

Grandparents, Caregivers, & Extended Family Q and A with Dr. Laura Markham

Dr. Laura M.: 00:00:00 Hello, this is Dr. Laura Markham. In this audio I'll be answering some of the most common questions that parents ask about Grandparents, extended family, caregivers, and nannies. Remember, we're always applying our three big ideas. We start by regulating our own emotions and behavior, then we connect with our child. Finally, instead of trying to control our child, we coach them to be their best self, both by helping them with their emotions, and by creating an environment where the child can thrive. So, let's see how to apply these three big ideas to daily life with children.

Question 1:

Dr. Laura M.: 00:00:43 This parent says, "Our four-year-old won't say hi or hug his maternal Grandparents, and certainly won't listen to them or obey their orders. It makes us not want to leave him with them."

Dr. Laura M.: Yeah, I'd say, well, I'm with you. If he won't even say hello to them, I would not leave him with them, especially when they say you should be more strict. I get that it's painful for all of you, but spend time with them with you there. Be the bridge, so that he starts to bond with them before you start leaving him there.

Dr. Laura M.: Okay. So, this leads into communicating with other people about this parenting approach. I would like to say it's going to be very hard to communicate with other people about the parenting approach, but you can give them the book to read. If they don't like it, if they think I'm crazy, that's their problem, at least they'll see what you're doing, and that it's not just craziness that there is somebody, at least somebody with a lot of experience and a PhD who's

worked with thousands of parents and seeing this work, right?

Dr. Laura M.: You can explain, if you have read the book, you'll be able to explain why you do certain things, but in the end, what I think really matters is that you believe that this approach works. Because if you do, you'll find that it won't matter what they say. It's when you doubt it that you find their hostility to the approach to be worrisome to you.

Dr. Laura M.: So, I think, in general, explain to them the way I've explained it to you in the book, get them to read the book, and then when they dismiss it, you can say ... If they have a background in childcare, I know that was one of the questions, if they have a background in childcare, and think they know best, you can say, "You know what? I know your training might not have included this or your experience, but this is the latest thinking, and our experience is, it works, and you can make your own mistakes, we'll make ours." That's it.

Question 2:

Speaker 2: 00:02:29 Thank you. Thank you. We're thrilled with your course and the data that you share. It's been such a great experience to go through. In particular, I just quickly share the daily inspirations are fantastic. That's been such a meaningful part of the course for me. So, I just want to let that.

Dr. Laura M.: Thank you.

Speaker 2: Thank you. We have a five-year-old daughter, three-year-old son. I am a working mom, and really busy. We have a full-time nanny. So, as we are going through this exercise, and what prompted the course for me was really some of the repair I felt I was needing with my three-year-old. He is

a very smart and strong-willed boy, and we're seeing a lot of emotion come out with a lot of various things, and they came out with transitions, transitions from coming and going or needing to do something, and they were getting elongated into meltdowns.

Speaker 2: So, I definitely felt that emotional need to help. So, the course has been great. So, I really feel we're making progress. Just the other day he was having one of those, and I incorporated one of the exercises about breathing, just to let him know, "I get frustrated, too. You know what I do? I breathe." I've been saying that a few times. For the first time, he actually hugged me, and just took three deep breaths with me, which I thought was really neat.

Speaker 2: So, we're making little progress, but because I do have a full-time nanny, who is an amazing part of our family and team, and really cares for my kids, I need some guidance of how do I help educate her on peaceful parenting light, that I cannot ask her at this point to go through the course and do the work that my husband and I are trying to do, but she does spend a lot of time with our kids.

Speaker 2: So, the key areas that my heart is telling me are some of the empathetic limits because he really needs to unload that backpack at moments. So, I know she's experiencing some of those during the day, and that's draining, that's hard, right? So, we need to be present there for him. Then also, it can keep going for a long time if we let it, right?

Speaker 2: So it's such a challenging thing to educate a third party, right, because they do spend a fair amount of time with our kids. So, I was hoping to just get a little bit of guidance on how you suggest I incorporate her, and again, a very caring and a really wonderful person into the same philosophies.

- Dr. Laura M.: Okay. So, great news that she's a caring and wonderful person because it means that she'll be open to the philosophy, and it means she loves your son, and she wants what's best for him. However, everybody in his life, every adult in his life doesn't have to take the same approach to helping him empty his backpack.
- Dr. Laura M.: So, for instance, if he were in daycare, which it sounds like he's not, but if he were in daycare, you wouldn't expect that when you send him off to daycare, that they would assign a staff person that when he gets upset about something, they would sit with him for an hour while he empties his backpack, right? You wouldn't assume that. Instead, you'd assume he would have to stuff things at school, and then when he came home, he might just fall apart, and you would have to do that duty.
- Dr. Laura M.: So, it's not necessary for every adult in his life to help him empty his backpack. In fact, only people he really trusts will be allowed to do that, in a way, right? So, that would be the first thing I would say. I don't know if she falls into that category or not, but I absolutely think you would expect someone at daycare or a nanny to be able to set limits in a non-punitive way.
- Dr. Laura M.: So, whenever he gives her a hard time about, "No, I don't want to wash my hands," before he sits down to lunch or whatever, she can say, "We have to wash hands. That's what we do. You don't even want to wash your hands today. I bet you want to have the dirtiest hands in the world, right, but we're going to have super hands and clean them," whatever. So, you would expect a daycare teacher to be able to do that, as well as a nanny to be able to do it, right? Set the limit in a way that is fun and acknowledges what the child is saying that they don't want to do, et cetera.

- Dr. Laura M.: Now, if he actually pushes it at that point and says, "No, I won't wash my hands," and he falls apart and he's screaming and crying on the floor, then she would have to understand that, "Oh, this isn't just about washing the hands. This is a full meltdown," because he's just had a really hard morning, he didn't get enough sleep or since we started parenting this way, we have noticed that he actually has to do a lot more crying about things, and he obviously feels really safe with you, so he wants to cry.
- Dr. Laura M.: So, you do have to have that kind of a discussion, I think, with your nanny about there will be times when this happens. Our approach to this is to just be nonjudgmental, and acknowledge "You are having such a hard time." And she doesn't have to necessarily sit on the floor with him. She can say, "I'm ready with a hug when you're ready. I am going to be right over here with your sister," or whatever.
- Dr. Laura M.: So, she doesn't have to necessarily do it exactly as you would do it. But if she can, if she can be there with him while he's writhing on the floor, she can say, "You really hate this idea of washing your hands, I know, and nothing is going right for you today," and then again, shut up, because that's the best way to do with scheduled meltdown. If you don't say very much, you just acknowledge that life is not going their way, and that you're right there with a hug when they're ready, and you stay close and present. You're not scrolling through your phone, right? So, I think that you could probably communicate to your nanny, what do you think?
- Speaker 2: Yeah, and I think that's a great idea. I think it's a great idea. I think one of the key things is she's very willing to have the conversation. I started to share some of those anecdotes that, "I'm now going through this course, and here's some of the tools that I'm working on," and she's, I think, open. So, I have to also protect her from the emotional drain on that, too, right, because I've seen it in

moment's where it's hard. I know it's hard, and especially when you care. So, I think giving some of the tools and, to your point, maybe specific tools of things, "When this happens, we can try this, and when that happens, try this. That might help."

Dr. Laura M.:

Yeah. I also think you might want to give her the specific tool of laughter, that laughter often disarms. It siphons off the top layer of anxiety in the emotional backpack. So, the child who's having a hard time, often laughter will divert that and they don't have to actually go through the whole meltdown, at least not until mom gets home or dad gets home.

Speaker 2:

That makes sense. What we observe is we're feeling the need to really go in depth on peaceful parenting with both of our kids, but definitely our youngest son is emoting a lot more emotion from this exercise and our daughter is going through the process. So, we're also sensitive to her because sometimes these sessions with him can go for a while, she, bless her heart, is patient, entertains herself on the side. So, I don't know if you have any recommendations of things we can say or do because she's five, she's still young, but, I mean, I do talk to her about, "I know your brother had a hard time today and you were extremely patient. Why don't you and I do this?" just to kind of let her know, I acknowledge that.

Dr. Laura M.:

Yeah. It's great you're acknowledging it. You want to make sure you're doing the one-on-one time with her, the special time, and laughing with her, roughhousing with her, right, and empathizing, and acknowledging or everything that you just said.

I would also just add "He's little, so his feelings are super big, and he has a harder time, but when you can talk about your feelings the way you do, then you don't have to cry so much, right? So, we talk about our feelings, you and

me. That doesn't mean we don't cry sometimes. Sometimes we still need to cry."

So, that way, she gets that you'll always listen to her, and there are other ways to work on things. She doesn't have to be on the floor kicking and screaming in order to, A, get listened to or B, have a healthy emotional life, right? She's not getting the message that that's the only way to do it when you talk to her that way. Does that make sense? That helps her to understand it.

Question 3:

Dr. Laura M.: 00:11:07 This parent asks: "When family comes to visit, the four-year-old will act out until the family make the effort to get down on the floor and connect with her."

Dr. Laura M.: Yes. Well, of course, she wants them on the floor. But Nana and Granddad don't necessarily like to get down on the floor. They're old. So, maybe they could read her a book? Tell them in advance, say to them, "She's so glad to see when you come. She really wants to connect with you. When she feels left out, naturally, she acts out, and she doesn't mean to be rude, but she just desperately wants your attention, and she doesn't know how to get it. So, you know what? We'll have our whole visit for adult conversation. When you first get here, let's focus on her. Would you mind reading her favorite book?"

Dr. Laura M.: Once they know that's what's of expected them, they'll probably do it. It just probably never occurred to them. I would have her pick the book out in advance, explain to her what's going to happen, so she's not disappointed when they don't want to get down on the floor.

Dr. Laura M.: They might also sit on the couch and do special time from there while she shows them her toys and stuff? Or you could have them sit at a low table with her and draw with her. There probably are things you could come up with that they're comfortable with, even if it's not getting down on the floor and roughhousing with her.

