

Episode 146. Honoring Where Our Kids Are Different From Us

📅 Thu, 10/28 1:06PM ⏱ 30:02

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

kids, surprises, important, parents, deana, people, person, children, love, line, grooming, families, childhood, happy, kira, learned, cleanliness, modeling, happen, feel

SPEAKERS

Deana Thayer, Cozi, Kira Dorrian, Future Focused Parenting, Manscaped

D Deana Thayer 00:00

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F Future Focused Parenting 00:32

Welcome to Raising Adults, the groundbreaking parenting podcast that starts with the end in mind. We're your co-hosts Deana Thayer, and Kira Dorrian. We created Future Focused Parenting to take families from surviving to thriving. So join us as we help you stop raising kids and start Raising Adults.

M Manscaped 00:57

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K Kira Dorrian 02:36

Well, hi everyone and welcome to another episode of Raising Adults. Kira Dorrian over here in my laundry room. Deana Thayer is over there on the totes in her coat closet. We're so happy that you're here for another episode. It's not a doozy today, but it's an important topic. And I feel like usually we say it's a doozy. So I'm pleased that we can just say, today's a good topic to talk about, and think about. How you doing Deana?

D Deana Thayer 03:02

I am well thanks. I'm, I'm really, I'm really contemplative at this time of year, I feel like because we're approaching the end of the year, and it always gets you thinking about the new year ahead, and so I'm good. I'm, it's kind of nice, actually, that at the moment, we're recording separately, and I'm in this little closet. I feel like in some ways, your space helps you. And so this is a contemplative space. I'm in this cozy little corner. Helps me do deep thinking, what can I say? And I'm ready for today, because you're right. While it might not be a doozy or this big thing with a lot of gravity, I think it's fairly universal.

K Kira Dorrian 03:41

Yeah.

D Deana Thayer 03:41

And probably every parent will experience it at some point.

K Kira Dorrian 03:44

I think so, I think so, which is the topics we try to talk about anyway.

D Deana Thayer 03:47

It is, you know, we want them to be applicable.

K Kira Dorrian 03:49

I do have to give a disclaimer today that I haven't had to give in a while. So we're going to take a moment for that. My children's school had a power outage, and so they're home today on a recording day. It's been a while friends. It's been a while. I've enjoyed the gift of children back at school, but they are home today

and you might hear their little voices in the background. You might not but just worth letting you know that if you hear little tiny critters giggling, screaming, crying or chewing in the background. Those are mine.

D

Deana Thayer 04:20

Or chewing?

K

Kira Dorrian 04:22

You just never know. Also, they rile up the dog, so if you hear Guido barking, also mine. It's a fun day here at Team Dorrian.

D

Deana Thayer 04:33

I love the power outage, the random power outage. But I mean over the years we've had everything from hair rubbing the microphone, to epic thunderstorms in the background, to chainsaws. I'm sure we can handle a little bit of chewing and barking.

K

Kira Dorrian 04:44

Yeah, few critters, no big deal. We got this, we got this. Alright, so today, we are talking about how do we as parents handle and cope with our kids being different to us. And that can mean a number of things. It could be the way that they come out of problem, the way they respond to stress, just their habits, you know. What if you're like Deana and very organized and tidy, and you have a crazy, messy kid? What if my children don't like musical theater? Like, how will I cope? So I think it's just an important thing, because the reality is, we often think that our kids are just going to like the things we like, partly because it's been modeled for them and it's part of what they're exposed to. But oftentimes, parents face this challenge of like, oh, my gosh, this is nothing like me, I have no idea how to parent toward this. And so that's kind of what we're going to talk about today.

D

Deana Thayer 05:35

Yeah, and is there a why? I mean, I have a why for why we're talking about it, because it will happen to you. And we want to help you navigate it. And the why is also because this will happen, to, it's happened to me, it will happen to you, it has happened to Kira. But the other thing, I think, underneath that's a more serious why, I do think there has to be a line between understanding that difference and deciding where as a parent, we still challenge the difference a little bit and have our requirements in our home and have those expectations. And where is then the other side of that line where we honor the difference and where there's grace for those things. So, I think that is an important why, but my silly why is, because it's gonna happen. It's coming for you . . .

K

Kira Dorrian 06:19

It's gonna happen.

D

Deana Thayer 06:20

. . . if it hasn't already.

