

Episode 33. Talking with Kids About Drugs, Alcohol, and Addi...

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

parents, child, healthy relationship, conversations, drugs, alcohol, important, thinking, work, addiction, substance, kids, scott, drink, talk, bit, raising, deana, coping mechanism, struggled

SPEAKERS

Deana Thayer, 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. Hello, and welcome to Raising Adults podcast. Well, it's a big one today, but I'm excited about it because I have experience with this one. So today we are going to be tackling substance abuse and how do you talk to your kids about drugs and alcohol? What are the things you're planning to do around that? And I'm going to let you start Kira, because I have obviously a lot of thoughts on this topic because we've kind of been through it with one of

our children. So I will at least share my why. My why is I had parents who participated in some, like they drank around us and whatever and it wasn't the end of the world, but it made me not want to do that as an adult. And then also now having a child who's been through it. It's really important to me to get this, right, because it's pretty prevalent in our society. And there's so many areas where children get exposed to things younger and younger. And we talk a lot on this podcast about thinking ahead and being proactive rather than reactive and all of those things. And so I think those, all those, all those principles apply, but you as parents out there have to think about how are you going to handle this if it hasn't come for you yet? And then if it has, is there any course corrections maybe you could be making. And so I have to be honest that my why wasn't oh, lay, the foundations weren't laid super long ago, some of it has been on the fly. And we've talked about that. I mean, sometimes parenting happens because something, you get thrown a curveball. I was very much prepared for this conversation. Because I knew I had strong feelings about it. Having seen it growing up, I didn't want anything to do with it. And I knew what I was going to say and I had all my best laid plans and that doesn't always work out. So I just want to at least say for me, my why is coming primarily from experience. And so that's important to note and then I'll let you just start and I can share in a little bit.

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Kira Dorrian 02:11

Yeah, I think my why is probably the same as most parents' why. No one wants their kids addicted to anything, right? We want our kids to be healthy and functional and have great coping mechanisms. And but I think that and I know, because this is one of the times where we really did discuss this episode before we launched into it. And we usually don't do that everyone, we usually just say, hey, we're gonna talk about this... and then record. And this was one where we had a really good discussion, and I think that for me, my my, why was that I want them to have a healthy relationship with anything that they engage with that, that I'm trying to think how to even say this because to me, let me just launch into the how. So I said to Deana before we hit record that I think this is a little bit like when my husband found out we were having twins. He's a twin. So he was like, oh, it'll be fine. I'm a twin. And I was like, yeah, I don't think being a twin and raising twins are the same thing, not quite. And I think this topic is kind of like that I was raised by parents who had a really healthy relationship with alcohol. And who had dabbled in drugs when they were young. And were comfortable with me dabbling in drugs when I was young, but also set up really smart parameters around that and really just encouraged me to have a healthy relationship with anything that you do sometimes. And I think it was always presented like there's a big difference between I sometimes go skydiving and I have to go skydiving every single day. And so, but I say all of that because my kids are seven. So I can have all the philosophies in the world about this topic, and I'm certainly happy to share what

worked for me as a child. But I haven't had a teenager yet, I haven't had a young adult yet. And so I don't know how this is gonna play out. And I just want to be really sensitive to the fact that Deana has seen this play out. And so again, like being a twin and raising twins are not the same thing. So I'll just share a little bit about what I experienced growing up and some of the conversations Dave and I are having because we're actually really not on the same page about this yet, and it is requiring more and more conversations. So my parents, I think I've said this before, like they were pretty, not hippies, but they were, they were forward thinking for their time. And they really, I think, had this philosophy, which we've talked about, of the boundary's here, and everything within it is free range. And there was also this real level of trust that they put in me, it was assumed that I was going to make the right choice. And only when I didn't, which was rare, did that have a fallout? And I think there was also this underlying current, they never said it, of if you mess up around this topic, even once, it's all over. Like it all goes away. We are giving you some space around this because we believe that you deserve it. But if you show us even once that you don't, it's over. And so I felt a responsibility to live up to that, right? Like, my parents were pretty cool compared to most other parents. And I did not want to ruin that or disappoint them. So I think that helped a lot in what they did, saying that they were very open. And they didn't drink. Neither of them are big drinkers. And I'm actually not a big drinker as a result of that, I think because it just wasn't modeled. Whereas Dave, my husband is English, so he likes his beer. So the modeling in our home already is a little bit different.

