

Episode 55. Using Mindfulness in Parenthood with Hunter Clar...

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SPEAKERS

Deana Thayer, Hunter Clarke-Fields, Kira Dorrian, Future Focused Parenting



Future Focused Parenting 00:03

What happens when two parent coaches, one a Christian and the other an agnostic Jew, sit down to talk about parenting? They take their listeners from surviving to thriving. I'm Deana Thayer, and I'm Kira, Dorrian. Welcome to Raising Adults, a podcast brought to you by Future Focused Parenting.



Kira Dorrian 00:25

Well, hi, everyone. Welcome back to Raising Adults. Thank you for being with us today, we have a really cool guest on the show today, Hunter Clarke- Fields who hosts the Mindful Mama podcast, and is just a mindfulness and loving kindness coach. She's just fabulous. And the interview is really interesting and really resonated for us in terms of some of the things we talk about. I feel like she just really mirrors that, right. So we're excited to share that with you. But before we do, I have to tell you a funny story that I know our listeners will appreciate. So Deana and I were at a speaking gig the other day, we were giving a talk at Crystal Springs preschool. So shout out to Crystal Springs. And we, after the talk, we went out into the lobby, and we chatted with a few people. And then it was clear that they've kind of moved on to their next activity. And we, it was time for us to go. So we leave and we end up getting out this weird side door. And it's dark and it's raining. And we, the door slams behind us. And we suddenly realized that we're in their playground, which

is fenced in, fully fenced, in the dark, and the door that slammed behind us is no re entry. Like, we cannot get back in and everybody's inside having their like, all school meeting. So we're like, it's cool, like, no problem. We've got laptops and books that we you know, sell at the events and all this kind of stuff. And so we walk through the playground, and we get to the edge of the fence and there's a gate. Fabulous, we're so excited. So we get to this gate, and we cannot open this gate it is, it is uber locked, which is good, because that will protect the children. But yeah, we could not get out. And of course, we have no way of contacting the people inside. And so I'm sitting there kind of running through okay, what are the options like in my head, you know, thinking like, okay, well, we could, we could call someone, we could bang on the door, you know, I've got all these options in my head. And Deana Thayer turns to me and is like, hold this, gives me her water bottle and her purse, and hops the fence. And this is like a six foot fence. Right?

D Deana Thayer 02:26
Definitely taller than us.

K Kira Dorrian 02:27
Oh, significantly. We are very small individuals. And she just climbs this, I mean, without even, it was like, fascinating to me. Because for me, that was probably like the very, very bottom of my list.

D Deana Thayer 02:39
That would have been if we had exhausted everything else?

K Kira Dorrian 02:41
Yeah, we have now tried everything, it is time to hop the fence. And Deana was like, hold this, hops this fence and gets to the other side, and like weasels her way back into the preschool and comes around to the door and lets me in. It was, I have no words. It was just I loved you. I've always loved you. But, but I just loved you even more that this was your go to, like, no problem.

D Deana Thayer 03:03
Well, I felt it was sort of my responsibility, since I'm the one who led us out the wrong door. And this is what happens when Deana is at the front of the line. And I've said this to you before and probably on the podcast before, but I am the person GPS was invented for. So

I do not have the sense of direction happening. It's not a thing for me. And I thought oh, it's the way where they showed us where the restroom is. So I just went out all confidently and knew almost immediately because we had to go through some like vinyl plastic sheeting.

K

Kira Dorrian 03:13

Yeah, that should have been our clue.

D

Deana Thayer 03:32

Yeah, we didn't come in through the plastic. So I figured it, you know, I should take it upon myself. But that probably was a little silly. I was dressed up for a speaking engagement and going up and over a very large, wet...

K

Kira Dorrian 03:48

But you did it in like one swoop. I mean, if I had done that, first of all, there would have been grunting. And second of all, like I just, I mean it was just like, she popped up, a leg swung over, and boom, she was over this giant fence. It was amazing. So anyway, I just...

D

Deana Thayer 04:04

We had an adventure.

K

Kira Dorrian 04:05

We did have an adventure. So if you were at that event,

D

Deana Thayer 04:08

Now you know what happened after, behind the scenes.

