

BUILD A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR TWEEN & TEEN

TRANSCRIBED NOTES

The Crash Course On Conflict, Communication, and Connection

MOMSOFTWEENSANDTEENS

Transcribed Notes

Build a Healthy Relationship With Your Tween & Teen: An Online Course on **Conflict**, **Communication**, and **Connection**

Module One: How To Listen So Your Teen Will Talk and Talk So Your Teen Will Listen

I just want to welcome you to Day #1.

And today we're going to be talking all about connection.

And over these three days we're going to talk about how to build a strong relationship with our tweens and teens,
We're going to talk about how to deal with conflict (we're really going to cover that tomorrow, power struggles and disrespect).
We're going to talk about how to be that safe place for our kids and build that communication and also that connection.

So I'm so happy that you're here. Because that speaks volumes about the kind of parent you are, you're here to learn and grow. And so I just want you to take that in, if you're coming here overwhelmed, frustrated, you're dealing with disrespect or other things that you're worried about, you've come to the right place. After these three days, I want you to leave with tools and insights, to really help you with your communication and to grow, build that strong foundation.

And then as I said, I want you to know that you're not alone. So I don't want you to buy into the lie that you're failing, okay, we're just going to take that sucker off that big, heavy backpack with all those boulders, we're just freeing ourselves up right now. And we're just not going to leave that lie. Because here you are, you're showing up and you want to be a better mom. And that is huge.

So first, I just want to give you an overview of the next three days. Okay, we're just going to go through this quickly. Just kind of let you know what's going to be happening.

Okay, today, we're talking about how to listen.

So your teen will talk tween and teen will talk and talk. So your tween and teen will listen. So we're going to talk all about what really matters in order for our kids to open up and want to talk to us.

And then tomorrow, I'm going to be sharing how to stop disrespect and power struggles and actually build connection.
Yes, we can!

In the midst of conflict. So many of us here didn't learn how to deal with conflict growing up in healthy ways. Most of us would say we didn't learn that. And so we're going to talk about how we handle conflict with our kids so that we're teaching them how to express their feelings and emotions in a healthy way. So I'm super excited about that. I love to talk about that.

And then day number three, we're going to talk all about boundaries, and how to set those limits with our kids.

We need to balance truth and love. And we also need to have boundaries. So it's both. If we have too many rules and expectations and we don't have enough of what I'm going to be sharing today, it's lopsided, right, then we're being punitive. So we're going to bring it into balance.

And we're going to share what we can do to help to motivate our kids to set those limits so that they can thrive. Okay, so that is the foundation and here's my mission.

My mission is that you will walk away after these three days and you're going to feel encouraged.

I want you to be encouraged, I want you to be reassured, I want you to feel more equipped to be able to pair your tweens and teens through these really precious years, but challenging years.
I want you to become more confident. I'm also going to really work on just validating the challenges and the struggles so that you know that you're not alone. I hope that you're going to see your kid through a different lens about what they really need from you. And that that's actually not going to bring your anxiety up like, “oh my gosh, now I got to do all these things,” but it's going to be bringing her anxiety down and you're going to feel more confident and there's going to be more space to connect.

So let's jump in today number one!

How to listen so your tween or teen will talk and talk so your tween and teen will listen.

Wouldn't that be great if they listened? Who is so sick of reminding,reminding, reminding, nagging, lecturing, talking, talking, talking? I
I mean, who here can relate to that?

The title of today's workshop actually comes from the book, How to Listen So Your Teen Will Talk and How To Talk So Your Teen Will Listen and it's by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish. I think I'm saying her name right. It is excellent. It's what you know, some of those things I'm going to be talking about today come from this book. Also a lot is based on research and working with moms and parents and also from my own parenting.

So the truth is and we all know this, but I'm going to say it...communicating with our adolescence is challenging, right?

I mean, it is really tough. And I lead other workshops on just understanding what's going on in the adolescent brain.

There is so much going on in their bodies.

Developmentally, they're trying to become more independent, and they're pulling away.

And it's like, you wake up one day, and it's like, oh, my gosh, I feel like they have an alien in my house. What happened to my kid, they go from this sweet, cuddly kid, and they're talking all the time. And then all of a sudden, they're talking back. And they don't want to be seen with you.

Remember, even my daughter when she was a tween? This is my youngest one. We were at the grocery store and I was even looking cute. She saw some boys in her class and ran around into the other aisle, so that they didn't see her with me. She wouldn't go out to dinner with my husband and I. All of a sudden, she turned like, that was probably when she was like, 10 1112. And then all of a sudden, it didn't matter anymore.

But they go through these phases. And it's really hard to understand, like, "Oh, my gosh, what is going on? And it's hard to not feel hurt and upset about it. They're not talking as much, they're pulling away, which can be so hurtful. They're saying, leave me alone. And then when they finally do talk, it's really

hard sometimes to hear what they have to say. It's like they can say the darndest things which we're going to talk about tomorrow.

Who has heard something like this.

“You never listen to me.”
That's not fair.”
I wish you oh my gosh, this is a killer one. Who's heard this one? - I wish you were like, so and so's mom. I wish you were cool like her. That's like a dagger in the heart, right?

“I don't care.” Who hears that? “I don't care. Take away my phone. I don't care.”

“You can't control me.”
“You can't make me.”
“You are the worst parent ever.” Who's heard that one?

It’s painful.
And, “Everybody else's mom is letting them do it. Why won't you?”

And, “I hate you.” Who's heard I hate you?

That one is a really painful one to hear too.

I just want you to know, I've raised three teenagers. I have heard every single one of these.

And how do we respond?

I founded Moms of Tweens and Teens and it started because of my own challenges with my oldest daughter, (who I had said is now 30) when she was a tween. It was such a difficult time. And I had no idea what to do. She was depressed. She was disrespectful. Some of you may have seen what I put and she has given me permission to share all of this. But maybe you've seen the before and after where she's on vacation. And she looks like this (grumpy face) You know, she would have the stink eye. And I didn't know what to do with her. I had trouble getting her out of bed to go to school in the morning. She was disrespectful, was talking back and really angry.

And I just want you to know that it's really hard when our kids are expressing these emotions. And we didn't learn how to handle these kinds of emotions. I didn't learn. And some of you know that I grew up in a very strict perfectionist home and I became very compliant. So here I have this kid that is anything but compliant. She's

strong willed, she's fighting me on everything. And I had no idea what to do. So I sent her to therapy, “I'm just going to fix her” and part of that was I wanted to help her too. But I was like, “she's difficult.” And honestly, I felt like this. This kid is a bad kid. And I only say that to be totally and completely honest. That's how I viewed it at the time. That's how I was feeling like “what is wrong with this kid,” you know?

So the therapist would bring me into the room. I had this lightbulb of an epiphany moment where I realized this is not about her. Yes, those things are true. She's angry, but this is about me.

This is me. Now I had no idea I had any anger. I was making her anger bad. And I didn't know how to help her to talk about her feelings and emotions.

So I'm going to weave my story in and out and through all of this today, so that I can give you some examples.

But I will tell you this, I started out on this personal growth journey because I knew I wanted to have a healthy family, I wanted to be able to show up for my kids, I wanted all of that. I didn't want to repeat some of those patterns that had happened in my family growing up, which I was like, there's no way that's going to happen. But then all of a sudden, it's happening. It just looked a little different, but it's happening. And so I started this whole journey, I ended up getting into a moms group, it transformed my life. And it transformed my relationship with my kids, it transformed my marriage, it transformed my relationship with my mother, it's night and day.

So I just say that because if you're here, you have so much power in your family, when we start learning these things, and we start changing the way that we show up with our kids. It turns the Titanic around.

I have people that come to me and they're like, “I'm so worried about my kid. They're oppositional defiant, and it's just horrible.” And after working on themselves and learning new ways, their relationship totally changes with their kids.

So it's never too late if you're here, and I just want to hold out hope for you.

In this workshop, I'm just going to give you some bullet points. So you know where we're going...

#1 I'm going to talk about the four roadblocks that get in the way of connection, these are things that we do that we mean well, and becoming more self aware of these things will really help you and really helped me and I still do them. I mean, it's not perfect, but I want to help you to become aware of those things that we actually

do, when we're meaning well, that that gets in the way, and it puts up a wall between us and our kids.

#2 I'm going to talk about the three foundational principles.

You have this in your workbook to take notes to make it easy for you.

These are also known as the three S's and I'm going to tell you what they are. And when you begin to implement these and put them into practice, you're going to be amazed at the changes that begin to happen in your relationship with your kids.

#3 And then the next thing we're going to talk about is the five essential keys that are going to build safety, trust and a strong bond with their kids.

So you're going to learn about the three S's and then what that looks like and what you can actually do, to put those foundational principles into practice.

<u>The 3 Foundational Principles</u>

#1 Becoming A Safe Place For Your Kid.

That is number one, because if we are not a safe place for our kids, we're not going to have that connection.

And I love the quote that says ...

“They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”

And that goes for our kids, too. That is so true. And we really want to be that container and that safe place where our kids can come and they can share whatever it is that they're going through. And that is what we're going to learn how to do. Okay.

And I want you to think about having a newborn baby. And this is very foundational, and based in research, so when a baby is born, what do they need?

They need to feel safe, right?

How do they feel safe? They know that their mom is going to be or their caregiver is going to attune to what their needs are. That they're going to be safe, they're going

to be nurtured. They're going to have eye contact, they're going to be connecting with them, They're not going to be talking to them like this (mad face) right? And like looking at them angry, that they're going to feel comforted and soothed and safe.

This is where attachment theory was born, it's so foundational to our kids feeling safe.

And that's what the three S's are - we're going to talk about how we help our kids feel safe in their relationship with us.

So if we don't feel safe, we can't connect.

We're always kind of scanning. You know, we don't really realize but our kids and us we're always kind of scanning -

“Am I safe here, right? Am I going to be accepted? Am I going to be loved or my needs going to be met?”

And if they're not, we don't feel safe. And it's the same like with that baby from a very young age that begins. So I want to say that because I want you to be thinking about, as I talked about before, roadblocks that get in the way of **connection.**

<u>Roadblocks That Get In The Way Of Connection</u>

So these are the things that we actually do that make us feel stuck - when we do these things our kids aren't going to want to talk. And they're not going to want to open up with us. And when we can become aware of these, that's when we start to notice it, “oh, I just did that. Okay, that wasn't so helpful.” or “Oh that's why they just shut down. That's why they just put a wall up. That's why they're not talking to me about these kinds of things,” then we're going to start making these connections and that’s when we can change and learn to put in place something to do differently, which will make all the difference. So here are some scenarios.

#1 We dismiss, minimize or invalidate their feelings.

Okay, this is where the research comes in. Dr. John Gottman, who I love, he is a psychologist, he is a researcher and what he did is he did a lot with couples, but also with children. And what he did is he watched what was happening in their families. And then he followed them over a span of many years to see the outcome. And what

he found was kids that feelings were dismissed, or they were minimized or they were invalidated. really struggled with connecting with their parents, and not only with their parents with other people.

So here's a scenario, I want to give you a couple of examples...
So you can kind of get an idea of what this looks like.

So your kid comes to you, (this happened with my daughter), and she told me that she had broken up with her. And she is sobbing about it. And you know what I was like, “Oh, thank you, God, that they broke up. I'm so relieved. I didn't like him. I'm like, hallelujah, right now. I don't have to worry.” So I'm feeling relieved. And she is really hurt and upset about it. Okay, that's scenario one.

How do you think, you know, how do you think my reaction went?

When that happened, right? scenario to your daughter's crying, or even your son, let's say your son is crying, or he's really upset. He's having an angry outburst. And when you ask them what's going on, you try to calm them down. They just start screaming, and they say, “leave me alone!”

Who has experienced either one of these things.

