

## 210: Conscious, Connected, Respectful Parenting (with Laura Froyen)



### Full Episode Transcript

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**Jen Riday**

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## 210: Conscious, Connected, Respectful Parenting (with Laura Froyen)

**Jen Riday:** You're listening to the *Vibrant Happy Women* podcast, episode #210. We're talking all about conscious, connected, respectful parenting. Stay tuned.

Hi, I'm Jen Riday, and this podcast is for women who want to feel more vibrant, happy, aligned, and alive. You'll gain the emotional, physical, and spiritual tools you need to get your sparkle back and ensure that depression, anxiety, and struggle don't rule your life. Welcome to the *Vibrant Happy Women* podcast.

Hi, there, my friends. Welcome back to Vibrant Happy Women. I'm so glad you're here because I'm talking with one of my favorite people on the planet. She's been on the show before. It's Dr. Laura Froyen from episode 93. She is back to talk about respectful, conscious, connected parenting.

In this episode, she'll be talking about the behavioral model of parenting, which many of us grew up with, which many teachers, and administrators, and social situations still adhere to, and the new model, which has a lot of research and science to back it up, and that is the compassion/relationship model.

Many of you have heard of Dr. Shefali Tsabary who wrote the book *Conscious Parenting*. It's very popular. Well, in this episode, Dr. Laura will be talking about several other research-based books that give you practical tools that will help you as a parent.

Often times, when parents engage in the obedience or behavioral model, we expect kids to listen. That's our number one goal. We worry, "Oh, my

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gosh. My kids aren't listening," but what happens down the line when we adhere to that model?

More often than not, if there's not a lot of warmth and connection with that obedience process, we as adults don't feel safe or secure sharing our true selves with our parents who adhered to that model. The new model, in contrast, emphasizes the relationship, the connection, the gooey, sticky, yummy warmth of connection with each other before obedience, and that fosters self-love in a child.

Those children grew up, and don't have to relearn how to love themselves, and don't have to relearn as much how to be self-compassionate, and if we're doing it right, those children grow up and want to keep sharing with us, and revealing their true selves to us because they feel safe in the relationship. I don't know about you, but I know which one I am working toward. Having grown up with the obedience model, I have maybe further to go than many people, but I am making good progress.

Well, Laura and I discuss all of this and more in this episode. I share some personal details of how I've thought about my husband and my kids, and how I'm shifting my thinking. I think you're going to learn a lot too, especially things that will help you strengthen your relationship with your children or with other important people in your lives. So, let's go ahead and dive in.

Hi, my friends. I am with one of my favorite people, Dr. Laura Froyen today. Laura has a PhD in human development and family studies with a specialization in couple and family therapy. She's also a peaceful parenting and respectful relationship coach, and a self-compassion advocate.

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Laura helps parents get clear on their goals and values so they can begin prioritizing the things and people that truly matter, and begin living in alignment with their deeper purpose. I love that. Welcome back to Vibrant Happy Women, Laura.

**Laura Froyen:** Oh, it's so nice to be back here with you.

**Jen Riday:** Everyone, if you don't know, Laura was with me two years ago, two and a half years ago almost, on episode 93. You can go back and listen to that. It was awesome. Today, we're going to talk about parenting. So, Laura, tell us a little bit about what you're doing in the world, and how you're working with parents, and the context in which you're gaining your expertise because you are totally an expert in my mind.

**Laura Froyen:** I was a practicing couple and family therapist for six years, and I was also an academic researcher for a couple of years before I left that academic world and started my practice as a parenting and relationship coach. So, I help families find their balance. If they're couples, I help them reconnect and come back to why they were with each other in the first place.

For parents, I help them go from feeling confused, or lost, or powerless in their parenting role to feeling more empowered, and in control, and confidence, and most importantly, connected with their kids. I do this in a number of contexts. I have an online class that I'm teaching, and I work one on one with families both locally in my community, and then around the world too.

**Jen Riday:** That's awesome. I know I've heard you on Anna Seewald's podcast, the Authentic Parenting podcast. You're starting your own as well, right?

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**Laura Froyen:** Yes, I'm working there. Yes. I think that's getting to be getting off the ground soon, I hope, but yes, I am a regular guest on Anna Seewald's podcast, Authentic Parenting. We'll link to that in the show notes. That's a really great parenting podcast.

