

Spin Cycle - Family Meetings

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

parenting, talk, deana, conversation, kids, big, feeling, question, family, pornography, rhiannon, chores, bedtime, ongoing conversation, episode, meeting, topics, rhys, grownups, chat

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.
 - K** Kira Dorrian 00:16
Well, Hi everyone. Welcome to another spin cycle here in the laundry room with Kira and Deana at Raising Adults, we got a great listener question that we wanted to make sure we took the time to answer. Thank you for everyone who's sending in those listener questions. We sure love them. Don't forget info@futurefocusedparenting.com I kind of wonder if now

that I've explained that it has an E-D, if we're getting more questions. This might be why giving people I don't know, like the correct email address. And so the question was, how do you as a family make time for some of these big conversations? We've got this attribute of the month that's out now and and people are getting something to focus on and how do we actually find the time to have the conversation about generosity. How do we actually find the time to say, Hey, we're gonna make a change about chores? This is what's gonna happen now. So, Deana, do you want to share how you guys do in your family?

D

Deana Thayer 01:09

Okay, I'll say a couple general things first, I'm so sorry, but I'm laughing because I know that Cienna and Marc, I talked to them in advance about isn't this funny the way we do it? But here's my general ideas, and then I'm gonna tell you what we actually do. So the first general thing is it doesn't have to be an act of Congress. I don't think every time it has to be a big sit down, we're going to have a family meeting because we haven't been doing chores the way we should. And we're going to fix it. It can honestly be a couple sentences. You know, mommy and daddy realized we can have you have some responsibilities around the house. We haven't really been doing that. So we're gonna start with these three easy ones. Here they are. On Saturday, we're gonna do it for the first time. That easy. So it doesn't always have to be a big to do. I think some of these issues definitely do. But it doesn't always have to be. So that's number one. And number two, is instead of one conversation, I think of it as an ongoing conversation which, as you do life, as you're being an example, as you're doing a chore you even talk about it. Oh, I really like the way you just took out the garbage. You showed initiative there, you just saw something that needed to be done and did it. Well, now, they just had a little life lesson nugget about what initiative means and what it looks like in action, but you didn't have a big, deep, meaningful conversation. That being said, sometimes some of these issues do call for that. And one of the ways we've kind of done this at home is it gets harder and harder for us, frankly, to have family dinners together. It's just a challenge with people going here and there or sports and activities and musical rehearsals, what have you. So we do actually buy table topics, you've probably heard of them. And there's all kinds of different varieties. So right now we're working through the teen edition of table topics and so we just pull out a question. We can start having a dialogue and often it'll lead to something else. So the other night, we just had one about what do you think are the most important qualities in a friend? Well, that ended up being a great conversation. But it started with just pulling a card out of the box. So if you're stumped, and you don't want to just ask how your day was at school, I really do recommend table topics. You can get travel edition ones, little kid ones, family ones, I mean, they're great. And you can just buy them on Amazon. But lately, I have some busy people. And so I've been just watching and looking for a moment of

downtime, and then I come out with the crazy stuff. So for the things that do need a bigger thing, I think when you have younger kids, it can be over the family dinner table, or it can be if your family does do family meetings. I think that's a great way. I'm just being honest. For me, for those of you who have teenagers, you might have to just watch and grab the moment where their faces aren't in their phones or they're not here and there and everywhere. So the car has been a big one for us. We do a little bit less now that my daughter is driving. But when I was still in active chauffeur mode, the car rides were critical. Sometimes we would just say we're not going to have music. We're not going to plug our phone into the aux cord. And I want to ask you about something. We could have a talk. Lately, since that's even happening less, I've seriously just been the jumper, I jump on and capitalize like the Jumping Spider like, oh, they're just hanging out here...

K

Kira Dorrian 04:26

Are they scared of you? They're like, we're hanging out, mom's coming down the stairs, go go.

