

221: Emotional Intelligence for Us and Our Kids



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With Your Host

Jen Riday

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You're listening to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast, episode number 221. We're talking about allowing ourselves to feel, both for ourselves and for our kids. Stay tuned.

Hi, I'm Jen Riday. 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.

Hey, my friends, my vibrant happy friends, welcome back to the *Vibrant Happy Women* podcast where we are talking about emotional intelligence for ourselves, and especially for our kids. A lot of moms have told me their kids are a little bit stressed out, and frustrated, and have some pent up energy. How do we as moms and parents help our kids manage all the emotions?

We spend a lot of time ourselves as adults, figuring out how we feel, how to manage the emotions of living through a pandemic. And maybe your stay at home orders are over, but it's still ongoing, there is still uncertainty. There is still some level of unknown, or fear-based thinking out there as we wear masks and look at death tolls.

I'm certain that most of you have had to learn a few coping strategies. Now, some of us cope with emotions that are uncomfortable through numbing behaviors like ice-cream, alcohol, chocolate, Netflix. Now, a healthier approach, although numbing is definitely valid at times, sometimes we just want to shut off our thoughts, I get that, no shame in that. I hope you have allowed yourself the space to feel it, to heal it.

When I grew up, we didn't talk a lot about emotions, I grew up on a farm, my parents are of German and Danish descent. I wouldn't say they're the most touchy feely people. They are hardworking and they're fun and they're

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honest, lots of good things, but we didn't talk a lot about emotions. Thinking back, I was thinking, gosh, the most I remember talking about emotions would be to discuss words like sad, mad and happy, it didn't go really very deep.

And if you think about all the different feeling words that exist out there, and they're all very nuanced, let me read some. You can go so much deeper than sad, mad and happy, let me give examples. We have in the joyful category, I'm feeling sexy, playful, creative, extravagant, stimulating, fascinating, daring, delightful, playful.

What about in the peaceful category? I'm feeling relaxed, serene, thankful, trusting, loving, intimate, thoughtful, content.

And then the mad category, I'm feeling furious, selfish, jealous, frustrated, angry, hostile, hurt, hateful, critical.

It's so amazing to think of the dozens, even hundreds of words you could use to describe these nuances of feeling. So then if that's true, why do we spend so much time avoiding understanding our feelings? And even more so, why aren't we as parents spending more time teaching our kids to understand what they're feeling and to be able to understand how it feels in their bodies?

A couple of my kids, my two youngest, I can tell are feeling a bit of frustration or pent up energy. And we've talked about it a little bit, we need to keep going deeper. I know this because they've been picking at their skin. They must feel a little bit bored, they need a little more stimulation. And so we've talked about not picking, we're doing more fun things to compensate. But we also in the process, need to continue to talk about how they're feeling.

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So throughout the next few weeks on the podcast, and in the Vibrant Happy Women Club, for those of you who want to go deeper, and become masters of helping kids manage emotions. We are talking about emotions, allowing our kids to think and feel and believe what feels true to them.

Now, think back to when you were a child, did your parents allow you to think, and feel, and believe the things that felt true to you? Or did they continuously try to improve you and teach you their values, and tell you what's right, and tell you what you should be doing, what you should be doing better, what you should be doing differently? Now, no judgment, every parent does the best they can, each of us listening, we're doing the best we can, I know that to be true. The thing is, if we know better we will do better.

So over the next few weeks on the podcast I'm going to be talking with guests about emotions, and helping kids to manage those emotions. So, allowing emotions, let's start with ourselves. What are you feeling right now? You're like, "Jen, where is that word list again?" I know, it's really handy, I happen to have one in front of me, I use it all the time.

Maybe you're feeling irritated, you're driving your car, some crazy person just cut you off, you're feeling irritated. So that could be the end of it, you labeled it, well done. Let's go deeper, I call this feel it to heal it. Where do you feel irritation in your body? Maybe you feel it clenched in your fist, maybe you feel your throat tight. Maybe your eyebrows are down with a little bit of irritation in them. Wherever you feel it, it's different for everyone. But the more aware you are of how each emotion feels in your body, the quicker you can identify it, the quicker you can let it go.

So let's go deeper, you're feeling it in your hands, your throat, your eyebrows, irritation. If that emotion of irritation had a color, what would it be? Black you say. If that emotion of irritation had a texture, what would that be? Steel wool. These are coming to my head, whatever's coming to

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yours is true too. If that emotion of irritation were a weather, like sun, rain, sleet, what weather would it be? Tornados, what? Oh my goodness. You see how this works?