**Jen Riday:** Well, Laura, let's shift and talk about thoughts, feelings, actions, and results in the context of parenting. You and I both know that the TFAR model was started through cognitive behavioral therapy. Tell us more about how our thoughts or our stories about our kids really create the reality of those relationships.

**Laura Froyen:** None of us are in isolation within our families. My background is in human development and family studies, and at my heart, I'm a family systems theorist, and the family system theory tells us that none of us are in isolation. We are all embedded within this context.

So, when we are in our head thinking and telling ourselves a story about our kids, or our partner, or even about ourselves, we're not alone in that process. Kids are biologically designed to be really in tune with us because we are their safety net. That comes through in our tone of voice, in our actions, and even in the atmosphere of the relationship, the tone of the relationship.

Even if we are saying all the right things, if it's not coming authentically from us, and we don't believe what we're saying. We might be saying super positive things like, "My dear, I would really like you to help me pick up these toys." If we're telling ourselves the story of, "My kids never help me. I have to do everything alone," in my head, that comes through, and our kids know we're not being real with them when they know that there's that little bit of resentment underneath.

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When there's resentment like that, that's a very disconnecting emotion. When kids aren't connected with us, when they don't feel loved, and seen, and held, and unconditionally regarded in a positive way, they don't want to do what we're asking them to do because the relationship is on the rocks. It's the relationship. It's the connection. That's where we get our power with our kids.

**Jen Riday:** Wow, this is huge. I don't think I've ever heard anyone put it quite in those words, but that means phrases in our minds like, "Ugh, I can't stand being a mom, or these kids are driving me crazy," or these common phrases that we see in social media that moms and dads pick up on that we think are normal. "Oh, mommy needs her wine." How do you think those affect kids? Have you seen that in your practice and in your parenting groups?

**Laura Froyen:** Absolutely. Or even in my own family, when I'm in a stressed and overwhelmed state of mind, and I'm feeling resentment towards my family or towards my obligations, we can sense that. I'm sure you've felt that in your partner too. Sometimes it's easier to think about when we felt that coming off of someone, when we felt that they feel overwhelmed, or they feel hard done by, radiate off of them in their interactions, even if they are saying all of the right things.

So, those parenting, just the things that we say, "I need my wine. When is it going to be wine o'clock?" Or, "Gosh, there's not enough coffee in the world to handle this child," or just all of those things really affect the way we see our kids, and our families, and our lives. The other thing too is that our brains are built to be really good at picking out what we are telling our brain is important.

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So, when we are thinking about certain things and focusing on them, we tend to just see those things. I don't know if you've ever been shopping for a new car. When I was shopping for our new minivan a couple of years ago, I all of a sudden started seeing Honda Odysseys everywhere because that's the model that we were thinking about getting.

**Jen Riday:** That's what we drive. Yes, it's a good one.

**Laura Froyen:** Oh, my gosh. It changed my life.

**Jen Riday:** I know.

**Laura Froyen:** I love my minivan.

**Jen Riday:** Powered doors. I'm never going to stop. Those powered doors, I love it. Groceries.

**Laura Froyen:** The ability for a kid to be able to get into themselves.

**Jen Riday:** Yes, I'm with you. I'm with you.

**Laura Froyen:** Absolutely, love it.

**Jen Riday:** Forever.

**Laura Froyen:** I don't know if you noticed that when you were thinking about it, and it was on your mind, you saw them everywhere. That's what happens when we're focusing on the negative aspects of our lives. We see them everywhere. If we're thinking all the time about how what a wreck our house is and how messy it is, that's all we see. We don't see the positive

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interactions. We don't see the fact that, yes, there's craft materials out, but this beautiful creation that our child poured their heart into is also there.

We gloss over those things because our brains are primitive brains, and they're wired to see the things that we're telling them are important. So, by changing our focus, changing our thoughts, and really being firm with ourselves that we're going to focus in on these things that we want more of in our lives, then we will start having more of those things.

**Jen Riday:** Wow, this is huge. I feel like taking this in a vulnerable direction with myself. I'm tempted to gloss over it, but let's go here, Laura. You guys might know, or might not know, that when my marriage was at its worst, Laura came to work with my husband and I in her home for about six sessions, and she is amazing. We had done some family therapy before. We had done some marriage therapy before, and Laura is awesome.