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Deana Thayer 05:42

Between the two of you.

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Kira Dorrian 05:43

Right. Totally, because they hardly ever see mommy drink. And daddy pretty much has a beer every day, you know. So there's a little bit of that, that's different. But when it came to drugs, their attitude was I'd rather I believe that you're going to do it because we did it, we cannot expect you to do anything differently than we did. And we would rather you do it with us where we know that you're safe than not with us where we don't know what's happening. And so the way that fell out, was when I was 14, I told my mom I was kind of getting curious about marijuana and what that was like. And she said, well, if you're going to do it, I'd rather you do it with me. And we had, she had a friend who smoked marijuana. And so she called her friend and got a joint and we smoked a joint together. And that was my first exposure to drugs was with my mom. She doesn't, she didn't I mean, she's not here anymore, but she didn't smoke pot outside of that situation. She had when she was younger, but she saw it as an opportunity to be with me in case something went wrong

and to work with me and talk me through it. And so, it was something that you know, through high school, I occasionally had a joint. I occasionally went to a party and drank. They also said and I loved this, they said if you ever are drunk at a party, you have to call us, we will not, you will not get in trouble. You will only get in trouble if you don't call. And I think that's what I liked most about what they did. There were no illusions of like, and this is I'm trying to think how to put this. But, you know, I think I like the idea that parents should not expect their children to behave any differently than they did. Saying that, everybody is different in terms of what they've done. So for someone like you who saw anything related to substance and went no, thank you. It's perfectly reasonable for you to expect that your kids are going to do that. You can't set an expectation for them to do differently than you. But for me, as someone who has done drugs in the past, I can't be like, you're never doing drugs, because who am I to say that, right? So I think that helped a lot. There was a little bit of like, you know, we're not idiots. We know this stuff happens and the message was over and over and over again, we just want to know and be involved so that we can keep you safe. They also had a lot of conversation about the difference between a natural drug and a chemical drug. And, you know, it's different now even than when they were because natural drugs even are laced with all sorts of stuff. But you know, they kept saying things like, it's the chemical stuff that is the scariest and the most dangerous and the most addictive. So please don't ever touch that. And I got that feeling from them of like, there's this kind and this kind and we don't even talk about that kind. That's a no, no go. And I remember one time when I was in my 20s. I mentioned to my father that a friend of mine was doing E regularly and I was thinking about trying it. And he was so cool. I don't know how he did this. I think you've talked about the like, stunned on the inside, Oscar performance on the outside. And he just said, well, you know, he kind of normalized it. He was like, I can see why you're thinking about doing that. He said, I just want you to think about something. You know, some people have like a, such a strong reaction to E that they die, right. It's one of those, it's rare, but it happens. And he said I just think it would be such a waste if you were one of those people. And then he left it. He left it with me. And I can't I can't even imagine how he did that. Right? Like, you're sitting there and you're like, Okay, so I'm just gonna share my thoughts with you. But he was freaking out on the inside, possibly, because he didn't, because he sent the message of, I want you to think about this, but I trust you, that over and over, we trust you. We trust you. We trust you. I never tried it. And I really think that's a testament to their parenting. So, like I said, I don't know how this is gonna fall out with my two. Interestingly, Dave is far less concerned about alcohol because he drinks and totally disagrees with me about drugs. He's like, they'll never do drugs. I was like, okay, well, I disagree. And I don't actually have a problem with it. If it's a reasonable, it's not something that's happening every day. It's a sometimes thing. I don't have a problem with that. And so he and I are constantly you know, having to look at this because it's not that far away, probably, unfortunately, even though they're seven. So all that is to say that, you know, the way that my parents

handled it worked really, really well for me. And the other smart thing they did, and I think it again, it comes down to what works for your family based on your expectations, your own experience, etc., and your kid, you've got to know your kid, for sure. But one of the things I think they did well, considering that they weren't a no substance family, was the parties were at our house. And that's a huge risk that they took, I think letting the parties be at our house. But their attitude was we want to know you're safe. So we're going to have it here. And we're going to take keys, and we're going to, and they just were able to put some really smart, I think their attitude was it's going to happen, whether we know about it or not. We'd rather know about it, take keys and keep everyone safe. And so I think that worked really well for them and for me. Now if I was a different kid, who knows. So again, I come back to I haven't raised my kids through this yet. So I can only speak to what worked for me, and what I would hope to emulate for them. Does that make sense?