Dr. Laura M.: So, think of this as being your daughter's advocate. In the moment, when they get there, if they're not with the program even though you've talked to them, you can just say, "Oh, she's so glad to see you. She's so excited for you to be able to read a book to her, and to show you her doll house, and her Legos. Come on over here, Grandma and Grandpa."

Dr. Laura M.: "Are you ready to give Grandma and Grandpa a hug?" I would ask it that always, so she's not forced and, "Do you want to bring them over and show them where they should sit?" Just put her in charge, so she doesn't have to act out to get their attention.

Question 4:

Dr. Laura M.: 00:12:51 This question is: "I would love to know how to handle other adults and family that discipline or yell or scold or shame my child, and I'd also like to know how to help resolve that with my child after they've already done some damage."

Dr. Laura M.: Let's assume that the adults and family who are disciplining your child or shaming your child don't live with you. Really the first thing is, if you can, it's great to have a conversation with them in advance before you see them.

Dr. Laura M.: So, in the United States, Thanksgiving is coming and I've had this question from a lot of folks who are saying they're

going to see the Grandparents for Thanksgiving and they're a little concerned about how to make that a positive experience given that their parents will be aghast when their child has a meltdown or whatever.

Dr. Laura M.:

Somehow it's true. Grandparents never seem to remember that their own children did misbehave and somehow came out to be responsible adults who are raising children of their own. So, if you can have a conversation in advance or if it's an ongoing relationship where you see them every weekend or whatever, you can have that conversation at some point without your child around.

Dr. Laura M.:

It's great to simply open it by appreciating them. "I love how much you love your grandchild. I love how much support you give us," if they do, "and I'm so appreciative that you're in our lives," so for some sort of appreciation. Then, "We've been learning a lot about how best to help a child grow into an adult who's healthy. And as you know, mom and dad, there are a lot of pressures on kids today. I know there were a lot of pressures on me, and a lot of pressures, especially on you when you were growing up, but in some ways, it seems even harder today for kids today because of the screens, and the culture, and the culture seems to disconnect kids from their parents more."

Dr. Laura M.:

"So, we've done a lot of reading about this and a lot of studying, and we're realizing that from a developmental perspective, what our kids really need from us most is connection. Now, of course, they need limits. They definitely need limits from us, but it turns out that punishing them doesn't help them observe those limits. What really helps them is connection. So, we're really emphasizing connection. We're setting limits as we need to. We're accepting all of their emotions, even the ones that are inconvenient for us, and we have really backed off punishing."

- Dr. Laura M.: We used to spank or we used to do timeouts” or whatever you used to do, “and really, we don't do them anymore. We instead help the child calm down, help the child to work through the emotions, help the child feel better, and then help the child repair what they've done wrong, what they've torn asunder. So, that's our new approach now.”
- Dr. Laura M.: At this point, you close your mouth and your in-laws or your parents or your whoever says something like, “Well, in my day, that's not what we did, and it worked fine.”
- Dr. Laura M.: You say, “Yes, I hear you. I love that you raised such wonderful children, and I married one of them, because he's such a wonderful guy” Or “I love you so much and I know how much you loved us, mom and dad, when you were raising us. I'm so grateful for all of the energy and care and hard work you put into raising us.” And then you repeat yourself, not the whole spiel, but you simply say, “We know a lot more now about child development. They don't make airplanes the way they used. They're a lot safer now. In the hospital, we know about germs now. Doctors didn't wash their hands a hundred years ago. Really, in every aspect of our lives, we have new information, so that we can do a better job.”
- Dr. Laura M.: “With child raising, the same thing is true. The techniques that worked a hundred years ago, we're learning have some limitations. They're probably one of the reasons that we have so many people with problems with addiction and problems with anxiety. So, we're using a different child raising model. I know, mom and dad, you may not agree with it, but you had your chance. And now we have to make our own mistakes. We really believe that this is going to raise wonderful children. We love your grandchildren. We're their parents. We are doing everything we can to give them a good life and a good start in life.”

Dr. Laura M.: "Yes, it's a lot of work for us, but we actually signed up for it. We're here doing it. We hope that you'll support us to do that. So, when the children, when you feel that they're not acting appropriately and they need discipline, please just let us know, and we'll handle it, so we can discipline our own kids."

Dr. Laura M.: So, basically, you're being kind but firm. You're empathizing, and you're setting a limit, and you're saying, "This is what our kids need to be healthy and we're the parents. We're the ones in charge."

Question 5:

Dr. Laura M.: 00:18:06 This question is:, "What if the parent lives with us?" Specifically, she mentions yelling. She mentions, "Well, if you have a mother-in-law who lives with you and yells a lot, what do you do? You want your children to respect their elders, of course, and you want to be emotionally generous to your mother-in-law, of course, but what are you supposed to do?"

Dr. Laura M.: I think the answer is to try to shield your children as much as possible in the moment when mother-in-law begins yelling to say, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. Mother, you're so upset about this, I hear you. I can handle this with the children." You've already had the conversation that I just mentioned, obviously, with her in private, and you put your arm around your child and take your child away from her because she's angry, away from her, and you talk to your child privately.

Dr. Laura M.: Now, if you can, depending on how old your children are, you can also say, "Grandma gets really upset about this. This is something that really upsets Grandma. She feels really strongly about this." So, you might say, "When

Grandma was a girl, children would never have been allowed to ask their parents questions like that or to be rude to their parents. So, it makes her very upset. And it's important when you speak to Grandma to be respectful because she hears that -- when you use that tone of voice -- she hears that as rude."

Dr. Laura M.:

So, you're almost saying to the kids, "There's different rules for Grandma," and I actually think that's fine. They already know there are different rules for you and dad, to some small degree. "Mom will usually give us another five minutes, but dad never will. On the other hand, dad is more willing to let us have a little screen time or treat or whatever it is. He's willing to roughhouse with us." So, kids do get that things are slightly different with their parents, and they certainly can get that it's different with Grandma, and if they're going to Grandma's house, it's even more different.

Dr. Laura M.:

"We go to Grandma's house, no jumping on the couch. It's okay at our house, but at Grandma's house, that's not okay. That's one of her rules. Or at Grandma's house, we always say grace at the table, we say a blessing before we eat. That's not something we do at our house, maybe, in this case, but at Grandma's house, we do it. Let's practice, so we see what it's like."

Dr. Laura M.:

So, I think it's completely fine to tell kids that there's a different standard, in a sense, for an older person who has a different cultural orientation and might think that certain things are more rude than you would think, for instance.

Dr. Laura M.:

I guess the the yelling question then segues into the other part of the question about the damage to the child. If you have adults who are shaming your children or yelling at your children, your job is to protect your children from the shame and from the yelling. If those adults are your own parents or your in-laws, that's really hard to do.

- Dr. Laura M.: So, I guess I would say that you do the conversation that we talked about. And then certainly, in that moment, you jump in and you say, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. Let's all calm down. It's never okay to yell at people." I would just say this right in front of my parents or my in-laws. "It's never okay to yell at people."
- Dr. Laura M.: Now, if they start to yell at you at this point because you're obviously being an irresponsible parent, I would say, "Can we talk about this later when we all calm down? It's not okay to yell. We're going to talk about it later. Right now, Grandma, I'm going to handle this with Emily," and you put your arm around Emily, and you take her into the other room.
- Dr. Laura M.: When you ask about the damage, I would empathize. "Wow. That was scary when Grandma was yelling, huh?" Let your child say something. Your child might say, "It's not scary. I hate her." If they are used to the yelling, you could get that strong a reaction. Or it could be that your child is crying and was devastated.
- Dr. Laura M.: So, there's a range of reactions, but basically, you're doing what you always do. Think of it as if it were their sibling who they just had this interaction with. You say, "It was so upsetting to have her yell at you like that. It really upset you. I see. I'm so sorry, Sweetie," or if she says, "Emily hates Grandma now," you can say, "You are so mad at her. You feel like you never even want to work things out with her. That's what you mean when you say hate. We're a family. We always work things out. But I hear how upset you are. That really hurt your feelings when she yelled at you. It really didn't seem fair, did it?" You're empathizing.
- Dr. Laura M.: Now, again, as with a teacher, you're not undermining Grandma. Because you're able to explain to your child a little bit about Grandma's perspective. "Grandma's older. When Grandma was a child, it wasn't done this way. She

thought that was rude," or whatever. So, if the child has actually done something hurtful to Grandma, then once the child is restored to a state of wellbeing and not before, then I would ask the child what they're going to do to make things better with Grandma. Do they want to write her a note or a card or make a picture for her? Do they want to go give her a hug and tell her that they'll remember next time to use their words or whatever? What can they do for repair? That will help with the relationship.

Dr. Laura M.:

I guess bottom line, I would say it's very hard when Grandparents, especially, but others have a different opinion about what you're doing. I still remember when my son became very angry when we were visiting family in Washington one year, and he became angry for a good reason. I don't even remember what it is, but my son always had good reasons when he would get angry, and there were very few times he actually got angry. That's why I noticed.

Dr. Laura M.:

He became very angry and felt that it was unfair what was happening. I think he'd been promised something was going to happen and then the adults decided something different would happen. He got very angry. I remember my sister and my father both thought that he was temperamental and difficult. We laugh about that in my family because my daughter was temperamental and difficult. My son was not. He was strong-willed, but he was never, I mean, not even anything like my daughter.

Dr. Laura M.:

He's the most mild-mannered person. To him, it was about justice. He felt this was a betrayal of justice. They were not used to a child standing up and saying what they thought was right. My son didn't just yell and kick. He actually angrily said what was wrong. He was about five. I remember years later hearing from my sister and father how they had thought he was so difficult, and they were

so surprised that he turned into such a lovely young man as he got older. And he is, that **is** who he is. But I think you may not convince ...I guess my point is that you may not convince them that this is a better way to parent, but the proof is going to be in the pudding.

Dr. Laura M.:

If you need to, you can just say that, "You've made your mistakes, dad. You've had your chance, dad. It's now time to make my mistakes. I believe that this is going to turn out right, and I realized we won't really know for another 10 years, but you know what? I'm going to gamble on that, and we'll talk in 10 years about this. You want the same thing I do, dad. You want a great young man here, and so do I. I think that's what we're on track to get. Anytime you have a question or an issue about it, please feel to raise it with me privately."

