Coaching Kids to Develop Friendship Skills and Community

Mr. Chazz

Interviewed by Dr. Laura Markham

Dr Laura Markham (00:04):

This summit is brought to you with love by Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids. Welcome. Hi, I'm Dr. Laura Markham, founder of Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids and organizer of this online summit, Nurturing Hearts, Nurturing Minds: The Neuroscience of Peaceful Parenting. I can't wait to introduce you to my guest today, Mr. Chazz Lewis or Mr. Chazz, as he is known to his giant followings on TikTok and Instagram. He's an educator, coach, content creator, and podcaster who shares his ideas on social media in a fun, playful, and accessible way, training thousands of teachers and parents, sharing practical tips and insights on how to understand and support children.

(00:49):

Mr. Chazz says his goal is to teach adults to see, guide, and empower kids by offering strategies that help the adult regulate their own emotions. Sound familiar? So, they can respond to children with patience and empathy. His approach emphasizes understanding children's behavior through the lens of developmental psychology, but also understanding ours and the child's neural state, so neuroscience. So, welcome, Mr. Chazz. I'm so excited to talk to you.

Mr. Chazz (01:19):

I'm so excited to be here.

Dr Laura Markham (01:22):

So, can you tell me why friendship, and social connection, and community, why are those things so important to our kids?

Mr. Chazz (01:31):

Well, it's not just important to our kids, it's also important to us. That connection and safety is a human need. And when we don't have safety and connection, then it's very difficult for us to learn and I take in new information. And part of the way that we talk about this... I practice the framework called conscious discipline. And we talk about when a child is in a survival state and they need safety or when a child is in an emotional state and they need connection, and understanding, and a sense of belongingness. And if they have that safety, and connection, and sense of belongingness and understanding, then they can really practice their executive skills in their prefrontal lobes, which isn't fully developed till at least 25, 26.

[NEW_PARAGRAPH]And there's more research coming out that suggests it's even later than that. But for us to practice these executive skills, like attention, time management, impulse control, empathy, organization, memory, all these things that we want our children to use in a practice and often expect them to use in a practice. If you want them to practice it, they need to have a sense of safety and connection so that they can access this part of their brain and practice those skills.

Dr Laura Markham (02:47):

Beautiful. And I think you would also say, because I've heard you say this on a podcast, then when they're in that survival state or the emotional state, when they're feeling threatened, they're not going to be able to relate well to another child. We're talking about learning, which is really important. But just in terms of being with other kids on the playground, if they're feeling threatened, lots of things can go wrong at that point. Whereas if they're feeling safe and connected, then lots of things can go right. So, maybe you can tell us what you see in groups of kids or even two kids together. What are the common challenges that kids face when they're trying to relate to their peer group?

Mr. Chazz (03:29):

Yeah. Like you said, when they're in a survival state, they only have a few choices. They only have but a few skills. They can fight, they can run away, they can flight, they can fawn, which is ignoring their own needs to please somebody else or they can freeze. And so, when they're in a survival state and they don't have that safety, now those are the skills that they got in their tool belt. Those are what they can

access. Those are what they can do. And as you might imagine, fighting and running away, and freezing, and even fawning aren't things that help build and maintain a healthy relationship. In fact, these are skills that are not necessarily bad skills, because it's intended for us to keep us safe, but we often do things that are hurtful to others or ourselves when we're in this survival state.

(04:22):

So, to answer your question, some of the challenges are really them not being able to regulate themselves enough to use those executive skills that I talked about. In the emotional state, their skills are more less physical reactions, but more verbal reactions like name-calling, like blaming, like the whole, "You're not invited to my birthday party." It is like the classic thing that a child might say when they're in an emotional state. It's not because they're a bad kid, it's not because they're a mean kid or a bully or anything like that. The trigger for us getting into an emotional state is simply something in the world not going our way. Something not going our way triggers us into an emotional state. It puts us in a view of it's me against you as opposed to me and you versus the problem.

(05:12):

And by the way, I'm also talking about us adults too, not just the kids. And puts us in a place of judgment. We're more likely to do things like social exclusion, name-calling, blaming, and verbally attacking, maybe cussing each other out or whatever it is. Maybe your toddler might be more likely to engage, try to start a power struggle and be like [inaudible 00:05:34]. That is a signal of the emotional state. And so, when they're in these states, you imagine it's hard to practice taking turns when you don't have access to empathy or impulse control, because you really want it and you want that right now. But when you do have that sense of safety. And also, by the way, the trigger for us going to survival state is a threat or a perceived threat. Threat doesn't have to be real. It can just be perceived.

(06:05):

When you don't have that safety and connection and you're hitting or you're running away or you're name-calling, you're blaming, these aren't things that help us build and maintain healthy friendships and relationships. And so, the big challenge is practicing that regulation. And children often need, especially young children, need co-regulation. They need an adult to help them regulate and move them up their brain so that they can use those executive skills to really be in healthy relationship with each other, and also, often meet our very sometimes high expectations of children.