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Deana Thayer 11:09

It does. And I think it's really key that you said that piece about knowing your own child. Because some respond really well to hearing I trust you, I'm pretty confident you're going to do the right thing. So I only need to put up these few little fences here and there. And, and I and then there's other I think, children and teens who take that as kind of this license to almost do whatever and it can go sideways. So it's a lot about knowing your child and a lot about talking about this ahead of time. So especially because you guys aren't exactly identical yet. It's good that you and Dave are talking about it. And we, this is, this is exactly what we chat about all the time. Because it's way better to have your approach ready to go than to have to be on your heels and going oh, now what? And I speak from experience. So we'll see, see what today is like, I don't know, it might be really emotional for me, I might get through it just fine. We'll see. But it is important to me that I just give a little disclaimer to say I have, I have spoken with all the people that I need to to have permission to talk about this. But I'm going to be very careful. And secondly, I'm primarily going to be talking about my experience as a family member of an addict and how that impacted me because that is my story to tell and I'm allowed to share it, but I want to be really considerate that other people's stories are theirs. So just wanted to get that out of the way. I've talked to, talked to everyone in advance. So the, the how in our family was a little bit created as we went. And that's not ideal. I want to be really forthright about that. But as our listeners know, we have children who at least at some point in their lives, were not with us 100% of the time, so they're going back and forth. And sometimes an issue will crop up while they're with you that wasn't even a thing last time they were with, with you. So that's been, that's been what it is. It's unfortunate, but it is what it is. So in our family, we did have a child who ended up dealing with an addiction issue. And we're actually kind of still working it out with, still happening. So it's not easy. I just want to share today kind of what that was like for me, because I think parents need to hear, hey, this is going to

impact you. If you get too much of the attitude of, well, it's going to be fine. It'll all work out in the end, and think that there isn't a ripple effect onto you as a parent, that's... I would really caution against that because it affects the whole family. If you have more than one child, it definitely will affect siblings. So I want to make sure to share about that. And then the other thing is just being really real about what we maybe wish we would have done differently. And I've actually asked Scott too, and so I would love to share some of that. So for us about a year ago is when we found out that we had a child who was struggling with some of this and we took very swift action. It was literally within 24 hours, we had this child in treatment, and I'm talking inpatient, sleeping there. So it was not a joke to us. We weren't just going to go find a meeting, or start with this really soft entry. We wanted to hopefully just nip it in the bud. And I think something for me, as a mom, my thinking was, this is about saving a life. Because when these things go too far down the trail, literally people die. And that is not overstating it. So to me, when the internal mama bear comes out, it's this is life or death. So who cares how much it costs, who cares, you know, how it disrupts our life. This is what you have to do to save your person. So that's, that's an important thing to note, you might have to take time off work, you'll be, your schedule's gonna look wonky. I mean, we were at the treatment facility several times a week and nights, weekends, whatever, because you just go when you can and when the visiting hours are there, you're going to be there. That's it. I wanted to be there every time that I could. And super kudos to my husband, because he was there so much. And I just, I love that. I think sometimes it's easy to think that moms are kind of this primary...and I think we even still do that here in 2019. So I love that there was also this awesome dad figure in the mix. I thought that was great. So we went right to inpatient. That was just our personal choice. I would say, I'm not someone who can give legal advice or whatever, but if your insurance will help, do that. I mean, it's much better for them to just get immediately surrounded by people who can help them and I think that was really positive to not have it be just a couple hours and the rest of the time, you're still in your same environment. To actually remove you from your environment and get that support I thought was really great. But it was not easy. It was a very strange, a very strange month because we also were missing a person at our house. And that was, that was not easy. We both had to miss some work for the process of admission and all of that and so there's a lot of logistics but I, just for our purposes, it was what needed to be done because there were some... it wasn't just something small we had to kind of take it seriously. There was some other things going on. And I also will say that I think there can be, something I've heard a lot now that I'm kind of walking this a little bit, is things like well, it's just weed or just... I'm, I get feisty about that at this point like spicy meatball. There's no just fill in the blank substance, because for any number of people that might be their particular gateway to a lot of other things, and a lot of the things I think we would think maybe are mild, such as I think some people do this with alcohol. And I think it's pretty common with marijuana especially, we're here in Washington where it's legal for over 21. And so I think