Question 6:

Dr. Laura M.:

00:25:39

This parent asks: "I find it most difficult to coach my children this way when I'm in the company of other people, other parents, friends or even complete strangers, who are clearly expecting me to respond to my child's behavior in a particular way. How should I handle these situations?"

Dr. Laura M.:

So, first, I would say your job is your child, it is not pleasing these people. That's the first thing. Secondly, if there's a standard way of doing this, like "we apologize when we hurt someone on the playground," and you are not about to shame your child into that or get into a power struggle with your child about apologizing -- your child probably thinks the other child was wrong or whatever --that's fine. But **you** can offer the apology.

- Dr. Laura M.: So, at the playground, when your child hurts the other child or pushes them or whatever, first of all, there's hopefully another adult there to tend to the other child, and you make sure the other child is okay. Then you put your arm around your child, and you go over. Let's say your child is four or five, and your child isn't willing to apologize. You can say, "Brian fell down when you pushed him, and he was crying. Do you feel ready to tell him you hope he's feeling better and you're sorry you pushed him?"
- Dr. Laura M.: Your child may say, "No. He was wrong. It was his fault," or something.
- Dr. Laura M.: You can say, "Okay. We can't let more time go by before we offer an apology. So, we're going to go over together and I'm going to tell him that. It's okay. I'll be with you."
- Dr. Laura M.: So, you put your arm around your child, and you go over, and you say ... So, your child's name is Henry. First you say to Brian who fell down, "Oh, Brian, we hope you're feeling better now. We're so sorry that you got hurt when you fell." Then your arm is still around Henry and you say, "Henry is sorry he pushed you. He was frustrated and he forgot to use his words. We hope you're okay now," and then you turn around and leave.
- Dr. Laura M.: Now, the other parent may think you should have shamed Henry and made him do it, but we don't care what the other person thinks. This is just fine as a way to operate. It helps your child learn to do it, and learn that it's really okay. It doesn't mean your child has just lost World War III. It's not your child somehow giving on something that is a compromise to their integrity. So, it helps your child see how to do it and become more comfortable doing it.
- Dr. Laura M.: So, I guess the other kinds of situation would be, you're in a supermarket and you say, "No, we're not going to buy

the candy at the checkout," and your child loses it. I think most people are very sympathetic to that. I guess the time that they might not be is if your child becomes aggressive. Let's say your child kicks you. At that point, everybody is looking at you and expecting you to subdue your child in an aggressive way.

Dr. Laura M.: At this point, I would say for your own self-protection, just draw a little circle of light around you and your child and shut everybody else out. At this point, you just say, "Whoa! You must be so upset to kick me. We're going to pay for this food, and then we're going to go home, we're going to talk about it, okay? We're going to figure this out."

Dr. Laura M.: You purposely ratchet yourself down instead of up, so you're not escalating the drama. Hopefully, you stay far enough away from your child that you're able to pay and get out of the supermarket. If not, you may have to abandon your cart. It's just hard if they've already rung up part of the food, but they can make that null and void and let you go and you can go back another day.

Dr. Laura M.: Again, we don't care what those strangers think. Even if it's the same checkout lady you see everyday or somebody or another parent is watching right behind you who you actually know from play group or something, it doesn't matter. Your responsibility is really to your child, not to them. They will be amazed at your ability to stay calm and collected, and they might learn something from watching you. So, that would be my take on that.

Question 7:

Dr. Laura M.: 00:29:41 This question is, What about the rest of the world parenting differently than you do? So, if other people say

things like, "Good boy" or "Bad boy" or "You can't have this unless you do X, Y, Z" or whatever, how much does that affect them? I would say it depends on how much time they spend with those other people, and it depends how egregious their behavior is. Obviously, you're not going to let your child be with somebody who's going to be punishing them all the time or calling them names because that could affect them very deeply.

Dr. Laura M.:

If it's mild praise or withholding of affection, I think you're probably okay if they're not there that much, and I would talk to your child about it. You have a five-year-old. So, you can actually talk to a five-year-old about, "Boy, Grandma always says the same thing, doesn't she? She says you're a good boy when you do this or you're a bad boy when you do that. What do you think about that?"

Dr. Laura M.:

I would listen. I would say, "You know what I think? I think you're a wonderful boy. Good boy doesn't even begin to cover it. And bad? You know, everybody has bad feelings inside them sometimes, and everybody does things based on those feelings that are not always kind. We're all working, all the time, to do more good things and fewer bad things, but everybody has good and bad in them.

Dr. Laura M.:

So, I think what Grandma is trying to say is it makes her happy when you do this, right, and it makes her unhappy when you do that." You're trying to not criticize Grandma, but you're trying to explain Grandma's point of view. "At Grandma's house, it's important that you do X, Y, Z because that's important to Grandma."

Dr. Laura M.:

If it's about a teacher, you can say, "It's hard for your teacher. There are so many kids in the class, and sometimes she forgets and yells. Even though, kids should never get yelled at by grownups. Sometimes she forgets and yells because it's hard with so many kids in the class, but she never means that you're a bad kid. When she does

that, it means she's frustrated. That's what it means. No one ever has the right to yell at you. How can we help your teacher so that you don't add to her stress, but you cooperate with her and do what she asks, so that things work better and more smoothly in the classroom?"

Dr. Laura M.:

So, you're always helping your child to see what behavior is expected in a given environment, and cope well in that environment, but you're also helping them develop psychological insight about another person and why they're acting the way they are. You're being very clear that you're not endorsing the evaluation of your child by this other person.

Question 8:

Dr. Laura M.:

00:32:19

This parent asks if she should talk to her in-laws about the way they're speaking to her child. She says what she usually does is just speak directly to her child and empathize with her child's feelings and ignore the in-laws' comments. Great. Absolutely great.

Dr. Laura M.:

"Oh, Sweetie, you're so upset about this. Come on, let's go calm down together," as opposed to when the in-laws are saying things like, "You behave now," or "What that girl needs is a good ..." or whatever.

Dr. Laura M.:

So, that's exactly right, speaking directly to your child and empathizing. Sometime when your child isn't in the room, you might try to have a conversation with your in-laws. I think you would start from the premise that you know they want what's best for your child, but you've done a lot of reading on it, and you've decided that this is what's best for your child. You see that the proof is in the pudding, and if they don't see that yet, you think they will someday, you know they want a wonderful grandchild, and you think

you're raising a wonderful grandchild, and you hope they can just relax and enjoy her.

- Dr. Laura M.: After all, they've already had their chance. They raised your partner, and that's why you're with your partner is that they did such a great job, and now it's your chance to make your own mistakes, you and your partner.
- Dr. Laura M.: So, it doesn't always work when you have that kind of discussion, but as long as you're not defensive, sometimes it will work. I remember talking to my mother-in-law about this stuff when my son was little, and she would say, "You don't have to go to him every time he cries. It's good for him to exercise your lungs. You don't want him to be a mama's boy."
- Dr. Laura M.: I say, "Well, actually, that's not what the research shows."
- Dr. Laura M.: She said, "Research, shmesearch." She was not going to be convinced with the research. I'm just laughing that I said, "Millie, let's talk about it again when he's older. We'll see how he turns out."
- Dr. Laura M.: Of course, the kids grew up great, and my in-laws and my parents ended up thinking the kids were great. But there was a time when my kids were little, where probably all of the in-laws and, certainly, my dad and my stepmom thought that my children were very spirited and probably not having a firm enough hand. But it's interesting. They have since read my books and have become believers, by looking at how my kids turned out.
- Dr. Laura M.: Now, you don't have that luxury if your kid is only four or five. But you can just say, "Look, it's my chance to make my own mistakes. Let's talk about it again when they get a little older, and we'll see how they're turning out."

- Dr. Laura M.: Really, remember, it won't affect you if you really believe in what you're doing. So, it's your own self-doubt that undermines you, not so much what anyone else is saying to you.
- Dr. Laura M.: So, I think, do your own research, do your own supporting **yourself** for your parenting choices. And then you'll be able to stand up to somebody else's judgment without being defensive. You won't feel like ... The judgment won't matter to you. Yes, you can always talk to your child about it.
- Dr. Laura M.: When your child is little, nonverbal, I wouldn't leave them with people who are going to treat them like that. I think the older they get, the more you can talk with them about it, and it builds character as opposed to shaping them to feel bad about themselves. But if they're very young, you don't want them to be left to cry, to feel bad about themselves. So, I would pay attention, especially to who your children are with before they can articulate how they're feeling.

Question 9:

- Speaker 3: 00:35:44 I love your work. It's just incredible. It's healing for everyone. Can't get enough of it. My question is around caregivers. We employ your message as much as we can with our two kids aged two and five. Our five-year-old is a sensitive boy. So, all of these Q&As today are helpful. So, it's an ongoing effort with him. We have a nanny who works with us. We're actually in the process of finding a new caregiver right now. So, that will be a transition, four days a week.
- Speaker 3: Now, with our last nanny, we got her the book. I'm sorry. I actually got her the No Drama Discipline when my son was

three, and then we got it for her on audio, and it was just I think way too much. I mean, the first few chapters are about brain science. I was wondering, obviously, the best tool is finding someone that has emotional intelligence, which we found to be quite a hard task. It's hard for anyone to actually know how to employ this message.

Speaker 3:

So, I just wondered if you had tools or resources that might not overwhelm someone, but give them a flavor like, "Here's how we parent, and here's the things we're looking for, and here's a few things that you might try with our kids. We try to voice it over, but I just thought you might have some ideas as well."

Dr. Laura M.:

A great question, "Where the cheat sheet on how to do this?" I think it's hard because I can list off the tools that we use. You know what the preventive maintenance tools are. Laughter is always a place to start and crying, if necessary. Kids really a needed routine to feel safe. They just need empathy, so that whatever they say or do, if they feel understood by you, they'll be a lot more cooperative when you set a limit. Set the limit empathically.