K

Kira Dorrian 04:12

Exactly. So before we launch into the interview, we did want to let you know some exciting news. We kind of touched on this in the last episode, but our online courses are officially live. They're up and running. If you go to our shop tab, you know we talk about that shop tab all the time. The shop tab is like official now. So you can either click on the word shop or there's a drop down that will say online courses and videos. And you want to click on

that and we are running a massive sale right now like everything is over 60% off because it's like our launch special. And don't forget if you are a Raising Adults podcast listener, you get 15% off on top of that. Yeah, so but if you enter the code, RAISINGADULTS, all one word, all caps, then you will get that extra 15% off. So definitely take advantage of that because we're not going to run that for forever. Go to futurefocusedparenting.com, click on the word shop or on the drop down menu, online courses and videos. And check those out. They are so cool, like the fundamentals program is just going to transform your whole parenting style. It takes the essence of what we talk about on the show and breaks it into six easy steps to follow that will just completely transform the way you think about parenting. I really, I think, I'm very proud of it, I really am. And then each of us released a 30 minute video, Deana has an amazing video on infant sleep. So if you liked the episode that she did, this is like an even deeper dive into that to help foster some good sleep habits for your baby so that you can get more sleep. And then I did a 30 minute video all on fostering emotional intelligence in children. And as similarly, if you liked the episode that we released, this is an even deeper dive into that. So highly recommend checking those out, futurefocusedparenting.com click on that shop tab and it will take you to the store. And don't forget to put in that code Raising Adults all one word for 15% off. Yay. Yay. Super fun. All right, so let's get to the interview. Hunter, welcome to the show. Thank you so much for being with us today.

H

Hunter Clarke-Fields 06:12

I'm so glad to be here. Thank you so much for having me.

K

Kira Dorrian 06:14

Absolutely. So can you just start by telling our listeners all about yourself and the work that you're doing and how you developed the Mindful Mama podcast?

H

Hunter Clarke-Fields 06:24

Well, let's see, the Mindful Mama podcast kind of has its own story. It's all sort of meandering, but um, I, I kind of fell into working with mindfulness and parenting and developing the mindful parenting work through what happened in my own life, with parenting in my own life. I am, I had discovered and been practicing mindfulness for a while and studying about it since I was a teenager out of sheer necessity. Through you know, I was really kind of like emotionally kind of up and down. And I would fall into these pits and, and lo and behold, after I read about meditation practices and mindfulness practices for a decade, once I actually practiced, it really helped enormously. I actually like figure, you know, reading about tennis does not make you a better better tennis

player. I have to say, so it's very similar with practicing mindfulness, but um, it really helped me have a lot more equanimity in my life and really helped me be able to handle so much more and, and then I got pregnant. And I remember I was like, sitting in a meditation group with like, my big pregnant belly and thinking like, oh, yeah, I'm gonna rock this, it's gonna be so good. Because I'm, like, sitting here meditating. I'm pregnant. This is gonna be the most peaceful child. Yeah, all right, you know, everyone just really wasn't. And, you know, until at that point, um, I had been a teacher, I'd been working as an artist. And, and I had, I had been teaching yoga, yoga became a big part of my life and was one of the avenues that I was able to finally practice meditation through. And, and then when I was parenting my child, it was just, she was just a very intense, highly sensitive baby, like, really intense. And, I mean, it was an intense birth too, like, very intense from the beginning. And then, you know, I was like, kind of like with these, you know, I had her in a birth center, and I was with my kind of crunchy birth center moms, they seem so blissed out, and like, you know, and I was just like, why am I struggling so much. She was really intense. And then when she started talking, it got so much worse. And I really, the big, biggest catalyst for this work was, was how hard it was. And honestly, how hard it was really, the big, the big teacher for me, in doing all the work that I do was, was my temper, was my anger that came out. And, and it's, you know, it's so, it's interesting because I was, that was some of the work I was doing with my, with my painting too was like, working with this, you know, I had this, this intense fiery temper, and still do, you know, it hasn't gone away too much. I mean, it's, it's changed and shifted more, but really, like as this temper came out, and my buttons got pushed, and I just was like, I just felt like I was like, truly failing at this job that was like the most important thing to me in the world. That I really, you know, it meant the world to me and I, so I could either you know, it could either just like completely knock me over and kill me or, or I had to learn from it. So I just went, what, what can you teach me, anger? What, what can my temper teach me and, and that was, that was really the catalyst for all this work was that I was, I was kind of like one of those people who's like good, you know, good student, good at being good at things, good at you know, a lot of things. And then here's the thing I'm really bad at. And so I thought, so then I, so then I kind of dove into all this, this learning and understanding and giving myself this, you know, trainings and all these things to kind of understand it. And then, and what I realized is like, okay, there's, there's some things that are missing from this conversation in different areas, and I have something to contribute to, to things that are missing from this conversation. And, and if I can do this with my temper as intense as it was, you know, you can too. And just understanding, from this place of understanding how hard it is. Yeah. So I think, I think that that's the, that's the catalyst. That's the sort of like, the, the spark for the journey was my, was my anger.