there can be this idea that we just kind of dull the senses to it, it's just fine. It's no big deal. But for a developing mind, that's very different. And again, I'm not a doctor, this is me being real about things I learned going through it with a child. But especially for the developing brain. There's no such thing as just pot, just alcohol, just fill in the blank. Those things change the brain chemistry, and frankly, it's not overstating it to say that person's really never quite the same.

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Kira Dorrian 17:50

You're talking about if it's really regular use though, right? Because I, it just, it's so tricky, because I think there are going to be parents that this, they smoke pot themselves or, you know, they drink themselves. And to my mind, it's, it's that same idea of alcohol. Alcohol is a great example. It's legal, some people can have a really healthy relationship with it. You know, I have a glass of wine like once a month, and I'm totally fine, but some people can't. And so that's true. I sort of want to make sure that we're at least discussing that but like, I don't know that. I don't know that everyone would feel like that's the same. Does that make sense? But I think what you're saying and I would totally agree is that if you've got a child that's smoking pot every day, well, that's like a child drinking alcohol every day. And even though the alcohol and in our state, the weed is legal and supposed to be like a sometimes thing, that if it becomes an everyday thing, now we've moved a perfectly, quote unquote safe substance into an absolutely not safe category.

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Deana Thayer 18:55

Yeah, I would totally agree. I think when I'm saying we can't say just fill in the blank, it's for someone who's now grown to kind of depend on that, or they need it all the time, oh, I almost need it to function. I feel really rotten without it, then we don't get to say just whatever. Yeah, someone who has a glass of wine with dinner. I don't, I don't even have an issue with that, even after having gone through this because I really recognize that people can have a healthy relationship with alcohol and, and maybe even with, with other drugs. But I don't, I don't think we get to say just whatever when it's become to that level, because it really changes things and those growing brains, they're changing and developing all the time until you're adults. So yes, that's an important distinction to make. And I think it's just an easy kind of excuse people fall on, you know, oh, yeah, I'm doing it all the time. But it's just whatever.

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Kira Dorrian 19:42

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely.

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Deana Thayer 19:46

Yeah. So that that was what we did initially, and I'm not sorry about it. I don't make apologies for it. I think it was, it was great. And it was right. Some of the things I think now that we look back that we wish had been different and we would have probably even done different, I think is asked a lot more questions and probably sooner and I'm speaking for myself here, I tend to be between Scott and I, the more suspicious parent. And so I'm already kind of like, I just don't know if I believe that and I, I'm gonna be honest, I kind of secretly love that about myself because very few things get by me. And I love when I hear about your parents and that they were, you know, basically sending the message, we trust you, you're going to do the right thing. And I will, I work to get there. So basically, the way I have parented is you show me over time that I can trust you and then you get to have that. I'm gonna, I'm gonna actually I probably almost too much and I'll admit this about myself, that I probably err too much on that I'm gonna assume you're not gonna do the right thing. And then when you prove me wrong, I'm gonna be thrilled and it's, you're gonna earn some more privileges around that. So literally just this week, I was able to do that for one of our children, who just has demonstrated consistent time and again, responsibility. And we've had a policy of nobody of the opposite gender comes over if we're not home. And Scott and I were out, and my daughter asked to have a friend over from school who was a boy and my first response was no, no, no, we're not here. Absolutely not. And then I had to remember what you just said here is look at the child. And I thought, based on what she's shown me, I don't, I can do something different here. And so I said, actually, I want to really reward your responsibility in this area. So while I'm gonna say stay out of your bedroom, you can have your friend over. And so I think it's okay to treat things case by case and child by child. And the same for me is true here. And so even though I err on the side of being more suspicious, I wish I'd even gone maybe a little more there and just asked more questions and been really curious, or if I didn't feel comfortable, making sure that I was talking to Scott a lot, asking him a lot of questions and, what do you think about what we're seeing? Because we want to look at our children and notice patterns that we're seeing, and then talk about what do we do? And I think that's, I don't know, maybe, maybe every parent has some area where they kind of look back and go, I could have done a little better there. But that, that certainly was one for me. I could have just had more questions. And even I think the message that questions send is not always accusatory, it's I want to invest in you. I'm interested in what's going on.