Well, that is a preface to the fact that I have had a story about my marriage for a very long time that it was terrible, that it was dysfunctional, that my husband was insensitive. By extension, when our two oldest boys started to do things, I had a story of, "Oh, I have really hard kids. They have a blend of ADHD, and autism, and depression, and anxiety."

That's all true. What would you say to someone like me or anyone else out there listening who has these stories of, "My relationships are hard. My kids are hard"? How do we start digging out of that very negative story?

**Laura Froyen:** The first thing always is noticing. If you're just in the stage where you're having lots of negative thoughts, and you're starting to have a sense of awareness of them, most of the time, our thoughts are running in the background, and we have no idea what we're thinking. We're just thinking them unconsciously and habitually, and every time we think them,



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it hardwires that thought pattern, that neural pattern, harder and harder into our brains.

So, simply the act of becoming aware of it is the first step, an important step, and you might be in a place where you are just noticing for a while, just noticing the story. Then once you become aware of it, the next thing to do is to start challenging it gently and compassionately, and asking yourself, “Is it true? Is this really true? Is my husband always insensitive, or are there times where that hasn't been the case?” This is my story, “My husband's insensitive.”

Now, I'm going to be an investigator, and I'm going to look for times that contradicts that message, that story, just with curiosity, and just examine it like you're a scientist with a microscope, or a magnifying glass, or a detective looking for these clues as to whether this is really true or not. Or if my kids are always disrespectful, or whatever the story is, asking yourself, “Is this true? Is it always true? Does it have to be true?” Those are good questions. I think Byron Katie is a person who asks those questions a lot in her work. I don't know if you know her.

So, examining whether it's true, and then trying on a new thought. “How would I change if I thought this in this moment? What would it change for me?” Then I also always like to encourage the people I'm working with to tap into compassion for the person that they're telling the story. We all need to be really compassionate to ourselves, and we really have to work on that because it's hard to be compassionate towards others when we are lacking our own self-compassion.

Sometimes because it can feel inauthentic when we haven't filled our own compassion reservoir, but mostly because it's draining. So, tapping into compassion for the person that you're having this narrative story about,

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thinking about that they're probably doing the best they can with what they know right now, and that all humans do well when they can. No human wants to live a life of disconnection and discord.

They're likely, at that point in time, doing their very best, and they likely just need other resources or supports either from a therapist, or who knows what they need, but just that idea of they're really doing the best that they can, and with what they know, and what their own life experiences can be really powerful in changing your attitude or your posture towards something or someone.

Then when we do that, relational dynamics theory tells us that when we shift our position or posture, it lets other people have a little bit more room and freedom to shift out of their positions. So, when we soften, it gets somebody who's maybe hardened and defensive an opportunity to soften too, safely.

**Jen Riday:** That's really, really beautiful. As you were sharing that, I was thinking about what step am I on? I think I became aware of what was happening. That was one of the greatest gifts of my boys. Having the struggles they had, I became more aware of my place in that and the negative thoughts I had been thinking. Then I started to see it with my spouse.

Well, one of the first positive thoughts I forced myself to think, once I was aware how negative I was being was, "My husband is a really good dad," and I saw evidence over and over again. Then I started to experiment with, "He's improving at being sensitive." That was the first positive thought I could have there.

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My brain though, as I thought that thought, started to look for the evidence, just like you talked about. It's increasingly obvious to me that he has many, many very amazing sensitive moments. Part of me is thinking he has changed, but maybe that's because I started to open up the space for recognizing that it was even happening. What do you think about that?

**Laura Froyen:** Absolutely, and opening up space for him to change. When we are begging, or pushing, or trying to force someone to change, it leaves them with very few options. Especially if they tend to be a more strong-willed person, we back them into a corner, and it doesn't give them the room to come there authentically on their own and step into this place of choosing to make those changes for their own betterment.

For the betterment of their relationships, and their connections, and their own lives. So, absolutely. One of the most powerful things you can do is looking for that change and taking a step back and giving room for change to happen, especially if it's something you've been pushing really hard for a while.

**Jen Riday:** Yes.

**Laura Froyen:** I do this with my own marriage, by the way. I have this story in my brain that no one will ever be loved enough by someone to have them fully empathize and validate my feelings in the way I need them to be.

**Jen Riday:** Wow.

**Laura Froyen:** That's my negative story. It's super powerful and sad.

**Jen Riday:** Do you find yourself pushing away empathy just to keep that story true in your mind?

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**Laura Froyen:** I think I find myself being dissatisfied by my partner or others not doing it perfectly.