K

Kira Dorrian 06:21

Yeah, I think I totally agree with that. I think for me, the, the why is really around the fact that, you know, we encourage families to think about the adult that they want to raise, and to write down the character traits and all of that. And the reality is that they're going to become the adult that they're going to become. And we have to find a way to honor whoever that adult is, whoever they become, to honor and create space for that. And so like you said, there's a fine line, there's a balancing act here, between "Yeah, I have expectations of how you move through the world, how you treat people, etc. but then, whoever you are inside of that, I want to foster you, and not just a mini me." And that's delicate. So I think it's good that we're talking about this because I would say I'm still working on this. I don't even know that I have amazing, sage advice, other than this, like you said it's gonna happen, and what does it look like to hold, to hold those two things at the same time?

D

Deana Thayer 07:17

Mm hmm. Well, since you so accurately described one of mine, I can lead with that one. So I'll give an example of what this might look like, when your child is different from you either because they're wired differently, or like Kira said, it could be they end up with a different preference than you. They don't like something you enjoy. So giving an example of what that might look like, and then at least just for in our home, how we've walked the line of, "Hey, here's still what I ask of you" versus honoring that difference. So as Kira said, I am a neatnik, which I'm sure surprises no-one. Yes, Captain OCD Pants over here, and I have the kind of OCD that happens to be about my environment. So cleanliness is very important to me. I'm tidy, and I'm clean, and I think that distinction is important. It'll make sense in a moment. And so I have kids that are not so much. So they are all across the spectrum. Some of, some of the five are, "I have piles, but I know what's in the piles." So it's like their own form of organization, which I've learned, and with varying success, to accept. I have some that are very much, "I need a clean desk in order to do my schoolwork. But things could be blowing up behind me and I'm oblivious". And I have some that are maybe not as messy but are okay with things being dirty. So, I will say that is where my personal line was. I know, and I want to acknowledge that you as the parent, we always encourage healthy and appropriate boundaries, as long as they're not becoming authoritarian. So it is fine for you to say, "You know, while you live in my house, I'd like you to make your bed." That's okay. I'm just going to share what I've chosen to do as my kids got older. We actually had a bed making requirement, a tidy up requirement, for a lot of years. So the disclaimer there is, that my kids are older, they're stepping more into who they actually are and so I'm learning to back away and let that be there. So the line for me has been, I'm fine with clutter. Messy to me is different than dirty. So I'm fine with clutter. I'm, I've learned to get okay with the clothes on the floor and the chair not tucked into the desk. I'm not ever going to love finding weird hairs on the bathroom floor. No, it's not for me. Okay? So that is where I've had to say "Okay, while you live in our house, we're going to still have a clean bathroom and we're gonna all chip in to do chores" or we're going to "Hey, Saturday's set aside and we're going to clean" and I got to have a clean toilet, people! I've got to have clean kitchen. I, this is what, this is what has to happen. But I've, where I've really backed off is more of what I would call just the messy, the clutter and the way I have handled it is I still don't really prefer to look at it. So they have learned with rehearsal and practice to shut their door as they're leaving the home. The door's shut. I don't have to see it. They know what's in the pile, I don't want to look at the pile. So I've really backed off on that, and then held my line on cleanliness. So that's just one small little cogent example, where my kids

just aren't wired to be as much of a neat freak as me. And I've learned to go, you know what, that's okay. Their, their sense of whatever it is, to me, it looks like a mess, but it makes sense to them. And so I try to be over here while still insisting that cleanliness is maintained.

K

Kira Dorrian 07:28

Well, and that's great, because it allows you to lean into them, but also says that you have needs as a person in the home, and everyone's trying to meet each other's needs and find some compromise and some balance. So I think that's great. That's lovely.

D

Deana Thayer 10:49

Has this happened to you at all yet?

K

Kira Dorrian 10:51

Oh, my gosh. Do you remember Rhys' room when you were here? I mean, sorry, Rhys, I love you to pieces. I mean, Rhia's isn't much better, to be honest with you. But as I've said on the show before, his is this, like creative chaos, right? I mean, that's a great example. Like I would say, this is similar, but different in our house, and that I like things neat, not as neat as you but I like order, I like organized. But for him, it's like, he can't be creative in the way he wants to be creative, if there isn't some chaos. That's like part of his creative style. So learning to sort of say, "All right, well, the buckets can just be filled in whatever order you want, but I want them neatly on the shelf," right? Like, the, there's that compromise.