Dr Laura Markham (06:45):

So, what you're describing is such a great trajectory of human development, that every one of us starts from a place of we don't know how to manage our emotions. And the goal throughout life is to learn to get better at it. But I'm thinking about this 4-year-old on the playground, "You can't come to my birthday party." We're all going to hit. Every four-year-old, and every 14-year-old, and every 44-year-old is going to find times when things don't go their way in life. So, how do we as the adults support our kids to sort of notice what's happening and regroup? And is it about developing empathy? Is it about helping them notice what's going on for them? Is it about creating safety? What do we need to do?

Mr. Chazz (07:29):

And so, really the challenge is for us. And like I said, I practice a framework called conscious discipline, is really us learning all of these, called the seven skills and powers, and really kind of using them in the moment interchangeably. And what conscious discipline teaches you to do is identify what brain state the child is in and then use an appropriate skill depending on their brain state. Because sometimes we use very helpful skills that are great skills to use, but sometimes we use them at the wrong time. So, for example, sometimes when a child is in a survival state and they're using those fight or flight skills, sometimes we really try to come in with empathy. And empathy might not be the most helpful skill to use in that moment, because we might be using a lot of words and those words can sometimes be even more disregulating.

(08:28):

They're not really hearing us. And it might be more helpful to just be in proximity with them, and to be breathing with them, and to really breathe for ourselves, and kind of download calm onto them. Might be more helpful when a child's in the survival state, then reflecting back on what we're hearing. But now, if a child is using words and that is a sign that they're in an emotional state and they're saying something like, "You're invited to my birthday party," that might be a time to reflect back what we hear them saying or maybe that emotional message underneath. And maybe even if we're there and we're present enough to know what happened, we might even be able to use the descriptors that you want it next time. Because the situation is that you're not invited my birthday party. And the reason that I'm saying you're not invited to my birthday party is because you are playing with the one pot that we have in the room. And I really want to play with the pot and you're not giving me a turn right now.

(09:36):

And so, that's not going my way, so I'm going to verbally lash out by saying, "You're not invited to my birthday party." Now, one, us adults need to be thoughtful about, especially in group care where we have multiple children having adequate enough... setting them up for success with the environment. And if there's one pot for the kitchen and everyone loves the pot and everyone wants to cook, that might not be setting the environment up and setting the children up for success. One is something to think about. And two, another thing might be just saying you wanted a turn with the pot. Ask for a turn like this. And then we can use that opportunity to teach them the skill that they're missing here. Because they don't have the skill at that moment, they are resorting to the skills they do have in their tool belt, which is the verbal, you're not invited to my birthday party or I hate you, or you're the worst mommy ever, whatever it is, not necessarily recognizing their emotion and regulating it and breathing through it.

(10:42):

They're not there yet. And so, we have to lend our prefrontal lobes to them and we have to be in a regulated state to first see that child who says, "You're not invited my birthday party," see it as a missing skill, as opposed to this is just a mean ungrateful child who just wants to mess up my classroom and bully everyone in my classroom. We see it like that, we're not going to be in a position to help the child. But if we see it as this is a kid who's maybe having a hard time, who's maybe lacking skills, that already puts us in a position to teach them the skill. And puts us in a better state to actually access our own executive skill instead of being dragged down to the emotional state with them, starting to judge them and say, "Oh, you wanted a turn.'

(11:30):

The reason why you're saying this is not because... You may not have to be using all these words, but this is the intention, the feeling that the receiving is that you're not saying that you're not invited to my birthday party because you're ungrateful or you're a mean kid. You just don't have the skills to handle this situation, to ask for what you want, to be assertive in what you want. Or maybe you don't have the skills to deal with the disappointment when your friend says, "No, I am still playing with it right now." And so, recognizing and seeing that way is like, okay, we can teach them to ask for a turn. And if the other child says no, you might be surprised by how often a child says yes when we're teaching a skill. You probably would be surprised.

(12:09):

But if they do say no, because the child does have a right to say no, they have that free will, how do you deal with the disappointment of not getting what you were hoping for, what you were wanting for? I mean, that's going to be a struggle for us

too as the adult sometimes. Think about that promotion you really wanted that you didn't get, or maybe even reflecting back to the pandemic times where you wanted to be with family and connect with people, but you couldn't do it in the same way. It's tough. It's hard. So, seeing it that way and then using language like you want it next time can be helpful.

Dr Laura Markham (12:43):

Yeah. I love your focus on skills. And also ,you were talking earlier about safety, that if we can see that child who is saying mean things, mean in quotes, as not feeling safe, not having the skills, but we can get curious instead of judgmental about that kid, then we keep ourselves at a higher level instead of moving down the ladder into the brain states or neural states that are not going to serve us. And as I've heard you say on your podcast, kids can never be at a higher neural state than the parent is or the teacher. If the adult in the room can't stay up there and offer that to the child for co-regulation, there's no way the child's going to lead the way and say, "Oh, well I'm feeling this and I'm wondering that and I'm disappointed about..." That's not going to happen.

