

Episode 31. Caring For Your Relationship with Nancy Owen, Co...

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couples, partner, people, parent, talk, baby, nancy, sex therapist, home, feel, deana, blended families, question, expectations, relationship, common theme, therapist, amplified, parenting style, bit

SPEAKERS

Deana Thayer, Nancy Owen, Future Focused Parenting, Kira Dorrian

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- 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 00:16
Well, hi, everyone. Welcome to today's episode of Raising Adults. Today we have a very

special guest. She is a couples counselor and sex therapist who is absolutely fantastic. And she's going to talk with us about relationships after you have children, but also what you can be doing before you have them and while you're still expecting to prepare for some of the relationship challenges on the other side of having a baby. And I think Deana and I would both agree that you know, having a baby is kind of like taking everything that was not working in your relationship and magnifying it and making it bigger and even harder and even more difficult to deal with because now you're sleep deprived and, and all these other things. So she's going to talk to us about how to solve some of those relationship issues and how to work through them when you're grappling with also having a newborn.

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Deana Thayer 01:04

So smart. So this is Nancy Owen, who we're going to be talking to from Fierce Waterfall, and she's a couples therapist, but also a sex therapist. And all those things end up with issues when you have children, even if your children were on the scene before you were a couple, as in the case with our family, where we're a blended family and the kids actually were there first, which adds all kinds of other fascinating layers. And we've been talking about this offline too. But there's a little bit of a stigma with therapy, I think, where people think, oh, it must mean something's really bad and really about to implode. And, frankly, Scott and I have a therapist at the ready whenever we hit an impasse or a speed bump or just get stuck. And we think it's really positive and it can be a way to be really preventative. It doesn't always have to come as a diagnostic tool after there's already an issue. It can be here, we see this landmine coming. Let's not step in it.

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Kira Dorrian 01:57

Yeah, well talk about being future focused, right. I mean, it's that's same idea of what am I doing now to protect or form or impact how I want things to be later? And actually dealing with issues right then as they're happening is so important. Yeah, David, I have a therapist as well. We've been together 17 years and off and on we have gone to someone when we feel like wow, we're not solving this ourselves, or, you know, wow, we're not our best selves as we try to solve this. Because the great thing about having a third party in the room is like, you just can't be your shitty self you kind of have to pull it together and like, actually listen, and actually make it look like you're making an effort. And as a result, you end up sometimes making a different kind of effort than maybe you were making at home.

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Deana Thayer 02:40

It's so true. Having the objective third party just observing, I think, lends a different layer of accountability. You have to put in the effort and also whether you have great insurance or not, most people are paying at least something for that. So there's a little bit of different skin in the game too. And I think it helps up the ante in a way to say this is really important and if we're choosing to prioritize our couplehood even as we parent, then we want to use this time and money well, and so I just think it's a really smart idea. Everyone should have counseling.

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Kira Dorrian 03:09

Yeah. Oh, absolutely. I mean, as a mental health professional, I'm a fan.

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Deana Thayer 03:12

Yes, please.

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Kira Dorrian 03:13

But I think also, sometimes people are afraid of, you know, airing their dirty laundry like, this is private. This is between us, but I kind of think about, especially since we're in a laundry room, you know, if you have dirty laundry, you don't just let it sit in the hamper and get dirtier. That's nasty, right? You put it in a washing machine whose job is to clean it. And it's kind of a little bit like that, like not being afraid to seek out the tools that you need to make the dirty laundry clean.

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Deana Thayer 03:40

Yes, absolutely. That was a really great analogy.

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Kira Dorrian 03:43

And appropriate for a laundry room recording studio. So let's get to the interview. All right. So we have today with us Nancy Owen from Fierce Waterfall and she is a couples and sex therapist that I have known in a professional capacity and I am so excited she's here today because she is amazing. I have to tell you a little something about Nancy. So I refer to her a lot. I get a lot of people asking that they want to speak with a couples counselor. So I refer to Nancy a lot. And I always get the exact same email after I have referred her and it always says OMG. Nancy is amazing... exclamation point, exclamation point. So this woman is the bomb. I'm so excited that she's here with us today. So Nancy, why don't you start by just telling us a little bit about yourself in your background and the work that

you're doing?