Kira Dorrian 11:11

Wow, I so appreciate your honesty and vulnerability in sharing all that because I think so many of us are dealing with that. And it's not a part of the conversation. People are scared to be honest about that. Like, I have a temper. Sometimes I yell, sometimes I yell more than I'd like to. So I just really appreciate your willingness to even put that out there.

D

Deana Thayer 11:31

Yeah, it's really relatable. I think we've all been there. And, and what you said about, I'm doing a bad job at the thing that's most important. I think we've all felt like that at one time or another. And I love that today we're going to talk about loving yourself, you know, can you love yourself into being a better parent? And I know you really believe we can. And so much of that starts with our own self talk. Kira and I talk about that all the time as well on the podcast and how important that is. And one of the things you talk about is the mean voice in your head. So can you tell us what that is? And how we even work to deal with that as moms?

H

Hunter Clarke-Fields 12:05

Yeah, sure. So you know, going back to, going back to that, like that, that temper coming out, right at first, like the voice that came out of my head was this like, mean voice like, oh, you are failing at this. Like you're, I'm a terrible mom, right? That's the, that's what I was telling myself. I'm a terrible parent, I'm a terrible mom. And, and was that helpful? That's go figure, like, it kind of left me in this helpless, you know, puddle of tears on the floor. And that's kind of where I would be. And it wasn't, it wasn't that helpful. So, um, so thinking about like that, that mean voice in my head, you know, I had to, I, I had to look at myself and kind of see, see that voice. And then for me, I have a, I have a strong voice. Uh, I have a strong instinct of I can figure this out, I, there's, this is something I figured out, I have some tools. And I have this tool of mindfulness. And so I've been practicing, doing a practice, sitting meditation practice for a number of years. And what is beautiful about that is that it helps us to, to start to see and understand those thoughts, right. And so oftentimes, we most, most often, if we haven't sort of worked with and trained our awareness and our attention, we believe and identify with all the thoughts that are in our head. And then what happens as you start to practice retraining your awareness and your attention, you can start to see oh, like look at this thought, oh, look at how it's affecting me. This isn't really affecting me well, this isn't, this isn't a really helpful way of thinking of it. And you can start to kind of interrupt and change these thoughts. But until we start to, kind of start to, have to develop that self awareness and start to look at those, it can kind of be like, when you're, your thoughts are like, like, you're in a waterfall, right? And you're just under the water. And you're kind of believing and identifying all those thoughts, whether it's, I'm a terrible mother, whatever it is. And then we kind of act from that place.

And as we start to train our attention with mindfulness and self awareness, train our self awareness in general, we can start to kind of step out in front of that waterfall. So that mean voice is really, it's that, it's our, our inner critic, and the truth is, that voice in a lot of ways is, it comes from many different factors and may come from our families of origin and might come from our culture, which is a very judgmentally based culture, you know, kind of like a blaming culture in a lot of ways. And, and so we're just kind of in the soup of that. So that, that voice comes out. And it's also a voice, that in a lot of ways, in some ways, it's a voice of fear that's trying to keep us safe. It's saying, you know, we're having this nervous system reaction to, you know, our nervous system sees our child as a threat, you know, and sees this moment is threatening, it's outside our comfort zone, it's uncomfortable, it's way outside our comfort zone. And this voice is saying, you know, trying to kind of keep you safe and keep you back in, in your comfort zone. So, so we can kind of understand where that's coming from. But, but the truth is, like, when we shame ourselves and blame ourselves, and we have this kind of habit of, way of speaking to ourselves, we may, we may not even realize it, but we might be thinking subconsciously that this is going to help us, because that's kind of culturally what, what we think. But the truth is, it actually doesn't, it actually leaves you very helpless, leaves you feeling helpless, leaves you unable to kind of make a change. Because if you make a mistake, if you try to grow and change, and then you make a mistake, which you will, because you're human, and we all do, and then you're met with this really mean harsh voice in your head, you're not going to try to make those changes and make the, make mistakes again, right, you're going to stay in that tight little comfort zone. And actually what they've shown through research, Kristen Neff's research on self compassion from University of Austin, shows that actually, when we instead practice being kind to ourselves, to treat ourselves as we might our best friend, to, to make the inside match what we want to experience on the outside, right, when we practice that kindness, actually allows us to then try some things that are different, to grow, to make positive changes. Because when we do those things, and we inevitably make mistakes, because we do and we're human, then we're met with a voice of, hey, you know, you were trying, that was hard. That was a, wasn't a great situation, and you tried, but it didn't, you know, it didn't work out so well, something that's kind or something that's more comforting, then we're actually able to, to, to make changes, like changing maybe our communication or whatever you might want to change to, to grow as a parent and as a human being.

