

254. When Your Kids Don't Listen



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Jen Riday

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254. When Your Kids Don't Listen

You're listening to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast, episode number 254. I'm talking about what you can do when your kids don't listen. 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 there my friends, Jen here and I want to talk to you today about what to do when your kids are driving you bonkers. Now, you're not alone, know this, I have received so many messages from parents who are flabbergasted, frustrated, feeling resentful about how their kids seems to be behaving. One woman said, "Jen, I feel like my kids are fighting all the time, constant meltdowns, my husband gets mad that I'm mad at them. I just want to be in alignment. I want to come from love but there are too many bad moments happening right now. I don't know what to do."

So in this quick episode I'm going to give you five tips, one for each finger on your hand, to help you. So the first tip is, have you given yourself the space that you need and the space that you deserve, the space that helps you to be emotionally healthy? And you might be saying, "Jen, what space, there is no space, I'm virtually schooling, I am stuck at home, how do I get space?" Well, I will admit, I too would like a little more space. I am almost salivating at the thought of the Vibrant Happy Women retreat in 2022.

Yes, I haven't announced that yet, you heard me right, the 2021 retreat has been moved, rescheduled to 2022. And it seems so far away, I can't even wait. By the way, you can sign up, it's a year away, it should be safe. You can sign up at jenriday.com/retreat. I would love to see there. I can't even wait. Nobody can wait. Well, anyway without a thing like the retreat, maybe if there's no space to go to lunch with your friends, all your normal ways to retreat from your life and rejuvenate, seem to be missing.

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday

254. When Your Kids Don't Listen

So how can you recreate the same feeling at home? Or how can you recreate the same feeling safely? If you live in a warm climate maybe you can go on a nature hike, a long one, alone or with a friend. If you're like me and in the middle of a Wisconsin winter, well, we have to get ultra creative, I love baths. I love long meditations. I love the virtual yoga app called Down Dog. I can turn that on for any length of time. It has the best music. We can create these child free spaces where we can regroup and recharge, it's totally possible.

So that is step one, holding up your thumb, step one, one step for each finger on your hand. Step one with your thumb is creating space for your own emotional health. Have you done it? A little bit every day, if not, go schedule it.

Okay, step number two, this is an important one and it's a tip from my friend, Dr. Laura Froyen from The Balanced Parenting podcast. And she like I do has a degree in human development and family studies. She has a specialization however in child development and in play therapy, she has the best tips. If you haven't followed her already, go do so. The Balanced Parenting podcast, go subscribe, she's awesome.

Well, she recorded a sound bite that I wanted you to hear. And this sound bite comes back to the idea of the five to one ratio of positive to negative. You might have heard of it before from Dr. John Gottman. This ratio has been shown to lead to the best outcomes in the parent child relationship, not only the parent child relationship but any relationship.

So I'll let you listen and before I play this sound bite, I want you to think about this, we know we need a five to one positive to negative ratio. The thing I love about Laura's sound bite is she points out these positive interactions are easier than you think. I should add that I asked Laura this question privately and she answered me while she was eating her lunch. But keeping it real and I love that she shared it in such an authentic way.

254. When Your Kids Don't Listen

Dr. Laura Froyen: The first thing that hopped to my mind and I'm so sorry I'm just getting to this now and I'm also eating, so it's probably gross for you to listen to. The very first thing I would have a parent do in that scenario is to do a self-assessment where they are keeping track of how many corrections versus how many connections they have in their day-to-day lives with their kids. So just take one day, put one post-it note on the fridge for any time you tell your kid what to do.

You get to set a limit; you hold a boundary any time you give them a correction or tell them to stop doing something. And so you've got one post-it for those. And then you put one post-it for every time you connect, every little touch of the head, every little snuggle up and read, every little, "Sure, I'll help you cut your food", or, "Yeah, I'm happy to get you a glass of water." Any time you have little moments of connection, snuggles, I love you's, eye contact across the room with a loving smile, any of those.

And you do the self-assessment for one day and you just take a look, it's just a little snapshot and the ratio that research shows that healthy families have is a five to one ratio, five positive interactions for every one negative interaction. So that self-assessment can be one of the most powerful and eye-opening things you can do for your family. And then the next day you go into the day with the mindset that just for today, not for always, but just for today you are going to make sure that your ratio is as close to five to one as possible to your kids.