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Nancy Owen 04:33

Wow, that's really kind of nice that you said that. So yes, I'm a therapist, couples and sex therapist. I work in Kirkland out of a private practice office there. I've been a therapist for 25... Let's not go into that, how many years. 25 plus years and I started out working with kids and families years and years ago and community mental health. I did a lot of work with foster care kids who've been taken out of their homes. That kind of stuff. 10 years there, the last 15 or more years I've been focused on completely adults, and certified as a sex therapist and have been doing couples work, I do individual work as well. My passion is relationships, helping people restore relationships after there had been disruptions. I've taught the bringing baby home class, John Gottman's work if you know that work. And that was kind of my connection to postpartum stuff. So I've done a lot of work with people postpartum as well.

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Kira Dorrian 05:33

Fantastic. So let's just go in chronological order. So let's talk prenatally. I'm curious, you know, what advice you might have for couples who are expecting. What can they be doing right now to prepare themselves for some of the relationship challenges that are coming down the pipeline?

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Nancy Owen 05:49

So one of the things to think about when you're pregnant is that I think our culture gives us the idea that this is the greatest thing that's ever going to happen to you and, and that you should be blissful the whole time. And so, one of the things that I do when I'm working with people expecting is adjusting expectations, like thinking about what are those unrealistic expectations you have about what this time is going to be like in your life and how blissful it's going to be. And I'm not saying it's not going to be blissful. I don't want to pop everybody's bubble, but I kind of do pop people's bubble. I basically say, you know, let's talk about what you think it's gonna be like, and then the bringing baby home class in particular is about readjusting those expectations to understand what it's actually going to be like and that that's okay, like, what it, what it becomes is also okay, even though it might not be exactly what you expect. So, as a couple, what I try to do is help people talk about those expectations. Think about how we would adjust them and prepare for what you're going to need after the baby. One of the things that causes a little, a lot of conflict for couples is, we don't know what we're gonna need, we prepare in one way. And then we figure out that the people who are coming in to help us say, we're having our in laws, or

our parents come in for a bit, it creates more of a difficulty than help. And how are we going to figure that out? So we just talk ahead of time about what do you think you're gonna need? Let's make a list of what are the things you think you need help with? And how can you prepare for that? And then if that doesn't go well, how are we going to talk about that? So I have couples kind of think ahead a bit. And I also readjust their expectations myself, like I say, this is going to be really hard, you're going to be exhausted. What happens when you're exhausted right now together as a couple? What are the conflicts that you sometimes have, when you're both really tired or you didn't sleep? Well, let's magnify that by 100. And how's that gonna be? And then their eyes get really big and everybody gets really freaked out. I'm like, okay, so let's back off because we can prepare for that.

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Kira Dorrian 07:58

So aside from that, You know, people coming in to help example, is there another place where you see those expectations being faulty? Or you're like, wow, that's a really common theme that people think this particular part is going to be different than it is.

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Nancy Owen 08:13

I think that people are kind of shocked often by their own transformation to being a mom and being a dad. And I really don't think you can prepare for that adequately, like, what it's gonna feel like to have this little person handed to you. I mean, I can remember myself when they handed my first to me, I was like, really, cuz I don't know what to do here. You're gonna need to help me out. You know, you're not sending me home with this, but I don't have any idea what to do here. And I've been a therapist, a kid therapist for 10 years by that point. So I mean, it's kind of weird, but I was like, I don't know what to do here. So I think that also seeing your partner as a parent is different. Well, and so there's a common theme of now we're mom and dad and we were whatever we were before that, we were just a couple. We were partners, we were whatever. Just seeing your partner in a different way. And understanding how to incorporate that into your identity is also kind of a common theme. And I do talk to people about that, but I think it's hard to know until you're there, you know, how that's gonna feel.

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Kira Dorrian 09:24

Yeah. Okay, so then let's talk about when you're there. Okay, so we're on the other side, we've brought a baby home. And so we have all these sort of myriad issues that may or may not arise. So I'm curious what the most common things are that you see couples really battling with on the other side, and I mean, like things that, then what are the

tangible solutions to that? What are some things that are, couples who may be struggling with middle of the night stuff or work life balance stuff or you know the, the feelings that come up from one parent staying home and the other going to work? These are just things I've seen couples struggle with. I'm sure you have others. So what do you, what would you say are the most common? And then are there any tangible suggestions that you have that our listeners could actually start trying at home right now?