(13:30):

So, I love that you're focused on the adult offering the child safety and skills. So great. And empathy, also. But empathy doesn't mean, "Oh, you're feeling like you're not going to let them come to your party." Empathy is actually looking at what's happening that that kid wants the pot. So, empathy is not the feeling, so much as noticing what the child is trying to do. What's the wandering need that they're trying to fill?

Mr. Chazz (14:02):

Yeah. And really, it's not even just the words that we're saying. I want to be very clear about this, that it's also our body language, it's our tone, it's our energy. Children, whether you believe it or not, you think it's hokey, it exists regardless if you believe it or not. The children definitely feel our energy and are definitely impacted by our energy. And you too, if you're really present and notice, you can also feel energy. Think about how maybe you're in a room with people, holidays are coming up, and maybe you're in the room with your people, and you're connecting with someone and you feel that energy back and forth. And then maybe someone comes in who you're not so connected with, or maybe it's in-law. And you can feel probably even your energy start to shift when that person comes into the room.

(14:57):

Maybe you're a little bit less vocal, maybe you're a little bit more shut down. Maybe you're a little bit more just tight in your body. And that is a testament to the energy that is all around us that is impacting our emotional state all the time. And so, it is something definitely to pay attention to and to become aware of, because a lot of times we're trying to say the right words. We're trying to say the, "Oh, you wanted this." But we're still in our emotional state, we're still in our survival state. And so, it comes off authentic because maybe it is authentic. And they can feel when we're truly really trying to be on their team, when it's truly me and you versus the problem, as opposed to it's still me versus you, and I'm going to try to manipulate you with the set of skills that I learned that Mr. Chazz said was going to make you listen.

(16:01):

It's more about connection. The big difference in what I am talking about, and what you talk about, and more traditional methods are... the traditional methods are based off of fear and control and making the child do something, making people doing things. It's focusing on other control. Well, while what we are talking about is more focused on connection and collaborative-based practices and approaches, which is more focused on our self-control. We have to be able to control ourselves so that we can be more intentional on how we impact others.

Dr Laura Markham (16:42):

I love that. I think we're all always radiating. And whether we're adults or children, we're picking it up. So, when you're talking about the nervous system state of the adult, another thing I've heard you talk about is curiosity. If we can shift ourselves from the judgment to curiosity, it changes. It moves us up that ladder again to a state where we're more in connection. Because judgment, of course, there's no connection. We're just in our own emotions. So, could you talk about curiosity?

Mr. Chazz (17:13):

Yeah. Now it's hard to be curious when you are in a state yourself. You kind of have to get to that curiosity. You have to be an executive state yourself. So, the question is how do we actually get from when I'm stark raving mad and my body feels like there is a threat. Your child may be cussing you out or giving you the finger, or saying no to you, or not listening to you, might put you in a survival state. And maybe even talking back. Or maybe it might put you in emotional state where you want to lecture and you want to just give it to them, and tell them all the reasons why they're bad, and all that stuff and you're judging them. And when from that place, we can't really be curious. So, how do we actually do that?

(17:58):

Now there's something else in conscious discipline. And the book, Managing Emotional Mayhem by Dr. Becky Bailey, is a really great book to teach you how to move yourself up in the brain and also teach you how to help children move up in the brain to the executive state. And there's something called the five steps of self-regulation. I'm very, very briefly going to go over it because we don't have a lot of time here, but I do want to touch on it, encourage you to look and get the book. And you can also use my code, Mr. Chazz 24 to get free shipping on the book. So, there's five steps. First step is becoming aware that you're triggered, because a lot of times we just shove it all down and just like, "I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm not triggered, I'm doing fine," when we're really not fine. And everyone else probably in the room knows because they can feel our energy.

(18:46):

Second step is, I calm. So if I am, I calm. And the second step is really about doing something to calm your body. And I recommend breathing, because breathing works for everybody. Now it's something that you do have to practice because most of us don't know how to breathe in a way that actually helps our body. When we get triggered, we'll go like... And that doesn't help anybody. That doesn't does anything that's going to be more disregulating and send you down to lower centers of your brain. The way to breathe so you actually get the benefits of breathing is in through your nose, a deep belly breath in through your nose and a long breath out through your mouth. So, like this. Breathing. And even just doing it that one time, I feel a little calmer.

(19:36):

And breathing in through your nose with your belly, your diaphragm expanding is how you get the benefits of breathing. The next step is, I feel. It's recognizing what you're feeling. Dan Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson coined the term name it to tame it. But a lot of times we don't name it. And the idea is that you need to be able to... the better you're able to name your emotions, the better you're going to be able to regulate your emotions. So, again, a lot it's us. We grew up with the you're too dramatic, get over it. It's no big deal. And so, we have a lot of practice shoving our emotions down. And so, we don't name it or tame it because we don't even claim it. We don't claim the frustration. And then we end up blowing up and we go from not feeling anything to blowing up and going to aggression. And so, those three steps really are to help you get to this fourth step, what I see as one of the most difficult steps.