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Kira Dorrian 22:28

I want to understand.

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Deana Thayer 22:29

Yeah. So that's, that's something for me. And, and then for Scott, because I mentioned I would, I asked him too, and so I suppose for him this will out a little bit, but not anything, any bad way. But he really wishes that he had kind of fought harder to have his children with us full time. And so I think that's going to be just an unfortunate regret for him. We now have two of them full time, but I think he's looking back and saying you know, if there'd been a little bit earlier intervention or they'd had the stability of being in our home 100% of the time a little bit before this, we don't know, would it have even been different? But it's, it's hard that he has that, well, what if? That wondering. And so he was really honest with me when I chatted with him about this episode that yeah, I would say that something I just kind of wish I had gone to bat a little bit more and a little bit sooner, to just have that influence and that access all the time, not just every other weekend or what have you. So I mean, woulda, coulda, shoulda, this is real life. But here's what I'll say. Now, because I've now had some experience with this. We have some younger ones. And it's, if this is going to maybe sound crazy, but I want to just say to anyone who's going through this, if you have siblings, there is a silver lining to them watching and seeing what's going on because they see that it's not cute. It's not cool. It's not pretty when it gets to this level. It's not fun. It's not even fun. The person doesn't feel good when they're going through withdrawal. It can be kind of scary. I know that for us as parents, it was really hard. Our particular child was the youngest person at this treatment facility. And I know I was thinking, well, are they scared? Are they feeling alone? Like that was just really hard. Are they feeling lonely? We couldn't be there. And that's important that they're removed and that they're not with you. But it's just hard. But I will say for the other children in the home to see the side of it that isn't so cool, because I think that's the thing that happens even as early as Middle School, sometimes late elementary, is the first time drugs or alcohol, whatever it is, are presented, it's kind of because it's presented in this way that this is cool. This is maybe what popular people are doing. Or maybe there's almost this allure, because it's kind of secretive or we can hide and do it and it's fun and it makes you feel good. And I think, for me, that removing that veil and seeing the parts that weren't cool and weren't fun, as sad as that is, I think that was positive if I can say that. Does that make sense?

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Kira Dorrian 25:03

Oh, absolutely. And I think it's really important that if you're a parent who's maybe more aligned with my view of, you know, I fully expect that my children are going to do drugs at some point, I hope that it's marijuana, and then I can keep a good tab on it and that it can be in a healthy relationship that those conversations about, here's what it can look like, if this gets out of hand. You have to be having those too. It's not just like, oh, I'm not going to worry until there's a problem. Even at seven we have already had conversations about

what is the difference between a chemical drug and a natural drug? What are the fallouts of getting addicted to drugs? What does that look like? What does that mean? We've already had those conversations and I want to be clear, Dave and I, Dave and I do not do drugs. I mean I did in the past, nothing major. And never in an, in a everyday way. It was always just a nice to have, but we don't anymore. And but I know there are families where the parents here in Washington, it's legal. So the parents smoke pot, the kids see it. I personally don't have an issue with that. But I think that those conversations have to come with it. Mommy and Daddy have a healthy relationship with this. It's a sometimes thing. This is what happens when it turns away from sometimes and into addiction. Just like I would assume and I would hope that families are having this conversation around alcohol. You need to be having the same conversations around drugs.