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Nancy Owen 10:12

So some of the things you mentioned are absolutely on my list as well, I think time management, or time and resource management is maybe one of the things that comes up a lot. So the thing I'm thinking about is sleep deprivation and who's going to do what? And there's a shift that's really hard for couples around coming into like what we would might call more traditional roles, especially if one parent is going to stay at home for a bit after the baby comes, which is typically how it goes. Then we fall into these what we call traditional, somebody goes out to work and somebody stays at home and couples today aren't as familiar with those roles and it feels really weird. And there's a lot of resentment that builds up over okay, so I'm home so now I'm doing everything. I'm cooking. I'm doing grocery shopping, I'm doing this. I'm caring for the baby. I can't do all these things while I'm going out to work. So I mean, I think to prepare for that, just beginning to realign who's going to do what and maybe even talk about who's going to do what. And sometimes I, the Gottman class has you come up with a stress reducing conversation that you have like that well, he says every day. I think that's totally completely unrealistic for couples with a baby. So I say once a week, maybe schedule a time when you can talk together about what's going on, who's stressed about what, what's, what's stressing you out this week? And how could we readjust ourselves to figure that thing out? Whether it be who's taking out the garbage or who's going to get up with the baby in the middle of the night or breastfeeding is not going well? Who do we need to see about that? What are the challenges, what's happening and I think when we're sleep deprived, every thing is amplified, it's really, really important to remember that you get in this state, in which you're tunnel vision to, this is going to be my life for the rest of my life. And it's horrible, and I can't do it. And what I try to do when I'm working with couples in that phase is, is help them realize it is time limited, this phase of your life is time limited, you will not be doing this forever. So let's problem solve just Tuesday, right? Let's just stay in the, this week or this day mode instead of but what if it's like this forever, and we can't do this forever, and we're angry with each other and are we going to be angry with each other forever. Also understand that the way that you are as a couple, the difficulties you have are also amplified. So the cycles of communication that may be not productive or healthy, are going to be amplified after you have a baby because there's more stress and more stress amplifies the patterns that you already have. So recognizing what those patterns are and

how they might not be healthy. Sometimes, you know, seeing someone to help you with that is a really great idea at this time in your, you know, in your couplehood.

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Kira Dorrian 13:07

Yeah, Dave and I do a Sunday one to one. It's a very corporate phrase he uses, but throughout the week, there's a lot of like, okay, well add that to the one to one because we just can't deal with it in the moment and our kids are seven and a half and we're still doing that. So I think that's such good advice.

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Deana Thayer 13:22

So Nancy, I'm curious about the overnights. As an infant sleep consultant, this is a huge deal and one I work with clients a lot on and sometimes there's a parent that's still working, or one that's nursing, and there might be an assumption that they kind of have to go it alone. Are there ways that couples can troubleshoot that? Tell us about your ideas for that.

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Nancy Owen 13:41

Yeah, that's a really, that's a tough one. And I see that a lot as well in my practice. I think sometimes what, what bugs me about that is the expectation that one partner is going to carry that burden and often it is placed upon the one who's breastfeeding because well, you know, I get from the male partner if you're working in a heterosexual couple, well, I have to go to work and so I have to be fresh in the morning or I can't do anything anyway because I can't feed the baby. So I'm gonna flashback to my own, you know, time when we were in that traditional role kind of situation. I was home for several months. I was breastfeeding, my partner was going out to work. But with us there was never kind of a question that it was just going to be... He definitely wanted to be part of that experience. And so even if he just got up, picked up the baby, diapered the baby, handed the baby to me and then kind of sat with me or fell asleep beside me in the bed. It was super meaningful to me to have companionship and that was not what we always did. But we often did that and I, and I think that with some of my couples, we also talk about learning to pump and learning to have your partner help out with one of the feeds with a bottle. There's lots of ways to do that and the idea that one partner should be sleeping all night because they have to get up and work in my opinion is a fallacy because the other partner is also getting up and working all day long. Right so in this I, I don't get that and sometimes I get a little bit of pushback on that but I do push pretty hard on why is it the breastfeeder's responsibility to do all the overnights? And I again, I don't think it has to be every night, I do think you need to talk about it. And if resentment's building up, it's not

going to be a good situation. So I do think it's something to talk about and it's something for the non breastfeeder, to think about how can I contribute here? Can I get up? Can I get a glass of water? Can I, can I help in any way? Can I just be emotional support to hang out? I personally had a huge problem with breastfeeding. And so just to have my partner there to encourage, to help me position the baby, was super helpful and made me feel like I wasn't by myself. And that feeling of aloneness is huge.