**Jen Riday:** Oh, that's so interesting.

**Laura Froyen:** Something you said just sparked me thinking about this. I'm a recovering perfectionist, and part of my work in that realm has been focusing on progress over perfection. I don't give the people who I am working with that benefit sometimes. Sometimes I really have to work hard to focus on their progress over getting it perfectly right and being satisfied and feeling loved by the simple fact of the progress.

The other thing that I've been thinking a lot about on this negative story, for me, I really think that because I feel so dissatisfied by the level of empathy and validation from others, I've really come to realize that all these people in my life are inviting me to understand that that empathy and validation has to come from me.

**Jen Riday:** Yes.

**Laura Froyen:** To come to me from someone outside, and it's got to come from in me. I have to see myself as worthy and lovable and give myself that gift of empathy, and validation, and compassion, and fill that need myself so that I'm not constantly looking for it from others.

**Jen Riday:** You know? That is huge. I need to speak to that. Again, the struggles with our boys has been one of the greatest gifts, and I have a feeling everything is going to end great, but what it has taught my husband and I, number one, is we had to take care of ourselves. Just like you said, that empathy, and validation, and compassion for yourself.

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I feel like since I started my podcast and this journey of self-love, I really feel like I've nailed it. I know I can give myself everything I need for love and compassion. I just need to rest or I need to go on the walk, but what's really cool, now that I feel like I've nailed my own self-compassion, I have a deep interest in watching my husband nail his.

I've created enough of a space that I can care that someone else is meeting their needs. I see, "Oh, I think you need to go take a break." He'll be so grateful I invited him to go take a break and take a nap. I can just feel his stress levels rise and fall, or his anxiety rise and fall, and I'm more invested in everyone else because I took care of myself first. Do you find that to be true for yourself?

**Laura Froyen:** Absolutely. We hear a lot, as moms, that we have to take care of ourselves, and the phrase that gets used a lot is you can't pour from an empty cup. I have a different analogy that I use with my clients, and I'd love to share it with your listeners, if I can. It's not that we need to fill up our cup so that we can then pour it into those that we love.

We need to fill up our cup so that it is overflowing, and in the process of overflowing, it then flows into those that we love because by pouring it out, we are telling ourselves and them that this is a scarce resource. This is something that there's not a lot of, and that I'm choosing to give it to you, and this is a gift.

But when we bring an abundance mindset to self-compassion or self-care, and that we are looking at this cup that is this endless reservoir that we're filling up and it is overflowing, then it doesn't feel as much like a scarce resource. There's always more because I'm taking care of myself, and I'm constantly replenishing that cup, and it's always overflowing into my family, into the people that I love.

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What's amazing about that is that when we bring that mindset to it, you don't even have to actually change the amount of self-care you're doing. It's just the way you feel about how much self-compassion or how much reserves you have, that they're there, and it's overflowing, and you're, instead of pouring it out, tipping the cup and pouring out what you have that's bubbling up and flowing into.

It's more satisfying to the folks that you're pouring it into because they can feel when you're giving them a scarce resource. You know this too. When you're stressed, and you're overwhelmed, and your kids are begging you to play with them, and you play with them, you sit down and you're giving them their attention, but it feels like it's never enough for them.

They always want your attention, and you're in the back of your mind being pulled in 20 different directions and thinking about the things you're not doing while you're doing that. It's not satisfying. But when it's overflowing from you, and you have this reservoir of compassion or time and attention, and unconditional self-love that can flow into your kids, it's much more satisfying to them.

**Jen Riday:** So well said. Oh, my gosh. You know the phrase, "If mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy." It's cliché as heck, but when you look at it in terms of an abundance of self-compassion and self-care, you know, "Oh, mom is happy." That feels so secure and amazing for kids and spouses when we as women are emotionally juicy and happy. I love that analogy.

My mind is churning on that because that's exactly what's happening here. I've become so adept at taking care of myself. I know that nothing could happen emotionally that I couldn't handle because I've practiced the tools so much of taking care of allowing myself to feel, to heal. That's a really

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secure place to bring to my family, and I never thought of it before. So, thanks for helping me see that.

What about families perhaps like mine with my kids having diagnoses of various sorts? I have a friend who has a son with ADHD, and her story very much is that he is so hard, but her daughter is such a joy, and that pains me to hear her share that story because how would it feel to be on the receiving end of that? How do we balance this idea of having a story about our families when kids have been given diagnoses? How do you juggle that?