K

Kira Dorrian 17:30

It's so amazing what you're saying, because I am a hypnotherapist, and I have a small private practice here in Seattle, and you are speaking my language. Like every client who comes to my door comes in with a problem that they hate about themselves, and they have this horrible mean voice in their head. And so much of the work that I do is actually

to help them understand that that part's trying to help them and it's not really working very well.

D

Deana Thayer 17:51

You should have seen her nodding furiously.

K

Kira Dorrian 17:53

Furiously nodding, because that's exactly right. Like, all the parts of us, especially the parts we don't like, are designed to help us, they're just not working very well. And so we have to figure out the more effective way of helping ourselves. So I just like, preach, I love everything that just came out of your mouth. So can you tell our listeners then, how do we practice and learn to do that? How, how do we create those new like, neuro pathways and, and shift that voice in our head? Do you have some like tangible tools or systems that people can put into place to help them do that?

H

Hunter Clarke-Fields 18:27

Oh, yeah, absolutely. Yeah. And the truth is, like, you know, it's the, the good news is that, you know, we have this neuroplasticity, or our brain is constantly growing and changing to whatever, whatever we are doing at the time, is changing and shifting our brain and literally, you're right, like our neural pathways, and it's really helpful to think of them almost like I'm, I kind of think of them as like, like, literal like kind of pathways. Like so you might have a habit energy of being hard on yourself. And that habit, you might have been working on that one for a good 30 plus years, right? So it's pretty strong. It's like a neural superhighway, nice and well paved. It's actually literally easier for the neurons to connect right in the brain. Because it's well myelinated and all of that, that stuff, but then this to say that you can change and it does you, you can practice new habits. And it often feels like really uncomfortable at first and feels really strange because you, you're used to doing that, that superhighway of shame and blame. And then when you start to like practice something different, like being kind to yourself, it's kind of like at first you're like bushwhacking a path through the forest, you know? Like, doesn't feel right, like, and then you're like, kind of like, you have to walk on the path and the more you go down that path, the more you practice, literally the more well trod it becomes. So to say it's, our brain is constantly growing and changing, we can change it. And it's not easy it takes, it takes practice, but the good news about loving kindness, about self compassion is that they are ways of loving and ways of being with ourselves that we can practice that we, it's a, that you can cultivate. And, you know, we, I kind of like to think of it like, inside ourselves, you know, we have the seeds of all those different feelings and all those different ways of