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Kira Dorrian 16:12

I love what you just said for just multiple reasons. And I think it's interesting because when I'm working with couples teaching childbirth classes, I talk about all these same things. And I, I joke about the fact that the only well rested person in the family should be the baby, right? Nobody should be well rested in this time. And exactly what you said... the breastfeeding, you know, mother is getting up and going to work for the nastiest boss, I mean, this boss is like, very demanding, non communicative, constantly dissatisfied, and you don't even get a hot cup of coffee. So I think that that's spot on. But what I love that you said that even I had not really thought about before is the concept of companionship, and how that can just change the relationship. Because I hear from couples all the time when I'm teaching. It's one of my favorite things I always ask, what are you most looking forward to about having a baby? And I used to sort of inwardly chuckle when they would say, oh, I just, I feel like it's just gonna bring us so much closer together. And I just, I mean, it was just my favorite, but I think that's a great example of how it can. If you have someone giving you companionship overnight, you feel like a team. You feel like a partnership. And of course, it's the quiet hours of two in the morning with a sleeping nursing baby, you actually are going to feel closer together. So I love that you've said that. So I remember talking with you once and you said that you often see couples who come in 10 years after baby's born and they're sort of unpacking stuff that happened right after baby is born is that, that's a common theme?

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Nancy Owen 17:45

Yeah, um, I think what often happens is that you know, you have a baby, you transition from what they call, you know, we to three, we to three. People use that term and so you, you don't get help, then things are difficult. You do feel pretty, people begin to feel alone or those, the disconnection starts there I think for a lot of couples. John Gottman, his research tells us absolutely that satisfaction in relationships takes a huge dip after the birth of the first child and continues to dip and bottoms out around the time, kids are in elementary school to middle school transition. That, that's the lowest point for relationship satisfaction. So it just continues to like, careen down the hill, which is depressing. When I talk about that in Bringing Baby Home, people look at me like, wow,

why are you telling us this? This is horrible. It doesn't have to be that way. It doesn't have to be that way. And I think if you're consciously making decisions to connect, it's not, but I think the reason I see a lot of couples when their kids are 9, 10, 11 years old, is because that careening downhill has continued to happen until they're at a crisis point when they come in to see me.

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Kira Dorrian 18:58

So the moral of the story is go in sooner than later. Like, don't be afraid to seek that, that help.

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Deana Thayer 19:04

What would you say is one thing, and I'm sure there's more than one, but what would be one thing that you really wish every couple knew or some tool every couple had, as they go into therapy or something they can use in their relationship? What is that one thing that if we were going to just take away one thing today, what would you want us to know?

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Nancy Owen 19:22

There's, there's a couple of things that hopped out to me when you said that question that jumped out in my mind that I say over and over and over and that I threatened to like stencil on the wall in my office so that people can see it. The first thing is, slow down, slow down, slow down. When you're talking with your partner, and you're in conflict, things speed up, speed up, speed up. We want to get our point across, we want, we get urgent, we get afraid, we get triggered, and we speed up and it's always catastrophe when you speed up. If you can slow down, if you can listen, if you can breathe your, yourself and your partner can breathe, then you can have a conversation and you can listen. And I think they go together. The two things I say, so much go together. The slow down is the first. And the second is when your partner tells you something, anything, whether it's a complaint, whether it's something about their day, whether it's, you know, a struggle they're having. Really try to ask yourself, what is my partner telling me about him or her? Not what is my partner telling me about me? And this is the hardest to, to get when your partner is telling you about you. In other words, if your partner is saying, I'm so upset at you, and here's why I'm so upset at you. Your first response is defensiveness, right? I didn't do that. I didn't mean it that way. You're hearing it wrong. And what I say to people is your partner is telling you about them. They're saying something about them. Try to figure out what that is and in order to do that, you have to slow down. You have to really listen, you have to take down the wall that goes immediately up that says, I didn't do that. No, I didn't. Now you're saying it wrong, too. What can I learn about my partner with what

they're telling me right now?