Dr. Laura M.:

So, I do have posts on my website that are about preventive maintenance that you could use. I also have exercises about how to set limits that are probably very helpful, that are in my new book, the workbook. I talk about setting limits, obviously, in Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids, which you've read for this course, but Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids workbook, the first half is all about parent self-regulation and mindfulness and healing your feelings, so that you can be the parent you want to be.

Dr. Laura M.:

The second half is about setting limits with your kid and connecting with your kid. So, there are a lot of games listed, and your nanny might like those, but I'm thinking specifically of the setting limits part because where people

have a hard time is, "Yeah, but what if they're doing something wrong? What if they hit each other?"

Dr. Laura M.: So, the nanny is going to be in a position where she's going to be trying to get your kids to come sit down and eat or something, and they're not willing to come. Or wash their hands or whatever it is they're not willing to do. How do you get cooperation? So, I think if you talk to her about setting limits and demonstrate for her how empathic limits work, and maybe xerox a few pages of the book, so that she won't have to read the whole book. She might find that helpful.

Dr. Laura M.: Most people say it's actually like magic. They can't believe how it works when you start empathizing, that kids become 100% more cooperative. So, that might be the place to start. What do you think?

Speaker 3: That makes a ton of sense. Just to make I understood you, the cheat sheet we are all looking for is in the workbook, maybe a couple of sections in? Is that where you would point me?

Dr. Laura M.: I'm trying to think of how do you introduce the idea of an empathic limit to someone who's never thought about it. Certainly, you could find some things on the website about it, but I think the workbook would be the way to develop the skill.

Speaker 3: Wonderful. Thank you so much.

Question 10:

Dr. Laura M.: 00:39:44 Our next question is about when people don't agree with your parenting, but they have some responsibility for your children and, specifically, it was Grandparents. What about

Grandparents who are strict, authoritarian? That's a tough one if they're very involved with your children.

Dr. Laura M.: I know one parent said that her mother had spanked her son when she was in the other room. I guess I would say if you had a caregiver who spanked your son whether you're in the room or the house or not, you would fire that caregiver, I'm assuming. So, you can't fire your mother from being your mother, but you can prevent her from being alone with your child.

Dr. Laura M.: Now, I'm not saying you have to do that, that that's the only possible outcome, but I am saying that, in the end, you're the one with the power. It's true that Grandparents often supply much needed child care at no charge, and we depend on that. On the other hand, if a caregiver was giving you child care for free or for cheap, you would still fire them if they spanked your child. It might be that if your parent can't change, you will need to do that.

Dr. Laura M.: So, the question is how do you get the change. How do you actually motivate your parent to change when they think you're wrong -- because they will think you're wrong. They will not understand this kind of parenting. So, of course, you try to talk about it. You talk about your own discoveries, what you've seen change in your child since you started this kind of parenting, and why you're doing this kind of parenting.

Dr. Laura M.: You ask your parent, whether it's your in-laws or your own parent, you ask them what they're afraid of. **Why** do they think that children need a different kind of parenting than this? You ask them that question. Often, they'll say things like, "You're going to raise a child who is ill-behaved. You're going to raise a child who doesn't listen to you or who's rude or defiant." You can explain that you don't see that happening and, in fact, everything you read tells you

the opposite, and that you're not going to motivate your child out of fear, but out of love.

Dr. Laura M.: Now, your parent or your in-laws may not agree with you. My own mother-in-law, rest her soul, was not going to be convinced by the research that I would cite to her. What I said was, "Look. You don't want a grandson who is," what she said was, "a mama's boy, who can't stand up for himself, and is dependent...You shouldn't run to him when he cries" the way I did.

Dr. Laura M.: So, I said, "Look, I don't want a child who can't be independent and stick up for himself either. I just have a different idea of how he gets to that point. I don't want him to feel those needs and squash them. I want him to feel those needs and know they'll be met, so that he can learn to take care of himself and move beyond feeling needy."

Dr. Laura M.: She wasn't convinced, but as my son grew, and she saw the proof in the pudding, she thought he was a pretty great kid.

Dr. Laura M.: I think there's a way in which they will not be convinced until they see the children developing, and the proof is in the pudding. So, if you're depending on them between now and there, that result, that can be really tough because they'll see your children will not be perfect because your children are not going to be perfect, and they're going to want to intervene the way they think is best.

Dr. Laura M.: But really, you're holding the ace here, which is that, "I'm so sorry, mom, dad, mother-in-law, father-in-law, that in the end, this is our child. We've decided how to parent, and if you can't abide by our wishes, we can't have our child with you."

- Dr. Laura M.: I've talked to a Grandma about that She thinks that her daughter is going overboard about healthy eating. She doesn't see any reason her child can't have more sugar, and more TV -- but she said to me, "Look, I have to accede to her wishes. It's her child, not my child." I wish all Grandparents could see it that way, but there's no way to win that discussion other than trying to listen to their perspective, hearing that you don't want those bad outcomes either, sharing what you're reading, and hoping they're open enough to listen.
- Dr. Laura M.: You do, in the end, have to say something like, "Look, I love you. I know whatever you did for me you did from love, and I came out pretty well. But you had a chance to raise your kids, and now it's my turn to make my own mistakes. So, mom, dad, I need you to let me do that."
- Dr. Laura M.: So, as always, we're not trying to make anybody wrong, but you have to own your own power. I think it's really that simple. The same goes, of course, for the Grandparents who are too permissive. You can say, "No, I disagree about giving into the child and just buying them off with the snacks or the sweets or the TV or whatever else."
- Dr. Laura M.: The parent who said, "I've seen her bribe my three-year-old with chocolate M&Ms during meal so she eats." I would minimize the meals. I mean, unless you can get her to do something different, I would minimize the meals with her. I think, I really think that Grandparents know that this is not ideal. I think they just don't know any other way to do it. The more you can teach them and model, the more they want to be like you.

Question 11:

Parent: 00:45:20 We're very fortunate here, and that my son lives very close to all of his Grandparents, which is wonderful. So, we see them on a daily basis, mostly. But we're getting into a pattern where when they see him, they say, "Oh, hi. Where's my hug? Where's my kiss?" He's very highly sensitive. So, if he's well-rested and everything is fine, then he's happy to do that.

But a lot of the time, he isn't and so he says, "No," and he tries to run away, but he gets swept up into things he doesn't like or they'll say, "Oh! So, no kiss today? So then you don't get to have this thing I brought with me," or "But your cousin always give us our kisses. Why are you such a little brat?"

Parent: So, I was just wondering ... I tried thinking through what a good response would be because it's clearly not a system we want going forward, but I also don't want to completely offend all the relatives. So, I was hoping you could give me an idea of what a good response would be because I feel like his consent is very important, and that we need to be respecting, and no means no, and even with the family. He's only two and a half, so we're just starting, and I'd like to get off on the right foot with it.

Dr. Laura M.: Yes. So, good for you. So, for anyone who's listening to this who hasn't really thought about this issue before, consent starts early. Children need to learn that they're in-charge of their own bodies, and nobody touches them without their permission, and that they don't touch other people without permission.

Dr. Laura M.: There are obviously a few exceptions to this. The most obvious is the parents are allowed to touch their child when they're young for the purposes of caring for the child, and doctors are allowed to touch the child and

parents are always in the room when the doctor touches you. Then that's really it.

Dr. Laura M.:

So, those are the exceptions. So, I think it's great that you're aware of this, and you want to talk to your relatives about this, and that's where I would begin. I would begin by having a conversation. I would probably start with the larger picture in the world today. You might talk about Me Too, which has been in the news, and on every Twitter feed. "Me, too, I was touched against my will in the workplace or in school or in some other way," and talk about how amazing it is that this could have gone on in our society for so long without being talked about. And how hard it is for the folks who are talking about this having happened to them, and that, obviously, if they had felt empowered to stand up....

Dr. Laura M.:

Now, somebody in a workplace is worried about losing their job. There are many reasons you might not feel empowered. But it begins with children feeling empowered to say, "No, I'm in charge of who touches my body," and seeing that as something that they wouldn't just put up with.

Dr. Laura M.:

I would really have a discussion with the relatives about this, even if you're having to tread new ground with them. I would do that. At some point, not initially, but once there's empathy established for people who are being touched against their will, I would say, "It even extends to very young children like two-year-olds, who even when we love them, when they don't want to be touched, that they have agency over their body.

Dr. Laura M.:

"So, I know how important it is for you when you see your grandson that you want him to hug you. I wonder if we could figure out.... I think he always has to greet you, but maybe there's other ways he could greet you. Let's come up with a list of ways he could greet you. We could even

take pictures, and he could point to the one on the list that he wants to do that day. One of them could be shaking hands. One of them could be that you shake his foot. One of them could be that you wave to him or that he waves to you from behind the corner or the door and sticks his head out. One of them could be that mommy holds him while he gives you a kiss or a hug or receives a kiss or a hug."

Dr. Laura M.: Often, children feel better about receiving the affection if you're holding them. That's a way that even if you've got your child out in public and you want them to say hello to the stranger, the supermarket clerk, it helps kids a lot to be able to do that if you're holding them because then they have their secure base. So, sometimes kids will greet relatives more readily if you're holding them.

Dr. Laura M.: So, anyway, come up with a list of ideas. Then I would talk to your son about, "You do have to always greet Grandma and Grandpa when you see them, and you get to decide how to greet them. Which ways do you like on this list? Can you think of any more ways? Let's make a whole little chart of it, a poster of all the ways you can do it."

Dr. Laura M.: It takes the pressure off him. So, a hug is one of them, a kiss is one of them. He's going to choose those sometimes, probably, and it also means that the Grandparents, A, they at least intellectually understand it, and B, they can start seeing that it's within the realm of prescribed behavior, so they don't have to withdraw their love for him when he doesn't greet them the way that they think he should be greeted. Does that make sense?

Parent: It does. Culturally things are quite different here. So, it will be quite a challenge, and we're all in the process of it in the moment is he gets ... because I've tried to do that as much as I can. Sometimes I'm not close enough when they arrive. So, if they say, "Can I have a hug?" and he says, "No," then I'll say, "Oh, it looks like he just wants to give a

wave today or he just wants to do whatever," but it's not well-received so far.