being, you know, we have the seeds of anger and aggression and, and doubt and all those things. But we also have the seeds of kindness, we have the seeds of compassion, we have the seeds of mindfulness, of creativity, all those things. And we want to be like gardeners, like selective waterers, and we want to water those good seeds, so that we can grow that garden. And in and so the ways to practice include, you know, I would say there are kinda two places that you want to practice, and you want to practice in a difficult moment, but it's gonna be in the difficult moments when our stress responses is, is happening. And so it's actually kind of hard, that's the hardest time to practice. So if you can practice in like easier moments, then you're more likely to be able to, to draw on those tools in the difficult moments. So some, so in the easier moments, you might, you might practice by doing a loving kindness practice, and, and that just means maybe taking some time every day to touch a hand to your heart, to breathe, and to offer yourself, um, to offer yourself kindness. And the way we traditionally do this, and I, and I actually think it's very important for us to, to do this as, as moms or as parents, but especially women, because we're, we're so conditioned to like, be trained to not think of ourselves. But to deliberately think of yourself and you can, you can even try this now, think of yourself as you are now. Or even yourself as a four year old child, kind of picturing yourself, I picture myself with those bangs cut across all straight. Anyway, but you can touch a hand to your heart and you can say words to yourself, offer words like may, may I be safe. May I be happy. May I be healthy. May I live with ease or, or may I be peaceful and may I be safe, or whatever. You could pick like two or three phrases that, that resonate with you, may I be peaceful, may I be safe. And so you start your day, sitting at the edge of your bed, you know, with your feet on the ground, and just saying this to yourself maybe five or 10 times just with your hand over your heart. And then as you start to to water these seeds, you know, then in those difficult moments, that that kindness and compassion is a little more likely to come out. And this is a super simple practice. But it's like I said, it's not necessarily going to be easy. You're bushwhack, you might be bushwhacking through the forest. And you might be a little bit faking it till you make it. And that's okay. It's okay to do that. But ultimately, the fruits of this practice are so valuable because the truth is like, I'm, as parents, you know, you are going to be squeezed at many, many times in your life. When, when you're squeezed, what's inside is what's going to come out. Just like when you squeeze an orange, juice, orange juice is coming out, you're not going to squeeze out some pomegranate juice. So if you want, when you're, you're in those moments with your kids, where you're feeling squeezed, if you want to have compassion come out or kindness come out, you have to practice that inside yourself for yourself first, because otherwise that harshness and that mean voice is going to come out. And so we have to start to really cultivate that, that kindness within.



Deana Thayer 24:11

And you mentioned some great ideas for what to do in those calmer times. And when you're maybe in a more low stakes situation. Say it is one of those harder moments you're describing. What are, what are the ways that you would access that loving kindness and mindfulness in those hard moments?

H

Hunter Clarke-Fields 24:28

That's a really good question. And so just like, just like kind of practicing, that makes it more like, practicing that kindness makes it more likely to come out in those hard moments. Practicing this one crucial piece that everyone talks about that you're gonna, it's going to be so obvious, practicing it in those calm moments really helps too. So and that means, that is the pause, right? So we all say like, okay, pause in those difficult moments. But yeah, I wouldn't be losing it if I knew how to pause. We, we have to practice it in the calm moments. So you might practice before you answer a question, just taking a breath. When nothing else is happening, when there's no other problem, you might practice just kind of pausing then. And then you're kind of building that mental muscle so that when you come to that moment, where it's that difficult moment, it's not like you're trying to bushwhack a path, you've already got a path to go on. Your neurons already have a path to go on to, to enact that pause. And so let's, let's imagine that you're able to do that pause. And so some, skipping over a bunch of steps here, because sometimes it's like, it's like, you lose it. And after the fact, you're like, oh, I should have paused and said something nice to myself. And then like, right before you yell, you're like, I shouldn't yell, I should pause, but you yell anyway. And then you just, and then, you know, eventually you kind of move back the timeline. With practice, I'm kind of speeding up a little but, but say, you're able to pause. And then in that moment, if you can pause, and you can practice, you can then maybe take a breath, you can touch do that, send that, touch the hand to the heart. And that sense of touch, your brain really registers it as like a compassionate act. And then anything else, you know, sort of besides yelling, or even saying, I'm about to lose it right now, and I need a break. Or, I'm really angry right now. And you just walk away. Those are all wonderful, really skillful alternatives to like losing it in that moment.

K

Kira Dorrian 26:43

I have this image of like, I'm trying to think how to describe this. But the image in my head is almost like of a mother stroking a child's head, that like, we sort of need that mothering ourselves, right? We're mothering ourselves in that, in that moment, like we, you know, we would, we would want to say to ourselves something loving and motherly. Right, like, may you be safe, may you be loved, you know, take a pause, take a breath, honey, all the same things we would say to our kids, we have to remember to say to ourselves in those moments, right?

H

Hunter Clarke-Fields 27:14

Yeah, yeah, exactly. So you know, if you're able to kind of walk away, that exactly, you want to mother yourself. So you don't want to walk away and say I'm a crappy mom...you know, to yourself. So if you think about what Deana might say to you in that moment, and you know, she might say this moment sucks. And it's hard. And, and, and it's okay, you can, you can do it. You, you know, this is a hard moment. But, but you know, you can, you can take a break, you don't have to respond right away, you know, and, and, yeah, and all those things, you might say to a good friend.