You can either tell your kids that this is your goal, and be over about it really that – and it's not forever, it's not for always but it's just for one day you're going to really focus on that five to one ratio and just see what happens.

That's totally doable, the post-it notes on the fridge and just see what happens with curiosity and openness, kind of like a scientist. I wonder what happens. I think the fact is since we've been stretched to capacity, a lot of us women, moms are kind of a little bit withdrawn because we are

254. When Your Kids Don't Listen

expending so much energy trying to regulate against this very abnormal year around us. Our brains are always processing, lots of emotional processing going on that we might feel like we have a little bit less to give to our kids.

So this is an interesting way to step back and see how are we doing in terms of the connection piece versus the kind of a negative piece, the controlling piece. Now, I want you to have grace here. You might see that your ratio is off, mine certainly is. I have not been at the five to one ratio.

But the cool thing is if you find that you're not it does give you an explanation or a strategy for how you can help your kids start to reregulate because when our kids aren't getting this five to one positive to negative ratio they can feel out of balance. They can feel like their emotional capacity is stretched beyond their capability. Because kids haven't learned full emotional regulation yet, depending on their age group, we as parents are there to scaffold and provide structure for them to learn these processes. To help them wire neural connections to handle various situations.

So just take a deep breath, give yourself grace and try it out, try engaging in a little more connection, give them that interesting loving look across the room. Walk by and give them a pat on the back. Say, "Sure honey, I'd love to log you in", or, "I love you." They're so easy to say, dancing with them, anything that is connection counts as a positive, so five to one ratio. Your thumb was holding space for yourself, creating space for your emotional health, number two, five to one connection to negative ratio.

Now, number three, this one's some work, some mental work, grab a sheet of paper. That was quite the scary preface, this one is some work. What we're going to do here is examine your expectations and your triggers. Step three; examine your expectations and your triggers. Write, and write, and write, what do you think your kids should be doing? They should be able to get to their virtual class on time. That's one I've been thinking, but

254. When Your Kids Don't Listen

it's not the reality and it's causing problems. So I'm going to explain how I deal with my expectation in a moment.

Your kids should not be fighting. Your kids should not be having meltdowns. Your husband should not be mad at you when you're mad. Listen to all the shoulds going on in your mind and get them onto paper. What are you expecting? What do you believe should be happening in regards to your kids? Get it out on the paper. Similarly with the triggers, what are the situations that are upsetting you the most right now?

I'll share mine. My daughter is, I'm not even going to share her – well, I'll share her grade but I won't say her name. My fifth grader I believe should be able to get to her virtual classes on time. She is genuinely struggling. She has reasons like, "I was in the garage with the cats. I was emailing my friends." So because I have felt like you probably, stretched to capacity this year with five virtually schooling kids and all the things I need to process emotionally that I've never experienced in my life, and you know what I'm saying.

I probably haven't set up the most win, win situation. If I were completely on my game I would have set a timer for my daughter instead of asking her to set the timer. Because the timer hasn't been happening, I would be present to make sure she's there at the classes etc, etc, etc. However, I have had the thought that she as a fifth grader should be able to manage it. That thought has triggered an emotional response, namely that I'm frustrated because I have that belief she should be able to be in class on time.

It's very triggering when I get another email from the teacher again that she wasn't there, or that she missed half of it, or that she left in the middle and never came back. And so I need to do my work. After you've written all these shoulds and these triggers down, look at them and put them into what is known as a thought table.

254. When Your Kids Don't Listen

We talk about thought tables a lot in the Vibrant Happy Women Club. We master them there but just to give you a sense of what it is. The idea is that there are facts such as my daughter missed class again virtually. It's a fact, neutral and provable in a court of law. We have thoughts about it, she should be able to be in class, that's a thought I've had without – now I need to change that thought apparently. When I think that thought I feel frustrated and triggered.

When I'm frustrated and triggered what do I do? I probably have more than one negative interaction with her. What is the result? We have a more stressed out and less close relationship, my daughter and I. Not the result I'm looking for. So with thought tables you recognize that your thoughts cause your frustration, your expectations cause that resentment. So I'm going to give you a strategy of what to do to help the situation, not just changing your thoughts, but how we're going to handle it with a boundary as well. But let's analyze the thoughts first.