We spend a little time feeling the nuances of irritation, and as you do that, giving it its due attention, will begin to pass and move on. Now, you're thinking, what's the point, we have these emotions, some feel good, some feel bad, that's true, life is 50/50.

We have good, we have bad, we have happy emotions, we have less happy emotions, positive and negative, that's normal. But if we resist the negative emotions, they can sometimes get stuck and cause us to be reactive with our kids, impatient with our spouse, frustrated with who knows what, because we didn't take the time to process.

So thinking about your children, if they're feeling annoyed, frustrated, short tempered. Maybe this is the perfect time to boost both yours and their emotional intelligence, to talk about these emotions, to know what to label them as, to understand where we feel them and how those emotions feel at the nuanced level. This is super important because when we can label and identify these emotions in our bodies they pass more quickly. And we don't have as much pain, resisting them.

I want to talk a little bit about the emotion of shame now. Shame is essentially a thought or an emotion of feeling less than, not good enough, not as good as another person, it's an emotion of being essentially fundamentally flawed. Isn't that interesting? How many of you listening, have felt shame before? I'm guessing all of you.

How many of you now could believe the thought that you are fundamentally flawed, that you're inadequate? And what feeling follows that thought? Icky, right? Shame is a really icky low vibration emotion, it's uncomfortable. Shame can keep us stuck, it can cause us to crawl into the fetal position

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and lie in our bed and not move, because why bother if we're fundamentally flawed?

Shame can cause us to eat half a gallon of ice-cream. Shame can cause us to lash out. But notice this, shame, just like any other emotion starts with a thought. The thought, I'm not good enough, I suck, I can't do this. Thoughts like that generate feelings of shame.

So how do we move out of shame? We allow ourselves to feel it for a moment, of course, but then we back up and say, "What am I thinking that's causing this feeling?" And we figure out a new thought that would help us to feel better, instead of thinking, I suck, I can't do this, which you know is going to ultimately lead you to get in bed and stay there all day, or be mean to your spouse or kids, or whatever.

Then you up-level that thought just a little bit and think, well, I am really good at sewing, you already know that's true. Or, well, I did work out today or, well, I could read a book. Any of those thoughts generate a better feeling than I suck, I can't do this. You see how that works?

You can become super emotionally intelligent as you create a sacred space for yourself to feel your feelings in the nuanced level, and to understand the thoughts that generate those feelings. But what's more beautiful is to think about doing this as a parent. Think of all the times as a child or a teen when you felt sad, mad, frustrated, annoyed, irritated, unsure, uncertain, disgusted, anxious, helpless, confused, rejected, all of the feelings we all feel at some time in our lives.

Did you have the tools that you have now or that you're learning now to feel those feelings and move through? And what's more, how did your parents react when you were displaying behaviors that matched those feelings? Maybe when you were irritated or confused, you were a little jerk. We all did it, right? Maybe you sulked and your parents would say, "You should

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not do that, you should get up and do something else, you should help me with the dishwasher, you should go outside and mow the lawn. You should get a job, you should not do this, you should raise your grades.”

So instead of helping us understand these feelings, understand our thinking that was causing the feelings. Sometimes our parents are well intentioned parents, and we do it too, ended up piling even more stress on top of us through the form of shoulds.

Now, let me talk about shoulds for a minute, think again about yourself. I'm going to say some statements, and I want you to identify how you feel when I say these. You should be at your natural weight. You should not yell. You should not fight with your spouse. You should go help others. You should have plenty of money in your bank account. You should get good grades. You should be kind always. I could keep going. Do you feel the heaviness that comes on us when we're talking about shoulds?

Now, next question, how are you shoulding on your kids? This one's so uncomfortable, isn't it? How are you shoulding – shoulding, careful, how are you shoulding on your kids? We all do it. Now, take a breath, don't descend into shame, “I suck, I can't do this.” No, we're not going there. You're going to think instead, “Oh cool, Jen's teaching me something, I'm going to do better,” a way better thought, it's going to generate a way better feeling.

So throughout the next few weeks we're going to be talking about various components of emotions and understanding kids' emotions. And if you want to go really deep, and essentially become skilled in coaching your own kids through their emotions. And becoming a powerful listener for your kids, and having a tool belt full of coping tools that will help them with depression, and anxiety, anger, fear, stress. Then you'll definitely want to be with us in the Vibrant Happy Women Club for the month of June.

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We are going really deep, we're going to be talking about how to hold space. I'm going to talk about that in a moment. How to coach kids, how to allow them to think, feel, and believe, and experience what they want, to be true to themselves. By the way, that is actually what it means to show unconditional love, to allow kids to think, feel, believe what is true to them.