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Kira Dorrian 21:17

That's a very vulnerable thing to do. Yeah. Right. Because you have to be willing to seemingly take that information as truth. Right? Because you're not defending yourself. You're not stepping in and saying, no, that's wrong. And so I would assume that feels very vulnerable for a lot of couples.

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Nancy Owen 21:37

It not only feels really vulnerable, it's really, really hard to do. Um, what I, the phrase I use a lot is you have to learn to hold on to yourself when your partner is talking. I say that over and over again. Okay, we're gonna, we're gonna hold on to yourself, while he tells you this thing that he's feeling and I think you're exactly right. You're actually, you are accepting it as truth because...this is another Gottman-ism that I like. There are two realities, every single time you're talking, there's not one. And I think when we're in conflict, we often think, well, we're trying to get to the one reality. Whose reality is accurate in this situation, or whose reality is most accurate in this situation? That's not the, they're both accurate. Because your experience is your experience, and it's your truth. And your partner's experience is their experience and their truth. There's two realities every single time. So if you go in saying, I need to understand my partner's reality about this before I can talk, it's pretty game changing. But it does require a lot of vulnerability and it does require a lot of fortitude to hold on to yourself long enough to allow your partner to finish because often we're already into our defensiveness before our partner has finished talking, actually.

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Kira Dorrian 22:57

So do you feel like then it's about asking clarifying questions to get to the root of what they're really trying to say about themselves?

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Nancy Owen 23:04

I often say I mean, it's a great, great point. I often say, if you're thinking you need to say something in response to what your partner says, ask a question. Ask a question. Ask a question. Don't make the statement you need to make. Ask a question. Because, again, that also allows your partner to feel, because your partner is very vulnerable in this situation as well. Your partner is stepping out and saying, I'm going to say this, even though I know it's probably going to land wrong. And I'm probably going to say it wrong.

So they've been vulnerable too. If you step back and ask a question, it allows them to breathe a minute and go, okay, wait, wait. He really does want to hear my experience. He didn't push back yet, not saying you're never gonna push back. I'm just saying not yet. Timing is everything. So if you start with a question, your partner is able to continue to engage in the conversation. You start with a statement, especially a statement of, let me tell you what my reality is. You've changed the game again and it may make your partner shut down.

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Kira Dorrian 24:10

I hope our listeners at this point are understanding why this woman is so amazing.

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Deana Thayer 24:14

I couldn't agree more, Kira. On the podcast, we talk a lot about moving from surviving to thriving or this idea of going from floundering to flourishing. And I'm wondering if you can talk a little bit about your ideas for that if a couple really does feel kind of underwater. You mentioned the slow down, and I'm wondering if perhaps you could flesh that out a little bit more, but maybe give us a few other key elements for couples who are kind of feeling desperate and really need to just have a little bit of hope to cling to.

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Nancy Owen 24:43

So I'm going to do the, I'm going to do it backwards. So I'm gonna come back to slow down because I want to say something that I just listened to a video, I was just listening to a video series yesterday. And I grabbed onto this thing that this couples therapist said it's, and yeah, that's, that's exactly what I'm talking about, but he said it so much better than I did. I think he was talking about the 60 second connection, that you're trying to make 60 second connections throughout your day and he asked couples, he was talking about what we call last chance couples. So basically, as a couples therapist, there are a number of couples who come in your door and they have maybe done couples therapy before, maybe numerous times, or maybe they haven't, but they've waited way too long to get to you. And they are basically having one foot out the door. They're basically like you're it, Doc, you know, help us or we're divorcing, which no pressure there on us. But I mean, I think as a long term therapist, you know that you have to get something happening right away, or they're gonna give up, you have to give them hope. And his idea was you have to help them start making 60 second connections. I think this is so good for postpartum couples, because they can't imagine a date night. John Gottman talks a lot about date nights and I'm like, what are you even, where are you even going there? With a new baby I mean, this is not something you can feasibly think about doing right away. But