**Laura Froyen:** This is so hard. I have a similar situation. I have one kid who just came out challenging.

**Jen Riday:** She'll be two.

**Laura Froyen:** She has a difficult temperament. She always has had one, and she probably always will be. She's also very much like me.

**Jen Riday:** That's fun.

**Laura Froyen:** Almost all of my parenting triggers are focused on her. She elicits them. I have this other child who is a joy. She'll do things that the other one would do, and I'd be so mad, and this other one will do them, and I just feel like laughing because she does it in a way that doesn't trigger me.

So, I think sometimes we do have a kid who's more difficult, and I think one of the best things that we can do is to buffer that difficultness by finding ways that we can connect and have a piece of joy in our relationship with them. The thoughts are a big piece of that though.

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Again, examining are they always difficult? When aren't they difficult? When do things feel like they flow between us, and looking for more of those times? For my one who's more difficult, with her dad, he and she find that when they're wrestling or roughhousing together, that flow together where things are easier. Whereas she and I find that while we're doing art together.

So, finding those places where you can love your kid and really unconditionally show that love in a really real way to buffer how hard it is sometimes because sometimes kids are hard. Sometimes we're hard in relationship with the kid. A kid isn't hard on their own. Most of the time, they're hard because they're bumping up against expectations that they don't have the skills or tools to meet.

Most of the time, when kids have a hard time, they're having a hard time because they're not able to meet expectations that are being placed on them right then. Those expectations come from us, or from society, or culture, or from teachers. I think recognizing that too, I'm taking this certification course with Dr. Ross Greene. His method is called Collaborative and Proactive Solutions, and he has a few really fabulous books that teach this collaborative problem-solving process.

The biggest piece that I help parents in this work is shifting how they see their kid. Most parents, when they have a kid who's struggling, see their kid as defiant or willfully not doing the things that they need to do, and we really have to shift how we see those kids. Really. having the mantra within your head, "Kids do well when they can."

Kids want to do well. They want to please us. They want to stay connected with us, and if they could be doing better at that moment, they would be, and we can usually pretty much rest assured that if they could be doing



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things differently right then, they would be, and partners do well when they can.

We're all doing our very best most of the time, and when we're not, when we're having struggles and when we're looking bad, it's usually because you're bumping up against a place where we don't have the skills, or tools, or practice, or knowledge, or background to be able to look good in that situation.

**Jen Riday:** Wow. Kids do well when they can. I'm going to go back to my story because I know it the best. From day one, I definitely got more calls from the principal, more emails from the teachers about my kids. How do we cope with this idea that still, teachers and society works from norms, and if people are neurodiverse, or behaviorally diverse, or mental health issues, whatever, they don't always believe the idea that kids do well when they can? How do you help your kids when society is telling you they're not doing well? You know what I mean?

**Laura Froyen:** Yeah. I think that it's the teachers, and society, and the school that need to make changes in those cases. I have no problem advocating for my kid. Part of this is, is because I have my PhD, and I can throw the weight of my diploma around a little bit. So, I share the books. Dr. Ross Greene has one for teachers. It's called Lost at School. I give that as gifts to principals and teachers who need it.

**Jen Riday:** Wow, Laura, you rock. I love this. So, you're giving me permission.

**Laura Froyen:** These are our kids.

**Jen Riday:** I hear you.

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**Laura Froyen:** These are our kids, these are our people, and we still have these vestiges of these old behavioral models, and kids and humans are not pigeons, or rats, or dogs. We're not Skinner and Pavlov. These are the grandfathers of psychology and behavioral psychology specifically. Most of the interventions that are happening in schools these days are behaviorally based, and we are not dogs.

We have engrained animal responses, but we are wired for connection. We are wired to learn socially and in relationship with people. The modern research is catching up with this now. We're having great researchers out there doing good work, and getting into schools, and things are changing. Teachers do well when they can too, and principals do well when they can, and we might all need to be needing to learn something new and different to gather because none of us grew up with a compassionate and respect-based parenting model.

Most of us didn't. Most of us grew up in a place where kids do what adults say, and that's what you do. Parents know they're kids, and it's okay to share the knowledge that you have of your child and what works for them with the educators that you're working with, or with the professionals.

