rug kind of culture, and man, he had a steep and fast learning curve about how to navigate Kira Dorrian grieving cycle, which was all emotions and all feeling feelings, and sharing feelings, and wanting to talk about feelings and process feelings. You just watch Dave like, up against a wall, you know, kind of like smacked down by all these feelings. He's never seen so many feelings in all his life. And on top of that, wanting and, and needing to continue to parent our children in the way that I as a mental health professional wanted them to be parented through this. And he'd never done any of that. So huge credit to my husband who really showed up for that. I mean, he crushed it. And having to navigate all that, I think, as the partner is, is so, so challenging if you, especially if you haven't walked that path before.

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Deana Thayer 29:31

Absolutely. And it is interesting that you have a house with a bunch of belief systems. So you also had to kind of, he had a job to do to honor where you were, honor where your dad was, match what you had planned on together in terms of how you were conveying this to the kids. It's just such a tall order, I think for anybody plus, they're sad. So even if it's not the same, it doesn't mean they have no grief.

K

Kira Dorrian 29:56

No! I mean, he was there when she died. And I mean, it was interesting because when she died Dave was weeping and my dad was weeping. And I actually was completely stoically silent because I just went numb. I mean, exactly what I thought was gonna happen happened. I went numb for months, it took months for me to start feeling anything. And then when I did, I was pissed. I was a super fun person to be around for a little while there. But um, but yeah, I think you know, and I think for Dave, he was so much the primary caregiver for a while there. We were very, very lucky that his, his amazing boss at that time, said, you just take as many weeks as you need. So he was home for three weeks, like not an issue. He got paid. He didn't even have to take a holiday. I mean, nothing, like, it was incredible gift, an incredible gift to our family. But he was the primary caregiver because I was sometimes just in my room, right, completely checked out. And he had to yeah, he I mean, it would have been so easy for him to talk about heaven and God and all these things that he knew wouldn't be honoring me as the person who'd been through this loss. So very, very tricky, but he really handled it very, very well. And the kids I feel like now that we're all these years later, they're just really open minded. That's one of the things I like about our setup is, and it's not to say that you have to have our setup to be open minded. I mean, your kids are extremely open minded as well, which is something I love about your family. But I do see them you know, they, they've just watched the three of us have different opinions, debate about it sometimes in the house, and always with kindness, with acceptance, with a true curiosity. And so whilst I think it could be confusing, I think they've on the whole just seen, Wow, there's lots of different ideas out there, and I get to decide when I'm older. And honestly, if they decide to be Christians when they're older, and they are Christians the way you are, I would be so incredibly proud and happy to watch them do that because they would have come to that from a place of lots of opinions. And this is the one that resonates with them and, and will hopefully treat everyone who is not a Christian in the way that you do right, with this kindness and acceptance and joy and love.

D

Deana Thayer 31:56

Well, maybe you can share because I probably won't get it right. When things happen to you, you remember them. But you said there was something I said, and I think it kind of conveys this too, how I got that peek into your culture and all that beauty. And you got to hear something from me from my perspective.

K

Kira Dorrian 32:10

So we were standing outside of my office, and I can't remember how it came up. But you, you know, you acknowledged the fact that I didn't know if I would see my mom again. And

how hard that must be. And I think you said something like, because I know I'll see my loved ones again. But you don't necessarily believe that. And that must be so hard. And it was beautiful, because it was so honoring of where I was at. Nothing in that sentence conveyed I should know, or have you considered, or you know what would make you feel better? And there was no pressure for me to be anything other than who I was. And there was such an honoring of that truth because it is true, it would have been really lovely. I mean, I would, I said time and time again through that process, I wish. I wish I still believed in a god firmly the way I did years past. I wish because it would have been so much easier to navigate it that way. And so the fact that you were able to see that and honor that without trying to make me somebody I wasn't was so beautiful. Because really it was, at that time, - in the best, most loving possible way - it was a sea of people praying for us, and telling us that God had a plan and all these things that I just, I ended up doing a Facebook post saying, I just need that to stop. Because it in no way resonated with me and certainly not the part of the family that was experiencing the most grief. Right, like great for Dave. Not great for my dad or I...not comforting. What was comforting was people honoring where we were and how, like you said, how hard that must be. And it was, that was really hard. Does that make sense? And so yeah, I just really appreciated that. And I mean, as I've always appreciated the way that you bring your Christianity to our friendship in a way that is just delightful, for lack of a better word, just delightful.

D

Deana Thayer 32:21

Well, it was good that, that happened to us. I mean, I got this amazing look into your world, you got a little peek into where I was coming from. But again, and you've said this even today, it's about keeping kindness at the forefront and not ever having it turn condescending. And I think even for Christians, when it's over and over, we'll pray for you, that can start to just sound like platitudes, and then isn't very helpful. But the big thing today that I think is important that we've hit on is that, even though we've talked actually a lot about how the adults handled it, and what did that look like, that's modeling.

K

Kira Dorrian 34:32

Absolutely.

D

Deana Thayer 34:32

And that is still a huge element of Future Focused Parenting. And so as we deal with hard things that come our way, whether it's job loss, loss of a person, a move, whatever that might be, it's really about modeling that well, and then also doing some active training along the way. So we're really thankful that you all were here to listen to this and to share

some of, even some really vulnerable things today. And just to hear that and hear the heart of that as we try to navigate even hard things with our kids. And, and as always, we of course welcome your feedback and thoughts and even your own stories of how you've handled tough things and how you've navigated that with your own children, or how you walked through it so that you could be a strong model. You're always welcome to drop us comments at [raisingadultspodcast.com](https://raisingadultspodcast.com).



Kira Dorrian 35:19

So we've talked today about grief and how you might be able to think about supporting your children if there is grief happening in the household. And we want to finish today with a great quote by Carol Buchner. She says, they may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel. And so as you begin to navigate that grieving process if you are in your household, thinking about the feelings that your children will be experiencing and the feelings that they will be left with is going to be far important than the things that you say. Your actions are going to speak louder than words. For more information, you can go to [raisingadultspodcast.com](https://raisingadultspodcast.com) or our bigger brand [futurefocusedparenting.com](https://futurefocusedparenting.com). 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 35:27

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