D

Deana Thayer 27:52

Yeah. And what's so great about this, too, is that once you do get a grip on it, I mean, that will take some time and the practice, like you mentioned, but once you get a grip on it, it's really setting a pretty beautiful example for your children as well about how to how to handle these things that come up for us and how to love ourselves, even in the midst of it. And here, Kira and I, we love modeling, we talk about it all the time at Future Focused Parenting. And so we were excited when we learned how important that is to you. And I'm wondering if you would be willing to talk a little bit about this idea of modeling the kind of life you want your child to lead? Can you share a little bit about that with us?

H

Hunter Clarke-Fields 28:27

Absolutely. Yeah. Um, you know, that's exactly right. Like in those moments, I'm thinking about, when we think about why those moments are so tricky for us, right? When our kids have some kind of big, difficult feelings. These moments are really tricky for us, mostly because we were taught through our childhood that, that it's unacceptable to have these feelings, right. Like, we, our parents lost it at us if we had big feelings, or if we yelled or whatever. And they inadvertently taught us this lesson that our big feelings and our challenging feelings were unacceptable. So then when we get in this moment with our child, we're, we're just perpetuating this generational pattern where they're, they're having some big feelings and, and we, if that feels so unacceptable to us. That's that old habit, right, that old super strong highway neural pathway, that, that it feels like, you know, it makes, it makes it this feeling of just complete unacceptability. So what we want to do in those moments is we're really trying to teach ourselves how do we take care of our own difficult feelings. And when we learn and practice how to take care of our own difficult feelings, it's like a two for one deal, because we're modeling how to do it for our kids and teaching them how to do, teaching them how to do it. But it's wonderful to talk to your kids about how to take care of difficult feelings, but it's, it's also almost pointless if you're not doing it yourself, because they're really great at, you guys talk about modeling, right? Like, they're great at doing what we do, but they're not so great at doing what we say. So,

if you even say out loud, you know, I'm feeling really angry, I need a moment, I need to go take a breath. Or if you, you know, really visibly, like, ah, take your breath, you know, and, or if you even if you do something wildly radical and silly, like, do a forward fold, or, you know, a child's pose on the floor, and your child is like, what are you doing? And you can say, like, I'm taking care of my feelings, as I'm starting to feel really upset and annoyed and frustrated. And you can show them, you can sit, speak out loud what you're doing. And, and for many of us, when, or for many of my clients often like as I suggest this, this feels like this shocking, like, thing to do. I would, why would I do that in front of my child? We have this idea in our culture that we're going to kind of lose face or lose respect and things like that, but it's actually quite the opposite. You know, our kids, then they say, oh, like, you're not just this role, that I have to push against, that I have to get what I want, you're a real person, you have real feelings, you're trying to take care of these feelings. It offers your child a chance to tap into their really innate empathy. And it's really amazing, like, kids as young as two can say, oh, Mommy, this is hard for you. I've heard stories of, it's pretty amazing. But, and when we, when we take care of our own feelings like this, it's like, it's like this, this powerful effect, and what it helps, it helps us to then be more available for our kids, when they're having their big feelings too, to just not, to just be a little bit more accepting of the feelings, not necessarily the behavior, you know, we, we want to put boundaries around that, but we can accept the feelings because there's no point, you know, in, in trying to stop them anyway. Yeah. So you know, that, that modeling is, it's what we, it's what we needed, right? And we kind of have to, it's harder for us, because we maybe didn't have that modeling. But we, it's possible to do it. And as you practice with yourself, you, you feel more and more grounded, and then you, you know, you, you show your kids and that always feels, it's, you know that you're doing something really powerful and positive for them.

K

Kira Dorrian 32:37

I love the idea of modeling the pause. I mean, because even if you're doing a forward roll, or you're, you know, doing Child's Pose, or whatever it is, you're, you're sending the pause, right? Like, they'll grow up and be like, you know, my mom always took a pause. Whenever something big happened, she always took a pause and like, what an amazing gift for them as they grow into adulthood to learn how to take that pause, not even with their own children, but at work with a boss or you know, whatever it is like the practiced pause. I think that's just so cool.

H

Hunter Clarke-Fields 33:06

Absolutely. I just want to say that I probably said it quickly. It's not a forward roll, which would be hilarious. But a forward fold.

K Kira Dorrian 33:15
Oh like in yoga, you did totally say fold.

H Hunter Clarke-Fields 33:19
I just wanted to make sure because I love that image of like, I'm super upset. Let's just do some forward rolls.