D

Deana Thayer 11:34

Yes!

K

Kira Dorrian 11:35

We, it's interesting, because I have one kid who's a lot like me. More of a homebody, loves to curl up with a book. You know, is just really happy just kind of pattering around the house all day. And then I have one kid who's a 'go-see-do'. Like, only happy, active. You know, let's go do something. Let's go outside, let's blah, blah, blah. And this has been an area where this struggle has happened. Where it's like, I want to honor who this kid is, but it means I don't get to curl up on the couch and read my book, right? And I think it's a great example too, of where as parents, we, we are allowed to sometimes say, "You know what, I need an at home day today. But let's plan an adventure for tomorrow." But I also think there's a perspective shift that can happen for parents that's useful to think about, that has helped me. Is that with a lot of these things, where our kids are different from us, particularly if it's not something you feel is negatively impacting them. So if you feel like they're not handling a situation well, in a way that you would like them to handle it, that's a little different. But if they just have no interest in musical theater as an example, but they're super interested in physics. Oh my gosh, this is like my worst nightmare. But anyway, um, you know, or like when my kids loved Legos, and I really just recently figured out that the Legos are divided into packs that are numbered. Like, one, you do this pack first. Had no idea, none whatsoever. I mean, this is how bad I am at Legos. But as an example, I think the perspective shift is that we can get

excited about learning new things, pulling ourselves out of our comfort zones. I mean, kids have the ability to really open up some fascinating and interesting territories for us if we are open to going there with them. I mean, I know so much about Greek mythology and dinosaurs, and thank goodness, I love it. I would have never chosen to lean into those things, but because my kids were interested, down that rabbit hole we went. So I think that if, if it's something that's just different to you, that you don't understand, I think coming back to that curiosity we talk about all the time, is a great way to get excited about it, or at least kind of make use of the time in a positive way. Like, I'm learning something new, and I'm supporting my child, but they're gonna see you push yourself out of your comfort zone. And they're gonna feel seen and valued that you did that for them, even if it wasn't your cup of tea, right?

D Deana Thayer 14:00

Yeah, believe me, I know a lot about marine mammals, and, and spiders, and I am not a fan of arachnids, but this is, this is what it did. So I agree leaning into that, and you brought up something great that I think is worth noting, is that there is that difference between, you know, something not being handled well, versus a different way of doing something. And we have this in our home too. I'm very work before play. And I've modeled that and really taught that. We get the tasks done first, and then we can enjoy the day or we get home from school and have a snack, but then we do homework, so that evening is nice, for dinner, watch a movie together as a family, whatever. I, no, no, my kids not so much. So it's very much, I'll push off the things that don't sound fun until the end. So I'm really glad you mentioned this because I want to say, I would actually intervene on that if it meant those tasks weren't getting done at all, or because they were pushed to the end, they weren't getting done well. And I was seeing things like grades suffering, etc. But what I've learned is, I'm over here going, I don't even know how they can enjoy this when that work is hanging over their head. They're having a great time!

K Kira Dorrian 15:14

Yeah, they're fine!

D Deana Thayer 15:14

And the work still gets done and gets done well, so I've, I don't intervene. That what needs to happen is still happening. They're just doing it a different way.

K Kira Dorrian 15:23

Yeah, that is so hard.

D Deana Thayer 15:25

It's hard.

K Kira Dorrian 15:26

That especially, I struggle with that from the only child perspective, because I don't know if you know this,

but as only children, our way, that's the right way. Just FYI, if you're ever curious what the right way is to do something, just ask, I'll tell you.

D Deana Thayer 15:39

Well thank you!

K Kira Dorrian 15:42

And so it is really like, a little bit of a head trip, to have to wrap your head around the idea that actually there are multiple ways to approach a problem. There are multiple ways. You know, all these things and, and only children having children, particularly children different to them, or multiple children who do things different ways...very eye opening. Very, very eye opening . . .

D Deana Thayer 16:03

I bet!