We're going to be talking about values, creating that safe emotional space for your kids, powerful listening, how to do mirroring and to use eye contact, how to restate and validate your kids. And then coping tools for anxiety, depression, anger, fear and stress, we're going to learn about the super hug. And something I learned when my kids read the Anasazi Wilderness Program, we're going to talk about the heart at peace model. And I'm not going to tell you more, it's really, really good.

How to build your influence with your kids by giving them the safe emotional space, this has been huge for me with my teenagers, I can't even tell you. You guys, my 19 year old he still has his mental health struggles, but he is making choices that make them so much easier to handle, he calls me often. I have positive influence in his life because I learned so many of these tools, and I want the same for you.

So that is everything we're going to be learning in the club throughout the month of June. If you want to go deep and you want to become essentially your child's, or your children's emotional coach, come and join us, it's good stuff, jenriday.com/join.

Now, I said I would talk a little bit about holding space. Holding space, the best way I can describe this is imagine you're in an attic full of books, and clothes, and old toys, and the box of who knows what that is, but it has a funky smell, tons of Rubbermaids and totes and cardboard boxes full of stuff.

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But right in the middle of that space is an empty Rubbermaid container, it's clear, and there's no lid, it's just the strangest thing, an empty Rubbermaid container in this space. You want to kind of go to it, you gravitate towards that empty Rubbermaid. Wow, it's so unique and special. Well, that is essentially what you do for a child or another person, or even yourself when you hold space. All the thoughts, all the clutter, all the emotions, all the things going through our brains and through our feelings, they can be overwhelming, so many thoughts, so many feelings.

But you as a parent can go to your child and look them in the eye and create a sacred and safe emotional space, sometimes throughout the day, throughout the week. Where you find out through powerful questions and powerful listening, and with an energy of love, "How are you feeling?" And you have the skills to listen, and restate, and validate, and allow them to think, feel and believe what is true for them.

Imagine having that same experience as a child, to have an adult in your life give you that sacred safe space to feel your emotions, to think, feel and believe what is true for you without judgment, without shoulds. You can feel how sacred and special that is, and I know, we all want to give our children that gift, we even need to give ourselves that gift.

So all you need to do is learn how it's done, and it's not hard. And if you'd like to join us, we're going to do that in the club all month, I would love to have you with us. One more time, jenriday.com/join.

Now one last thought about unconditional love. Unconditional love, what is it? Well, I think the only being on the planet that's really, really good at it is dogs. Dogs love unconditionally. They are happy to see you, they love to be in your presence, and they don't expect anything from you, there are no shoulds attached usually, unless they want you to throw the ball around, but you get what I'm saying, they love unconditionally.

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Now, on the flipside, we as pet owners generally tend to love our pets unconditionally, most of the time. There might be moments when we're frustrated, but we don't expect them to do anything or change their thoughts, or feelings, or beliefs, we just love them because they exist.

Unconditional love is the act of choosing to feel love for another person independent of their thoughts, feelings, beliefs or behavior. So if you think unconditional love sounds amazing to receive, I can tell you, it's even more amazing to give it. And a hint for this, we can't really feel unconditional love if we feel resentment. Resentment comes to us when we think people should think, feel or believe or act differently than they do. We resent them when they're not following our values, our shoulds, what we think they should do, and we do this all the time with our kids.

But think, if you were able to believe the thought, my kids should think and feel and believe whatever they want and be true to themselves. I feel a sense of relief with that, relief at not having the pressure, not having the should, not having to push my values on them, but trusting them to discover it for themselves, kids are going to do it anyway.

But if we as parents can step back into this place of unconditional love, where we ditch all of those shoulds and that pressure. And build this sacred beautiful space to allow our kids to think, and feel, and believe what's true for them to express those thoughts and feelings, the world and our families become so much more beautiful. And that's what I want for you.

So lots of food for thought in this episode, thank you so much for listening. And if you want to go deeper with us, you're definitely going to want to be with us in the Vibrant Happy Women Club for June. I am mailing out workbooks with all of the themes I talked about, holding space, coaching your kids, unconditional love, creating a safe space, powerful listening, coping strategies, the super hug, heart at peace. And you can learn all that

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with us, I would love to have you there. One more time, jenriday.com/join. It is the place to be if you want to help your kids manage their emotions.

Alright my friends, you're amazing. I want to say that I love you unconditionally, you're amazing, you don't need to change anything. I just want you to change what you want to change, so you can feel the way you want to feel, that's why I'm here. I love you all. I'll see you again next time, until then, 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.