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Deana Thayer 26:30

I know we're getting to the end here. But I just want to make sure I also talk about the vocabulary of that. Something I've talked to Scott about and he's really receptive. So again, just, he gets major shout outs, but he also is different than me, I don't touch anything. And he likes to drink like, he likes his whiskey or whatever. And I was noticing there was a season there where if he had a really hard day or the kids were being frustrating or we were refereeing a bunch of teenage fights which are just, just like bigger toddler fights, they're no fun. It's like, okay, great. It's just toddlers who can shave, you're still refereeing. He would say, I need a drink. So we had some long talks about the message that sends that now you're saying you need a substance to cope with your life. And wow, you guys, that's something to be very careful of.

K

Kira Dorrian 27:21

Well, and I think it really comes back to and again, I'm almost hesitant to say this, because of the whole being a twin and raising twins are not the same. But I think it also comes back to where mental health is so important, because if you are arming your children with good positive coping mechanisms, they are less likely to reach for drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism versus a fun thing to do. Does that make sense? And so, again, I don't, I won't know until my kids are grown, whether that theory pans out but I like to hold on to that idea that as a parent, if you're employing, here's a positive coping mechanism. Let's go for a ride. Let's sing some songs. Let's take some deep breaths, you know that they're going to be less likely. And I think we talked about this before we hit record, but I want to make sure we talk about it now. Also knowing your family history around addiction. So I want to be perfectly clear that my family does not have any addiction in its past, at least the past that we know about, and on either side. And so I think my parents felt because there is no history and they themselves had never struggled

with it. They did not, I think they would have parented very differently if there was a history of substance abuse, because there is this propensity for that to continue.

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Deana Thayer 28:36

Yes, thank you for bringing that up. And because I had forgotten, it's so easy to get in the weeds on this, it's still kind of fresh for me. And so it can go into the ditch of just my personal story, and I want to make sure it stays practical. So thank you for bringing it back to that because we were talking about this before we hit record about there is a physiological component to this. And so it's important to remember that while there are behaviors around it, and there are choices around it. And I don't want to entirely remove that personal responsibility piece, that would just not even be appropriate... that the brain of an addict is very different. And so what's going to happen to them, when they try a substance is different than someone who maybe doesn't come with that predisposition or a family history or that genetic component, what have you. There's many things and even now, people are still learning how this is all interconnected. But there is definitely a difference. We've even seen PET scans, the brains of addicts look different. And so the way they respond to chemical substances is not the same. And I think one thing that can come as an encouragement from that is if you're a parent who's dealt with this, or even if you just have a family member or something and most of us at least, maybe less than six degrees of separation know somebody who's had a struggle with this, is remembering it's not your fault. And I think particularly for parents, that's so key because it's way, way easy to go into the guilt. What could I have done? What did I not do that I should have done? You can just play that game all day long. And to remember that there's this other thing going on. There's some context here with even just how this child is wired that isn't about how you parented, you could have done something different all day long. And this could have still been the outcome. And it's just important to remember.

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Kira Dorrian 30:14

Well, and I also think that if you are someone who personally has a history of addiction, or has family members, or it runs in the family, that it also changes the conversations you need to be having around this. So a similar example, my mom died from ovarian cancer and has this, you know, this mutated gene, the conversations I will have with Rhiannon about needing to stay on top of her female health are going to be totally different than probably the conversations you've had with Cienna based on our family history. She's going to have to be so much more on it. She's going to have to make some early decisions. And that's just because of our family history. So this is the same thing if you have this history, the way you talk about drugs and alcohol is going to be really important so that they understand this changes the conversations I have to have with you.

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Deana Thayer 31:03

Oh, it absolutely does. And we've even done that with the siblings and said, you know, you need to know that because there's this in your family now it's probably not going to be a great idea for you either. And do at least take that into consideration. Of course, like you said, we're not with them 24/7, especially at these ages, they're going to be away from us. And they may make decisions that we aren't a fan of or that we don't approve of, or what have you. But for them to be armed with the knowledge of, hey, this exists, and it might affect what you think about as you encounter these things. So it's really important.

K

Kira Dorrian 31:36

I have a funny story before we close. So we were talking about this the other day, and the kids and I were in the car, and he said to me, Mommy, how does marijuana make you feel? Like what does it feel like? And I said, well, it can feel a couple different ways. I said some, for some people, it helps them feel really, really, really relaxed. I said for some people, it makes them laugh, like they can't stop laughing. Everything's funny. And he said oh, well, I'll never need to try that because I already think everything's funny.