So it's like an emotional roller coaster, right? It's like we're riding these waves. And it's like, “oh, my gosh, how do we handle this?”

It's like, one minute, they're doing great. And you're feeling connected. And the next minute, they're being disrespectful, grasping on, “oh, good morning. And they're like, you know, grunting or rolling their eyes. And you think, gosh, what did I say? Or you ask them, if they did their homework, and 30, like, throw a fit, right?

“Just leave me alone, get out of my face,” and they don't like it.

Kids at this age have a really difficult time emotionally regulating, we're going to talk about that more tomorrow. But I just want to say that it's really difficult. They don't know how to be responsible with their emotions, they just don't. And then you've got all their brain development going on, which also plays a big part in that.

But when we dismiss or invalidate what they're going through, then they're not going to talk to us.

So how does that look? So my daughter comes back, you know, comes home and her boyfriend's broken up with her. Thankfully, I didn't do it. I knew better than to

minimize or dismiss her feelings. Even inside, I felt some relief. I also felt sad that she was hurt, right? I mean, that was part of it, too. I felt very brokenhearted, for her to see her in such pain. But I wanted to say, “Oh my gosh, he was not good enough for you.” Right? I wanted to just say all those things. And so that would have been very invalidating, but it's natural. Like I cannot stress enough that we do this. And still to this day. Even though my kids are older now. I still struggle with it.

And we're going to make mistakes and we're going to do it and that is just our humaneness, but becoming aware of it and stopping ourselves.

Sometimes when we do it then we can apologize. When we start seeing it happen. We can catch it right?

Here are some invalidating statements.

We say things like...

“That's nothing to be upset about.”
“Why are you making such a big deal out of this? Like, it's nothing to be upset about, get over it?
Or “Don't be mad. “Why are you so angry, snap out of it”
“I don't want to hear about this.”
*Lighten up, you're too sensitive.” (*I used to get that one a lot. Growing up, stop thinking about yourself so much, or you're being so self centered. Just try to be happy and stop complaining.”

And it's understandable that we say some of these things.

But again, if we're doing this on a regular basis, when our kids really need to talk to us about something that's upsetting them, or something that happens, they're not going to.

Why?

Because we're not safe, they get a message that something's wrong with them, or they shouldn't feel the way that they feel, which is very confusing, we're going to talk about what you can do instead.

So that's one, okay, when we minimize or dismiss, also,

#2 We criticize and are judgemental.

The research has proven that when we're judgmental, and we're critical, that's when our kids feel like we're not safe. Like, I'm not going to tell mom that because if I tell her, she's just going to say I told you so or she's going to criticize me in some way. And maybe some of you felt that way growing up, or I'm gonna you've, it's almost like you've got your guard up. And, your kids can do that, too. Like they're just waiting. And when you start practicing these, these kinds of behaviors I'm going to teach you, you're going to see that all of a sudden, they start to relax.

And I can't tell you how many moms have said all the sudden, they start to relax, and they start to open up.

So if they're always kind of expecting that to happen, they're not going to share as much. And it is exhausting. Because as I said before, they can say the darndest things that are really, really hard to hear.

And they're individuating right now. So they say things, sometimes they're testing, you know, they are at this stage, they are trying to find out who they are apart from you, apart from us. **And so they're going to disagree more**. And that's really hard to hear, you're going to say white, and they're going to say black. And you're like no, but it's really white. And then they're gonna know it's black. And then you get into this whole power struggle thing. And then you end up saying things that you wish you hadn't said it just escalates. So oftentimes, we don't realize that we come off critical and judgmental. And part of the reason I believe that we end up doing this is because we feel so responsible for our kids. So we feel like if we're not somehow telling them something, or teaching them something, then we're not doing a good job with our kids.

But criticism and judgment does not work.

#3 Number three, fixing and giving unsolicited advice.

Well, when I learned this now, my family will say to me, “Mom, you're giving me unsolicited advice.” And my husband says “you're giving me unsolicited advice.” Well, I didn't know what that was years ago. But it's really giving advice when they're not asking for it.

And sometimes we need to insert our two cents, right? Sometimes they need that coaching. But it's better, to ask questions to get them to start thinking about these things, rather than telling them because if they feel like we're always lecturing them, or we're jumping in, we're saying things like, “well, you should do this, or you should do that, or you shouldn't do this.” They feel like they're bombarded. And so they're going to shut, they're going to shut down, and they're not going to talk to us.

#4 Number four, we simply asked too many questions.

And this is understandable, especially if you have a kid that's not talking. I recently did that as well. I guess now, time goes so fast, it was two years ago, but it was when my daughter went away to college. And she wasn't talking and she wasn't telling me anything. And I wanted to find out about what was going on. And so I was asked, how's your day going? How's school? How are your studies? And you know, she ended up telling my husband, "I don't want to call mom, because she's just bombarding me with all these questions. And it's making me really anxious." And we were actually, you know, able to have a conversation around it.

And I'm like, "honey, you can always tell me that. I didn't realize what I was doing. I just wanted to know how you were and what was going on and you weren't telling me."

So if some of you have kids that aren't talking very much When you don't know you're like, "are you doing okay?" Or you're not talking?

I'm hearing from so many of you - "my kids not talking? Are they Okay? I don't know. I'm worried they're depressed."

So of course, of course we do this, but if we just bombard them with questions, rather than kind of opening it up.

Because they're like cats. This is what I always say: they're like cats, if we're bombarding them too much, they're going to go hide under the bed. And they're not going to come out.

And so many of us, we hear, "Fine, I'm okay. Leave me alone."
"How are you doing? You know, do you have any homework?" You know, all those things we can ask them. They're like, "I'm fine. No, okay, leave me alone," right, but we just care. And, and yet, it doesn't work.

So we want to open it up. So they feel we create that space where they actually will come to us when they need to talk. Okay, so hope you got those down in your workbook.

And now I'm going to move on to **the three foundational parenting principles.** I love these. And I want you to think about these, like, I'm going to take a drink of water. I want you to think about these, like an umbrella. Okay, this is kind of

overarching, if you can think of it like, remember these three things, and then the five essentials, everything else falls underneath it.
These are how we become a safe place for our kids. It's kind of obvious thinking of it like going into like a protective covering, or even like a weighted blanket, these three things and then everything goes underneath them.

Okay. Now, this is based on attachment research.

So British psychologist John Bowlby, he was the one that came up with this first, okay, the whole attachment. Some of you are familiar with this. Some of you aren't familiar with this. But what he studied was children. And his whole history is so fascinating, but I won't go into how he was raised. But he really did a lot of research on troubled kids, and then the bonds that they formed with their parents, and what actually created that healthy attachment where they felt safe and secure.

So he was the first one that started this, then John Gottman, he also was one of the pioneers. And also Daniel Siegel is one of the pioneers, and I am going to take what I'm sharing from Daniel Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson's book, The Power of Showing Up is a great book (I recommend that book too).

And they named three things that we need. So this is based on the attachment theory. And then they've gone into great detail on that book explaining these things.

So if we want our kids to feel safe with us, if we want them to open up, if we want to develop a strong bond with them, when we start practicing this, it is going to create that strong foundation. And I want to say it again, it's not too late. We can turn the Titanic around.

If you're coming here and you're feeling you're feeling, "Oh my gosh, I can't imagine my relationship with my kid improving. I'm feeling such despair."

When you start practicing these things, you will see things begin to turn around. These principles also apply to kids that have experienced trauma. kids that are in foster care systems, kids that have been adopted when they're older, this is always where they start.

<u>The Three Essential Parenting Principles</u>

Safe.
Seen
And Soothed.

So safe.
What does *safe* really mean?
Well, I touched on it a little bit.
Safe means...
“I'm accepted for who I am. warts and all.
You're going to love me no matter what (don't we all long for that, “I'm going to be loved even when I'm at my worst.”

I talk about in the Moms of Tweens and Teens Podcast, “the ugly cry,” you know what I'm ugly crying, and I don't want anybody to see it because I think that they're just gonna run away and reject me. When I know I can actually ugly cry, and somebody's still gonna love me. You know, they're still going to care about me, I feel safe. Those are the friends. Those are my tribe. Those are the people that I want to open up and talk to because I'm not worried about them criticizing me and judging me.

So think about yourself in this and then think about your kids.

Seen.

What does it mean to *see* somebody?

This is kind of a buzzword now.

But when I can tell when I really see somebody, when I meet with a client, or a group, you know, and I can't see your faces here, and I wish I could, but when parents are shaking their heads like this (nodding yes) I know, they feel seen. They feel like I, I get them.

I get them, I'm validating their experience. I'm having that empathy and understanding and what our kids feel seen by us.

They're like, “Wow, I make sense. She gets me Yes. I'm feeling hurt. Oh, and, and she gets why I'm feeling hurt.”
They feel seen. And they say my parents care about how I feel. They care about my thoughts, even though they may not agree. They want to know me, they want to understand me.

That's huge. That's what being seen means.

Soothed.

So soothed, it's very confusing once they become adolescents. Because why? Because they're pulling away. So maybe like, I wrote that blog post, maybe some of you have read it, about my son that he would want to cuddle with me when he was younger. And he talked to me, and he followed me and he was chatty. And then all of a sudden the adolescent years hit, and he didn't talk to me as much. He told me one day, *"I don't want you to read me anymore."* He was probably I don't know, 10. It was heartbreaking. And I had to learn this whole new way of relating to him as he was becoming a young man. I had to change my approach. I don't know how I got off on a little tangent.

But soothed can be physical comfort, right. But some of you have kids that then touch is not their love language. My oldest is like, "no," that's not her thing.

Soothing is what brings comfort.

Listening brings comfort. Listening to their feelings. It's very counter intuitive. When actually listening, it brings their anxiety down. And so they are soothed.

So how do we soothe our kids?

They feel soothed when they feel like they can be themselves with us. That is when they feel connected and a strong bond.

I want to share a story with you. I was talking to Jen who's behind the scenes. And I was telling her that my daughter has a cat, a little kitten. And the kitten came to them as a rescue and came to them a little too young. And I have two grandkids and they're five and three. And so they bought this cat. And they try to pick it up and it scratches and it claws. But what they do, and I didn't know this, maybe some of you have cats, but my daughter swaddles the cat, and then they can carry that cat around. Well, I kind of think of it like that, like we're wrapping our kids in this blanket of these three S's where they feel safe. They feel like we're containers. And that's kind of what it is like. And then when the cat gets older, because she has another one, they're the friendliest cat I've ever met, they can trust because they've been comforted. And they've been soothed and safe.

<u>The Five Essential Keys</u>

How do we see our kids?
How do we soothe our kids?
How do we create that safe space?

#1 Number one, be present, and show up.
Sounds so basic, right?

But we're busy. I mean, we're busy, we're distracted. They come to us at the most inconvenient times, who has a kid here that is coming to you at 10:30. And all of a sudden, they become a chatterbox. And you are just absolutely exhausted. It's the last time you want to talk to them. Right? But they're coming to you. And then they can talk, they want to talk and talk and talk and talk. I remember I had to drink coffee to just sit there. And then they're telling you stuff. And it's like, oh, when is this you know, going to end on one hand, you're so happy but you're so tired, right? But to be present, we have to realize it's not at the convenient times that they come to us. It's like the worst times and yet I like to think abundance rather than scarcity usually happens when I have a workshop like this. And I'm trying to get ready for it. And then my daughter wants to come in and she wants to chat my head off and I have to just be like, okay, I got this but I can give her 10 minutes to listen, I can put it down and I can be present and listen.

So one of the ways that we do this is we do it with eye contact.