you can make a 60 second connection with your partner. You can sit and put your hand on your partner's lap, and look into each other's eyes and talk for 60 seconds. You can have a cup of coffee together, a cup of tea, you can get up in the middle of the night and sit with your partner with your hand on their back and you can say affirming things like wow, look at how she latched, so cool. You know those kinds of things, you can make those 60 second connections. So what I would say would be try to think in your mind what is a 60 second connection I can make with my partner today? Is it asking him how his day was when he comes home? Is it thinking about we got the baby down, the baby sleeping for 15 minutes, 20 minutes, an hour. Can we sit on the couch and just snuggle together for 60 seconds and touch? Touch is super important too, haven't talked about that. But as a sex therapist, touch is so important. And I'm not talking about necessarily sexual touch, just touching your partner, holding hands. Touch tends to go down a lot after baby because people are touched out. But it's still important to hold hands, to put your hand on somebody. To flesh out the slow down a little bit, it really means please breathe. When you're talking to your partner, breathe before you say something. And if things seem to be triggered, take a break. I talk with partners a lot about taking a break. Sometimes we get really dialed into we have to finish and resolve this conflict tonight. If you have been up and you're talking at three o'clock in the morning, nothing good is going to come of that. Don't be afraid to say maybe we should just pause and stop and talk about this tomorrow. Or talk about this with our therapist in two days when we, whatever. Put a, put a hold on it until you're ready to talk about

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Kira Dorrian 27:56

I love that and I think though I would follow that up and I'm sure you would agree with you, you do then have to talk about it right? So we're not going to put a hold and sweep it under the rug, which I think a lot of couples do. It's let's add it to that one to one list, or let's pick a time we're going to circle back to this. But as you said, maybe now at three o'clock in the morning is not the best time to be having that conversation.

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Deana Thayer 28:17

Yeah. So for blended families, they have a little bit of a different dynamic. And there's some other complexities. What might you say would be some good things for those couples to use as tools or to have as takeaways for their unique situation?

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Nancy Owen 28:32

Probably, in those situations, when I have worked with those families, there's a lot of discussion that needs to be had about expectations again, about, about parenting styles,

because here's people who are not creating their parenting styles together. They've already created a parenting style and they come in with that. And sometimes when you mesh in other ways that have caused you to connect as a couple, your parenting style might not. And that might be surprising to you that it doesn't. So talking about expectations, talking about how are we going to manage if we have children from previous relationships and a child from our relationship? How's that going to feel different to us? How are we going to admit to each other that it feels different? Are we going to separate responsibilities out, which a lot of blended families do in that you parent your kid, I parent my kid, you know, that discipline is doled out in different ways. I don't have a one size fits all on that. But I think that using the same strategies of communication, sometimes getting help from someone to help you do that would be useful. Asking questions about instead of saying, I really don't like the way you do that, switching that around to, can you help me understand why you do it that way? That's interesting. We, I've never handled that situation with my kid that way. Take out the judgment and try to understand the, be curious about why your partner does it that way.

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Kira Dorrian 30:04

Okay, last question. So what about people who aren't great communicators? What about people that are like wow, that, I don't even know how to begin to do any of what you just said? Because I do not talk about the things that are wrong in the relationship. I do not ask for what I need. Aside from what I assume you're gonna say, which is well, please start. How does someone start that?

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Nancy Owen 30:29

Um, that's a really good question. Um, when I see folks in therapy, often this falls out along gender lines, because I think that and you know, I might get some flack for saying this, but you know, I've been in the profession a long time, I'll go for it. I think that when I when I get folks in my office, it is often sis heterosexual males who say, I don't know how to do this. She knows how to do this. I don't know how to do this. I don't know how to talk about my feelings. Part of that, I think, is how we socialize young boys to not know know what they feel, to not talk about what they feel. And I think we're moving in the right direction as a culture about that, but I don't think we're anywhere close to where we need to be on that. But regardless, whoever it is, we may have people come up from trauma backgrounds, often that's the case and in a family where there's been trauma, I, it's not been safe to talk about my feelings. So I think first we have to back up a bit from let me give you all these communication strategies to use, to how do we help you feel safe? How can it be safe for you to be in this relationship and talk about what you need? And often the other partner is not making it safe for their partner to talk, but doesn't know that they're not, right? Often