D

Deana Thayer 32:05

Awesome. Great. I love it. Oh, well, and that's actually a fair conversation because one of the things that I know that I've talked about even before I met Scott, with my two biological kids with Cienna and Marc was, if you are looking to this, it's worth asking, Why? Why are you thinking you need to do something to feel better? So we've been talking about that since they were small, and about being just excited enough about life and finding joy and the difference between happiness and joy, which I hope we get to talk about someday. But those are good things to talk about. So it's actually a great segue because instead of a quote, I just wanted to give a thought and it's kind of one more little practical piece to that as you're raising young adults, and even starting in early grade school, which is where you're at. And this is what we're all about at Raising Adults anyway, but is looking at, is our help actually help? Or has it moved over into enabling? And I know that for Scott and I, there are areas where we would have to say it leaked over into enabling. And that maybe we can step back in all areas of parenting, but certainly around substances and make sure that we're setting them up to have healthy relationships with these things if they're going to do it, but also to be armed with the information and that we don't end up inadvertently helping them along to become crippled by something like this and just letting it sit there. That's really key. And I think it's an easy thing to fortunately slip into even, even the most well meaning parents will sometimes find that some of the things they were doing might have been aiding and abetting the addiction. So that's a generic parenting question, though. It's not just about this topic. Think about

that. Is your help actually helping? I think about it with something as simple as sometimes kids will forget their lunch. Are you the parent who drives home and brings it? Are you the parent who's like, well, you're going to be a little bit hungry today. But you know, they're not going to starve if they don't eat again until dinner, and they might even have a friend who offers them something. It's interesting, the way that our help is sometimes not helpful. I see you have comments.

K

Kira Dorrian 34:13

I do, because this actually happened with one of my children where they were forgetting their backpack every day. And so this was not just not every once in a while, you know, twice a week, and I was driving it to school. And so after the third time it happened, I said, I'm going to do this one more time. And after that, you're going to have to go to school without your backpack and the lunch is in the backpack. And it happened one more time. And then it happened again. And so I messaged the teacher and I explained this was the setup and I'm all about natural consequences. And so can you just be extra loving to this child today? Because they're probably going to have a hard time. And this child came home in tears. I was so embarrassed. I was so hungry. I said, I'm so sorry. That hurts my heart to know that you felt that way. But I told you, you have to be responsible for your things. It's not my job. And this child never did it again.

D

Deana Thayer 35:06

Isn't that fascinating? It's so true how that works. Marc once was when he was younger really struggled to get ready in time. And he had to go to school in his pajamas. And guess how many times that happened?

K

Kira Dorrian 35:20

Once.

D

Deana Thayer 35:20

Yep. He didn't get to do calendar because he wasn't dressed for school. That was a real bummer. No problem getting him dressed after that.

K

Kira Dorrian 35:30

Yeah. And I think it comes back to what you said that we want to come at it with love. We want to come at it with the belief that they're going to solve it and that we can be a part

of that. And then we also have to recognize at what point are we preventing solving the problem because of our love for them?



Deana Thayer 35:48

No, that's exactly it. And so you can pour all the time and resources and energy into it that you want, but you want to make sure it's going in a good direction. Like let's put resources toward treatment. Let's put resources toward getting you in a group. Let's put resources to making sure we have a really safe house or we keep like, for instance, we have a dry house. So there's no alcohol in our house at all. Things like that. We'll put our resources there but not in oh, when you ran out of gas money we'll give you cash. Hmm. Maybe we don't want to give cash to someone who's had a problem with addiction or some, you know, thinking about those kind of things, letting the help be help not enablement.



Kira Dorrian 36:20

Yeah, huge, I love it. Well, thanks for listening. Sorry, we ran a little bit over today but such an important topic. And Deana thank you for sharing such a vulnerable thing. And you thank Scott for letting us share that as well. And just making sure our listeners really, really appreciate being kind of led into something very real. So if you have questions for Deana or opinions for me, feel free to write in info@futurefocusedparenting.com and don't forget to like us on Facebook, Instagram @raisingadults or @futurefocusedparenting. And of course, please, please please reviews, reviews and ratings. We really, really appreciate them. 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 37:08

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