D

Deana Thayer 04:30

No, but I think sometimes the look on their face does give me a clue that they like really, right now we're doing this. So one of the most recent ones was in Hawaii. I just caught them having a chill moment in the hotel room. And I literally was like, let's talk about pornography. And, I mean, we had a great conversation, but we were on vacation. They weren't busy running to and fro. And I hadn't asked them about it in a few years or maybe actually for one of them it only been a few months but I really like to check in on that regularly because kids are being exposed to this earlier and earlier. And we might have to like put some kind of disclaimer on this episode now. So I'm sorry, but really, it's as young as eight. We're finding and most children have been exposed to some form of it by 11. So to me, this has been an ongoing conversation, but here we were, in Hawaii hanging out, and I caught them and just said, Let's talk again. Have you seen anything maybe you shouldn't have? Is there anything you want to talk about? How's this going? What about your friends? Are they, are you hearing from them that they're exposed to this stuff? But I am sure they were thinking, Mom, seriously, can we just go eat a pineapple? So but this is me, this is like you're getting a real glimpse into Deana. And then most recently, they were on the couch. They were like just watching Netflix, actually not face in phone, not actively working on senior thesis which my daughter, she's in the throes of the senior thesis, which for them is an all year long thing for the senior year of high school. So it's been very busy. So a moment where they actually both aren't doing homework kind of amazing....and we had a great talk about consent. What does it mean to you? Now I have a girl and a boy. So I wanted to hear from both of them. What does that mean to you as a young man?

What does that mean to you as a young lady? And then how would you put yourself in the other person's shoes? And what do you think it would mean to them, but literally random. So guys, let's chat about consent. Tell me what does it mean to you? Here's your, here's your pineapple juice. Let's talk pornography. So it truly has been me just a little bit capitalizing on those down moments because I gotta grab them where I can. My people are big.

K

Kira Dorrian 06:31

Yeah. Well, I mean, at the end of the day, I think what's so cool about that is you, you have not stopped being a parent. Because even though they're older, and maybe it's not their favorite time or convenient time, you know, for them this is their downtime, you're like, nope, I still have to be a parent, I still have a job to do. And so I'm going to grab the moment that allows me to do it, which is great.

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Deana Thayer 06:48

And let's be honest, a lot of times they asked me a question that was not convenient for me. So hey, just just going to share that with them. I'm just going to give them a little sample.

K

Kira Dorrian 06:58

Yeah, exactly. I love that. I know that we are planning to do an episode talking about consent and dating, which I'm really looking forward to, I suppose we probably need to do a pornography episode as well. I feel like I can drop an F bomb in this spincycle because I'm gonna have to mark it E anyway.

D

Deana Thayer 07:13

I already brought up porn. So the cats out of the bag.

K

Kira Dorrian 07:16

Well, I'll share just a little bit about what we do. I mean, we're in really early phases of this, right? I mean, our kids are really just coming to an age where we can have sit down conversations where there's a back and forth and questions asked, and it's so exciting. I love it. I love not just when we're having the big talks, but just the little things that they say and questions they ask. And you have this little dialogue. It's just amazing. But we definitely have family meetings, long may they last until they're teenagers it sounds like

and pretty much anyone can call a family meeting most of the time, it's us. And we sort of say, hey, guys, we're gonna have a family meeting everybody meet downstairs in five minutes. And so sometimes if we have something bigger, hard that we want to talk about, we'll we'll do it that way. And when you lead with, you know, we have something kind of big and hard to talk about today. But Rhys called a family meeting the other day, it was pretty adorable. And, and he he was saying that he was feeling he was feeling unloved by some of the choices that the grownups were making. And he wanted to be able to talk about that. And could we have a family meeting, please? And we said, Sure. And I was sort of blown away because we all sat down. My dad was there too. It was one where he was involved because Rhys was upset about all the, all the grownups. And so that it was lovely. He, he said to me afterwards, he's like, Mommy, I been thinking about, practicing all day, what I was gonna say. So like, he took it really seriously that he was gonna have a chance to have his voice heard. And it tells me that we're doing something right because he, he knew that he would, he must have known that he was going to be heard because he took the time to figure out what he was going to say. So he sort of shared what he was feeling and all of that and I was just so impressed. Dave and my dad both asked a couple clarifying questions to make sure they understood what he was saying, they explained a couple of things. Rhiannon then offered a bunch of information that she felt was relevant. I think she felt like she was probably supposed to add something to the conversation. But everyone was really cool and just let her her voice be heard too. And at the end, we finished up and checked in with Rhys. Like, are you feeling, are you feeling okay? Do you feel like we have some solutions here of how we how we move forward differently? And he was like, yeah, I feel really good. Thank you so much. And then Rhiannon was like, guys, I'm so proud of all of us. Look at how we handled this, we should hug it out. So we all hugged and it was beautiful. And it was really the first of its kind where we weren't leading it. Because you know, it's one thing as a parent, when you're leading something like that you have an agenda. You want to make sure you're covering the topic, blah, blah, blah, but to sort of be responding to them, and letting them lead was really special. So we do, we do a lot of that when we're having a big chat. We try really, really hard if it's something big or hard, that we're physically to get and be able to look at each other in the eye. So we'll go somewhere comfortable like the couch or we'll sit on the floor together, we try and get close physically as well. So like, have the kids in our lap so that there's some intimacy as well. And just a feeling of calm and peace and love. That is a part of this maybe harder thing that we have to talk about. So yeah, that's pretty much how how we handle it, I think a really great just tip, because I know we've talked about this, and I can't remember which episode apologies but with our own spouse to make, hey, we have this set time. So I would say if you're really busy family, maybe both parents are working or it's just a challenge. You can have a carved out time even every week. And if you don't need it, you don't have to use it, but at least then it's there. Kind of like we've also talked about with scheduling the vacations, get them on the calendar. So if your