After we've analyzed our expectations and triggers, we've seen them on the paper, we look at the thoughts we're thinking and recognize the results we're experiencing with our emotions and with our relationships with our kids, come from our thoughts about what is happening. Maybe you're thinking my kid shouldn't melt down. Maybe you're thinking my husband should be more supportive and not be mad at me when I'm mad.

Whenever we think thoughts that are not the reality we just get stuck in a moat of wishing things would change, feeling resentful and frustrated that things aren't different. The fact is my daughter is missing her virtual classes more often than her teachers or I would like. My thought, she should be there, it feels really true. All of society would have me believe that. But is there a way I can change that thought to give me a different emotional response that doesn't feel as frustrated or triggered?

My belief that my daughter should be able to attend class by herself is probably not realistic. So once I've gotten clear on my expectations and

254. When Your Kids Don't Listen

triggers we're going to go to step four, this is where we restructure the rules and the boundaries. So let me recap all the steps now. Number one, create space for your emotional health. Number two, five to one connection to negative ratio, five to one positive to negative ratio. Number three, analyze your expectations and triggers.

And then number four, reassess or reanalyze the rules and the boundaries. Okay, so in step three I recognized that my daughter is not attending her class virtually in the way the teacher and I would like. I often go work in my office space so I can get my podcast recorded like I'm doing now. And I have hoped that she would be able to take that responsibility for herself but given her mind, her capabilities, her skill set, that is not becoming a reality.

So here's what you do. You sit down with your kids if they can talk and have a discussion. "What do you think we could do to help you or support you in being able to attend your class?" Or if your kids are melting down or fighting, "What do you think our family, all of us can do to help you fight less or be happier more often, what would help here?" And have a discussion and hear what they have to say. A lot of parents like to approach rules and boundaries from a top down approach. I was raised with the same way.

I am slowly learning with experience how to let my kids be a part of that discussion and to take ownership of the behavior, because after all we want our kids to learn to self-evaluate how they're doing with things. So rather than me saying, "You were late at class again. Oh my goodness, here's a consequence", which would have been my old approach. I'll say, "How did it go today? Were you able to attend all of your class?" Well, I would also double check with the teacher, not just always taking her at her word.

"Well, I noticed the teacher said you stepped away for 10 minutes in the middle. You missed an important part about how to calculate the area of a triangle. So what do you think would have helped you to stay in class the whole time?" And then hear what she has to say. "How could we measure

254. When Your Kids Don't Listen

and create a reward? Or how can we make this fun for you so it would be easier to stay in class?" And then hear her idea. Having your kids get involved in this process and acknowledging to them that you're human and that you want her to succeed.

And it's been really hard for you to see this situation happening with the fighting, or the meltdowns, or too much screen time, or not attending classes like the issue I'm struggling with. Acknowledge that you're human, how you felt about it and how are we going to approach this as a team. I used to play high school basketball and the mentality of the team is really cool and we learn it well there. No one is responsible for a loss, we are all responsible to cheer each other on and say, "You've got this, shake it off. We can do it. Way to go, you've got this."

And what would it look like to do the same thing when you're trying to solve these problems with your kids to help them succeed, to help there be peace in your home, to help people feel happy and content and emotionally safe, same mentality. You don't need to be the dictator, you just need to be a member of the team and show the ultimate respect to your kids, trusting that together as a team you can come up with a process.

So, step one, create space for your own emotional health, quality self-care. Step two, five to one positive to negative ratio. Make sure you're having five beautiful connection moments for every time you need to correct. Then number three, write down your expectations and your triggers, what's really bothering you? Step four, come together as a team and analyze what you could do differently.

Now, we come to step five. This is the one where it helps things to stick long term. Set an alarm, a recurring calendar item, whatever you use to remind yourself to do something daily to check-in and to assess. This step is so important. We all know the importance of budgeting for example. It's a check-in of our finances. We know the importance of kind of measuring how we're doing with our health, that's why we go to the doctor every year.

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday

254. When Your Kids Don't Listen

These check-ins, these times to assess and measure help us to keep moving forward.

So maybe once a day you check-in and have a positive conversation, a connection moment to praise them for how they're improving. Maybe once a week you have a bigger assessment, or once a month, depending on what the situation is and say, "Hey, here's what I've noticed, I noticed you've been in class more. I only had one email from your teacher over the past two weeks, what an improvement. What do you think, honey, is helping this to go better?"