they think they've created great safety, then they come in my office, the person finally after a number of sessions tiptoes into the here's what I need, and everything explodes. And she, I use she because I'm going along traditional gender lines, is furious at what he said and has let him know. And you watch the shutdown happen instead of that. And there's no judgment there from me. Of course, what he said is difficult and painful and hard to hear. And it's not safe for him to have said it. So we have to back up to how do we make it safe, and that requires her to do some work around holding on to herself long enough to go, oh, my gosh, he did it. He did say what he felt even though I don't like it. I don't like what he felt. How can I create safety here for him too? And it may be talking with that partner about what would make it feel safe. What would make it feel safe? Would it be breathing, everybody breathe? Would it be taking a break and coming back to it in 15 minutes? 30 minutes, an hour? What would it be to create safety? And then yeah, I mean, if you're really struggling with that, sometimes some individual work with a counselor around communication around how do you be vulnerable? How do you fix, sometimes I start with individuals around how do I know what I'm feeling? Because I can tell when I asked that question, can you tell me how that felt? It's the deer in the headlights. No, I don't have any idea how that felt. So let's talk about that. How do you stop and listen to yourself? Take a pause and say, what, am I angry? Am I frustrated and sad? Am I hopeless? What's going on with me?

K

Kira Dorrian 33:23

Fantastic. So Nancy, why don't you tell everyone how they can find you if they want to work with you. I know you're based here in the Puget Sound area. Do you do Skype sessions? You do? She's nodding. Fabulous. So tell everyone how they can find you, website, contact, handles if you have them on social media. Let our listeners know.

N

Nancy Owen 33:43

So I, my website is fiercewaterfall.com and everything you need to know is there about getting in touch with me. I'm, my office is located in Kirkland. So a lot of people on the east side come in. I do have the capacity to do telehealth with folks as well. It's not my preferred method, but I do work that way with people who need that, people who travel and those sorts of things. Yeah, so you can find everything out on my website. If you want to have a session with me, you can either email me nancy@fiercewaterfall.com or you can give me a call and we can chat a bit about fit, that kind of thing. Happy to talk with folks about that.

K

Kira Dorrian 34:23

Awesome. Nancy, thank you so much for being with us today. She's so amazing. Thank you. Okay, Deana, isn't she amazing?

D

Deana Thayer 34:33

She was awesome.

K

Kira Dorrian 34:34

Yeah, I'm a fan. I love her to pieces. So if you want more information on Nancy, you can go to fiercewaterfall.com. And I haven't said this in a little while. So I'm going to say it again, listeners, if you haven't rated and reviewed our podcast, could you do that? Please, we'd be so grateful. I'm saying it now before we get to the quote so that you hear it because I worry sometimes people are like, good. I got the great quote. Oh, Kira is doing her admin thing and they turn it off. So this way you had to hear it but you, if you hadn't rated and reviewed, please do we really do rely on those and also sharing on social media, tell your friends, tell your barista, recommend us on Facebook, that's a thing. Those things just really, really help us. And if you haven't liked us on Instagram, or Facebook, what, you like on Facebook and you follow on Instagram, if you haven't liked us on Facebook, or followed us on Instagram, we are @raisingadultspodcast. Okay, Deana has a great quote today.

D

Deana Thayer 35:25

Yes, and I like this one because counseling is about the process, the process of how you interact as a couple and also how you parent, it's not just this arrival. So this I thought was perfect and it is by Pete Sanders: It is in the nature of helping and counseling to be a process moving toward something rather than arriving at a state of completion.

K

Kira Dorrian 35:47

Hmm, very nice. Well, as always, thank you for listening. For more information on us, you can go to futurefocusedparenting.com. Don't forget Deana and I are both parent coaches. So we work on this stuff as well. Nancy is amazing for counseling, I highly recommend her. But if you are looking for prenatal parent coaching just to kind of look at what are some of the things that I can be doing with my partner to ensure the best possible chances of success in our relationship on the other side, we offer coaching packages for that. Deana does amazing work with sleep and blended families, helping people navigate some of those tricky, tricky spots. We have coaching packages for that, you can find all of that on our website futurefocusedparenting.com. Raising Adults is produced by Kira Dorrian and

Deana Thayer and recorded in my laundry room. Music by Seattle band Hannalee. Thanks for listening.



Future Focused Parenting 36:35

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