meeting is already carved out for you, it's not hard to do it. It's already part of the schedule and if you find it this week, there isn't anything to change. It's okay. But you won't be in the other situation where we really need to talk about something and we can't find the time, right. The other thing we've done and again, this would definitely change as your kids get older, but for younger kids is we do a fair amount of bedtime, bedtime is a really good time of day. I have found specifically with my daughter works very, very well with Rhiannon, and it's a great time to have a calm and peaceful conversation. So it was a lot of times, I'm the type of person I think you're like this too. I'm gonna deal with it now. But I have learned that that is totally ineffective, especially with Rhiannon. And I've learned that if I can hold myself off till bedtime, I'm calmer, she's calmer, and we are more likely to have a rational conversation plus, again, we're close. I'm curled up in bed with her, you're starting to wind down your brain. So a lot of times I'll say, you know what we're going to talk about, like if something major happened or even something small that we really need to talk about. I'll say you know what I think let's talk about that a bedtime, and wait for that quiet time and occasionally, we have, have done two parents at bedtime, where we've said to one of them, we need to talk to your sibling. So can you go in your room and read, and we need to have a private conversation with them.

D

Deana Thayer 12:09

Yeah, that can be really great. And that's actually kind of similar to the car. Sometimes I would wait till I knew I was going to have just one of them in the car. And they can just be hanging out relaxing, sitting or just the, I think even the hum of the road. I mean, think about it, infants often fall asleep in the car. So that can be a little bit of just this little safe cocoon. So with older kids where you're maybe not necessarily doing this elaborate talking routine anymore, that can be an opportunity. And another one is our kids are taught....I will say with the eye roll there that people didn't see, they're not, still not so great at it sometimes, with the knocking first in our bedroom in particular. So Scott's kids were really taught that you ever see a closed door you knock. Well, when I was a single mom, we had a very open door policy. My kids were going through a lot of stuff and they were little and so they did not learn this lesson. And I will be honest, it's because I didn't teach it yet. I picked my priorities; that wasn't one of them. So now for different reasons, it's pretty essential that they knock. They have step siblings a step dad, you know, we just wouldn't want anything unfortunate happening. But another thing I do that you made me think of when you talked about bedtime is often if I have a bigger conversation, I invite them into my room. And when, we have a little sofa in there actually in a sitting area, and so it's kind of this special. Come in here when normally you're gonna have to knock first but you get to come in and sit and relax and we can chat and that also gives just a separate space because the kids have a very strong message from us that the master suite is a pretty private and almost sacred place that they don't just barge into whenever.

Again, not, not executed perfectly.



Kira Dorrian 13:49

I love that. Yeah, we do. You know, we have, we have very vocal children. We have very emotionally available children, emotionally expressive children, probably because of the work that I do. And so we get a lot of Mommy, I need to talk to you privately. And so we have a guest bedroom downstairs and we end up having a lot of our big chats in there, where it's like, okay, no problem. And, you know, we'll scoot over to the guest room and sit down on the bed together and have a chat. And yeah, some of our biggest and most meaningful conversations have happened in that little room.



Deana Thayer 14:21

I love that because I'm hopeful that that's not only helpful to the listener who asked this question, but to people at large that you can think about, well, maybe not all of these things work for you, but maybe one of them. Well, can dinner be a good time? Could bedtime be a good time? Do we maybe need to think about instituting family meetings? Or is it going to be more about what time of day it happens or a special room we go, with some of those practical tools, just pick from among those and you might be able to make some space for some of these conversations about how you handle your parenting.



Kira Dorrian 14:47

Yeah, I love it. All right. Well, if you have a listener question, you know, we love getting that info@futurefocusedparenting.com if you have not followed us on Facebook and Instagram, our handle is @raisingadultspodcast. We really appreciate all those likes and follows and if you haven't rated the podcast yes do that, do that we love reviews. We love those ratings and reviews and they really do help us with our relevancy. So I, we hope to hear some listener questions soon and we'll be back next week with another episode. 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 15:23

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Kira Dorrian 15:23

Hannalee. Thanks for listening