Dr. Laura M.:

Well, talking to them (in advance) will help. Let's think of what else you could say in that moment. Let's say they say, "Where's my hug?" and he says, "No hug." They say, "Oh, no. What?" and start in, and you come running. You can say, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. Everybody slow down here. Let me see if I understand the situation. They just arrived. They're so happy to see you. They really want to hug you, right? You," meanwhile, you're scooping him into your arms, so he's now at a higher level, so he feels better, "You aren't sure you want to be hugged, but I think you might be looking forward to playing with them later. Is that correct?"

Dr. Laura M.:

So, you're enticing out of him a happy response to them that is affirming even though you've acknowledged that he doesn't want a hug. Now, if he says, "No, I don't want to play with them. I'm disappointed they're here," in some way, shape or form -- he wouldn't use those words -- that's, of course, harder. He probably won't do that very often, right? What do you think?

Parent:

That's very helpful. I'll definitely try that because that would work with more the withdrawing with them, too. I just didn't know what to say in the moment; it happened so fast. Thank you so much.

Question 12:

Dr. Laura M.:

00:52:25

This question is, "I have a hard time when she's not polite around the Grandparents." Yeah, I totally get that. We all have a hard time when they're not polite around the Grandparents, and we get embarrassed. If she's not polite to the Grandparents, I would stop her. I would say,

"Whoa! Excuse me. That could hurt your Grandma's feelings. Sweetheart, that's not okay. Let's start over. What are you trying to tell Grandma?"

Dr. Laura M.: So, you just stop her. That's a limit. If she has a meltdown from it, then, obviously, she was at the end of a rope for some reason. Even a two-year-old can handle this. If she can't handle it, it's because she's at the end of a rope. So, at that point, you take her out of the room when she has her meltdown. So, it's not like you're not setting limits about how she's acting toward her Grandparents.

Question 13:

Dr. Laura M.: 00:53:12 I see another question here that's related. "I wonder if you've noticed your kids becoming oversensitive to disciplinary comments from uncles, grandfathers or other relatives? We're wondering how to approach this."

Dr. Laura M.: You can expect your child to get more sensitive to the way they're treated. When you treat your child more respectfully, they're going to expect other people to treat them respectfully. My kids expect others, including adults, to treat them respectfully. They don't have respect for adults who don't treat them respectfully.

Dr. Laura M.: However, they're both very socially skilled. So, my son is a little more likely to just not want to engage with that person, and not have relationship with them. My daughter will just tell them. She's very socially skilled, and she's compassionate, but she doesn't suffer fools lightly, which probably comes from the way she was raised, I would add. It's a good thing. She's not willing to be disrespected.

Dr. Laura M.: She's 21. She's in Ecuador at the moment, junior year abroad, and she was in a situation with the home stay that

she was in, one of several, she had great experiences in most of her home stays, but one of them, the person she was staying with was pretty disrespectful to her. She told them so.

Dr. Laura M.: She said, "That's not how I treat you, and that's not how I would expect to be treated."

Dr. Laura M.: So, the woman was a little bit taken aback. She didn't expect a 21-year-old to do that, but I don't think it was anything inappropriate on my daughter's part. She was able to say, "This isn't an okay way to treat somebody," Even though this woman treats her own son this way, of course. So, that's why she would treat someone staying at her house who's of that age the same way.

Dr. Laura M.: So, I guess I'm just saying we're raising children to have a different way of relating to other human beings. They don't need to go on the attack, but they're going to stand up for themselves. So, again, it's like what I said a few minutes ago. If somebody crosses that line, you don't have to be nasty to them. You say, "Excuse me. We must have a misunderstanding here. Let's start over." Right? You can teach your children to say the same thing if somebody is like that with them.

Dr. Laura M.: I talked to my children a lot about discipline when they were growing up. Anything they noticed about how anyone else disciplined their kids, I would say, "Well, what do you think about that? How do you think the kid felt? How do you think the uncle felt? What do you think your uncle meant by that? Hmm. Yeah. Those people really do discipline differently than we do. What do you think about that?"

Question 14:

Dr. Laura M.: 00:55:28 So, this question is about outside influences. What do you do when somebody tries to parent your child by their standards? So, your father-in-law says, "Quit whining. You're such a crybaby," and then mimics your child. Wow! That's such a disrespectful thing. I would jump in if my father-in-law, may he rest in peace, had done that, which, of course, he didn't, but if he had, I would jump in and say, "Wow! Herb, excuse me. That could make a kid feel really bad about X, Y, Z."

Dr. Laura M.: So, if the kid is whining, "It sounds to me like," I'm just going to use this example as if it happened to me. "It sounds like Eli is trying to tell us something. I want to hear what he has to say. You don't have to listen. He's going to tell me. Thanks." Then I would put my arm around my son and walk him out of the room. If Eli was actually crying, I would say, "Herb, that could make somebody feel bad about crying. Everybody needs to cry sometimes." Again, put my arm around my son, pick him up or walk him out of the room.

Question 15:

Dr. Laura M.: 00:56:31 There's another example here. When the mother-in-law says, "No, no, no. Play nicely." Isn't it interesting? It's always our in-laws, at least in these examples. Well, I don't know what play nicely means, but the toddler's harmless play, something about the toddler's play is bothering the mother-in-law.

Dr. Laura M.: So, I would say, whatever you call your mother-in-law, in my case, it was Millie, may she rest in peace, and I would say, "Millie, does it bother you when she does that?"

- Dr. Laura M.: Millie would say, "Yeah. She's making a mess," or "She's throwing things," or "She's splashing," or whatever she's doing.
- Dr. Laura M.: I would say, "Huh. Well, you know in our house, splashing is okay," if it's at your house. "I think we're safe. Let's figure this out. Sweetheart, are you being safe? Okay. Good. I feel like we're safe," or I might see, "Sweetie, do you hear Grandma Millie? She's saying she doesn't really like it when you ..." if you're at your mother-in-law's house, and the kid is splashing in the bathtub, "Did you hear Grandma Millie? She doesn't like it when you splash. At Grandma's house, we don't splash. At our house, it's okay, but not at Grandma's house," or "At Grandma's house, we don't jump on the couch," things that are harmless to you, but not to your mother-in-law.
- Dr. Laura M.: So, again, you're running interference between the other person and your child. It's your child. You're responsible to your child.

Question 16:

- Dr. Laura M.: 00:57:48 There's another example, when your own mom advises you to let your baby cry it out. Well, when my mother-in-law said, "It's good for him to exercise his lungs. Don't jump up and go to him," I waited until I had gotten my child in my arms and moved back into the room with her, and then I said, "I heard what you said, Millie, about that, that you didn't think I should run to him, but you know what? The research on this shows that babies who are responded to more quickly, cry less. So, I know that that's what they advised when you were

raising your kids, but the advice is different now based on the research. So, I go with this." That's it.

Dr. Laura M.: When we feel a sense of authority and we believe in what we're saying, they don't fight with us. It's our kid. If they did "fight with us", I would acknowledge.

Dr. Laura M.: I would just say, "I hear you. I know you want the best for your grandchild. I know you did a great job raising your own kids, that's why I love your son. That's why I married him. You know what? You had your chance. This is my chance. I'm going to make mistakes. I'm sure I'm going to make plenty of them, but it's not like I'm doing these things thoughtlessly. I think carefully about the decisions I make, and I do them for a reason. So, if you'd like to talk more about it, I'm happy to show you the research and the reasons that I'm making these decisions. I don't expect that we have to agree on everything. I know we agree on one thing. We both want what's best for your grandchild, and I think we're going to raise you a great grandchild, and you don't have to worry."

Question 17:

Dr. Laura M.: 00:59:23 This question is about when your adult brother criticizes your son's interest in girly things -- Oh, I would immediately defend your son.

Dr. Laura M.: I would say to my adult brother: "Yeah. It's too bad that when you were young, you weren't allowed to dress in sparkly things. I bet you always wished you could wear my pink sparkly shoes, didn't you? You know what? Boys today are allowed to do whatever they want, and so are girls. I think it is great that everybody is allowed to be who they are, and they grow up to be who they are. I know a lot of boys who like sparkly pink things like Jason does.

Some day they may like football or whatever. Everybody is different. We're all allowed to be who we are." I would just shut it down, and I would talk to him in private, also, about not shaming your son.

Question 18:

Dr. Laura M.: 01:00:08 This parent says: "A friend tells you straight up that bribery and fibs are how you get your children to do things." Well, fibs is serious because you're modeling lying and your child will know you're lying sooner or later, and your child will lie to you.

Dr. Laura M.: So, I said to my kids always, "We always keep our promises. I need you to tell me the truth. I will always tell you the truth." If you can't say that to your child, we know that you can tell when someone is lying, that you just feel it in your gut, and so when you say what I just said to your child, your child will know if it's not true. So, I would just say that. I mean, I'm pretty fearless about telling people things about parenting because I'm an expert, but you can say the same thing, and your friend is allowed to do whatever they want with their kid, but that's not what you do.

Dr. Laura M.: So, your friend can tell you that straight out and you can have a philosophical discussion and try not to take it seriously. That's much less of a big deal than when it has something to do with your own child, right? It does matter to talk about peaceful parenting in a non-attacking way. I would say that.

Dr. Laura M.: So, I would not say to somebody, "Well, you're raising your kid to be whatever." I would not tell them how awful their child is going to turn out, which is basically an attack. But I would start, always, by acknowledging, "I know it's so hard

to get them to do what you want. I feel like lying to them, too, sometimes, but you know what? I've just decided not to do that," as an example. But you're not judging what the other person is doing.

Question 19:

Dr. Laura M.: 01:01:24 Another example of one of these things is when somebody wrote that, "One of my son's friends canceled their son's seventh birthday party as punishment for poor behavior at home." Wow! "I would have loved to have said something destructive in response, but I couldn't think of anything diplomatic, and also, what do you tell your own kid?"