So we have to put our phones down, we have to stop what we're doing, we have to look up. It's also how they see us looking at them. And a lot of times our tweens and teens they do studies have shown that they do read our faces as anger when we're not angry. I've certainly heard from my kids, “Why are you making that face? You look like, why are you mad at me?” and I'm like, “I'm not, I'm really not.” I mean, sometimes I am. And you can see it on my face. But they do sometimes read that, but we want to try to be open, we want to try and just keep practicing being open and being present.

And this is a fleeting time. These are the pivotal years. And I did not really realize that with my older two. So they're very close together. And then there's nine years nine years between my youngest and my oldest, and then six between my middle and my youngest. And it went by so fast. And so we need to put our phones down to make this time.

I often have a mom say, “Oh my gosh, my kid is reaching out, they want me to watch this YouTube channel. I don't like it. They want me to play their game with them. I really don't like it. Like it's painful to play the game. I hate video games.”

And I just want to say just five or 10 minutes, because we want to enter into their world. We want to understand the world because that's showing them you matter to me, you're valued and valuable to me. And I have to put down whatever I'm doing.

And I'm going to try to get to know you, I want to see you, I want to understand even though we might not want to. And it's just true a lot of times we just don't feel like it. But it goes by in the blink of an eye. And Jen is behind the scenes. And she's always like, “Don't tell me that.
Don't tell me it's fleeting. I don't want to know that.” But it does. It's precious. And we want to treat our kids like they are precious.

Remember to tune in, okay, to your emotions, and your kids emotions. And the reason that I say this is remember when I was telling the story about my daughter, when my oldest became a tween, if you had asked me how I was feeling, I would have had no idea. I didn't know what I felt at that time in my family growing up. And I think for most of us, we didn't do feelings. We pushed them down, we pushed them down, we pushed them down.

And so when I, when I ended up having this gift, she was such a gift to me, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now. She was so challenging and required that I get in touch with my own feelings and my own emotions. And I will tell you that until we get in touch with our own feelings and we accept those feelings, the fact is, if we don’t accept our own feelings we're not really going to be able to attune to our kids very well.

When she was angry, it was really difficult for me to deal with her anger. to tune into that. I just decided, “No, we don't go there. We don't get angry in this family.” We just don't.

But how is she going to learn how to express her anger responsibly, if she didn't get to practice in the safety of our own home, if I wasn't able to help her to do that and see her and be able to give space to that?

So we need to get comfortable with the anger. And in your workbook, I have on the last page, I have a feelings sheet. I have this whole list of feelings. And this is so vitally important.

I want you to read over it in the next three days. I want you to track how you're feeling. I want you to stop. kind of slow down. And notice how you're feeling because we want to run from our feelings. We don't want to feel them. Because so often they're so uncomfortable. But the more that we can get comfortable with our own feelings, the more we're going to be able to accept and have compassion for our kids' feelings.

#3 Accept your tweens or teens feelings. All of them.

All of them. The negative ones.
Okay, anger.
Maybe in your family. Anger was a scary emotion. Maybe crying was like, “Oh, come on. Suck it up.
Maybe you didn't feel sadness in your family growing up.

But feelings are just what they are, they are valid, and we will dismiss them, we will invalidate them if we see them as right or wrong.

It's what we do with the feelings that matters.

And our kids need us to be able to coach them around what they're feeling, which we're going to get more into tomorrow. So they're not right or wrong. And I would have told you, they were wrong, you know, anger was wrong. I don't know. 18 years ago, I thought their anger was bad. So I wanted to shut it down. But they are valid. And it's important information. So we don't want to minimize it or dismiss it. We want to pay attention to it. And we want to help our kids to work through it.

Now, in Dr. John Gottman's research, one of the things he says, and I totally cannot agree more, is that **emotions are an opportunity for connection with our kids.**

Think about maybe a friend that you always feel like you can call and you can cry, or you can share your worst stuff, right? And they're not going to judge you. And they're going to hold space for that. And they're going to contain it. Those are the friends we want to call.

We don't want to call the person that's going to fix it, or tell us what we should do. Or we shouldn't feel the way we feel. You know that when you get on, they're like, “Well, you should...”

We're all really good fixers, you know, because why?

We're uncomfortable with those feelings, we want to make it better, we do the same with our kids. That's where we get into fixing, and giving that unsolicited advice, we want to make it better.

But that's not what makes it better. That's what makes them shut down. That's what makes them stop talking. It's when we give, we give that space for the expression that is going to help our kids so much.

#4 Listening is the most powerful thing that we can do.

And it’s so hard to do.

And there is a reason that we have two ears and one mouth, right? And we just need to shut up. We just need to just bite our tongue and not say anything, just be that container for our kids. And it's so hard to do.

But you know what? We can get more skilled, we can grow in listening.

I am such a better listener than I was even five years ago. I'm working on it all the time.

How can I listen? And I love this quote,

“Nothing conveys that you love your tween or teen more than listening.”

So how do we do this? How do we listen? Okay, it's like, oh, I know how to listen. But it's hard, especially when they're saying stuff that's hard to hear.

So let's say they come home from school complaining about their teacher giving them a C on the paper. And what do you want to say? We usually want to say, “Well, I told you to study harder. And if you would have studied, and you know what? Your teacher bla bla bla bla bla,” right? We want to say all those things.

Instead, we want to say things like,

“I hear you're angry and you're really disappointed. You got a C on that paper.”

Just say back what you hear versus “I could have told you so” or “maybe you need to do this. Or maybe you need to do that.”

We can say “okay, well, gosh, I hear that you're angry with them. Sounds like you're really disappointed. You got that C.”

Then shut up. That's where we don't say anything.

And then all of a sudden, they kind of let their guard down. You'll notice this. It's really amazing how it starts to happen. And they let their guard down. And they're like, “yeah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.”

And then they'll say something else and go “Hmm.” “Huh.” “Wow.”

And then they'll talk some more.

After a period of time when they feel heard, and they feel understood and they feel validated. Then you can say, “Well, what do you think you're going to do about it?”

See, you ask a question. Rather than jumping in and giving that advice or trying to fix it for them. You kind of give it back to them.

Or, what do you think you can do for friendship issues?

I've had this happen with both of my girls, you know, big friendship issues. I will tell you when my eldest got in the car one time and she had had some bad stuff happen with friends. Some of you know this. I hate to admit it here, but she was complaining and upset.

And I said to her, “Well, did you do anything? You know, what did you do that that happened?” and now I know better but I didn't know at the time. You only know as much as you know.

Fast forward to my youngest getting in the car and she's talking about how this happened.

And I'm like, “wow, that must have hurt. Tell me what else happened.” “When she was talking to a friend about you? That must really hurt.”

She's like, “yeah, yeah, yeah.” So she's spilling it. She cried a little bit. She's talking. And then she was fine.

Now for us, we're feeling like mama bears. But she was fine.

The next day, she gets in the car. And she's like, “oh, it’s better mom, we made up. We talked. And you know what, I kind of realized that, you know, I wasn't very nice. I was rude to them, and blah, blah, blah, blah.”

She had figured it out. Go figure. I had given her no solicited or unsolicited advice. I didn't try to fix it. I just listened.

#5 Number five, Validate your tween and teen’s feelings.

It doesn't mean you agree with them. It doesn't mean you're giving in, it doesn't mean you're a pushover. It doesn't mean they're winning.

We can often feel like we got to set them straight.

We'll talk more about that tomorrow, too.
It's really easy to focus on our kids' negative behavior, and correcting this or that.

But validating is what I was just telling you.

It's saying,

“That sounds tough.”
“How are you feeling? How are you doing with that?”

We can even say validating is, you know, “I want to understand what's upsetting you? Do you want to talk about it?” You invite them.

“That sucks,” or “That's awful.”

That's it. “It sucks.” Validate their experience, “that makes so much sense that you would feel angry, it makes so much sense that you would feel hurt.” Or even, “I see you're very angry.”

And I really want to understand what you're feeling and how you're feeling matters to me. However, it makes it really hard to listen when you act this way. And I'm ready to listen and understand when you're calmer.”

That's validating - it's like “I see you. I hear you.”

I'm going to close.

But safe, seen and soothed.

We want to be that non judgmental presence for our kids.
We want to be able to listen to what they say even when it's hard to be available and to accept them for who they are, where they're at.

This is a process. I think sometimes we just want it to be better right quicker than it is. And I just keep saying it to myself. I keep saying it to other moms over and over again.

This is a process and we're not always going to do it perfectly. Research has shown if we do it 40% of the time, we're doing an awesome job 40-40%. I'm like wow. So I want to give you that comfort.

So just know that the most important thing you can do to create a safe relationship with your kids is to listen and the effects are powerful. Validating. Seeking to see. Really trying to know them and understand where they're at.

So try this. Go home and practice today and tonight. And when you're tempted don't say anything, just see what happens. And then by the end of the three days at the very end, we can check in how you're doing and the difference even three days can make can be huge.

Module Two: How To Stop Disrespect and Power Struggles and Build Connection

Welcome to Day Number Two.

And today we are talking about disrespect and power struggles and how we can actually use conflict to build a better relationship with our kids.

I know, I know, I know that is hard to believe, especially if you're like me, and you are a conflict avoider. You know you don't like conflict. It's really difficult to know how to handle disrespect, and those power struggles.

But today I promise, I really believe that with all my heart, you're going to leave with some really great tools and some new insights into all things disrespect with tweens and teens and power struggles and it's really going to make a difference.

So I'm just going to name some of the ways that disrespect shows up and each of these I have dealt with myself.

So **eye rolling, who** is getting the eye rolls? You know the humf and that “Yeah, mom right. Fine. Yes. Leave me alone.” Right or the slouch shoulders?
Moodiness - “Good morning. How are you?” And they're moody. They grunt.

“How was your day?”

I was laughing with Jen about dropping them off at school and how my kids would just get out of the car and slam the door without saying thank you. And I'd be like, “Have a great day honey,” and I’d roll down the window to just embarrass them because they would just slam the door and walk away.

Then there's **name calling**. Who has some name calling that's really hurtful can really trigger us and make us angry?
Ignored requests. That can be a form of disrespect, right? Because it's not very respectful when somebody is ignoring us.
Snide comments, talking back insults, sarcasm. Sarcasm is another form of disrespect. **Screaming, yelling, angry outbursts, slamming doors**, maybe some of you on here have had to take a few doors off of your kid's bedroom.
Disregarding and breaking your rules, acting like they don't care.
Oh, that's really a trigger point isn't it? - Acting like they don't care?
And **throwing and breaking things**.

So I just want to ask you - how do you feel when you're being disrespected? What are some of those feelings and emotions that come up for you when that's happening?

And disrespect really takes a toll. It impacts us. It's hurtful. We can feel angry, sad, hurt, powerless, Who here is coming and you're just like, "I feel so powerless. I have no idea what to do about this. I'm overwhelmed."

We can feel confused. Like one minute, which I have certainly done - one minute I'm, you know, I'm you know, agreeable. And then the next minute, they would be disrespectful. And then I'd swing to being too strict. So it's like the swing towards being permissive and then that swing into being too strict, right? So we can go Whoa, whoa, cuz it's confusing. What do I do?

Also, we can feel like we're failing, right? Who's coming to this? And you're feeling like a failure. "I feel like I'm failing. And I have no idea what I'm doing."

Well, I want you to know that you're in good company. Because of course, we feel that way. This is all new to us.

This stage of parenting is all new. Everything is changing.

Our kids' world is totally different. We didn't learn the skills to deal with all of this when we were growing up. Many of us were parented by fear. You know, you're disrespectful. It's kind of like we want to say, "I would have never talked to my parents like that, right?"

Things have changed in the ways that we parent, and it is not a bad thing. It's a good thing, because we're much more relational. But I say that because it can be very confusing. Okay, well, this worked. When I was growing up. I was scared. I would never have said that. But at the same time, I didn't really feel like I could open up and talk to my parents, right? And then we swung this way.

So what do we do? We're going to be talking about all of this today.