(20:30):

And that's where that curiosity comes in. That's the choosing to see it differently. The fourth step is I choose. Choosing to see it as the child isn't trying to give me a hard time, they're having a hard time. It's me and you versus the problem, as opposed to me versus you. The behavior isn't happening to me, it's happening of me. Q-tip, quit taking it personally. Seeing it differently, seeing the situation differently, oops, just stands for our opportunity to practice skills or our opportunity to problem solve. And seeing it differently opens it up to... and I think the fifth step can be, especially if you're doing this work and you listen to podcasts and you listen to different strategies that you can use that are helpful for children. The fifth step, I think it can be one of the easiest steps, because once you start to see the situation differently and that's where you can kind of dip into that curiosity, but I wonder what's happening here.

(21:26):

That is when the solutions are more likely to just almost come up. They come a lot easier when you see it as, oh, this child is having a hard time asking for a turn, as opposed to this child just being a mean old bully. Because then the solution is, oh, we can just practice asking for a turn and what that looks like. And the fifth step is coming up with win-win solutions that work for everyone, which might be the practicing of the skill or something like that, or repairing the situation or whatever it may be. So, that is the five steps of self-regulation that helps you get to that point of curiosity so that you can be responsive to children as opposed to reactive.

Dr Laura Markham (22:09):

And I love that one of the early steps is calming the body, calming the nervous system, because when you do that, as you said, then you have access to more inner resource and more creativity to solve the problem. Then you can come up with the win-win solutions. And I think you tell me, but I think this would be true for children on the playground as well, that if they're upset, they can't solve the problem with their friend or their peer. But once they feel a little safer and calmed down, kids are endlessly creative to solve problems.

Mr. Chazz (22:41):

Yes. And compassionate and loving. And you get that invite back to the birthday party once they're up in the executive state. And often, especially for young children, it doesn't take that long for them to be playing again. And so, my big thing that I would say that we have a hard time with as adults is sometimes behavior can be very triggering for us. A child is hitting and we kind of go down this trigger story of if I don't nip this in the bud and then they're going to be a mean old bully, serial killer for the rest of their lives. And really just seeing it as, one, we don't take it personally on

ourselves. It's not us being a bad teacher or a bad parent. And two, it's not them being a bad person either.

(23:28):

It's just how the brain works. They're saying you're not invited to my birthday party. You're the worst mom ever. I hate you. Not because they're mean, because it's how the brain works and the world didn't go their way. They don't know how to handle that yet. The reason why they're hitting or they're running away, or they are shut down isn't because that they just want to be uncooperative or mean old bully. It's because something in their nervous system is detecting a threat or a real threat or a perceived threat. And just know that this part of their brain, these prefrontal lobes are not fully developed to at least 25, 26. And there's more research coming out that suggested maybe even later than that for some people. And so, this part of the brain would have all those skills I talked about, the tension, empathy, time management, organization, prioritization, all those things that we want children to practice and they need to really navigate relationships.

(24:29):

For them to use those skills we have to be in this executive state so that we can see, so we can give that sense of safety, so we can give that connection, understanding and sense belongingness, and access our skills to do that, to move them up here. So, then we can practice those skills like taking turns, repairing with a friend. Sometimes I see teachers, a child will hit, we'll see them or they see us and they run away and go underneath the table or something. And so, the teacher or the adult will come and be like, "You need to come out and say you're sorry right now." And the child is in a survival state and we're expecting them to use an executive state scale, and it does not work like that. They can't access that. And we are likely in that emotional state, and that's why we're coming in and we're yelling at them and wagging our finger.

(25:20):

And so, before you even give the look, recognize that you're triggered, take the breath, recognize what you're feeling, choose to see it differently, and you can do all of this on the walk over to them. Now, takes some practice to get good at it, for it to be quicker and quicker, but the more you practice, the quicker it'll happen. And the more they will be able to rely on you to go to when they have a hard time. Especially as parents where you're going to be with them throughout their lives, you want them to be able to go to where they have a problem. And the judgment and the criticism shuts down the communication and the connection, noticing and connection, belongingness and safety opens up the communication, and the problem solving, and the learning and the friendships.

Dr Laura Markham (26:16):

Beautiful. And I'm so glad you brought up repair, because when we think of social skills, there's always going to be things that go wrong. Any relationship between two human beings will have some conflict and sometimes we'll hurt each other. So, it's a very common thing for the adult, the teacher or the parent, to have to support the children to learn to repair. So, let's take that kid who did that thing, shoved somebody or whatever they did, and they're hiding under the slide. And the adult goes over. And the adult, let's say they've been successfully able to move themselves up the ladder, so they're not giving the look. They're actually radiating support, understanding, and also we have to clean up our messes. So, let's work together here because I know your friend's important to you. Let's be the adult, be very concrete. What should the adult say to the kid?