**Jen Riday:** That's cool. In defense of teachers, I know that teachers are stretched so thin, and mental health issues are something like four times higher than they were just 15 years ago. So, I can't judge the teachers, of course.

**Laura Froyen:** No, no. Both of my parents were schoolteachers. I have the utmost respect for teachers. They sacrifice so much. They spend their evenings grading papers. They spend their own money on supplies for their classrooms. They're amazing, and they're doing the very best that they can too just like our kids, just like all humans. We all do well when we can.

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**Jen Riday:** We talked earlier in the conversation about changing our thoughts. Maybe that's the easiest first thought. Everyone is doing well when they can. Everyone is doing the best that they can, and just go from there. It's so much easier than the critical thought.

**Laura Froyen:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Jen Riday:** It's beautiful. Well, so you mentioned that many teachers and society in general are still working from Skinner and Pavlov and the behavioral model. Can you talk more about the compassion model you've been hinting at with Dr. Ross Greene's work?

**Laura Froyen:** I'm not sure it's specifically Dr. Ross Greene's, but there's lots of folks out there who are shifting to a more relational based approach to parenting. Most of us were raised under the obedience model where parents tell kids what to do, and kids do what parents say.

I think parenting methods are starting to catch up with science on the fact that taking an approach to parenting where at the very core, your biggest goal is to preserve your relationship with your child, to have a relationship that is warm, and unconditionally loving, and connected. That through that relationship, one that's grounded in respect and compassion, your child will want to stay aligned and stay connected with you.

As a result, you'll gain cooperation from them. This doesn't mean that we don't ever make our kids mad or upset. It doesn't mean we never hold boundaries that they don't because we absolutely do. Kids need firm limits to keep them safe and to help them feel secure and like they've got a leader in their family, someone who's going to keep them on the right path. Kids need that, and they don't have to like all of our limits.

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It's the way you hold a limit. You're holding it with warmth and compassion. So, if you're saying that, "It's 20 degrees outside, I can't let you go to school in shorts. I can't," and they're really upset with you, you hold space for them, and then you can work together to come up with a solution.

So, finding out why is it that you want to wear shorts so badly this morning? What is it about your pants that you don't like right now? Can we put leggings on underneath the shorts so you can still wear the shorts and have your skin covered? Coming to a place where you are collaboratively solving these problems, but even when you have to hold a hard line, a hard limit like, "No, you can't use this chopping knife. You can use your knife, but you can't use mommy's knife."

Sometimes they just are going to hate that limit, and you can hold space for their displeasure. Then hold that limit with compassion, and empathy, and respect for them and their desires without being permissive and giving in. I'm very respectful, and empathetic, and compassionate in my parenting, and my kids also tell me that I'm very strict.

**Jen Riday:** Oh, that's interesting. Well, one of the biggest questions I get in terms of parenting is that parents don't feel like their kids listen, especially when it comes time to chores and responsibilities. How do you handle that in a relationship/compassion model approach?

**Laura Froyen:** I always like to help parents rephrase that my kids aren't listening or my kids never listen because I guarantee they hear you. They just don't want to do it, what you're asking. So, once we rephrase that to my kids won't do what I tell them to do, which is really what we mean, we see that there is an obedience mindset there. That I should be able to tell my kids what to do, and they'll do it. Without question, and they'll just obey me.

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So, working to step away from that model, that model that we know really doesn't work very well, and we know that because we can look at our own relationships with our parents. If we were raised in that obedience model ourselves, oftentimes, we don't feel safe sharing our true selves with our parents, or we don't feel like they've got our backs, or we don't feel like we were loved unconditionally as kids.

Now, as adults, where Jen, they seek out your podcast to learn how to love themselves unconditionally, and to learn that they are worthy of gentle treatment, compassion, and respect. We have to spend a lot of time in our adulthood undoing what happens at the cost of getting your kids to listen. That's something to just think about. That mindset shift is a big one.

What I'd rather have parents asking me is, "How can I get my kids to cooperate with me? How can I come alongside my kids and make this easier for both of us to get what we need to get done?" I have a video on my Facebook page on setting effective limits in five steps that walks you through these steps in a little bit more detail, but getting close and making sure you're getting your kid's attention. Oftentimes, we want to be able to shout an instruction or a command from the other room.