So in this training, these are the things that we're going to talk about...

- Why tweens and teens behave and act the way they do - the four leading causes - the reasons that your adolescent is disrespectful
- Four strategies that we often do that don't work and actually backfire.
- And six ways to stop disrespect and build a better relationship.

And then I'm going to share some conversation scripts with you and you are also going to receive them so that you can refer to them when you're stuck, you can look at them, and it will give you something to say, because that's often the challenge. It's like, what do I say that is more effective? We know to stop doing something, but then what do we do that can be more effective? So we'll talk about that.

So we're gonna launch in, first, I just want to give you an idea as to why.

What are some of the reasons adolescent's are disrespectful?

This information would have been so helpful. If I would have known this, when my now 30 year old was a tween, if I would have known what was going on with her that she is acting this way.

<u>The Four Leading Causes That Adolescents Are Disrespectful</u>

When we can understand what's actually going on that they're behaving and acting this way, if we can actually make more sense, we can have a little bit more understanding and insight. And then we can respond with greater patience and even empathy. And we'll be more effective as well in the way that we approach our kids.

#1 The adolescent brain is rewiring.

I'm so grateful that we have so much information now on the adolescent brain that we didn't have 20 years ago. All the neuroimaging now is showing that literally the back of their brain and the front of their brain, the prefrontal cortex, it's rewiring, so it's disconnected.

So what does that mean?

In layman's terms, it means that the part of the brain that's lit up right now is the emotional part of the brain - it's the impulse center. And it's the amygdala. So everything is kind of that fight, flight or freeze. That's why they can have these surging emotions.

The prefrontal cortex is the brakes and steering. So of course, they're emotional, they cry one minute, and then the next minute, they're like laughing, and the next minute, they have this angry outburst, and you're like, "Oh, my gosh," and then they're fine.

So much of their behavior has to do with their brain development.

The research suggests that our kids, they don't really mean to be acting this way, behaving this way, that it really is their developmental brain. And it doesn't fully rewire until 25. But I will tell you, every, every age, it gets a little bit more developed. And then you'll notice, it's starting to connect,

So what are the signs when the brain is developing:
highly charged emotions, mood swings, angry outbursts, crying, impulsivity, struggling with executive functioning, maybe some of you have kids that it's like, their backpacks are just a total mass struggling to emotionally regulate. So those are some of the signs.

#2 Number two, your adolescent is developing their independence.

So they want to be their own boss, right? They want things when they want it. And mild disrespect can actually be a sign that they're fighting for their independence. As they're moving towards adulthood.

Even though in many ways, it's hard. They do have to break away so that they can get ready, they can develop those wings, right? They can strengthen their wings. But it's messy, it's a messy, messy process.

But they are what psychologists call individuating.

So here's some signs that they are individuating just to normalize some of these things here:

They won't like being told what to do.
They want to be their own boss, they will want to be their own boss, even if they lack the skills to do so try and tell a kid that's turning 18 that right, who's been there? "I'm turning 18." And then it's kind of like, Well, good luck with that. Right?

- They don't want us in their business. They want that autonomy.
- They will be reactive when we tell them no, we talked about that a little bit with somebody's question yesterday.
- They're not going to like no, so we kind of just got to know that that's normal. Yeah, when we tell them, no, boy, expect them not to like it.
- They're going to be more private and secretive.
- And then they're going to argue with you because they're trying to develop their own sense of identity apart from you.

So all of a sudden, you're going to notice like they're disagreeing with your value system. It's like, they're gonna say things that go against, you're gonna say black, they're gonna say white And you're like, “No, no, this is black, or white”, or whatever I said, but they're gonna argue because they are trying to develop that sense of self, apart from you.

#3 Number three, they lacked the skills and maturity for navigating emotions and conflict.

I love this one, every time I read it, I'm like, Oh, yeah, of course, they don't have the skills. I'm still always working on my conflict skills, and then to expect our kids at, you know, 9,10,11,12, all the way up, you know, to, to know how to effectively talk about their anger and their emotions. Of course, they don't have those skills yet.

And so I think that's so helpful, just to remember that this is a process that they're in, and they're learning how to do this.

And when you learn what I'm going to share with you today, you'll be able to be more effective and help them with their anger.

The truth is disrespectful behavior (and this is really important), is one of the inappropriate ways kids, especially teenagers, try to solve their problems.

There's something they're trying to solve by being disrespectful. And they can also feel powerless at this age. Remember, the amygdala - it's like they're a sports car, they want to go really fast and do things on their own, but they don't have the brakes and steering for that. So they're in this developmental process, that's really not easy for them. And it's not easy for us.

Talking back and showing disrespect is one of the ways that they're trying to get this power back. And all of us are created - where we want positive power. And so just know that's one of our most basic needs is we want to feel in control of our own life.

So they are at the stage where they feel powerless, and they're trying to get that power. So we just want to somehow normalize some of this.

#4 They are stressed, anxious or upset about something.

And so who gets the brunt of it? Mom. I mean, sorry, if any dads are here, but mom gets it. Because we're that safe place where they feel like they can just unload and unleash.

So they're not going to say this stuff to their friends, right? They're not going to blast them. They're not going to let them know how how they're really feeling because they feel vulnerable or awkward, or they don't really know how to do that. So who are they going to take it out on? They are going to take it out on us.

And they have more pressure now, their academics that's ramping up. More expectations are put upon them.

My son would say to my husband and I when he was a teenager, he actually confessed to us. He said, “I don't want to grow up, like I'm scared to grow up.” And I was so glad he could talk about it. It's a lot of pressure as they're getting older. It's like this looming responsibility. And then you add on technology, right? You add on all that the image stuff, they're seeing if they're left out with friends, the texting, the pressures, they feel with that, that adds a whole nother level to it.

So when a kid is being disrespectful, sometimes there's more that's going on underneath the surface that they just don't know how to verbalize to us. And so they're taking it out on us.

Anxiety also manifests itself as anger and disrespect. So if you have a kid that struggles with anxiety, you might be like, oh, okay, that makes a lot of sense. My kid has a lot of anxiety. And they're having a lot of disrespectful behaviors, especially right now with COVID. Like kids, they're feeling a lot. And so you might see your kid acting out more than they normally would do. So I just want you to know that as well. But chances are, that most of the time, they're not truly acting this way to make our lives miserable. There are reasons.

So we want to see their behavior through the lens of what is happening emotionally, developmentally, and in their world and culture that they're living in. So it's also and I just want to say this, we're going to talk about this more tomorrow in the boundaries workshop. It's important to address disrespectful behavior, and to deal with it. We really do And because we can feel so charged up,

triggered and reactive when our kids are disrespectful. I just want to help you to gain some clarity by asking some important questions.

Okay, so I want you to pause, I'm just going to slow it down just a little bit while I ask these questions.

Okay, so think about this, we have to ask ourselves these questions and make a choice. And today, I want you to just pick one thing, one area that you are feeling disrespected. Okay? Not four, not five, I'm sure we could, we could find many different things. Most of you could pick three, four or five. But I just want you to pick one. Okay? And I want you to think about this.

What is truly disrespectful behavior? Because we have to get a little clear about that, you know, okay, can I let an eye roll go? Can I ignore that? Right? Because if we're picking on every single thing that they're doing, we're going to be nagging them 24/7 right? We're going to be on their backs. 24/7.

So I want you to think what is truly disrespectful.

What might be developmentally appropriate? Some of this behavior is developmentally appropriate. They just don't know how to express it appropriately, sometimes, right? And we can help them with that.

And **what is something that you can let go up?** So it's really important, what's really disrespectful because I see those, sometimes those wires get crossed. And we want to really focus on what really is important.

Where can you pick your battles? So think about that.
What really needs to be addressed? So that's another good question.
And what might be really going on underneath the surface of this disrespectful behavior, which I want to dig into just a little bit more during this workshop.
What skills might they be needing to develop that they haven't developed yet and it's just coming out disrespectfully, because they lacked those tools and skills.
And what is it that they might really need?

So kind of let that just percolate as I go through that there is a very good book that is written by Dr. Ross Greene. And it's called, *The Explosive Child*.

And after years of doing research with behaviorally challenged kids, he writes something that I just love. And it can be applied not only to challenging kids, but also tweens and teens. And here's what he says...

“What we know, according to the research, can be summarized in one sentence - behaviorally challenging kids are challenging because they are lacking the skills to not be challenging.”

I'll say that again. “behaviorally challenging kids are challenging, because they're lacking the skills to not be challenging.”

They don't have the skill. so disrespectful kids can be disrespectful because they're lacking the skills. And that kind of is helpful, isn't it to think of it that way? Like they are lacking some skills that they really need to develop.

And so I want you to ask yourself, what might I need to understand about my kid? How can I respond in ways that support and equip my kid to develop the skills that they need in light of who they are? And the unique needs that they have?

These are some examples.

Okay, so you're fighting over, you're fighting over homework constantly. Okay, so what might be a skill that's lacking there? Well, they may have difficulty focusing. And they might also struggle with the skills to connect that cause and effect of if I didn't do this homework, then I'm not going to end up doing another what one would be they're having regular outbursts, when you set limits, or maybe what you know when you set a boundary with them and it's difficult managing their emotional responses to frustration. So they're irrational, or they might fight to go to school because they struggle with anxiety. And they lack the social skills to know how to enter into groups, fit in, or fit in or connect with people. They want attention, but they seek attention in inappropriate ways.

These are all skills that they need to develop. And so I want you to be thinking about how you might be able to help them in whatever area that they're struggling in.

So now we're going to go on and we're going to jump into **the four strategies that don't work.** Are you ready?

#1 Number one, controlling behavior - that doesn't work.

What do we want to do when our kids are disrespectful? How do you want to respond? We want to control right? They say something disrespectful, it triggers us, it can make us feel powerless. And so we ramp it up. It's like, it's just anything, it's just such a normal response. And some of us might end up ramping it out more,

depending upon our personalities. Others of us maybe don't say anything, and we go passive. So we have different ways of reacting, but we want to try and control it. We could do that when they were little. We could tell them, no, we put the cookies up high. They can't reach them. But it becomes much more complicated at this age.

And so just knowing at this age, they want positive power, I told you, anytime we're trying to control them, or being really punitive, it's going to backfire. And you're going to end up getting in this power struggle with them. And it's just not going to work (we'll talk about what we can do instead). So first, we're talking about what doesn't work. And then I'm going to talk to you about what you can do instead.

#2 Number two, focusing on their bad behavior.

This is easy to do, too, especially when we're trying to be every single one of you is showing up watching this wants to be a really good mom. So we see something that needs attending to disrespectful behavior. And so we want to change what we do and should, right. But if we're focusing constantly, it's like, it's kind of like that, I think of it like getting stuck in a rut, and you're spinning your tires. And you're trying to get out of that hole, it's with tweens and teens, I think it's really easy to get stuck in that rut and be focusing on the negative. And so we've seen it because we're constantly seeing it. And I always say kind of out of sight out of mind, when your kids are out of the house, you don't have to see the mess in their room because they're not in your home. But if you're seeing it every day, it makes it even bigger. And so it's easy to focus on that. And maybe you're thinking you're coming to the US and you're thinking Well, my kids are constantly being disrespectful, I have to stay on him. If I want things to change. So then you end up constantly pointing out what's wrong. But when we continue to focus on the negative without paying attention, and acknowledging even the small successes, it actually can increase their disrespectful behavior.

They'll start thinking, "I can't do anything, right." They get discouraged, they might not be telling you that they're getting discouraged. And then they're going to fight back that much more, they're going to resist that much more.

#3 Number three, this is an easy one to do, again, all of them. And we're never going to do this perfectly. **We get hooked on the power struggles.** And it's like our kids throw out bait out there and we get reeled in. And then you know how that feels. It just ends up not going well. We feel terrible after something like that.