Mr. Chazz (27:09):

Yeah. So, like you said, we're exuding safety and it's in our energy, it's in our body language and how we're walking over here. That's a really important key step there. And then we can say something as simple as something happened.

Dr Laura Markham (27:23):

Oh, I love that.

Mr. Chazz (27:25):

Which just opens up. It's not judgmental. It gives the sense of I believe that there was something difficult that happened, that you're not underneath the table you didn't hit because you're mean, and I'm not judging you. It's, hey, something happened. And that kind of opens them up to, yeah. And they might start off with, so-and-so call me stupid and blah, blah, blah. They may not start off with their piece in it, the hitting that you saw at the end. But they call me stupid and such and such. And they might give you a good long story and hear that. Now sometimes you might be like, well, the non-helpful way to do it is just focus on the behavior. Well, no matter what, you know to keep your hands to yourself and you're not supposed to hit in this classroom. You know hands are not for hitting.

(28:17):

So, we go that way then we're kind of going into the judgment and all that work we did of calming ourselves down is going to be really just for not, because it's going to keep them down the lower standards of their brain. Or we could say, maybe, yeah, you felt upset or sad or angry when they called you stupid and you didn't like that. And this empathize. Let them know that you're on the same team as them. Yeah, that

was hard. And then that's where you can also then come in when you're kind of on the same page about that and you're on the same team and you're here together. Yeah, I don't want them to call me stupid. You're on the same page. Then that's when you can go into the problem solving. It's like, okay, you want him to call you by your name?

(29:07):

Next time say, I don't like it when you call me stupid. Call me Chazz, call me James, call me whatever the name is. And then you can say, let's practice now. Practice with me and say, I don't like it when you call me stupid. Call me James in an assertive tone, too, because the skill we're practicing here is a skill of assertiveness, which is one of the seven skills of conscious discipline. And you want to teach them that skill rather than you go over there and set the boundary because then you lose the opportunity for them to practice the skill. When next time someone calls him stupid for him to say, I don't like you when you call me stupid, call me by my name, call me James, whatever. And so, then they're learning to problem solve themselves. And a very important skill that us adults sometimes struggle with to speak up for ourselves.

(29:58):

And the two components here are the communicating what's not okay with you and communicating how you'd like to be treated instead. We have to teach people how to treat us because we all honestly like to be treated differently. Some of us, even as adults, some of us, we will play around with each other by name-calling each other and joking in a jabby kind of way. And some people may not be okay with that. In some places they call it banter. In other places they call it being mean. So, you do have to treat people how treat you, and this is a way to do that. And when we don't have the skill of assertiveness, we only really have three other options in conflict.

(30:40):

Either passiveness, where we don't say anything and the problem doesn't get solved. Aggression where we're often hurting, trying to hurt people to get what we want and get our way. Or often us adults do passive aggressiveness, where we're sarcastic and we kind of beat around the bush with what we... and that doesn't move us towards problem solving either. But assertive, clear communication, focusing on what we want will help us move towards problem solving. And so, in that moment to put it all together, something happened and then you can process what happened. You're feeling angry or you got angry because you didn't want him to call you stupid head. You wanted him to call you by your name. Yeah, I want him to call me by my name. So, next time say, I don't like it when you call me stupid head, call me James. Practice with me. We practice.

(31:31):

Because the other thing that'll happen is sometimes when you just say, "Hey, say I don't like it when you call me stupid head, call me James." Sometimes they'll go over there and they'll be, if you don't do it, practice with them and maybe do a little bit of breathing before they go off and practice it in a real life game situation. They will go and just run off and be like, I don't like it when you call me stupid. And they're not regular, and this is again using aggression as opposed to assertiveness. So, have them practice with you and then have them go over there, and do it and you follow them along and be with them to help support in the teaching of this scale. Now, big question that comes here that often comes when we do this is, well, what if the child doesn't want to listen? Maybe the other child still wants to call him, well, mocks them or says something like, I don't want to call you... You don't like you when you call me stupid face or I can call you whatever I want.

(32:26):

At that point, it would be appropriate and helpful for us. The child has set the boundary, for us to help reinforce the boundary by saying... but also focusing on the boundary that the child has already set. So, it's still valuing the power of their own words. It might say something like, they want you to call him by his name, James. They asked you to call you by his name. And we're now using assertive tone too. And so, it's not only they know that their words are powerful, we're also going to make sure that they know that we still kind of got their back in this, and that their words are still powerful, and we are going to help reinforce their words.