Dr. Laura M.: I tell my own kids the truth about what I think about the way other people parent, including the ways that people parent that I think are destructive. I always do it in a way that says, "They're doing their best. They don't know any better. This is how they were told to parent, but now we know better ways to do it, that's why we do different things in our house."

Dr. Laura M.: I always ask the child what they think, and my children would always say, "Those poor children."

I remember when my children learned that other children were hit by their parents. They were beside themselves when they first learned that, when they first saw examples of it. So, you also have to remember that your child is getting slightly traumatized by their awareness that parents could even hurt children.

Dr. Laura M.: In terms of what you would say to the people who cancel their son's birthday party. It's a really terrible thing that they did. I don't know what you could say that's

diplomatic. I guess it depends on how well you know these people.

Dr. Laura M.: I guess I would say, "I'm so sorry to hear this. I'm sure your son feels very ashamed that everybody knows this. I'm so sorry that it had to work out this way."

Dr. Laura M.: I think most people would take that as a criticism, I would, because it worked out that way because the parent did it. I think that's a good thing if they take it as a criticism.

Question 20:

Dr. Laura M.: 01:02:52 This question is: "My in-laws have trouble tolerating any distress my five-year-old has, so they buy him toys and try to fix things for him."

Dr. Laura M.: Well, I would just say again, it's not going to be as important as what happens at home, unless they live with you. If they live with you, you've got to get them on the same page. If you're living with them, that's harder, because they'll say it's their house. And I would work towards having your own place where you don't have to go through this, if possible.

Dr. Laura M.: I would consider you trying to educate them if they see a lot of your child. It is hard for them to tolerate the distress. It's hard for all of us to tolerate our child's distress. Once they see you modeling how to deal with the distress and they see the difference, they are going to start to change their ways as well, most likely.

Question 21:

- Dr. Laura M.: 01:03:35 Here are cousins playing together, that get out of control, and she copies the poor behavior of her older cousin. You can't prevent her from copying the poor behavior of her older cousin. She's going to do it. But you can talk about that behavior, and you can try to find activities for them to do together that are a little less wild and out of control. If that really doesn't work, then I would have her not around that older cousin quite yet, where she's going to really follow exactly what he does.
- Dr. Laura M.: You may have to be very involved in the play between them for a while if the stuff she is doing in copying the older cousin is really problematic. So, I don't know what the older cousin is doing, but if it's something that is not okay at the moment, usually, you would want to intervene at that moment, and say, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, everybody," just the way you would if it was your own children doing it.
- Dr. Laura M.: Usually, I find that when you intervene respectfully, other adults don't mind it. It's when you intervene in a negative way toward their child, where you're disciplining, that they have a harder time with it, which makes perfect sense. If you're doing it in a nonjudgmental way, which is the way we're trying to do it, then usually, it's not such a problem.

Question 22:

- Dr. Laura M.: 01:04:45 This parent asks: "My sister interfered between my six-year-old son and her son. They were fighting over a toy, and she took the toy from my son. He got upset because she was unfair according to him, and had a meltdown and

started hitting her. She got so mad she yelled at him and scared him. I had to intervene to separate them and remove my son. I feel like my sister over-reacted, but at the same time, his behavior was not okay."

Dr. Laura M.:

I agree with you. It's always hard when kids have to interact with adults who they feel disrespect them. You know what? It's still not okay for your son to hit his aunt, no matter what. Even if she was unfair, even if she was completely wrong, hitting her was not okay. So, he needs to offer her repair. I mean, he's six. He knows better. He's not a two-year-old.

Dr. Laura M.:

So, I think the repair is probably best offered in the form of a letter that he types with your help. You'll have to validate that he feels she was unfair to him, or he can't even dictate such a letter, I'm sure. He can even state in his letter that he thinks she was unfair and why, but he also has to take responsibility clearly in the letter, that he knows that it's never okay to hit someone no matter what, and he should not have hit her, and he is sorry he did it, and he will never do it again. He really needs to put that in writing to her.

Dr. Laura M.:

Now, you may wonder why I'm forcing your apology. It's a repair. It's a letter, it's not a verbal apology. I think repairs are always in order, and I think in this instance where he's done such an egregious breaking of the rules to hit an adult, he needs to follow the adult protocol of repair, and that means an apology. But I don't think he'll be capable of doing it in person because he feels wronged.

Dr. Laura M.:

So, I think you'll have to listen to him a lot, talk about what was wrong, how she did the wrong thing, and how she was unfair, and you'll have to validate that. But he does have to make a repair to her on her terms. I would not leave him alone with her for a little while until they can actually get their relationship onto a better footing.

Dr. Laura M.: I would practice with him what he can do next time he gets so angry. He might even say in his letter to his aunt, "My mom and I have been practicing the hug that I throw my arms around my body when I get really mad and want to hit, and I will do that next time I feel like hitting." That will probably mean a lot to his aunt, that he has another plan for next time; that he's thought about it.

Question 23:

Dr. Laura M.: 01:07:04 This parent is asking, "Seven and four-year-old, the older daughter tends to have tantrums and screams, and still hits when she feels disconnected. With your help, I've improved my ability to stay calm and connect a lot better, and I do see a change in all our behavior." Yay! ~~Tanya~~, that's hard work on your part. Good for you! "But I'm worried about the Christmas holiday coming up because every year, we spend two weeks in the snow in the same house with 16 family members, and there's always someone for them to play with, but how do I stay connected with them?"

Dr. Laura M.: So, this is so great (that) you're thinking ahead on this. First, I would talk with your daughter, talk to both daughters about the issue. Point out that when she feels disconnected, she feels scared inside and she ends up having tantrums and hitting, and that she's doing this less lately because you're connecting more and having special time and stuff. Tell her that you want to be sure that you do those special connecting things over the holidays, even though, of course, she's going to also want time with her cousins.

Dr. Laura M.: So, brainstorm with her. She's seven. Do a problem solving session where you write down all her ideas, about what are the ways you can stay connected. Maybe special time

every morning, story time every night, whatever. Ask her how you can be sure all this is going to happen, even though she wants to just play with her cousins. Make an agreement. Write it down. Review it and talk about the agreement as the time approaches. Revise it while they're on site as you need to.

Dr. Laura M.:

It's not foolproof, but it will help a lot. There is an article on the (AhaParenting.com) website about ~~vacation~~ tips for vacation. You just put "vacation" in the search box, and it will be one of the articles that comes up.

<https://www.ahaparenting.com/parenting-tools/traditions/Summer-Family-Activities-Vacation>

That will also have tips for keeping your kids more connected and calm on vacation, although it's aimed a little bit probably younger, more for your four-year-old, but it will work for your seven-year-old, too.

Dr. Laura M.:

Then finally, I would just say, you'll need to stay centered, so you can stay connected to her and stay calm. As you say, it's your calm that's made the difference in your child being less explosive lately. You can count on her spinning out of control in the environment you're describing. So, how can **you** stay calm enough to connect with her, to help her get recentered? You need a repertoire of things that work for you to stay calm. Experiment with those, write them down, go armed with your plan for **you**, so that you can stay centered.

Question 24:

Dr. Laura M.:

01:09:18

This question is: "I'm the grandmother. I've gotten pretty good at empathy. I struggle with the limits. My older granddaughter, who is dealing with anxiety and

depression, forgets limits and then questions them. The 12-year-old lacks perspective about how long she's been on screens or how many sweet rolls she's had. I'm trying to be consistent with what my son expects of them, and minimize limits."

Dr. Laura M.:

Well, I'm not sure that's the approach I would recommend, actually, minimizing the limits. Yes, your son gets to decide what he expects of them, but you can set limits, especially when they're at your house. The question is how you enforce those limits. You don't have to enforce them with punishment. You can enforce them with a sense of humor, removing the sweet rolls, telling your granddaughter it's time to get off the screen. And when your older granddaughter forgets the limit, going back in, getting in her face in a friendly way and saying, "Hey, hey, Honey. You know what? It's enough of this now."

Dr. Laura M.:

So, many people in older generations grew up thinking that setting limits meant punishment, but it doesn't. Setting limits means you have an expectation, you communicate the expectation, and then you give your child as much support as they need to be able to meet your expectation. That might mean that you give them something else they can do with that feeling or impulse, right? It can be really hard to transition off a screen, for instance, or stop eating sweet rolls. We've all had those problems.

Dr. Laura M.:

So, giving the child extra support to meet your limits works a lot better than punishing the child to meet your limits. That's what we're doing in this course, but we're not **not** setting limits.

Dr. Laura M.:

So, if you're still adjusting to this new way of parenting, I'm going to suggest that you go back to the week when we talked about how to set limits. That's week five of this course. You know what? Be patient with yourself. It takes

some time to learn different ways of enforcing your limits without threats. Over time, you'll learn what works with your granddaughters.

Question 25:

- Dr. Laura M.: 01:11:33 This question is "Our five-year-old daughter has problems connecting with her Grandparents and other relatives. They don't live by us, but they all visit often throughout the year. She's very distant with them, sometimes outright mean. She hides under the bed, speaks disrespectfully to them, doesn't want to spend time with them. She does not show loving or caring emotion with them. They hug her and tell her they love her, and she gives no response in return."
- Dr. Laura M.: Wow! So, that's hard. I would say she does not feel connected with them. I think you have to set some ground rules that she must be respectful to them no matter what. If she doesn't want to hang out with them and have them snuggle her and read her stories, fine. But she's not allowed to speak disrespectfully or hide under the bed.
- Dr. Laura M.: It may be there's some anxiety here causing her to hide under the bed. That does seem extreme as a response. But you can't make her, you shouldn't make her show loving or caring emotions with them if she doesn't feel that. She simply needs to rehearse with you how to be respectful with any visitors, including relatives.
- Dr. Laura M.: I would also work to make those relationships better. Find things she can do with them like a new book they can read her or a new special art project that she's excited about doing that one of them will do with her. I think over time as she sees them as a source of fun, she might warm up to them more. You can also strengthen the relationship your

daughter has with her Grandparents and other relatives by putting up a photo of them, and talking to it on a regular basis, so that she feels more connected to them and more comfortable.