So here's what happens... okay, so I want you to think about this, your teenager, your tween, or your teenager starts arguing about something. And you notice you take the bait, and then what happens then you want to correct them, right? You want to

tell them they're wrong. And then we try to control right? And then maybe we're trying to over explain and we're trying to get them to agree with us. Or we talk too much rather than listening. And we power up. And then we end up lecturing, nagging, threatening, and oh, you know, you know how it goes, right?

But if we want to avoid getting stuck in the power struggles, and the disrespectful behavior, we have to unhook. And we have to stop getting into that debate over who's right and who's wrong and trying to help our kids to get it. And so that's one of the ways so if we keep engaging in that back and forth, arguing, it never goes anywhere good.

#4 Over-explaining.

We talked about this a little bit yesterday - it's just a huge trap that I see that as parents we can get caught in. And that's when we're just trying to convince them over and over again and again and again, trying to reason with them, get them to come over and see what our way of thinking is because of course we know life would go so much more smoothly. If they came over to our way of thinking maybe it's just true, but nine times out of 10 when we over explain our reasoning it does not work. It's exhausting.

<u>The Six Things That We Must Do If We Want To Stop Disrespect</u>

And once you start practicing these things, you're going to see a shift begin to happen. This is building on yesterday.

#1 We want to allow our child to express their feelings.

And you're probably thinking my kids really talks disrespectfully to me, and you know what, I get it, and it's not okay. And we're going to talk about that. However, it's really important that you pay attention to their feelings.. And when you allow your kid to express their anger, and I mean, I've experienced this in my own life, raising my kids, especially my oldest, that was really strong willed. I see this working with clients all the time. And leading groups of moms, it feels very counterintuitive.

But when your kid is angry, you want to let them express it. Because what we tend to do is disruptive and uncomfortable. But if we can really tune in, and I'm going to give you a formula for being able to do this, it actually brings their anger down. It actually lessens it because they feel heard. And they feel more understood.

And they think “my mom wants to get me, she wants to understand me, she's actually hearing what I'm having to say.” And so their anger is going to come down.

We spend so much time trying to shut down the anger. And when I did this I tried to shut down my daughter's anger, “Go to your room, you're being disrespectful,” but I was missing out on that big piece that there was a lot going on inside of her and I was missing - this is where the connection piece comes in. I missed that opportunity to connect with her heart to really try and tune in and to see her and see what was upsetting her.

And years later, we've been able to talk about all this and I found out there were some really hard things going on in her life. And she was a kid that it wasn't as easy for her to access her sadness. So even when she was sad, she would behave out of an angry place. And so I just wanted to shut her up and just tune her out and, you know, “go to your room.” But I missed opportunities to even help her through those really tough things that were going on. Because I didn't tune in. And I didn't know. And it's and that's why it's never too late, because we talk about it a lot now. And I just say you know what, “I am not the same person I was back then. And I am really sorry. I didn't know how to do it. But we can do it now.” So I just wanted to hold out that hope. We really have to change how we see anger. So just try and stay open minded. Did you hear me say that?

So there's an anger iceberg.

And some of you that are actually in the Inner Circle, have it already, because we talk, we talk quite a bit about this in our membership group.

But maybe some of you have seen the anger iceberg. And I want you to think of an iceberg. Okay, and how it goes down, like this goes down like a funnel. And the anger is all up here on the surface. But underneath, there's all kinds of feelings that are going on. There's sadness, there's confusion, there's anxiety, there's depression, there's frustration, there's, you know, all those feelings, right? Yeah, so much of those feelings that are underneath that iceberg. The anger iceberg is there. But it's coming out as anger.

Our job as parents is to want to use that anger to connect with our kids and get down, connect with their heart and really find out what is going on.

It starts with being curious.

What could be going on with my kid that they're so angry or they're being disrespectful?

The problem isn't really anger. The issue is that our kids haven't learned how to deal with their anger and conflict. And most of us haven't either. We haven't become skilled in it. So we just don't know how to do that. So that's where the work lies.

Some of the things we can say are...

“What do you want me to know?” You know, “what do you want?” A lot of times our kids don't even know how to express what they want in an appropriate way, so they're just lashing out in anger.

“How might I support you?”

Okay, we're going to share some of those things that you can say in a little bit.

You also want to validate the emotions which I shared yesterday.

And we want to say things like, “I understand that you're angry with me right now. I get it.”

Just simply validate it, **don't over explain. Don't say anymore.**

Just “I get that you're angry with me right now.” Or, “I understand that you're angry, I won't let you go to the party, and that you really want to see the other kids that are going there.”

“I hear you're angry that I'm not letting you (fill in the blank). Or “I hear that you're angry and that you don't like that I'm holding you accountable. Before you can go over to your friend's house to get your homework done.”

Bam, don't say anything else.

“I understand that you're very unhappy about what I decided to do.”

This can be so powerful. Because you're just validating the experience. And when we feel heard, and maybe you've had this happen, where somebody says to you, “wow, yeah, I get why you would be so angry. And you're like, all of a sudden, it calms you down because somebody validates your experience, and the feeling.

And that's what our kids need.

It goes a long, long way when they feel heard and understood. And it helps bring their anger down.

#3 Number three, normalize the fact that there will be conflict.

Who here hates conflict? We want everybody to get along, right? We want to be a happy family. We just think, “oh, man, if everybody really saw what went on, what would they think?” But hey, we're all in good company here.

Because you know what, **the goal is not a happy family. The goal is connection. The goal is to know our kids, the goal is to connect with each other's hearts and to know that we're for each other. Happy, Happy isn't real, because life isn't perfect.**

Now, yes, do we have fun together? Can we be happy sometimes, but life is full of challenges too. And, if we're telling our kids, we have to be happy or agreeable. We're not going to be authentically real with each other, we're not going to be safe. We talked all about creating safety for our kids. And so we have to shift our mindset from my I want to be that happy get along family, which is not a bad thing to want I know, I really want us to be real, to be open to know that we're a safe place to come and talk about whatever is on our hearts. That is what we truly want. So we have to kind of think of things always through that lens. And that includes conflict.

And one thing that I have said in recent years to my kids, I wish I would have said this years ago. And this is what I even say with my husband now - **we do conflict. We do conflict in this family. But you know what? We work through it. We stay in it. And we work through it. And it's messy sometimes, and we have to take breaks, but we come back, we don't leave each other.**

Because what happens to families? Maybe some of you have families where your families are divided and split, nobody's talking to each other. Why? Because we got hurt along the way, right? We got hurt, we put up walls, we didn't learn how to work through our hurt and our pain. And we felt rejected. And so we don't have relationships. Now, of course, we know we have difficult family members to where you can't really do that, even if you do want to do that.

But the point being that in order to have intimacy and connection and close relationships, we have to be able to do conflict, conflict is healthy. There can't be intimacy, true intimacy and connection without conflict. Why? Because sometimes I'm going to get mad at you and you're going to get mad at me and we need to be able to talk about it. And we need to be able to ask for what we want and say, you know, I don't want this, but this is what I really want or you

hurt me. I feel hurt or I felt angry. But what I'm really realizing is that hurt my feelings.

That's what we want. So dealing with conflict with your kids in your family can help to keep stress levels down for the whole family. Still to this day. I have to say to myself when there's conflict in my family, I have to say to myself, “okay, okay, this isn't a bad thing. This isn't a bad thing. Conflict is not a bad thing.” But really, I have to talk to myself, we can talk through this, we can work through this because it's uncomfortable.

Now, too much conflict isn't a good thing, either. So we really do need those conflict management strategies and skills, which you are going to get help with, okay?

We have to learn how to deal with conflict in effective ways. And also in order to really help our kids, right.

#4 So number four, help them to articulate what they want and need responsibly.

Help them to articulate what they want and need responsibly. So it's easy to react and get into the familiar anger dance. I call it like an anger dance that we do when our kids are angry, rather than slowing things down.

So we want to slow things down, we want to, you know, instead of labeling it as irrational or disrespectful, we want to slow it down, and not make assumptions that we even understand what they're saying. We do that sometimes we just make assumptions that we understand. And we really don't. We don't ask those important questions.

So I want to tell you a story about my daughter coming home one time for Christmas. Now my oldest has been sober for 12 years. And she got into recovery at 19 years old. And we got her help. It happened very, very quickly. And I have walked that path. So if you're struggling with that, reach out to me, and I would love to support you in it. But she had developed a sober community of other kids, they were called, “never had a legal drink” is what they call themselves because they were all under 21. And they hung out together. And she had to really cut off from the friends she had at home and create this whole new community. So she was living in this city in Chicago, and she came home for Christmas. And she was giving me digs. And I think she was maybe I don't know, at this point maybe she was 21. So she was just saying hurtful things. And she kept getting me digs. Okay, so the old me would have just blasted her right, I would have been so mad, I would have blasted her, I would have

said, “Go home, if you're going to act that way.” I mean, it would not have been good. But I knew something was going on. This is not okay, how she's treating me. But I need to say something. And so I said, “hey, let's go into the living room and I want to talk to you.” We're away from everybody. And I sat her down and I'm like, “What is going on? Like you're giving me these digs. It's hurtful. It's disrespectful. I don't like it, I want you to stop. But I care about you and like what's happening with you.” And she started crying. And she said, “it's so hard for me to be home. Because I think about all of those friends I had. And I'm not in touch with everything that happened. And being home right now just really reminds me of that.” Think about that. Think about that, the connection that happened in that moment when she shared that with me was so powerful. And I was able to sit with her and say, “Thank you so much for telling me. I totally get it now.” And you know, the rest of the Christmas time she was home for like three days. She didn't act like that anymore. And she was happy. Why? She had expressed it.

So here's some things you can say:
“What's going on? I'm noticing ….”
“What do you want me to know right now?”
“I see that you're angry. What are you wanting?”
Like, “Okay, you're angry, you're having an outburst when you can calm down when things come down.”
“Let's talk about what you're really wanting? Or what do you want me to know about that?”

This is where once you start practicing this, I'm telling you, it's so it's connecting.

Now, it's not all going to happen perfectly. It's not always going to go well, it's not going to all happen at once. It's a process. So don't give up hope. But once you start practicing some of these things, there are going to be really significant shifts that you're going to see happen.

You can also say something like “you are coming at me like this right now and what's happening between us, it's not going to get you what you want. It would be so much more effective. If you'd come to me and talk about it.”

Right there and you're teaching them a skill.

So you're going to get these conversation scripts just so you know I put them together in a book for you so you can read them because it's a lot to digest, right?

#5 Stay calm.

Why Stay calm. I mean, that's probably the hardest thing because it triggers us, it's just not easy to do. The reason I tell you to understand why this is happening is because that'll help you to stay calm.

So it's kind of like, you just gotta remind yourself a lot of this behavior is normal.
A lot of this is because they don't have the skills, they lack the skills. This is not personal. Things or what is going on in their life right now. Right?

We have to have mantras that we have to say to ourselves, so that you can stay calm.
We can breathe, take a timeout.
Try and not raise your voice too much - that can be really difficult sometimes.
Walk away and have the conversation later.

A lot of times in the moment, it doesn't go anywhere good. So don't engage, don't take the bait. I feel like, in the western movies, where they're trying to remove a bullet from somebody's shoulder and they have them on the table and they put that rawhide in their mouth. I think we should all have one of those, because that is how it feels.
I have to say"don't engage. Don't engage right now. It's not going to go anywhere good."

It really takes a lot of brakes and steering on our part and self control. Because it's not going to be effective.

We just have to ask - how effective is this reaction going to be?

Instead share how you're feeling out loud - I will say, "Oh my gosh, I am getting so mad right now. I'm ready to blow, I'm ready to yell. I'm, I'm losing it, I'm losing it. Okay, I am going to walk away right now." This helps me regulate my emotions.