D Deana Thayer 33:24
Why is Mommy doing a somersault?

K Kira Dorrian 33:27
Hey, whatever works. So one of the things that I know you've talked about is that you can't give what you don't have as a mom. So can you talk about that a little bit? Because I love this idea. And I'd love for our listeners to hear your thoughts on it.

H Hunter Clarke-Fields 33:44
Oh, yeah. Yeah, I mean, we, we tend to think like, oh, I can give everything to my child, I can be compassionate to them, I can listen to them, I can be there for them, I can play with them. And I can, you know, be really present for them. But you can't give all that to your child unless you're giving it to yourself. And, and those words don't come from me. They come from Brene Brown and her research and it's really true. Like we, it's kind of goes back full circle like to that harsh inner voice, right. So, you know, I'll give an example. My, my mom, I love her so much. She's amazing. She modeled for me some amazing things, actually, including some great self care. She used to take herself horse, on horseback riding lessons, even though we didn't, you know, anyway, it was, that was wonderful. But one of the things that she, we can't give what we don't, we do not have that she, she struggled with herself was she, she struggled with her, her self image. And you know, eventually these things sort of come out. So if we are, if we're not practicing, loving and accepting ourselves, those things will eventually come out. What's inside is what comes out. So she, I remember seeing her in the mirror like looking at herself saying I'm so ugly. And you know, you know what, like, lo and behold, when I was in my early 20s, that's what I did. I looked in the mirror, myself in my mirror, and I told myself I was so ugly, and I was disgusted with myself. And I had this terrible self image. I mean, it's amazing now to think like, I was this young, like, 20 something person, and I was kind of working with these things. And, you know, I, and I say that even as a pretty like, slim person,

everything, you know, it's just these, these are the habits. We learn that from our, from our parents. So she, because that wasn't inside, she wasn't able to, to give that to me in some ways, right. So we, it kind of goes back to that modeling, like, we want to want to be there for our kids, want to be present for them, we want to be here in the moment with them, we want to be able to. I mean, when I think of what like, that idea of like raising good humans or loving ourselves into better parents, like, I want my children to love and accept themselves as they are. Because I know, through my own experience, and through the experience of my clients that that is how you feel grounded in this world, like you can feel confident, you can have the wherewithal to get your needs met and ask questions. And all of those things that we need is that, that, that, acceptance of ourselves, and so to be able to give that to our kids, we have to practice it with ourselves. Because if we're harsh and judgmental with ourselves, then that judgment habit is going to come out with our kids, eventually, they're going to just learn it from us. Or if we're always doing everything for others. And then, you know, we think that that's going to be the sort of healthy way of being actually, you know, you're kind of modeling for your kids a way of being that's all about burnout. And you know, never good enough, right? Because if we're always going and doing and achieving, then we're kind of modeling this, this perfectionist, never good enough thing, right? So we have to do that work with ourselves. It's kind of non negotiable. You know, if you don't want to, if you have some things you don't want to pass on. If you're human, you got some things you don't want to pass on. You have to do that work.

D

Deana Thayer 37:17

Yeah, if you're human, I think that actually applies to all of us. Thankfully, yes, that's really good. And what's so important there, I love, that I just want to highlight again, is we talk about modeling, you've talked about modeling, and only giving what you have available. And for some of us, this might mean we actually need to work to cultivate it in ourselves, we can't just fake it till you make it kind of a thing. You've got to really maybe work to cultivate that positive self talk, for instance, in front of the mirror, or you can't pass it on if you're not doing it yourself. So that is so important for us to remember. And I'm just really glad you mentioned it. And I know you have something exciting coming on the horizon with your upcoming book *Raising Good Humans*. Would you tell us a little bit about your book?