Dr Laura Markham (33:08):

I love that because I often say, house rule, classroom rule is we don't call names or we're respectful or whatever. But what you're saying is we're backing the kid up, we're backing up their ability to draw that boundary for themselves. So, we echo, he said he wants this. So, I love that. But there's another piece we have to address here. Kid's under the slide, he comes out, he's talking to you, he tells you his sob story, but it's not a sob story. It really hurt him. And we understand that and then we practice with him. But he did hit this other kid before he ran off. Now, the other kid called him stupid first, but he did hit him. So, most people watching us, you and me right now are going to say, what about the apology? So, how would you answer that?

Mr. Chazz (33:59):

Yeah. So, really, both children need the assertive skill practice here. They both need to practice the, I don't like it when you, because the hitting happened as a result of the name-calling. And often the name-calling, it happened as a result of maybe you

took my ball or something. And so, if we can teach them the skill ahead of time can as much because they have the skill to solve the problem before it escalates now. So, for that repair process, honestly, the repair process, it can be really fluid. It doesn't have to be one exact way. It doesn't have to be necessarily an I'm sorry. It can be the phrase that I like to use is how would you like to make it better. How would you like to repair it? And it might be an I'm sorry, it might be inviting them to play.

(35:03):

It might be writing, drawing them a picture. It might be giving them a high five. It might be just whatever really works for that situation and those children. And that can be something, because a child might not want a hug afterwards. And if you force them to say, I'm sorry. If you're forcing it, then it's just empty words. It doesn't mean anything. And it really paints the value of an apology. And it also kind of reinforces the idea that all you got to do is just say you're sorry and it's over and everything is just erased. And that's not true. You can try to make it better, but the other person might still be hurt. Maybe you hit him and they don't want to play with you in that moment. And that's okay. But I said, I'm sorry. I'm like, yeah, well, there's still hurt.

(35:59):

I think what we want to do is they need to know the consequences of their actions. Sometimes we want to punish them or they need to know the consequences of their actions. And sometimes the consequences of their actions are the other child isn't going to want to play with you right now. Or maybe that activity is going to be done for the moment and we're going to try again later. I think consequences is another conscious open skill. And I say that can be one of the hardest skills to use, because we have such a tainted idea of what consequences really are and what they really mean. The consequence of an action, the consequence of getting a bad grade, getting an F isn't like you're grounded. Or the consequence of an F, or getting a bad grade is how you feel about the grade.

(37:00):

And when we come in with the punishments, and the yelling, and try to force them to feel a certain way and say certain things, we take them away, we disconnect them from what they're already internally feeling. And focus their attention on our external punishment or whatever we're trying to make them feel. When there's already a feeling that they would naturally already experience from that disconnection of hurting their friend or getting the bad grade and not studying. And that is the consequence of their action. That's the natural consequence. And from that, that is

the only kind of consequence that will motivate them to learn a new skill, is a natural consequence.

(37:46):

Now, we have logical consequences, and I'm not going to get too deep into it. But logical consequences are consequences that are imposed by the adult, but they are related, they are respectful and they are reasonable. And again, I'm not going to go super, super deep into that. If you want to learn more about it, there is this awesome book that has all the things I've talked about and even more, and again, anything on the consciousness website you get for free shipping using the code Mr. Chazz 24. But logical consequences can only motivate children to use skills that they already have. And a lot of times we even try to use logical consequences for... the children just don't have the skill to be successful in that moment.

(38:34):

And we're really just creating more disconnection and we're really being counterproductive here as opposed to focusing more on natural consequences and skill building. And sometimes the consequence is we're going to practice the skill. That the consequence is might be you're going to get some assertive training and how to ask for a return, how to communicate how you'd like to be treated. And sometimes that can even be the consequence.

Dr Laura Markham (39:03):

I love the description you used of how punishment, because you were describing really punishment, takes the child away from their own reaction about hurting their friend or getting the F. And you just articulated so beautifully what is wrong with punishment. And so, I want to address the whole consequences issue because I'm actually a huge Becky Bailey fan. I've recommended her books for years. And what I always say to people is Becky Bailey teaches what I teach, except she teaches it in the classroom and I teach it in the home. But the consequences thing, she's not into punishment. She's into what in fact is the natural consequence. I forgot my lunch, so I'm hungry. I hurt my friend, so they don't want to play with me. I didn't study, so I got the F. Those are natural consequences. I think the whole question of is there a way there could be a logical consequence for the parent to apply.

(40:01):

If the parent's applying it, the research shows that the kid still sees it as a punishment. And it still has all the effects of punishment of them getting into the power struggle with us and getting separated from their own motivation to change things. So, I don't even recommend logical consequences anymore, because I just

think they don't work. But I do recommend that the parent think through, oh, well, he was using the iPad instead of doing his homework. So, I don't think it as a consequence exactly, but we're going to change the structure in our home. You have to do your homework before you can use the iPad. That's not a punishment. It's not a consequence, even though it is a logical consequence. It's actually changing the structure. And I think what you said about skills is the same thing. The child needs to learn the skills. If they don't have the skills to be able to do that, then the consequence is the parent thinks, oh, my kid doesn't actually have the ability to use these skills.