I'm an expressor. I'm an outward expressor. But tell them how you're feeling.

"Okay, that hurts. Let's talk later." It's good feedback for them.

#6 Give them outlets to express their emotions appropriately.

They need it. I mean, think about venting. And in the Inner Circle, I put a post on there saying - "Take time to vent what's bugging you today."

Why because we have a safe place to vent, we're not going to take it out as much on our kids. So it's really important that you have an outlet for you to be able to just vent to a safe person, a safe place, contact me, we have the Inner Circle.

if you want more of this amazing tribe of moms that can support you through this time, and more of what we're doing here, you're going to get information on the Inner Circle.So I'm just going to plant that little seed, but we need an outlet. And so do our kids. And again, we're often that outlet. So provide other outlets for them.

So here are some things...
Let them cry if they need to cry.
If they're angry, you can say, “you're really angry, what might help?”
That's why sometimes kids will smash a hole in the wall.

It's like they're trying to get all of those emotions out. It's very inappropriate but getting the punching bag, get it in the basement, I know a lot of parents have gotten those for their sons and even their daughters where they can just go down there and get it out model that for them. In my home we have a wiffle bat, and those plastic bats, and it kind of became a joke. Because I would pound my bag with it when I was angry. I know it sounds kind of hokey and silly. But my daughters loved it, and they would get it going and then they would take turns together getting it out and they would yell and like get it out. And then they would end up laughing. But we got to release it. You know, we gotta get it out in healthy ways.

Taking pillow jumping, exercising - kids that are in sport, you know, that can be a good outlet. So just helping them to think of ways that they can get that anger out and blow off that steam. Not to tell them but to say, “You know, you got a lot going on right now you got a lot to feel frustrated about, and what might be some healthy ways to do that?” See what they have to say. And even if they say “I don't know, you know, Mom, don't worry about it.” But we don't want to just dismiss it.

Okay, so moving on..

<u>Five ways To Proactively Address Disrespect And Help Them To Problem Solve</u>

So what you want to do with your kid first is identify the challenging behavior.

So where do you need to address challenging behaviors and attitudes?

So think about what belongs to you?
Sometimes we take our kids' stuff on, rather than just putting it back with them.

Asking your tween or teen, “What do you think you need to do about that?”

“You're really angry that their teacher gave you a C on that paper? Or what do you want to do about that?”

But instead, sometimes we take it and we hold on to it, rather than giving that back to them, which is teaching them those problem solving skills.

So think about...
What really belongs to me? And I also mean, what belongs to you? I want you to think about this like - what is taking care of you?
To ask - How do I take care of myself?
And what belongs to them?
What can you let go up, and what needs to be addressed?

So getting really clear, because sometimes so much is going on, we get confused.

So think about that.

#2 Pick a good time to sit down and discuss what's happening and the issue that you'd like to address.

I always think that a great script to use is...

"I'm noticing _____(the problem)."
For example:
"I noticed you're gaming more and you're yelling a lot. And when I tell you to get off of your gaming device, you're fighting with me, and you're not getting off when you need to. So I don't like the way I'm acting as your mom that I'm nagging that I'm lecturing, I know it's not good for you, then you're yelling, and this is happening. And it just doesn't feel good. And I'm sure it probably doesn't feel good to you."

Then ask them.... *"So what do you think about this?"*

So then what you want to do is you want to share your thoughts.

You want to say what you want and don't want.

"I don't want to be constantly fighting with you. And this is what I do want..."

And then you want to be able to say ...

"What do you think?"

See, this is the part and I know what you're thinking, "I don't know how much this is going to work."
I want you to try it because kids want to be heard.

And you're giving them a place to talk about it.

Now the trick is, you have to know that they're probably going to say some things that you don't like. So just be prepared for that. And start practicing trying not to take the bait again, but to hear them. Because they're going to be more agreeable when they have a say.

“And so what do you think we should do about this?”

Keep it really simple. And set some boundaries, it makes a big difference.

#3 You want to negotiate and you want to be able to compromise some.

“Let's talk about what we should do about this.”

So we want to work on kind of coming up with a plan.

“Hey, Mom, you don't listen to me.”

You: *“Alright, you know what, you're probably right. I haven't been the best listener.”*

You know, we're all working on that.

You: “I'm listening.”

#4 Stay calm.

If you have to say no, try to just do it calmly and know that they're not going to like it.

For example...
“I understand that you want to get a tattoo. But you're 13. And you have a lot of time to think about this. So right now the answer is no.”

And you have to be really just firm and know they're going to try to take you off the course. They're going to try and pull you into this power struggle.

“You're 13 and you have time, and the answer's no.”

You just have to keep on sticking with that. Don't get taken off course.

#5 Respect yourself by setting boundaries.

So just to repeat them...

Five ways to proactively address disrespect:

#1 Identify what it is, okay, what can you let go of, what do you need to focus on?
#2 Think through what you want to talk about and, and pick a good time to sit down. *"This is what I'm noticing..."*
This is what I don't like, *"I don't like how I'm being in this."*
Include yourself in the process. *"And this is what I want. Let's talk about this."*

#3 "I want to hear what you think" that's very relational.

And then you want to talk back and forth about what you think you can do about that. What might be helpful here so that we're not getting caught in this dance.
#4 And then if they say no, or they disagree, keep calm, and just be firm in what you're wanting.
#5 And then also to respect yourself by setting some boundaries and limits which we will cover tomorrow.

Lastly, give positive attention.

We're so used to focusing on the negative Sometimes kids are just really starving for positive attention and we're in this negative dance. And it's hard to get out of that. And the more responsible we want to be, as moms, I think it's even easier to focus on the negative. Because those are things that we feel like we need to help our kids to change. But we forget that.

I always talk about **the five to one rule**.

For every one negative, we need five positives. When you focus more on the positive rather than the negative, that is going to motivate them to do more of the positive, and you're making a lot of deposits in their emotional tank. And so we want to really be focusing on those positives.

Tomorrow is really an important day where we tie a lot of this up, because we want to have boundaries, too. It's that truth and consequences balanced with love and grace. We need both. We need both and our kids need both. And they want boundaries. They really do. Okay, see you tomorrow. Have a great night and I'll talk to you soon. All right. Bye.

Module #3 How To Set Boundaries and Build Healthy Communication

Hey moms, welcome. I'm so excited. It's our last day to day. And I'm really looking forward to being with you. hearing me share, and learning all of the things that I share and the strategies and the tools and getting the insight is awesome. And this is a playground like this, where we get to experiment. And we get to do things differently. And we get to try different things.

Each of you knows your kid, each kid is different. And so some of the things I share are going to work, some maybe not as well. That's why we want to try different things and practice. It's like, seriously, it's just part of it is just practicing and practicing that listening today is huge.

This is where we take day one, all the things laying the foundation, that foundation is so important, helping our kids feel safe, and seen and soothed by us in the ways that we show up our number one.

And we need to have boundaries, we need to have limits. And so we're going to talk about how to set boundaries. And what that looks like and why we need boundaries, all of those things.

What I want you to do is to begin by just checking in...

I want you to think about what is the one challenge right now that you're bringing here.

- Maybe it's something that you want to help your tween or teen to stop doing.
- Maybe it's disrespect, okay, that's just an example.
- Or maybe it's something that you do want your tween or teen to start doing.
- Maybe it's helping out by contributing around the house,
- maybe you're wanting them to be more responsible in a certain area.

So think about what that is, because I want you to focus and I don't want to have you leave here today feeling like you have to change everything all at once. That never works, we go in with our foot on the gas. And we have so much energy when we want to do that, because we want to make those positive changes. Yeah, as we all know, if we go in and we're trying to change too many things at one time, that doesn't work very well.

I want you to think about just one area, okay, and then other areas will come to you. But focusing on one is a really good place to start.

So in this workshop today together...

- I'm going to help you to gain clarity around what boundaries are and why you need them.
- Siix signs that you need boundaries
- Four keys to setting boundaries that work. Why aren't they effective, and what makes them effective?
- And then I'm going to help you map out your expectations and your boundaries around what you're wanting, what you're wanting more for your family in your home, and for your tween or your teen and for yourself, because boundaries really do start with, with us having good boundaries for ourselves, and also how to set effective consequences.

And I'm sure so many of you have tried to have rules and have limits, but you're finding that the consequences aren't working so well. So we're going to talk about that as well.

How can you get your power back in a good way, not overpower. But instead have that strong presence and power within yourself to lead we're talking about leading in our families. And **if nobody is leading, it's kind of like we're a ship sailing, with no map with no captain, and we're just being tossed to and fro in the waves and everything becomes chaotic**. And so how can you get your power back and become the captain of the ship in your home?

Most of us here have never learned how to have good boundaries, and what that looks like and how to have effective consequences and what that looks like. And many of us grew up in a culture of, “Do as I say, you know, if I say it, you do it.” “Because I said so” kind of culture. And so it's difficult to know how to do this.

When I talk and work with parents and when I work with moms - boundaries are the number one issue.

We have behaviors that we want to change but we don't know how and so then we wind up feeling powerless.

So I want to just start with talking about what boundaries are.

And some of you might have a pretty clear idea and some of us it's a little murky what boundaries are.

Boundaries are like having a fence around your personal space - think about the yard.

The fence keeps in the good and keeps out the bad. It also defines what belongs to me, and what doesn't belong to me.

So a boundary would be somebody mistreating me, they're coming into my, my yard, and they're messing stuff up. And they're talking disrespectfully to me, and having healthy boundaries, I'm not going to allow that to to be happening in my yard.

Boundaries...
Separate your physical space, your feelings, what belongs to me, what belongs to somebody else.

Some of us, more than others, take on other people's feelings, like they belong to us and with our kids this is so hard not to do, right. It's really difficult not to take on their feelings. But it's figuring out what belongs to me and what belongs to my kid.

It's also our needs, okay, so it's taking ownership of what we need, and also what belongs to us as far as what we're responsible for, and what we're not responsible for.

And as parents, this is so important. Because as we are raising our kids, we want them to learn how to become independent. That is the goal, even though it's so hard, letting our kids go, in many ways it is difficult, right? Some of you are like "no, believe me, I'm ready." But that is **the goal is to have them leave and not be living in our basements, but to be strong and independent and well adjusted. And in order to do this, we need to really help to cultivate healthy boundaries in our homes.**

Healthy boundaries are all about helping our kids to take personal responsibility for what belongs to them, and not taking ownership of what belongs to them. So we're going to get more into that.

Boundaries are our way of setting limits to protect, and also respect and take care of ourselves.
Whenever you're unclear, bring it back to yourself, and really check in with how you're feeling about things, and if this feels good to you, or if a personal boundary for you is being crossed and to know that you can say no to that.

And so it's really important that we realize what belongs to me and what belongs to somebody else.

Also, boundaries ensure that everyone in the family is taking responsibility for themselves and their own behavior.

Here's Six Signs That You Need Boundaries

It’s time to set some boundaries with your tweens and teens. And for yourself. Okay, you ready?

#1 Number one, this might be the biggest one. You notice you're feeling resentful.

Why resentment is a dashboard light on my car that's blinking. And I know, okay, I'm feeling resentful here. Something is off, and I need to do something. I need to take care of myself in some way. So if you find you're feeling resentful, angry, taken advantage of who here feels that burned out underappreciated and tired of nagging and reminding
and yelling, then it's really important for you to dig in around setting boundaries. And I can say, yes, yes, yes, I have felt all of that and continue to work on that, in my own life to have good boundaries. We can say things like, I can't believe you're so ungrateful after all I've done for you. Maybe we're not saying that directly to them. But we're thinking, so who has felt like that? What have I done wrong, that my kid is behaving this way? Or they're not doing XYZ? What am I doing wrong? Or who is in their home walking on eggshells, right? Because you feel like your kid has totally taken over the house. We're going to talk about that. That's a biggie. Number two, you're the only one or at least it feels like that. Doing the heavy lifting when it comes to your tween or teen doing their homework, their chores or contribution. I like that word better or staying motivated. You're doing these things for your tween or teen that they need to be doing for themselves. And that is hard. That's a hard one, how do we hold them accountable and yet not be taking over? There's a real tension at this age and it's not it's it's a continual thing that we need to be asking ourselves.