**Jen Riday:** Guilty.

**Laura Froyen:** Me too, for sure.

**Jen Riday:** My husband is like, "Could you please walk to them?" I'm like, "Oh, that's too hard."

**Laura Froyen:** I know, we got a lot to do. The thing about it, particularly with young kids who are in that five and under range, sometimes it feels like we're talking to them, and they're literally not hearing us. The ability to

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filter out distractions has just come on mind for those kids, and they are still working with that ability, and they haven't yet developed to the point where they can concentrate on something without completely filtering out all distractions.

Especially for young kids, we have to come up to them, and we have to get in the world, and maybe make some physical contact if you have a kid who likes that. Maybe rub their back, ask them what they're doing. "Oh, tell me about the tower you're building," or whatever it is, and get with them, connect with them, first before giving them the instruction.

Then you maybe give a warning if they're going to need to transition because transitions are classically hard for young kids, but for kids who have lagging skills, older kids who have a hard time moving from one thing to another, transitions can still be really hard. So, coming in and helping them, let them know, and help them get prepared that a transition is coming up. "In a few minutes, it's going to be time to put these things away and wash your hands for dinner."

You made that connection, you've let them know, and then you come back in, and you connect again. "Oh, I see this has been so much fun. You know what? I really liked watching you build these Lego towers. Great, okay. Is there anything with these Lego towers that we need to save, or can we put them away now because it's time to wash hands for dinner?" Then you take care of getting them put away and you help them too.

The other thing, sometimes we know kids can do things on their own, but sometimes it's really nice to be helped too. So, if we have the time and the energy, and we're able to, I totally think we should help our kid. The whole point of this is the more love and connection you can build between your

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child and protecting that relationship where they feel important to you and loved by you. They want to keep that connection going.

Saying no, or being defiant, or throwing something, or hitting you, all of those things are disruptive to the connection. So, if you've worked hard to establish that connection and get them feeling warm and gooey in your connection with them, you're much less likely to get some of that defiance, that connection disrupting behavior from them because they want to stay.

**Jen Riday:** Wow. That's amazing. To think ahead to the future, what's more important that they unload the dishwasher the first time you ask, or that they develop that self-love and want to share their feelings with you later down the line? I know that's very true.

My parents were authoritarian because they were farmers, and that's how everyone around there did it. Definitely, I still, to this day, don't feel super comfortable sharing my true self with them. When you said that, it really opened my eyes. Wow. It really affects everything forever. Crazy.

**Laura Froyen:** This parenting thing, this is a marathon, not a sprint, and it can be super easy to get focused in on the mundane, here and now, the toys are all over the floor right now. We really have to zoom out, pan out, and take a bigger look at what we want for our kids and for our relationships with them as they grow.

I don't know if you saw this post on Facebook recently about this mom whose daughter had dumped out her backpack looking for papers, and there were papers all over the floor, and she used the love and logic method, which is one that is very control and obedience based. It pretends to be empathetic and compassion based, and I think some people can

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implement it in a very compassionate, warm, loving way, but most of the time, it's not done that way.

So I made a counter post to that, and in it, I talk about how when my kids have a problem like that where they've made a mistake, or they've had a human moment where they're having a hard time, right then, I want them to learn some really powerful lessons from me.

That their mom has their back. That when they have had a human mistake, that they are still worthy and deserving of kind treatment and compassion. That when they're in trouble, when they have something big and they're overwhelmed, that they've got someone who will come alongside them and help them. Because right now, it's papers on the ground, or it's toys all over the floor, or it's a spilled glass of juice on your carpet.

These are the big issues right now, but in 10 years, it could be drinking at a party that they weren't prepared for. Or a partner who's pressuring them for sex, and they don't know what to do, or that they've got really behind on a project at school, and now, they're worried about failing. I want my kids know that they can come to me. They don't have to hide those things. They don't have to lie about them, and know that their mom is going to help them out. Not bail them out, but help them out.

**Jen Riday:** Wow, that's amazing.

**Laura Froyen:** That's built now. That's built now when they're four and five, and they're having tantrums. We build that trust now.

**Jen Riday:** What would be your top five favorite books that can teach us or help us improve relationship focused parenting method?



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**Laura Froyen:** The series, How to Talk So Kids Will Listen, and Listen So Kids Will Talk. There's three books in the series. There's one for little kids, one for middle childhood, and one for teens. Those books are fast, easy reads. They're super accessible. They have great summaries at the end of the chapters, and they even have cartoons depicting the different methods on which the dads I work with really like.