Not only are you helping the situation to improve but you're teaching your child how to self-regulate and to self-evaluate so they can start to own the situation and learn how to keep improving things for themselves going forward.

So how do you feel about these five steps? To recap, one, create space for yourself. Number two, five to one connection to correction ratio, five to one connection to correction ratio. Number three, write down your expectations and your triggers. Look at them. Number four, meet together and as a team create some structure or rules and self-evaluation for the child to improve. Number five, consistently reassess and evaluate how you're doing and moving forward, teaching your child this important self-evaluation skill.

Now, I hope that's helpful. Now, if this feels overwhelming, take a deep breath and really take care of yourself, come back to the first two steps if you must, if you want. Totally you have permission to just do two of these steps. Create space for yourself so you can manage your own emotions well.

Number two, analyze your connection to correction ratio, five connections, including the eye gaze and the loving comment and the praise, or the help, or the support to the corrections. Stop fighting, stop doing that, unload your

254. When Your Kids Don't Listen

dishwasher, go back online, those are corrections, five, connections to one correction. I love these strategies I want to hear how they go for you. So send me an email with your result, what you discover at support@jenriday.com. Maybe I'll share your idea on the air. I can keep it anonymous so you don't have to share your name if you don't want to.

Here's what I know, mama, friends, you're doing hard things, you can do hard things and you're rocking this. And this doesn't even have to be hard. This could be the springboard for an entirely better relationship with your child. What if you just spent five minutes here, five minutes there reconnecting with your child and you notice a huge reduction in the behavior you're not wanting, a decrease in the fighting, a decrease in the meltdowns, everything starts to feel more solid.

In the same way you need to hold space for yourself, this five to one connection to correction ratio is huge, not just with your kids, but with your spouse, even in the way you talk to yourself. It can make all the difference so try it out. You've got this, I'm holding space for you and I will see you again soon. Until then take care my friends.

Hey, everyone I wanted to pop back in here, I thought of something else. You know I mentioned in step one that we need to hold space for ourselves. And this may not be the year for the Vibrant Happy Women retreat as much as I wish it were. I would love that. Well, I do have something for you. We have set up a Vibrant Happy Women online retreat, the theme, Get Your Sparkle Back. Maybe this is exactly what you need to get your emotional juice back, to feel more emotionally balanced, and vibrant, and happy.

We have set up three days' worth of fun events, including a soul collage class, it's a fun, fun way to do a vision board, it's different. I'll give you a hint. We have set up yoga and meditation. We have set up a high vibe home decorating class. We have an EFT tapping class. I'm going to be presenting Dr. Laura Froyen who I shared that audio clip on this episode.

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday

254. When Your Kids Don't Listen

She's going to be presenting on how to let go of shame in your parenting. My friend, Janna Denton Howes is going to be speaking on having more fun in the bedroom.

My friend, Shazia Imam is going to be speaking on how we can focus on fun and pleasure in 2021, something we all need so much. So this is all set up, it's happening the first weekend of February and I'm super excited. I recommend if you're thinking about attending that you take this to the next level and get yourself a hotel room. My friend, Beth from Michigan, hi Beth, she's going to get herself a massage. Doesn't it sound heavenly? I said, "Beth, I need someone to host a retreat like this that I can attend."

But anyway it's going to be super fun, you're cordially invited, we all need this, there is a signup at jenriday.com/online-retreat. So there you go. Our 2021 retreat has been made virtual. Now, hot tip, for those of you who are signed up for the 2022 in person Florida retreat, you get free access to the 2021 online retreat. I'll repeat that, if you're going to the 2022 in person retreat in Florida, you'll get free access to the 2021 online retreat. You can sign up for the in person retreat, it's all on my website, I'll just leave it there.

Go to jenriday.com/events, you can click on both, there you go. I would love to see you at the online retreat, again, first weekend in February. Let's go get our emotional sparkle back. We've got this. Let's do this. It's going to be fun. I even have a DJ coming. It's going to be amazing. A Zoom DJ, I know, who knew? Thanks Kristen, shout out to Kristen the Zoom DJ. Alright my friends, again, just go check out the information, jenriday.com/events.

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.