K Kira Dorrian 16:03

. . . and humbling. But I love that example. I love that example, because I have, again, with my two. Man, twins are sooo fascinating. Can we just take a hot second for twins. I have one who has work before play. They get home, they dump out their stuff, I mean, they're in my face. "Sign this, because then I can go play", right? Or, "I need to just really quickly do my homework, I'm just gonna bust it out". They just cannot wait to get the work off of their plate, so they can exhale and go have fun. And then I have another one who is quite content to twiddle around and play and do all the things, but manages to get their work done just fine and on time, so who am I, just because I'm uncomfortable.

D Deana Thayer 16:42

Yeah.

K Kira Dorrian 16:45

And I am! I'm really uncomfortable, but it works for them, and I think those are the places where as parents we have to lean in, because there are going to be times where we have to say "Nope, nope, this isn't gonna work in our house, or this is not acceptable". So if we can find all those places where we can go, "You know what, we're different that way. That's cool." And lean into that and, and really vocalize and verbalize that. Not only are we telling them, we value who you are, who you are deeply as you are, we're also modeling non only child syndrome of, of "Hey, guess what? We can think differently about this."

D Deana Thayer 17:21

It's not the only way. so figure!

K

Kira Dorrian 17:24

Which is literally what I do is I put on a big smile. "Isn't it cool how we can just approach that totally differently?" and on the inside I'm like, "They're wrong, but that's okay. They can be wrong."

C

Cozi 17:36

Did you know there's an organizing app designed just for families. So, if you're starting to feel busy again, as we emerge and your calendar is filling up with more events and kids activities than all of last year combined, why not do your future self a favor and get Cozi. Cozi is the number one organizing App that families can use to juggle those school schedules, practices, meetings, doctor's appointments, and even workout or date night. It was even named a must have app for a better life by The Today Show. With Cozi you'll be all set up so everyone knows who's doing what, when and where. Cozi will even send emails every morning with the day's agenda. No more missed pickups or double bookings. So here's how it works. Cozi tracks everyone's schedules and events in one place with a shared color coded calendar. Cozi even reminds others about the events so you don't have to. And it's super easy to get started. You can even pull in events from your family's personal work and school calendars. And the best part, it's free. All you have to do is download the Cozi Family Organizer from the App Store. That's Cozi, C-O-Z-I, to get the free App today. Simplify your week even more by planning weeknight dinners ahead of time and use Cozi to discover new recipes inside the App, save recipes from across the web, and meal plan for the entire week. You can even add all the ingredients you need for each recipe directly to the Cozi shopping list. It's all free in Cozi. So download Cozi from the App Store today. That's C-O-Z-I to get the free App today.

D

Deana Thayer 19:06

Well, this is great, because you, you brought up possibly the only other thing that was important to me to say. And that is unpacking where the issue is our own. And not that they're doing it wrong, because they might just be doing it different. But is there something that's making us hold on to that more that has to do with us? And I've shared about our incredibly circuitous journey with organized sports before so I won't belabor that. But one of the things that helped me eventually back off of that was realizing what parts of that were wrapped up for me that I wanted to attend sport things because then I could watch. And so, it's been a real, it's been a really important thing to peel apart (a). (b) It's been really helpful to take solace in there's still things I can go to. I have a son who's an actor, who likes to sing, who all the things. I can go watch that stuff. Yes, when he goes and lifts weights at the gym, I don't go and spectate at LA Fitness. I mean, it's not the same as watching another track meet. But that was about me, that wasn't about him, and he did accomplish staying fit and taking good care of his body in another way. And I was reluctant to let go of the thing because of what it brought me. And I think that's very important. And I'm really glad you mentioned that piece, because it was a perfect jumping off point for me to say that "Parents, you've got to peel apart which of those things are about you and which is they're just doing it different, and it's totally a fine way to do it different, but it's hard for me." Well, that's work we have to do, it's not a reason to tell them, they may not do the homework in a different order, or blah, blah, blah.