(40:52):

And it doesn't mean we haven't told the kid, we've told the kid, give them a turn or whatever we've told them, but for some reason in that moment they couldn't use it. Did they not feel safe? Do we need more than one pot in the room for them to do the cooking? Whatever it is that we need to change in the situation, giving the kid the skill or changing in the structure, I think the adult has to take some action about rather than imposing something that the child's going to perceive as a punishment. Because as you say, it takes away the child's own internal motivation then. And that's what we want because there's nothing. Humans are so motivated to connect. That kid doesn't want to hurt their friend. So, I love your description of how the whole repair process works and how adding a punishment in there is not going to help that kid or either kid.

Mr. Chazz (41:42):

Yeah. And I think the word consequences again is such a almost kind of like the word discipline, is something that just sparks a lot of emotion. And we have a certain way of, we think about it. And your example of changing the structure of using the iPad. And so, okay, we're going to do homework. Or maybe we need a change the structure in the order of things. And remember we're going to put up a visual schedule that we're going to put together and we're going to do homework first. Maybe it's a snack and then homework, and then we're going to do the iPad later, because we found out that they have a hard time with having access to the iPad throughout the whole day is something that I would see as kind of that logical consequence.

(42:36):

But I think even just saying it, and I know I was even hesitant even just talking about it and just briefly skimming over it in my mind I'm like, oh, man, why did I even bring up consequences? Because I feel like I have to go super deep into it to really make sure

to not confuse people out there. That is exactly what I'm talking about there. I think sometimes we'll be thinking about like, okay, I'm going to do a logical consequence, but we don't meet those three criteria reasonable, related and respectful. So, you didn't clean up your toys, so I'm going take them away and you're not going to be able to play with them for the whole week.

(43:19):

Or I'm throwing them in the trash. That doesn't meet those. Or all the timeouts or you're grounded or never related to the actual thing that's happening. And I like to think of it as, okay, what can we do? And I think a nice way, how can we change the structure to really meet them where they're at? Because I mean, I got to do this. I mean sometimes when I got to do work, I got to charge my phone in the other room so I don't get distracted. That's kind of my own... but a child may not be able to make that choice for themselves. So, it's important how you do it too. If you come in and you're like, all right, since you're not doing your homework, no iPad until 7:00, until you get your homework done. That's not respectful. That doesn't meet the criteria.

(44:14):

So, I definitely hear what you're saying. And just when it comes to consequences, I think especially I think most of your audience are more parents of young children. Just think about natural consequences because they were so in teaching skills, because there are so many skills that they do not have. There's so many skills to practice. So, especially for young children, especially for children who are eight and younger, really just focus on skill building, don't even think about the logical consequences or whatever. And really, the thing about it is if you don't have all those, we talk about unconscious discipline, if you're not actively using all those other skills, the composure, the assertiveness, the empathy, the encouragement, the choices, the positive intent then consequences aren't going to be helpful and effective and they're going to be counterproductive anyways. So, don't even focus on the consequences part. If anything, natural consequences and focus on all those other skills, your time will be so much better spent.

Dr Laura Markham (45:27):

Beautiful. So, I feel like we could talk all day. And we can't. But I do have one last question for you that is really important. How can we support kids to be more inclusive and to foster a sense of belongingness with everyone and to make friends with kids who might be different from them?

Mr. Chazz (45:50):

Oh, man. It so much starts with our own attitude and how we're talking about children when mistakes happen, when there's hitting that happens or name-calling or really giving that sense of they're not trying to give us a hard time. They're not being mean, really not judging. They're having a hard time. So-and-so is still learning how to ask for a turn. So-and-so is still learning how to breathe and calm themselves down. So-and-so is still learning. I think that they're still learning or they're practicing and they're trying their best. Exuding that with your language and maybe even saying some of those, using some of those words are things that will definitely help shape the story for the children because the big thing's happening in their world too. And they are going to create their own story. And often their story is based off of what we're giving.

(46:57):

And even if we're sometimes we're saying the right word, but our energy is like, yeah, they're just having a hard time like they do every day. We might be saying the words, but again, with our energy and our tone, the children are feeling, getting what we mean. Oh, there's such a hassle, there's such an annoyance, there's such a nuisance to our environment. And the children will treat them that way. Now, on the flip side, we see it as we really get lucky. They're just trying. They're working hard, they're practicing, and here are some ways that you can help them. And here you can breathe for them when they're having a hard time. And it definitely shifts the energy when these hard moments happen. And even after the hard moments happened, which can also be difficult, the child reintegrating back into the community because sometimes they might have to leave the room or something like that, and they leave and they come back.