#3 Number three, the lines of authority in your home are blurred and your tween/teen is running the show in your house and you feel powerless because of their disrespectful behaviors. They may be acting demanding, entitled, or blaming you. Who's relating? Just saying that it's so exhausting.

#4 Number four, you can't stand when your tween or teen is upset. And when you say no, your tween and teen gets really angry and upset and badger shield and then you cave in and give in and then you are so unhappy that you did that.

#5 Number five, you are unclear about your expectations and limits and feel ineffective and confused as to when to step in to help and when to let them figure it out.

Now let me just pause because as I'm saying all this and talking so fast, I'm realizing that so many of you have got your workbook, and you're madly scribbling, and I want you to just relax, and just be here, okay? Because I'm going to give you, I'm going to give you all these bullet points. All right, you're going to get them. So don't, don't worry about it. I want you to just take it in, okay, you can just put down your pen or your pencil and just relax, okay? Because I'm going to give the answers to you, it's a lot.

#6 Number six, your tween or teen is acting out and engaging in risky behavior.

So I'm sure that we can raise our hands to at least at least five of those right four or five or six of those. Because why? Because we're moms. And this is challenging. We've never done it before.

I have a confession that I actually wrote a blog, a blog post called *Confessions of a Boundaryless Mom*. And I want to tell you this story, because I want you to know what is on the other side of a kid that is strong willed and is fighting against every single boundary that you are setting, which was my oldest daughter, who was really strong willed, and many of you have a strong willed kid. And that is difficult.

I would try to set a limit or set a boundary with her. And what would happen is she would badger me and she would work it. And then I would end up caving in. I was at that time very unclear about my limits and my boundaries. So I was really wishy washy. And I would say no to something, but I didn't really know if I should say no to it. So I kind of said no. But then she would be like, “everybody else's mom is saying yes.” And then I'd feel like oh, and then I'd say yes. And then what would happen? I would be so resentful, and angry with her. And it created all kinds of arguing and power struggles and fighting and crying. And it just wasn't pretty until I started to do inner work on myself and get really clear about my own boundaries. And at that time. I don't know how many years 18 years ago, I didn't I never really heard about boundaries. So it was a whole new concept to me.

And the major point of this story is that when my oldest who's now 30 was about, I don't know, 22 she called me and I by this time was clearer about my boundaries.

My youngest at the time was in middle school, and she wanted to go to a movie with a boy. And I told her no. I just knew very clearly that no, I'm not comfortable with that. And she had wanted to go with another girl and another boy and I think they're

maybe in sixth or seventh grade. And for me that was very easy, no. And she was like *"please, please Mom, please."*

And my strong willed, bucking bronco daughter is on the phone listening to this all going on and she says to me, *"Mom, do not cave in, like you did with me."*

And I couldn't believe it. It was like one of those moments in time where I was like, "there it is."

At that time she wanted boundaries. She was really resentful that my husband and I didn't have boundaries. Why? Because instead of having boundaries, we were yelling at her. We were fighting constantly. And we were punishing her for something that we weren't willing to do ourselves.

So I just want you to know, **they really want boundaries, they do.**

So hopefully that story encourages you.

So today, I'm going to leave you with proactive steps to get your power back. And you are going to be leaving with a map, like a personal kind of map, I want you to map it out. So don't take any notes, but maybe you can be jotting some things down regarding what your challenges are. And when you start setting boundaries, you're going to notice, you're not going to feel resentful, it's like the boundaries end up.(I mean, not that we're going to be totally 100% free because we are moms. And there's always things they're frustrating that are going on around us). So I don't want to act like it's gonna be all, you know, hunky dory, because it's it's not, there's still gonna be daily challenges. But you're going to notice that you're not going to feel that level. Because you don't have to fight because you're going to stand firm with the boundary that you have put in place. And you're going to notice, and I promise you moms that I work on this one-on-one with moms, once they start to set the boundaries, their kids, they might fight and protest it, but they feel safer. They feel like somebody is in charge, and they calm down. Because just like my daughter, they want boundaries to create safety, and somebody needs to be the one that is holding the line in the family. And you will also find that your relationships improve because you're not going to be punishing your kid all the time. Because the boundary is going to speak for itself.

<u>Four Reasons Tweens and Teens Need Boundaries</u>

#1 Boundaries help you like your kid again, yeah, you will start to like them better, because you're not going to just cave in and let them get away with stuff, you're going to have boundaries. And when we don't have boundaries, we pay a

high price in our relationships, because we resent people. And I would much rather now hold a boundary with somebody and say no, as hard as it is rather than resent them. Having boundaries is not loving. Some of us and I will include myself in this, I was a compliant person, I was somebody that wanted to be nice. But nice is not always the loving thing to do, because we end up resenting people when we don't set boundaries. And that's why it's really important. We were talking about paying attention to feelings really important to monitor when you're feeling resentful, because that's usually a sign that you need to set boundaries, not just with your kids, but with somebody else or with a family member.

#2 Number two boundaries help to prepare our kids for adulthood, and to take ownership of their lives. I know every single one of you is here, because you want to raise a kid that's responsible, that takes ownership for their life, that is mature, that is kind, that respects others.

And so we need to hold the boundaries for them, because they need to be responsible for their choices, right? They need to feel the effects of their choices and be held accountable.

#3 Number three boundaries, as I said, create safety.

So teenagers will test you.

This is a quote by Josh Shipp, *"Teenagers will test you to see if you like the lap bar on a roller coaster. They are testing you and prodding you and pushing you. Because they need to know at a time when so many other things are uncertain that you are certain that you are steady, that you are safe and that you will hold."*

And I love that analogy. It's just like one of those roller coaster rides, and you check it again and you're like, I don't want that thing to give.

They're gonna fight and push against it. But it helps them to feel safe. And I will add, it speaks a lot to that. And it speaks that you care. A kid that has no boundaries, doesn't truly feel like somebody is caring about them. And maybe you grew up in a family where you really wanted boundaries, and nobody was giving them to you. And so you really hungered to know someone cared.

And at this stage of the development, they can be impulsive, like we talked about yesterday and they're trying to figure themselves out and who they are and all of that. And they are in the process of saying no. So I also want to add this. So it's all three of my kids. They wanted to belong and they wanted to fit in but they would sometimes come to me with something and they secretly wanted me to say no,

because they didn't know how to say no to their friends. And it's really interesting. And some of you know what I'm talking about. When you say no, all of a sudden, you notice they're relieved. And maybe they're like pushing you, but you say no, and, and it takes the pressure off. And then I always say to my kids, when they were younger, you can use me as an excuse. And you can say no, so kind of goes both ways.

Boundaries create safety for our kids, but also so that we can strengthen them so they can strengthen their no muscle, when at this age, it's hard for them.

#4 Number four, rather, boundaries create freedom.

And this is what I said before,

Boundaries, when we're clear about our expectations and our rules, our kids know what they are. And so there's just more of that freedom. And then you can, you can free up on other things, and give them that freedom.

If you don't have boundaries, you might notice that you're more tempted to say no, really quickly. But if you're clear, you don't have to say no to as much because you know, “okay, that's a battle, I'm, I'm not going to fight. And I can say yes to that.”

So now we're going to move on to mapping out your expectations and your limits.

I want you to think about what your family values are. Because this is going to help to map it out.

You know, if you think you have a map, and you put a value like this is a really high value in our family. And here's another value in our family. And here's another value.

And even talking about those values, like sprinkling little seeds in our family, like I had said yesterday, a seed that I drop in my family is

“We do conflict in this family. But we work through it. We don't always know how to deal with it in healthy ways. But you know that we work things out in this family, and that we care about each other. And we work on hearing what each other has to say when we're in a conflict.” That is a high value. And that is one of my highest values in my own life is that I stay in it and I work through the conflict.

Hard work might be a value, you know, *“We want to put in our best effort.”*

I wrote down a couple of these just to give you some examples.

Respect, respect is a really good, a really good value to have, we respect each other in this family, we respect ourselves and we respect each other's contribution. So we contribute, we each play a role in this family.

Another value - helping them to become independent. So I guess the word would be independence, because we want to help our kids be more independent. The more we allow our kids to be independent to make their own choices (and mistakes), the better chance that they're going to learn how to make good choices while they're in our home, and and experience the consequences of those choices, and that is going to help them as they leave our nest and then they become adults who make better choices. We want them to take ownership of their choices. And that's so much of how they learn.

Another one is personal responsibility for the choices we make. So we're wanting to help our kids to not be blamers. Who has a blamer? If they're blaming, sometimes, that is a little dashboard light that maybe we're doing too much for them. And we're not letting them make mistakes enough and experience those natural consequences.

And I'm actually going to talk about natural consequences.

Four Keys to Setting Boundaries That Work

#1 So number one, I want you to get clear about where you will enforce rules and limits.

And I then want you to use your values here.

It's important to think through our values, and really spell that out and think about it because sometimes we're just kind of flying by the seat of our pants, but we're never really thinking through what our specific values are our own values, even in life that we're going to use to guide us when we're faced with decisions. And it just really helps align us with our values and like, "*What am I going to allow and what am I not going to allow?"*

So I want you to use your values.

There are **flexible limits and firm limits.**

So I want to explain because this is kind of murky waters.
That's why I choose to create "moms of *tweens and teens*."

Why? Because when they hit about 9,10, 11 years old, things begin to change.

And before we could just say, *“okay, you need to do this, you need to clean up your room before you watch television, you need to do this.”* And they were pretty compliant. I mean, some of us have more strong willed kids, but for the most part, they were compliant, then they become tweens and teens, and they want to be more independent, they're pushing back. And they're not always doing what we asked them to. And we all know what I'm talking about. So it gets murky.

But I want you to think about what's going to be flexible?
What battle are you just not going to fight because if you're picking every battle that is going to cause a lot of anger, resentment, power struggles, it's going to be exhausting.
And you'll also have to think about what I can really enforce?

What can I enforce? What can't I? And what does that look like?

So I'm going to give you some examples of flexibility, these are the battles that you just say, aren't worth fighting, okay?

This might be clothes they wear as long as they're appropriate.
This might be what movie you watch as a family or how long their hair is. Or if they get another piercing in their ear.

Okay, so what I mean flexible, you can you can negotiate these things with your kids, okay, so how long they gave that's flexible, you can talk about what you want that to be, how how much they use their phone, when they can be on their phone, when they can't be you can actually set some looser boundaries, you know, talk to them and be flexible, and whatever limits you set up.

So firm. All right, so these are non-negotiables. This is safety.

Our job as parents is to keep our kids safe as much as we possibly can.

What do I mean by that? Well, that might be the use of the car, when you're going to let them drive. If they're getting involved in drugs or alcohol, that's a safety issue. Curfew, if they keep coming in late, and you have a curfew for them, that can become a safety issue.

So I just want you to think about some of those things that are firm. And some of those things that you can really negotiate.

Maybe another one would be absolutely no disrespectful, abusive words, somebody was asking about swearing. And I really rethought that and I kind of, we have time, I can go back to that, I just want to be very specific, if your kid is swearing at you and name calling, that's allowing them to get away with abusive language and so that you can be firm about that.

This is going to look a little different for each one of you. So think about what is going to be flexible, and what's firm.

#2 Figure out where you will allow them to make mistakes.

Now, I will say this is one of the toughest things, I think, for parents.