H

Hunter Clarke-Fields 37:59

Yeah, sure. It's, it's very exciting. I mean, so *Raising Good Humans* takes the, the work that I did to kind of bring this all together and the work we do in the mindful parenting membership. And basically what it is, is that I, as I started to, like, dive into my own intensive education about this, how do I get from like, screaming, losing it as a parent to a

more present, grounded parent, I realized that a, this mindfulness piece was a big part of it, that you know, it helps to calm down that nervous system, that biological stress response. That self compassion piece is a huge part of it for some of the same reasons. We cannot give what we do not have, we talked about those things. But then also, like, in some ways, that wasn't enough, right, like so once I, once I was able to sort of like calm down a little bit more. And then I realized, oh, then I would say something. And it was like, something my mom or dad might have said, or might just be in those, in our culture, and it was just like, kaboom, my child would lose it all over again, it was just not, so just my words weren't so skillful. So I was like, okay, calming down is great, but I need to know the words to say, to have more skillful communication. And then I all, as I study, dove into this and studied, I got trained in parent effectiveness training and all kinds of things. I realized that in that world and sort of this parenting world, they always said, okay, just kind of say these things and everything will be fine. But the problem with that is that when our stress response is triggered, we're, we're, we're literally incapable of accessing the new learning. This upper part of the brain with the prefrontal cortex, with our verbal ability and our empathy, inner creativity, all kind of like goes out the window, when our stress response is triggered. So there were like, you know, there was a lot of information in that, like, you know, step one pause, and then say these things. So I realized this, see these two worlds needed to talk to each other. These two things needed to come together. They're kind of like two wings that need to fly. I think of mindfulness and skillful communication, you know, and I see them as parenting tools. But I think they're kind of life skills, right, that we need in every place. So, but that's what Raising Good Humans is about is bringing together this, these pieces of mindfulness, self compassion, and then skillful communication, so that we can create cooperation with less resistance and without punishing and threatening and all that.

K

Kira Dorrian 40:42

Sounds fantastic. So where can people find the book? And can you tell everyone how they can find you, if they want to learn more? What are your handles, your website, your podcast? Like, tell it, tell them all about the things?

H

Hunter Clarke-Fields 40:54

Okay, sure. So you can find the book, you know, like, everywhere books are sold, but raisinggoodhumansbook.com. You can find some links to buy it there. And then you can get book bonuses, which is great. And, and raisinggoodhumansbook.com is that's all at, you can find everything at mindfulmamamentor.com, mindfulmamamentor.com. And that's where the Mindful Mama podcast is, where I get to talk to amazing people every week and some solo podcasts and the book is there and there's all kinds of great

resources there as well. Then, you can find me on I guess I'm kind of more active on Instagram as far as social handles. So that's @mindfulmamamentor.

K

Kira Dorrian 41:39

Awesome. Hunter, thank you so much for being with us today. And just giving our listeners some really, really great thoughts and tools about how they can kind of shift away from that mean voice in their head into the state of loving kindness and, and just impart that to their kids as well. I just, I think it's fantastic.

H

Hunter Clarke-Fields 41:57

Oh, you're welcome. And thank you for doing what you're doing with the podcast and sharing, sharing this work and sharing your voices. And, and thanks for having me on.

K

Kira Dorrian 42:09

Oh, I love her. I love her. I feel like she was just speaking our language

D

Deana Thayer 42:13

Well, and so relatable. So many of the things she said, I know we've, at least myself, I could say, oh, yep, been there, been there, experienced that, felt that, etc.

K

Kira Dorrian 42:22

Yeah. And I think she's so spot on. It's like so many things actually could be circumvented with a pause, just that mindfulness of, I don't even have to solve it right now. I don't have to fix my feeling right now. All I have to do is take a pause, what do I do in that pause, that will shift what I do next, I just love that.

D

Deana Thayer 42:39

Well, and here's what's great. We talk all the time about how it's important for you to make it work for your family. I also like that then what you do in the pause can be customizable to you and what resonates with you, it might not be putting a hand on your heart or some of the other things she mentioned. But the pause itself is so powerful because it gives you just a break to catch your breath and maybe say or do something different than you were about to, and that is so important.



Kira Dorrian 43:04

Yeah. Well and, and to take that pause as an opportunity to be kind to yourself, like, everything is going to be transformed. If that moment is a moment of love and kindness, you're going to be more loving towards your child because you've been more loving towards yourself. Right?



Deana Thayer 43:19

Yeah. And it's just I don't think we do that enough at all. It's, it's important.



Kira Dorrian 43:25

Yeah, I totally agree. So be sure to check out Hunter and her podcast and her website that she gave you and also her new book coming out called Raising Good Humans. And if you have not yet followed us on Facebook and Instagram, we're running a giveaway on there right now. There's a lot of stuff happening so I highly recommend following us @Futurefocusedparenting. Raising Adults is produced by Kira Dorrian and Deana Thayer and recorded in my laundry room. Music by Seattle band Hannalee.



Future Focused Parenting 43:50

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