(47:59):

And that coming back to their peers, welcoming them to a sense of belongingness, of like, hey, we still got you here. We're still your school family. We're still here for you, is something that will help the child succeed and stay in their executive state or even maybe move them up. Because again, when they're in this emotional state, they need connection, understanding, a sense of belongingness, so that they can access their best skills and be at their best. And us adults really do set the tone for that. We really do. And I've seen it happen in myself on the negative side and on the helpful side. I've seen it with myself and I've seen it with so many teachers. So, I very much know the impact. I mean sometimes even just walking into a classroom, the kids will tell me who the, quote-unquote, "bad kid" is.

(49:04):

And how they talk about that child often gives me a hint into what we are kind of giving off. And again, even with that, I don't take that if the child is like, oh ,yeah, he's the bad kid. So-and-so always yells at... Or teacher always yells at me, he's always getting in trouble with the teacher and our teacher always sends them to time out. Even with that, my response isn't now to judge the teacher and say, oh, how could you do this? You're ruining this child. It's also to see this teacher as they must be having a hard time. And this is probably a teacher who needs some support, and needs some skills, and needs a different way to navigate the situation. This might be a teacher who's also having a hard time. And that piece is really important, important that I think a lot of us adults who support the adults or even we're talking about parents here, our partners, we miss out a lot.

(50:05):

We're very empathetic and we're like, empathy is really important. And we try to talk to our partner about empathy and we're doing it and we're doing our best. And sometimes we even make mistakes even though we're on this journey and trying our best. And then we are a partner, not giving empathy, maybe being judgmental or maybe yelling. And then the empathy goes out the window because we see it as, oh, well, you the adult should know better. And you don't deserve the empathy. You actually deserve judgment. Now, we may not actually say that, but that's what we give when we criticize and we judge, as opposed to notice and be empathetic and maybe even do like, yeah, this is now... I would change the language so they don't feel like they're being conscious disciplined or gentle parented or whatever the language.

(51:00):

I mean even something happened here, hey, that looks like that was difficult. It's almost hard. Hey, you want to talk to me about it? I got you. Whatever it is, in a way that's kind of natural, but you're just seeing the emotional message underneath what the adult is saying or doing. They deserve that too. They need that too. And we often miss that piece. And we want to model the other part to that is not just so that we can support our partner in a more helpful way, so they feel less in their emotional state, more the executive state where they can take in new information. But also, we're modeling that empathy in front of our children too.

(51:47):

They see too, that the empathy is for everyone, so that when they're with their little sister and they're thinking like, okay, I have empathy with my friends at school, but little sister, like, no, because this is how we talk to our family members. We just say, you're being bad, you're being mean. Whatever it is. They might have more of a

tendency to verbally lash out to their family members as well. So, modeling and practicing what we're preaching, not just for the child, but for everyone in our community, is also important.

Dr Laura Markham (52:28):

So beautiful. What I just heard you say is that inclusivity, it doesn't start with the kid who's in the wheelchair or somebody who's of a different race or gender. It actually starts at a much more fundamental level, which is that we're all human. We all make mistakes. We're all on a learning curve. And the way that we as adults respond to our partner or that kid in the classroom who we could respond, oh, making my life difficult. And instead we respond, he's working hard on that skill, as we say that to the child who just got shoved or whatever. That the way we interpret the world for children, the way we model the world for children, if it's about inclusivity of all human imperfection and we're all learning and growing together and we can be patient with each other and all of us belong here together. Wow, what a incredible vision of humans living together and of what we could model for our kids. I love it. Thank you so much.

Mr. Chazz (53:34):

And I don't underestimate of how incredibly hard it can be, especially when it's the hundredth time that you've talked to the child that morning. And want to be clear, the most important thing that I'll say in this whole podcast, I'm going to say right here, is that avoid being a perfectionist, being a provenist. The goal isn't to be perfect every day. The goal is to improve just a little bit every day. And so, avoid beating yourself up when things don't go your way. And just know that you are on this journey with your children, and that you're both learning, and growing, and the mistakes are essential part of the learning process. Oops just stands for our opportunity to problem solve or our opportunity to practice skills. So, see it that way. Embrace the mistakes. Know that they're going to happen with you and your children, and accept them, and learn from them and problem solve through them and move on.

Dr Laura Markham (54:41):

So, thank you. This has been so much fun to talk with you. And can people find you who want to hear more from you? What can they do?

Mr. Chazz (54:50):

Oh, yes. I'm everywhere. TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, a little bit on LinkedIn, a little bit on YouTube. I do some coaching with parents. I am traveling. I do conferences and

things like that. So, you might be able to find that on my website, mrchazz.com. But you can also just reach out to me on Instagram to find out the different places that I'm going to be. So, that is where. And I also have my own podcast, Learning Curve with Mr. Chazz.

Dr Laura Markham (55:19):

Yes.

Mr. Chazz (55:20):

Definitely catch me there. And I would love for you to come on my podcast. And we can have more conversation and I can hear more of your perspective, too.

Dr Laura Markham (55:32):

I look forward to that. Thank you so much. It was a pleasure.

Mr. Chazz (55:35):

Oh, thanks for having me.