K

Kira Dorrian 20:47

Well, and I love this point, because I think that so often, if we've had a happy childhood experience, I think a lot of times parents are trying to replicate that for their kids. And so they think it kind of has to look how

it looked for them. Which is not unreasonable. If you had a happy childhood, you're like, hey, these puzzle pieces made a happy childhood, I must use these puzzle pieces to make a happy childhood. But that's just not always the case. And, and I think that it's really important, what you said. That we have to look at, "is this about what I want their childhood to look like? Or is this about what I think they really want?" So an example, similar, but different. I have a kiddo who really doesn't like surprises, and has verbally said multiple times after what I thought was a very special surprise. "I don't like surprises. Please don't do that again." Like, we took them to Disneyland and did like a big reveal in the car and the whole thing when they were little. And then we were sitting in the Frozen performance thing, and this kiddo turned to me and was like, "Mom, please don't ever surprise me like that again." Which is totally fair. I mean, I get it right? Like some people don't like that. It feels like they've been sideswiped, they don't get the anticipatory excitement. Like, it makes sense to me, but as a parent, gosh, I love the idea of going into parenthood, I was like, I'm gonna surprise my kids all the time. Like, that was something that really mattered to me. I don't get to do that anymore. And I have to be okay with that, because is the point that I enjoy the experience? Or was the surprising, supposed to be about my kids enjoying it? Well, if they're not enjoying it, then that's really just my ish, right? And that's disappointing and I get to have feelings about that. But I can't just keep surprising this poor child and taking away their joy.

D

Deana Thayer 22:33

Especially if they've articulated they don't prefer it.

K

Kira Dorrian 22:36

Exactly. So I mean, I think that's, that's really key, what you said, this piece of looking at how much of this is about us? And I think this comes to behavior too and also when they don't necessarily have a healthy response to something or whatever. I know, like Laura Froyen talked about this when we interviewed her, and I know this is true for me. Sometimes what I'm reacting to, is my fear for them, that if they behave this way, or if they respond this way, they're either going to be unlovable, which is a huge statement to make, but I think sometimes that's really deeply what's going on for me, right? Or, that they're going to be not mentally healthy and happy, which is my like numero uno. So sometimes when I'm seeing them not coping well, and I'm struggling with that, it's really fear based. It's not recognizing this as a journey as a parent, and we may never get there. I may have kids that never cope well with X, Y, or Z. And I have to be okay with that, right. I can keep doing my job, but loving them holistically for who they are, might include they might never change this behavior, or this reaction, or whatever. And that's also about me! That's my fears for them for the future, right? So I mean, this point that you made is really, it's got a lot of legs.

D

Deana Thayer 23:52

It's important, and I think it can go the other way. You mentioned, if you have a good childhood, you might be trying to replicate that for your children. I think the reverse can also be true. If you had a challenging childhood, you're working so hard to do it different, and if that's rejected, that could bring up a lot for you. Or what if your child is interested in something that was a component of your difficult childhood? And instead of saying, "Okay, I get the chance to redeem this. My parents never came to my soccer games. I'm going to go to all the soccer games." Instead of like, "They can't do soccer. That brings up all the ish." You know, I, I think that's really important. And I will just say, anecdotally, I also do not enjoy surprises. And it is not for any of the typical reasons and I wonder how many kids are out there with the same thing and don't have the words to articulate it because I couldn't until I was an adult, but it's because I'm tender. And

I'm very concerned that my response won't be enough for the person who is the 'surpriser' because I'm the 'surprised' in this story. But also what if I actually don't like the surprise? How do you even fake that? Now I'm put on the spot to have a reaction that maybe isn't genuine, and because I'm a sensitive person, the fact that I could ever hurt someone's feelings in that way. No, does not work for me at all. I need to know what's coming, and probably be part of choosing it, because then I know the response will, it will get really, you know, the desired response. And I want to be able to honor the person who's thinking of me. Does this make sense?