**Jen Riday:** Oh, nice.

**Laura Froyen:** Oftentimes, dads won't read a whole book, but they will read cartoons.

**Jen Riday:** That's great.

**Laura Froyen:** A graphic novel. So, that series of books is wonderful. If you had a neurodiverse kid, or a kid who's having lots of challenging behaviors, and you're working with folks to try to understand them, and how to make their world a little bit easier, the book Beyond Behaviors by Mona Delahooke is new, and it has all this new science on how we really need to be looking beyond behaviors and focusing in on a relational based approach with kids.

If you have a kid who's really challenging, The Explosive Child is wonderful and saved my relationship with my kid. We started using that when she was four, and she's a different kid now, and our relationship is much better.

**Jen Riday:** Oh, I can't wait. I need to read that one for sure just for one of my kids in particular. We should chat. I think we have the same child. One of them. Oh, my gosh. That's great.

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**Laura Froyen:** The Explosive Child, that one is by Dr. Ross Greene, and he has a few books. One is Lost at School. That's really meant for teachers. Then one that is for typical developing kids called Raising Human Beings, which is also wonderful and teaches that same method, but from a perspective of maybe kids who aren't quite so challenging.

**Jen Riday:** Laura, these books are awesome. Also, you have a respectful parenting course coming out. Tell us about that.

**Laura Froyen:** It's Called Respectful Parenting 101, and it's an introduction to this relationship-based way of being with our kids, and how you can set limits. It helps you figure out which limits you need to set, and how to hold them with empathy and respect so that you can help your child, and you have the relationship that you're wanting with them.

So, you can let go of yelling or harsh punishments, let go of reward charts and sticker charts because all of those things will go by the wayside, and it'll be you and your child working together. You'll get to know yourself and your child on this deeper level that's really satisfying.

**Jen Riday:** That sounds heavenly. Connection is just something I'm so interested in lately, but I wouldn't say I connect with my kids as deeply as I want. So, it sounds great. That's all online, your course?

**Laura Froyen:** Yeah, that'll be online.

**Jen Riday:** You mentioned a couple of blog posts and your respectable parenting course. We will put links to all of those in the show notes at [jenriday.com/210](http://jenriday.com/210). All right. So, Laura, one last thing. You are going to be at the next Vibrant Happy Women Retreat leading a workshop and a Q&A on parenting.

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So, everyone, if you want to meet Laura in person and ask her your specific question, you should totally come to the retreat. You can sign up at [jenriday.com/retreat](http://jenriday.com/retreat). I can't wait to hear you, and gosh, I would be tempted to sit there and ask you all my questions, but I'll step back and let everyone else ask their questions. You're so amazing. I appreciate you once again being on the show today, Laura.

**Laura Froyen:** Oh, thanks for having me.

**Jen Riday:** Oh, my goodness. I love Laura. I don't know if you can tell that, but I just want to go listen to what she has to say. She has a talent, a superpower, for this. She remembers all of the research. She is really in tune with how to apply it, and that combination of knowing the research and knowing how to apply it is actually rare, but also to do it in such a warm and authentic way. I just love her.

So, if you want to learn more about Laura, you can follow her at [laurafroyen.com](http://laurafroyen.com), of course. You can follow her on Facebook as well. She has her Wednesdays With Laura. She does a lunch hour every Wednesday where she'll answer your questions. What a resource. Also, of course, if you want to meet her in person, come to the Vibrant Happy Women Retreat. She's going to be leading her workshop. I'm super excited about that. [Jenriday.com/retreat](http://Jenriday.com/retreat) is where you can get your tickets.

Well, thank you so much for being here, my friends. Those of you who are in the Vibrant Happy Women Club, we will be talking about applying everything Dr. Laura talked about, how to make this a reality in our lives. This is our focus for the next week, and you can find more information about this in your club workbook.

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Everyone, thank you so much for being here. I love you. I think you're amazing. Keep up your good work. Keep growing, and striving, and building those loving, connected relationships. Thank you for listening, and make it a vibrant and happy week. Take care.

If you enjoy this podcast, you have to check out the Vibrant Happy Women Club. It's my monthly group coaching program where we take all this material to the next level and to get you the results that will blow your mind. Join me in the Vibrant Happy Women Club at [Jenriday.com/join](http://Jenriday.com/join).