And **the best consequences are natural consequences.**

And I know this is a tough one. Sometimes we really just have to allow them to experience the natural consequences.

And in the groups that I've led, and the moms that I work with, I can tell you that usually about seven or eight times out of 10, that when they let go of some of the stuff that belongs to their kids around their homework, their kids start rising to the occasion. Why? Because if we keep trying to push and control them, they get resentful, and they push back. And then they don't want to do what we ask. They resist. And we actually wind up creating the very thing that we don't want sometimes or getting in the way by not allowing them to experience natural consequences.

Now is the safest time for them to experience natural consequences because they're in our home.

And I met for a while with a group that was in person with the moms that I was working with. And when I asked this group of moms, and their kids were older, they were 16, 17 ,18 years old and their kids were all struggling with very similar issues and I said, *"If you could change one thing about what you did when they were in middle school? What would it be?"* And they all said, *"I would have let them experience the natural consequences of not doing the work that they needed to get done for school. Because now it's as they've gotten older, it's just created more of a mess, more of a fight. And they're not taking ownership for what belongs to them. And they're blaming, constantly blaming me, because they got so used to us being on them."*

Our teens and tweens need to have opportunities to make choices, good and bad. And to get feedback from the choices that they make. They need that natural feedback.

And if we restrict our kids so much that we're making all the choices for them at this age, they don't have those opportunities to learn, and how to evaluate because we're jumping in there, we're jumping into their yard and making decisions.

And **no freedom means no growth.** So I just want you to think about that.

They have to experience the consequences of their actions.

And I feel like biting my fingernails, as I say this, but this is just true, if they don't study, they may want the test. If they don't show up for work, they get fired. And if they're rude to their friends, their friends won't want to hang out with them. I mean, not that we don't give them feedback, not that we don't give them support, not that we don't coach our kids. but some of these things, I think we have to be really strong and firm with ourselves to just give ourselves the reality that our kids need to learn these things, so that they're not blaming us.

And again, this is I think this is the hardest thing to do. And each of my kids in the areas that I was taking over, and doing too much in specific areas, and I could actually name each one of those with each of my kids. Those were the areas where they left my home that they were struggling the most, because they didn't learn it in my house. And it's like, oh, you know, but we can continue to kind of evaluate, you know, use this kind of just as evaluating and getting you to kind of think.

#3 Get clear first about your limit and boundary before you approach your kid. So get clear.

And then **I have a formula**. So this is a powerful formula. And you're going to get this in the conversation scripts. So I shared a little bit of this yesterday that I'm noticing.

So you tell them *I'm noticing*... What is the problem?

"I'm noticing I'm doing all the dishes, I'm noticing you're playing video games 24/7 and not getting out of the house or doing your contribution. And I'm just so tired of yelling and fighting, I don't want to be doing that."

Then what you want to do is say what you don't want.

So you say what you notice (and you can use this formula with other people in your life).
Then you want to say what you want or what you're feeling.

"Hey, everybody, I notice you know, when you're at the dinner table, you sit down, I noticed I'm doing all the dishes. And you know what I'm also noticing, I'm feeling resentful, and then I'm walking around really grumpy and angry. And what I'm wanting is I'm wanting us all to pitch in and contribute more."

Or *"I'm noticing that I'm telling you that you're gaming and I'm telling you to get off and you're not getting off when I'm asking you to get off and then we're fighting and then it becomes this battle and it doesn't feel good. And I noticed I feel angry. And I'm pretty sure you feel that way too."*

So then you want to share what you want.

Another example, *"I want you to be responsible for your own dishes. Okay, I want everybody to wash no dishes and put them in the sink."* Okay, that would be one,

"I would like to come up with an agreement with you about a reasonable amount of time to spend on the video games." Alright, so there's what you want, then you want to invite them into the conversation. So this is where it connects day one and day two, because we're wanting to invite them in and listen and hear what they have to say.

This is not always going to go smoothly. But I will tell you when you start practicing it and working on this even though there's going to be bumps in the road. And it's going to be squeaky and it's not gonna always go smoothly. But you're going to get more skilled at this and you're going to be able to talk about these things and things are going to get where you're more relational about things.

You're building those skills on how to resolve these problems and these issues while holding people accountable and taking care of yourself.

So then you want to invite them by saying, *"what do you think about this?"*

"So here, I'm saying what I want, what do you think?" And then you gotta listen. Now, this is probably the hardest part, because they're not going to probably say all the things that you want, but you just want to stay in it.

And you can also put it into a question, *"Well, what do you think we can do to get the dishes done as a family? What do you think's going to work?"*

So here listen to what they have to say, and then talk about how you can come to an agreement.

Then you want to decide about what the consequences will be, if it doesn't happen? Or if they break the rule or the boundary?

And you can even say, *"what do you think our consequences can be for this?"* or depending upon the situation, you can come up with the consequences yourself, which I'm going to tell you how to set effective consequences, okay.

And then what you want to do is you want to revisit it, after a day or two days or a week, and you want to say to them, *"we're going to see how this goes."* Okay, but we're going to see if it's working, because you know, a lot of times we said something, it doesn't really work, and we need to be flexible and re-evaluate.

7 Things That Make Consequences Effective

So now I'm going to launch into seven things that make consequences effective

#1 Connect consequences to the behavior you want to see.

We get this a little wrong. We want to try as much as we possibly can to connect it to whatever that rule or boundary that's being broken at.

Example:

So let's say it's curfew, okay. They keep coming home later than their curfew. Of course, you want to talk about what's going on with them.

So you use the skills that we talked about day one and day two...

"Okay, you're coming home from curfew, what's going on?"

And moms that I work with their kids will say, "Well, my friends are staying out till one o'clock in the morning, which then you know, no, you're only 12, you're not staying out to one.

So that's very firm and clear, this is a non negotiable that sometimes my kids would say, "Well, I had a friend that they were driving me home and they wouldn't leave."

So then we talked about that.

So you know, open up the dialogue versus just laying down the law - talk about it. Find out what's going on - why - so they feel heard.

But let's say they stay out past curfew, then the next time, they have to come in an hour earlier.

And then if they come home on time and then you can extend it back.

And another one, which is a good one, if your kids aren't doing their homework, they lose their phone until their homework is done.

Or they can't leave and hang out with friends until their homework is done. And then they can meet up with their friends.

#2 Make consequences short term.

We don't want to ground him for a month, that doesn't work, that's going to only build resentment, and sneaking around and anger. Make consequences for a short time period so that they have the time to make the right choice. That is the goal.

The goal is like "Okay, making *that* choice doesn't work. So you will experience a consequence of that. And then you get to pivot and change and make a better choice next time."

I want you to hold it like this is a learning process for your kid to think, "okay, if I make this choice it doesn't go so well. And if I make this choice, that feels a lot better. And then I get more freedom."

#3 Use consequences that motivate.

An effective consequence is a privilege your child is interested in.

So for some kids, video games are a powerful motivator, while other kids don't care about video games. And that's not going to be so taking away a cell phone for several hours, like I said, for your kids to get their homework done. That can be a good motivator. You want to choose the right motivation for your kid and you know your kid best.

So what are their interests?
What would really impact them if they lost it for a short period of time?

Remember, you want them to be able to earn it back and some parents say all electronics because if you don't, then they go to YouTube, right? Or they go to something else.

#4 Number four, come up with consequences together when possible, and appropriate.

“You know, what do you think is a fair consequence?”

You'll be shocked by what comes out of your kid's mouth when you ask them that question. A lot of kids will have a stricter consequence than then what you would have enforced and maybe you can even say, you know what, “I think that's maybe a little too harsh. Like what else could we come up with?”
And maybe some of your kids are going to say nothing. They're going to be the exception -those strong willed ones. And I just want you to know, you don't have to agree with them, you can decide what the consequence is, and just say, “Well, okay, I will hear you out. But this is what the consequence is going to be.”

#5 Number five (and this one's trickier when they get older) Only make consequences that you can follow through with.

So ask yourself the question, if I'm setting this consequence, am I gonna, it's kind of like you cut off your nose to spite your face, you might have a consequence, and then you're hurting yourself, when you make that consequence. You don't want to do that either. And you'll also want to have a consequence that you can stick to, or else you're going to lose your power. With that consequence, it's not going to be very effective.

What effective consequences might be:

So here's just a less because I thought, you know, this is sometimes hard to kind of figure out what might be effective.

They go to the room to cool down for a limited time. And then you follow up with them. This is after they've had an outburst. And they've been disrespectful. And then you follow up with them about what happened and what they can do differently the next time. You see you're teaching them in this process.
They have their phones taken away for a day until they change their behavior.
They aren't allowed to go to a sports activity. That's usually when you'll see a big change in behavior, or a friend's house or a social event. Don't take away a big event. That's just hurtful. So you don't want to do that.

#6 Use rewards to motivate your kid when you can. When you notice that they're having a change in behavior, and they're turning some things around and making better choices...
Give them additional TV time, allow them to stay up later, take them out.
Additional cell phone time on later curfew.

#7 Be brief and clear.

When giving a consequence, your kids are going to try and rope you back in.

That's when we get hooked. You want to be very matter of fact, with what the consequences is, *"This is what was agreed to, you broke the limit or the rule here. And this is the consequence.*"

And if they go on and on, you just say it again, you're just like very firm.

Don't expect them to like it. And so you don't have to get mad or angry that they don't like it, but you just have to keep reminding yourself.

Now, this is my last thing I'm going to say, many of your kids say they don't care, right, who has a kid they hear, say, "I don't care."

I don't care sometimes means that it's an attempt to manipulate you and hook you and to get a rise out of you or not to give you the satisfaction, or they're trying to manipulate you out of the consequence. And so it can throw you off, it's like an attempt to throw you off. And to get their own way and to assert their power, which is very normal at this age, because they want to be in control. And they want to be the boss of their own life. Not really. But they feel like they do. And they're trying to figure that all out like we talked about.

So don't take the bait, just recognize this is what they do to kind of jab back.

And you can say *"I understand* (this is a reflective listening) *that you don't care. But the consequence stays.*"

And again they might try to pull you off course. And this is kind of like how they use it in negotiations and all kinds of different businesses and everything. That's a skill, where when somebody tries to pull you off, kind of get you off track, you have to just keep bringing it back, *"This is our agreement, and you agreed to it. Now hand me your phone."*

Just continue to stay firm. So stay calm, and just stick to the facts.

So lastly, just practice, be patient.

Understand that this is a process in our lives in our families. And I just want to remind you, we have so much power to turn things around just by changing and growing ourselves and practicing some of these things. It's not going to be easy. It's not easy. It's a process. But I know and I've seen so so so many moms and I've experienced in my own life, where we go through these really tough times. But when we start making these changes slowly and surely, surely it begins to happen.

Listen to my podcast episode - The Moms of Tweens and Teens Podcast - The interview with Jen Kehl, *Hope For Moms With Boys That Struggle To Emotionally Regulate/A Personal Story From A Mom Who Has Been There,* who is behind the scenes here and she shares all that she went through with her son and how she began to do the things that I've been sharing, and how good of a relationship they have now, and how I mean, you will be so inspired and encouraged listening to what she has to say that what I'm sharing here works, but it takes time.

You know, change takes time, and we're human. And we try different things. And then we realize all of a sudden you start to see changes begin to happen. And it's encouraging.

I've had moms that have come to me and they've said I think my kids are narcissists, I think they might be sociopaths. I think they might be ODD, and they're sneaking out at night. They're doing this and they start putting this into practice. It changes. I promise you that. Um, thank you. Thank you for showing up. It's been an honor and privilege to be with you and to be able to support you and we can do this right. We can do this.
All right. And please, please, please stay in touch and share any takeaway you've had because I'd love to hear and I'd love to connect with you!

All right. Bye.