Dr. Laura M.:

Be enthusiastic when you speak to the photo about all the things you love about them and how they love her, so that she begins to develop a relationship with them in her own mind and heart.

With them, because they're bound to be taking this personally, I would just say that she's shy and it takes her a long time to warm up to people. Really find ways for them not to take it personally. It's not about them, but do set the expectation with your daughter to be respectful, and rehearse with her what she needs to do.

Question 26:

Dr. Laura M.:

01:17:43

The next question is "I work hard to control my own emotions and words, but how do I explain to my child when others in my family do not? There's tension among my Grandparents, divorced parents, aunts and uncles, and it often results in a tense atmosphere or worse during family gatherings. That often affects my own behavior as well."

Dr. Laura M.:

So, first of all, luckily, your child is only six months old, so you have time to work on your own self-regulation. I realize that can be really hard if your parents are divorced and they're bickering and you're at a family event. It's absolutely going to trigger you, because all your old childhood stuff comes up, but you're a grownup now. You're old enough to have a child of your own. So, you're able to do the work on yourself to keep from getting

triggered. And if you're not, don't go to all the family gatherings. Minimize your time with them.

Dr. Laura M.:

This is hard work, but it's work you can do. And it will make you happier, and it will make you a better parent. So, start now -- your child is only six months old -- to work on your own triggers. You can't control **them**.

How do you explain that to your child? You say, "Daddy and mommy forgot to be kind. They were both so upset. That's why they can't live together anymore, because they have a hard time when they're together, and it's hard for them to remember to be kind, but we're in ~~our~~ kind in our house, aren't we?"

Dr. Laura M.:

If your family can't be civil, you probably want to limit the amount of time that you and your child spend with your extended family. It's sad, but it's not an uncommon choice that parents often have to make for their child's benefit, and for their own.

Question 27:

Dr. Laura M.:

01:15:45

Our next question is "My mother-in-law is verbally abusive toward other people. They live right across from us, and bought the house we live in. She used to watch over my oldest daughter when I worked, and she used to come to our house about four times a day. Right now, I'm not speaking to her because of differences in parenting beliefs. How do you promote positive parenting in an abusive home environment?"

Dr. Laura M.:

Well, obviously, it's hard when you have extended family that are verbally abusive. If you could, I would not live across the street from her. I would relocate and live somewhere else. Obviously, your husband might disagree

with you, and I would begin to talk with him about that, but what you do in your own home is more important than anything else.

Dr. Laura M.: You can explain to your child that, "Grandma is angry because of some things that happened that hurt her heart when she was little. And now she's angry, and often speaks unkindly to people, and that hurts people's feelings. We know how that feels, right? We can see how we feel when Grandma talks to us that way."

Dr. Laura M.: "So, we're very careful to speak as kindly as we can. Even when we're angry, we try to say what we need to say to express our needs and wants, without attacking the other person."

So, you can certainly practice peaceful parenting yourself, and you can certainly explain to your children why Grandma acts this way. But it would be much better if you didn't have to live there, much better, and maybe your husband will even agree with you.

Question 28:

Dr. Laura M.: 01:17:27 This parent asks, "When family comes to visit, my two-year-old gets upset, throws huge tantrums, and won't go to bed until hours after her usual bedtime."

Dr. Laura M.: It sounds to me like your daughter is experiencing your family visits as stressful, so anything you can do to alleviate that stress will help. That means keeping your daughter's regular routines as much as possible, getting her outside a lot, getting her laughing a lot, all of the things that are harder to do when you have visitors.

Dr. Laura M.: I recall my mother asking why we had to put my young son's needs first on our agenda, when she visited when he was a toddler. Why couldn't we just change his schedule? She had no idea. She just didn't understand it. My son who was usually easy-going really hated changes in routine. When we worked around him, it worked so much better than dealing with a difficult child.

Dr. Laura M.: So, I would just say stick to your guns, keep your routine, laughter, laughter, laughter, and get her outside.

I want to also specifically suggest that you work on your own stress level. Your daughter is probably picking stress up from you. Obviously, we get stressed out by a house full of people, and also, we often get stressed by extended family, especially around our parenting choices, and our child being difficult.

Dr. Laura M.: So, developing a repertoire of techniques to stay centered yourself will be really valuable to you in helping these visits go more smoothly. Of course, they'll be valuable for the rest of your life.

Question 29:

Dr. Laura M.: 01:18:59 This question is "My mother feels it's her duty to step in and parent her way with fear and control, expecting complete obedience and compliance from my three and four-year-olds. She honestly believes she's helping me."

Dr. Laura M.: So, it sounds like you're still fighting with your mother for your autonomy. I would tell your mom that you love her, but you are the parent of your kids. She had a chance to do it her way, and she has to now have confidence that she raised a person who can make good choices. If she

doesn't have that confidence, what does that say about her parenting?

Dr. Laura M.: Tell her it's your chance now to make your own mistakes. And have confidence in yourself, because if you have confidence in yourself as a parent, it's going to give her a more clear message that you're in charge of your own kids. If she can't let you take charge as a parent, you're going to have to limit the length of your visits with her. And she will forget, she will test you. Just keep your calm sense of humor and step right in and say things like, "Grandma feels really strongly about this, honey. She doesn't know we do it differently at our house. You can explain to her that our rule is blah, blah, blah."

Dr. Laura M.: Of course, your mother is allowed to make her own rules at her house, like no jumping on her couch, but she can't mandate how you treat your children or whether they should be punished for jumping on the couch. You can always choose to have all the visits on your own turf.

Question 30:

Dr. Laura M.: 01:20:23:5 This parent says: "My daughter hurts my mom's feelings by shouting things like, 'Why are you here?' and my parents think she needs consequences. I keep trying to explain later to my daughter why it's so important to be mindful of feelings and polite."

Dr. Laura M.: So, if my grandchild said to me, "Why are you here?" I would say, "Why am I here? It sounds like you're surprised to see me, and you're not happy about it. I'm here because I want to see you, and have fun with you. Let's have fun together today, okay?"

- Dr. Laura M.: Now, obviously, to do this, you have to understand that the child is not trying to hurt you, they're expressing surprise or disappointment, and you speak to that surprise or disappointment. Of course, I know your parents probably hear this as an attack on them. So, I would say you have three goals here. One is to see if your parents can develop a better relationship with their grandchild, so she relates to them with more warmth and they have more understanding of her. That seems really important.
- Dr. Laura M.: Secondly, talk to them, so they can see this differently. Suggest what they could say, what I just said. Thirdly, discuss with your child that comments like that can hurt, and you can certainly do that after that fact that you've been doing it, but I would suggest that you consider also doing it in the moment like this, "My goodness, sweetheart. You sound surprised that Grandma is here. In fact, it sounds like you aren't happy to see her. I wonder if you're worried that today won't be as much fun with Grandma here, but you know what? I know that Grandma is looking forward to spending with you, and we're going to have a great day together. Were you worried that we won't be able to do X, Y, Z? You know you can just tell us that, and we can figure it out together. You can always say what you need without hurting the other person."
- Dr. Laura M.: As far as consequences go, when your parents say she needs consequences. I would ask them directly, "So, mom, you think I should punish her because she was surprised and upset to see you rather than dealing with her feelings and helping her to get her needs met? Is that right? Do you really think that's going to improve her relationship with you, and it's going to make her happier to see you?"

Question 31:

Dr. Laura M.: 01:22:41:0 This parent asks, "How do we navigate our new parenting approach when we're with other families or when we have kids over or when we're with extended family?"

Dr. Laura M.: So, when you're with other families, I would warn your kids in advance about things that are likely to be an issue. So, for instance, "We can't do long turns when this other family visits, because the other kids won't have a chance to use these toys after we're done with them today. So, when people visit, we do short turns. What's a reasonable length for a turn? What about giving the guest the first turn?" So, have those discussions and, of course, let them put away their most treasured possessions.

Dr. Laura M.: If your kids react to the way other children are disciplined, you can point out that different families have different ideas and philosophies. So, for instance, some people say grace at meals and some don't, and some think timeouts are a good way to teach kids lessons.

Dr. Laura M.: I had these discussions with my kids a lot over the years when they watched other families, and they became very articulate proponents of peaceful parenting. They can describe how parenting affects children, different kinds of parenting.

Dr. Laura M.: So, I think you can have those discussions in a nonjudgmental way with your kids, even with other families there, but certainly, you can have those discussions afterwards with your kids.

Obviously, you can't mandate whether somebody else gives their kid a timeout. As far as how you treat your own kids, you can just proceed to do what you usually do. If another child asks, "Well, aren't you going to give him a timeout or a consequence?" you can answer, "It sounds

like you want to be sure that William knows that this hurts you, and he won't do it again. I understand that. Of course, you want to make sure. Let's ask William, shall we? William, do you hear Alexander? He's saying that he didn't like it when you did that, and he's asking if you can promise to not hurt him again. What can you tell him?"

Dr. Laura M.: There's nothing wrong with getting that commitment from your child. In fact, if your child is willing to commit, he probably won't hurt the other kid again. So, that's a really good thing to do. The other families will learn a lot from watching you.

Dr. Laura M.: You asked also about when you have other kids over. You'll obviously treat all children with respect and warmth. I've noticed that some kids who aren't used to that, wonder where the limits are, and they get a little wild. So, in those cases, just be very clear about the limits, and those kids really usually respond well. Not mean, just very firm: "This is the limit," and those kids are like, "Okay. Fine. Now, I know what to do here."

Dr. Laura M.: Most kids love it when you use this approach because you're intervening between the kids to help them work out altercations in a respectful way, and they experience that as so much better than what they're used to, which just never seems fair to them.

Dr. Laura M.: Your third part of your question was, "What about with the extended family? Do we tell anyone that we're doing something new?" I think they're going to notice that you're doing something new, and you'll want to address that, so they don't think you've gone bananas or soft. Just explain that you want to coach your child to be their best self and develop into an adult who has resilience and self-discipline.

