

Let's Talk Learning Disabilities

EPISODE 41

In this Episode, Laurie and Abbey interview Ann Kaplan, a parenting coach who has developed a career out of helping parents discover the right approach to successful parenting through discovery and coaching. Ann shares her insight on root behaviors, and various ways discipline and consequences can benefit developing children.

What is a Parenting Coach? (1 min)

Some may think a Parenting Coach is someone who gives you all the answers to the struggles you're having with your kids. Truthfully, it is a gentle approach, aiding you in self-discovery of what is best for your child and their specific needs. She taps in to your own creative problem-solving skills, rather than a one size fits all guide to raising your kids. Ann starts off with what she calls a Discovery Call, to get to know her client, what their pain points are, and what values and morals are important to them and their family. She asks some really powerful questions to peel back those layers until she gets a really comprehensive picture of what's going on. After that, she turns the tables, and gives honest feedback, painting a picture of what's possible and how you can get there together. While at times she may offer good practices, she often guides to self-realization through questions like, "What are your thoughts on that? What of that feels most aligned to you? How could that apply in this situation? What do boundaries and consequences look like in terms of homework, for example, or in terms of getting ready for school on time? What consequence fits this situation? What thoughts, feelings or reservations do you have about even given a consequence?"

Where Our Parenting Approaches Come From (5 min)

People bring a mixed bag to their approach to parenting with all of their past experiences and messages that they've received during their own time growing up. Some people draw from those past experiences and think, I never want my

kids to see me the way I saw my mom or dad, so I'll never spank my kids or yell at my kids, or even discipline them. Or on the flip side they maybe think, it worked for me, I turned out fine, so I'm doing the same with my kid. Also, some people may have experienced a super permissive parent or a total lack of discipline, and their parents letting them do whatever they wanted to made them feel totally out of control, and so now they micromanage everything their kids do. Parenting Coaching has not necessarily derived from not knowing what to do, what consequences are, etc. but rather confusing what consequences are and what punishment is. Ann also mentions there is a real need for therapy in some situations, and that although coaching and therapy would definitely overlap on the diagram, they can also operate as a compliment to one another.

Common Parent Coaching Topics (9 min)

Ann serves clients with a range in the ages of their children from toddlers to teens. In the toddler phase, tantrums and power struggles are a hot topic. There can be lots of physical aspects to parenting a toddler and finding what you're comfortable with is important. Forcing your kid to get dressed in the morning, or wrestling them into the car seat, chasing after them at the park, etc. and all parents view those components differently. And then with older kids, a lot of times parents may think the issue is respect, but really, it's not. The principles of effective parenting never really change. We as parents can get hung up on trying to control things that are out of control, trying to manage the outcome of their kids, or their emotions and really it creates a power struggle, increasing the emotional intensity in the way we parent. That can even lead to potentially sabotaging any hope of improving our kid's behavior. Whether it's super intense positive emotion, or super intense negative emotion, neither create a good outcome.

The 4 Fundamentals of Effective Parenting (11 min)

- 1) You can't control anyone but yourself, nor do you have the right to.
- 2) All human beings desire control and autonomy in their lives, including toddlers and children.
- 3) Experiences are the best teachers - the more you're talking, the less you're teaching.
- 4) Intensity negates everything. You have to be neutral all the time.

Parenting a Neuro-atypical Kid (19 min)

It's really easy to fall into a trap of believing the fundamentals of parenting won't apply to your neuro-atypical kid, and that's just not the truth. A neuro-atypical kid wants all of the same things. They may have challenges with learning, and it may take them longer to learn and retain concepts, but it doesn't mean that those fundamentals are ineffective. Neuro-atypical kids need structure and boundaries, and predictability and consequences, even more so than the "normies" out there. The goal is the same for all kids, to be independent, take ownership and accomplish their goals, childhood and how they interact and are influenced is what shapes a person for adulthood.

Praise vs. Observation (23 min)

What's the difference between praise and observation? This is a question Ann prompts her clients with. You can say, "I am so proud of you for remembering to turn your homework in!" or "I can see you feel so great right now." And the difference between the two may seem really small, but it encourages self-realization for your child, so that they are making choices because it is important to them, and they will learn to make good choices for themselves, without us parents in their ear making their decisions for them. It's a powerful thing to kind of build on that intrinsic motivation and reward and praise for themselves.

Emotional Detachment (31 min)

Having a conversation with yourself to talk yourself down from an emotional standpoint as a parent is such a big thing. Telling yourself for example, "What you're hearing from the teacher is informational feedback. I get to choose what to do with this information. Johnny threw a chair today at school, ok this is information. What do I do with this information?" It should be just as informational as, "Johnny wore a yellow shirt to school today." As a parent you have to choose what is acceptable and what is not. And then come up with consequences that fit when your child does not do what is expected. Sticking

to privileges such as, “In this family, screen time is for people who turn their homework in.” is a great way to put choice back in the lap of your child. They get to decide what their outcome is, based on the choices and the structure you lay out for them.

Parenting a Teenager (35 min)

As your child gets older, they become more independent, and in turn, your relationship with them may become neglected. It's key to pay attention to how you are communicating, and even being aware of how effective the consequences are that you've set. For example, if you've ever had a friend growing up who was always grounded for something - they are re-grounded before they're ever un-grounded, it's obvious that grounding is not effective anymore. Finding other consequences can be set in place that will align with your own values can encourage kids to grow into that next level of age group.

Parenting with Learning Disabilities (36 min)

Ann speaks to parenting an older student with learning disabilities and how the fundamental elements of parenting don't change as a whole, yet the nuts and bolts to the structure may change with the child. For example, if you say to a neuro-typical kid, “Homework & chores need to be done before you can have screen time,” that may be all you need to say to them and they know how to layout their priorities if they want to have screen time. For a neuro-atypical student however, that may not be enough. You may need to encourage more thought and planning through questions like, “What can I do to help you feel like you're ready to take on that responsibility?” Or “What do you need to be able to do that?” Encourage your child to take ownership of their responsibilities, instead of you monitoring and using checklists for them, encourage them to refer to their checklist.

Resources:

Ann's Website: <https://www.annkaplanparentcoach.com>

Let's Talk Learning Disabilities Website: <https://ltldpodcast.com>

Contact info for the podcast: letstalklearningdisabilities@gmail.com

E-Diagnostic Learning Website: <https://ediagnosticlearning.com>

Social:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/eDiaglearning/>

Twitter: @diaglearning

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/diagnostic-learning-services/>

Instagram: @diaglearning

Length of episode 45:46