K

Kira Dorrian 25:19

Oh, my gosh, absolutely. And actually makes me think of a really funny story. Because I think, again, when we could, when we come back to what are we modeling for our kids? And what are we instilling that inside of them? And I think one of the things you and I talk about a lot is helping them recognize that there are so many different ways to move through this world. They're not all right or wrong, right? There's lots of moving pieces here, and how do we be empathetic and compassionate and allow there to be a difference of thought and opinion. And this is the same. As simple as a surprise. I remember having, a sort of, not falling out, but a situation with a friend. We used to call this friend spontaneously whenever we had, you know, an evening free, we'd be like, "Oh, who do we want to see? That person!" And we give them a call and be like, "Hey, are you free tonight? Let's go out." This was before kids, right? Well, this person ended up sending an email saying, you know, "I find it really offensive that you only ever reach out spontaneously. When you care about someone you set up and you make plans." And I thought, that was so interesting, because I was like, "Oh my gosh, you know, for me, when I care about someone, they're the ones I call when I have a free minute. It's like you're who I want to see. Right?" But I can understand that for this person it feels like I'm always your last minute thought and never someone you put on the calendar. That makes perfect sense, I mean, they're both very valid, right? But you've got two different human beings with different perspectives on how do we socialize. What, how do you show someone you care, blah, blah, blah. And so that became then, I, for me to love this person well, I had to get them on my calendar, because those spontaneous times didn't feel good to them. So I had to alter the way that I interacted with this person. But also let this person know, "Hey, when I reach out spontaneously, that's actually me saying, I pick you, right? You're the person that I value." So I think this is the same with us and our kids, and also what we're teaching our kids because our kids are going to go out into the world, and they love surprises, and then their future partner doesn't or their future kid doesn't. Or they're in a work situation where they think they're doing something really nice, and it's not received that way. And the more that we can be dialoguing about that and modeling it, the more prepared they're going to be when those circumstances crop up.

D

Deana Thayer 27:29

I love that! And I actually have a quote today, and you kind of lead into it, but, but I want to let you, did you have any final parting wisdom?

K

Kira Dorrian 27:40

No, I feel like, I feel like at 26 minutes, I got there.

D

Deana Thayer 27:44

Okay. I think you did. That was, that was really good.

K

Kira Dorrian 27:47

There was something valid around minute 26. There we go.

D

Deana Thayer 27:50

No, it was really great. Because I think that kind of captures the whole thing, is, it means something different to different people. And that's the whole thing, right? We're separating out and this is what's going to happen with our kids. But we actually want those differences. They're what make life awesome. We don't actually want oh my gosh, I could, there can't be more of me walking around. That's, that's a lot, people.

K

Kira Dorrian 28:15

Me either. Me either, everybody thinking they're right, mmm hmm.

D

Deana Thayer 28:18

One of me is plenty. So, so this is so perfect, because I found this quote when I was looking for, you know, what are quotes about differences and of course, there's a lot and a lot of them are kind of Kumbaya, but I like this one just because it's so practical, and it's by Jane Elliott. This is what it says. "We don't need a melting pot in this country, folks. We need a salad bowl. In a salad bowl, you put in the different things. You want the vegetables, the lettuce, the cucumbers, the onions, the green peppers to maintain their identity. You appreciate differences."

K

Kira Dorrian 28:48

Oh, well you know I love that!

D

Deana Thayer 28:50

Let's walk away appreciating our cucumbers, people.

K

Kira Dorrian 28:53

I love it. Love it!

D

Deana Thayer 28:54

Because our kids might be a cucumber and we're over here being a carrot. But we really need both to make the awesome salad.

K Kira Dorrian 28:58
Awesome salad. I'm a spicy pepper. Some people don't like spice in their salad.

D Deana Thayer 29:02
Yes you are!

K Kira Dorrian 29:03
Some people do. You know what? That's okay. If you don't want me in your salad. I understand. It makes sense to me.

D Deana Thayer 29:08
Right. It doesn't work for everyone. It might cause heartburn.

K Kira Dorrian 29:10
Kira Dorrian, might cause heartburn. Oh my goodness. Well, thank you for listening everyone. We really hope that you got something out of this conversation and that it might just help you in those moments when your kids are different from you because of course that's going to happen So just take a pause and embrace some of the things that we talked about today. And embrace your little people for the cucumbers and tomatoes, and little lettuce leaves that they all are because we want them all in that beautiful, beautiful salad. We look forward to being back with you next week.

F Future Focused Parenting 29:43
Raising Adults is produced by Kira Dorrian and Deana Thayer, and recorded partially in my laundry room and partially in Deana's coat closet. Music by Seattle band Hannalee. Editing by the amazing Allison Preisinger. Enjoying these transcribed episodes of Raising Adults? Consider receiving the Future Focused Parenting newsletter, where you'll receive sneak peeks, parenting tips, special offers, exclusive early access to podcast information, and more! Simply go to bit.ly/raisingadultspodcast to sign up. You can also connect with us on social media! We're on both Facebook and Instagram: @futurefocusedparenting. Our channels include podcast episode announcements, so you'll never miss new topics. We look forward to sharing more Future Focused Parenting content with you!