Dr. Laura M.: So, you want to go beyond sticks and carrots, and instead use limits with empathy. To do that, of course, you need to self-regulate, and to prioritize the connection, so your child is willing to look to you for guidance.

If the extended family argues with you, just smile and thank them. You both want the same thing for your child to grow into a great person, but it's your job, not theirs. They had their chance. Now, it's your chance to make your own mistakes.

Dr. Laura M.: You also asked what if they live with you. If they live with you, you'll have many more discussions, but it's still your job to parent, not theirs. No one but a parent should ever discipline a child, and that also goes for stepparents.

Question 32:

Dr. Laura M.: 01:26:29:0 Moving on, we have a question: "My husband and I have been implementing your methods, and we've noticed that our four-year-old is more cooperative with us and his sister when we're around. However, we have two grandmothers and a nanny who play a regular role in child care. When they're around, he hits, he's more defiant, he generally behaves much worse than when they're absent. How can we encourage cooperation with caregivers?"

Dr. Laura M.: Well, we can talk about how to ask your son to cooperate more with his caregivers, but you're going to probably have more success if you work with the nanny and the grandmothers to cooperate better with your son. There's a reason that he's misbehaving with them. Partly, it is the relationship. You have a relationship with him, or you treat him respectfully, and apparently, the grandmothers and the nanny don't have that same relationship. So, he's more defiant with them.

- Dr. Laura M.: Now, you can absolutely talk to him about their attitude. So, an example might be if he goes to Grandma's house and he wants to jump on her couch, and at home he's allowed to jump on your couch, and Grandma says, "Don't jump on the couch," he could get defiant because he knows what the rule is. The rule is, "Of course, you're allowed to jump on the couch. We do it everyday at home."
- Dr. Laura M.: So, some of the defiance you can solve, prevent, by helping your son understand that, "Different people have different attitudes and different rules. So, it's not really good for our couch that you jump on it. For us, it's worth it because you and your sister have such a great time jumping on the couch, and it will eventually break the couch, but we figure the couch is getting dirty anyway everyday that we use it, and sooner or later, we're going to need a new couch. This one is old. It's okay with us that you jump on it, but that's not true for Grandma. She loves her couch. She wants to keep her couch forever, and she doesn't like people jumping on it because that can break the couch. So, her rule is no jumping on the couch. So, at her house, her rules."
- Dr. Laura M.: So, I think that's pretty clear. When your son understands that kind of reasoning, he will probably be less defiant because one of the reasons that kids are defiant is when they know that the adult is wrong, and that could be the case with different rules.
- Dr. Laura M.: Now, the nanny is a little bit different, because the nanny works for you. So, the nanny not only should be using your rules. The nanny should be using your approach. I understand you can't remake her. She's a human being, but you can say to her, "We require that you become familiar with this approach, and you can listen to the audio tapes. You can talk to us about it, but we need to treat the kids respectfully, and we require you to do that. I

understand it's not always easy to do this kind of peaceful parenting, but we will help you do it."

Dr. Laura M.:

Obviously, you can share the course with her since she's working for you, and that's the only reason she's taking the course. Obviously, if you could interest the grandmothers in the course, that would help as well since they do play a regular role in child care. Now, I know they don't work for you, but as one grandmother said to me, she doesn't see any problem letting her grandson watch TV, but his mom doesn't want it, and she's protecting her right to see her grandson, so when mom says no TV, she has to respect that.

Dr. Laura M.:

I think within reason, that should be our approach to Grandparents. We ask you to treat the child in a certain way. We ask you not to do timeouts. We ask you not to do threats and punishment. We ask you to treat the child respectfully. I think you would see that if the Grandparents could do that, there would be a big difference in your son's response to them; that he would be much less defiant.

Dr. Laura M.:

The hitting, specifically, with the Grandparents, I think you just have to lay down the law to him, "Absolutely no hitting no matter what. You don't hit with us, you can't hit with them. They're old. You can't do it. They don't know how necessarily to parent the way we parent." He's four, he can understand this. That, "When they grew up it was a long, long time ago, and children were treated differently, often badly, and they don't understand that there's a new way of treating children -- the way we treat you. So, they sometimes are very strict in ways that we wouldn't be, but no hitting, not ever no matter what. If you hit, you can't go see the grandmothers. It's that simple."

Dr. Laura M.:

I assume your son wants to see the grandmothers, so that would be some incentive for him. Finally, you can help your son be less defiant with his Grandparents and the

nanny by helping him find another way to get his needs met, which means, basically, to stand up for himself without attacking the other person. Because think about it. What is defiance? Defiance is saying, "You can't make me. I won't do this. I won't go along with you."

Dr. Laura M.:

What we're suggesting is he can get his needs met just the way he would get them met with you, if he expresses them to the Grandparents and to the nanny in a more respectful way, that's respectful of them. So, he's, again, old enough to understand being able to do that, and to practice that with you. It really might cut down on the defiance. You're helping him solve the problem that's causing the defiance.

Dr. Laura M.:

I hope that's helpful. It's always hard to explain this kind of parenting to Grandparents, and it's hard to explain to your children why they're not being treated this way when they're used to being treated respectfully at home. I do think that at four, he's old enough to be able to understand somewhat if you talk with them about it directly, not in a way that's disrespectful to the Grandparents, but simply in a way that helps them to understand their perspective.

Question 33:

Dr. Laura M.:

01:32:17:5

"Peaceful parenting works great for us at home, but when our son's Grandpa is around -- which is often because we have close extended family -- at those times, peaceful parenting doesn't work. Grandpa tries his best and in his mind, he is protecting my son from harm and frustration, telling him to be careful not to, "It works better if you do it like this." "You did a very good job" is his comment to practically everything my son does right. He also wants to show us he can handle our son, so when there's a conflict

or a meltdown, he throws himself in it, tries to talk him out of it -- not working -- or tries to distract my son -- not working either. Things escalate and there we are unable to connect with our son, and not knowing how to handle the situation."

Dr. Laura M.:

I think I would advise you to handle this just the way you handle other limit setting in your family, except this limit setting, I'm afraid, is with Grandpa. All limits we set with compassion, with respect, with empathy, but also with firmness, so the person we're setting the limit with knows we're serious.

Dr. Laura M.:

You have a conversation with Grandpa when your son is not listening, and you say, "Grandpa, we love it that grandson loves you, and we love seeing you so frequently. When something goes on with grandson, we would like to be able to handle it in our way even when we're here visiting."

Dr. Laura M.:

Then Grandpa will say, "Oh, no. I can handle him."

Dr. Laura M.:

You say, "Of course, you can, and he's very close to you. He always has been. He adores you, and when you're alone with him, you can handle things the way you see fit, but when we're here, we want to be the parents. We want to do the parenting. So, when we're around, if our son gets upset about something, we're going to act like parents. We're going to come over, and we're going to parent him. And we ask you to please step back and let us handle it, even if you disagree and think you could handle it in another way.

Dr. Laura M.:

You may not even like how we'll handle it, but we'll do our best. We've done a lot of thinking and reading and considering about how we want to parent our son, and even if you don't agree with it, you had your chance. You did a great job, and now it's our turn to make our own

mistakes. So, with all due respect to you, we'd like you to give us the respect that we're his parents, and when he gets upset about something, please let us handle it.

Dr. Laura M.:

If you forget and start to be involved, we're going to give you a little signal. What's a good signal for us to use? We can just say, 'We've got it, Grandpa. We'll handle it. Thank you, though.' Unless there's some other signal you'd like us to give you?"

It sounds like it's important for Grandpa to look good in front of everyone else that he can handle his grandson, but he isn't handling him. What's ending up happening is that things escalate.

Dr. Laura M.:

So, obviously, you want to be respectful and let him decide what signal you'll use so other people don't necessarily notice what's going on. And you will step in, and then you know what to do when you step in because you do it at home, and it works fine. So, you'll do that. You'll connect with your son and it will work. I realize this could hurt Grandpa's feelings, and so, of course, you affirm how much his grandson loves him. Who knows? Maybe he'll start to notice how much more effective your approach is, and he'll give it a try himself.

Question 34:

Dr. Laura M.: 01:32:52:0

Our next question is: "My parents-in-law immigrated to the United States two years ago and have been living in our home with us since then. They don't speak English. Our almost five-year-old has only acquired basic skills in their native language since they've moved here. She repeatedly asked them for something, and they don't

understand her, and she completely loses it, understandably. She's so very frustrated. How can I help her?"

Dr. Laura M.:

Well, I hear how she's so very frustrated, and that's understandable, but I think she's old enough to understand that they don't speak English. She's almost five. It's a great opportunity for her to teach them some English, and for her to learn some of their native language. I think you could treat the whole thing as a game. When she does get frustrated, be understanding, be empathic, and tell her that she just doesn't know enough of their language yet, and they don't know enough of her language yet, but she can teach them.

We want to empower her to solve her own problem. She's young enough to very quickly pick up another language, not the ins and outs of it, not the verb tenses, but certainly the noun for water, the noun for cup, the noun for book. She can learn all that, and should. We wish we could solve our kids' problems for them. We wish we could save them from all frustration. We can't. But in fact, our kids can do hard things with our support.

So, it's our job as parents to completely empathize, and to introduce the word yet. There's a way she can change the situation. She just hasn't made herself understood **yet**.

This is a wonderful opportunity. Your daughter will be so glad to have learned some of this language. Her Grandparents won't be around forever, but someday, as an adult, she may choose to learn some of this language, and she'll already have a head start because of her exposure to it now. This is a wonderful opportunity for her.

Yes. It's frustrating. We can't stop that from happening. What we **can** do is give her a different attitude about it, so

she doesn't get so frustrated. When she is frustrated, sure, empathize. When you can help her to treat it as a game and a learning opportunity, even better.

Dr. Laura M.: 01:38:28:5 That's all our questions for today. Thank you for listening. I hope this was helpful. If you still have a burning question that wasn't answered on this audio, please submit it for possible inclusion on my podcast. Just go to ahaparenting.com/podcast, and leave your question as a voice memo. This is Dr. Laura Markham wishing you less drama and more love. Goodbye for now.