

273: How to Be a Guilt-Free Mom (with JoAnn Crohn)



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Jen Riday

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273: How to Be a Guilt-Free Mom (with JoAnn Crohn)

You're listening to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast, episode number 273. I'm talking with JoAnn Crohn about how to be a guilt-free mom. 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 friends, welcome to Vibrant Happy Women. We're talking about guilt today. I want to ask you a question, when was the last time you felt guilty about something? About how you parent, about how you interacted with something, about what you did or didn't do today, about your exercise, about your morning routine. You get the idea. We are guilt-laden people, we are a guilt-laden society.

The thing is, guilt doesn't feel very good. When I feel guilty, I have found I am less likely to take action, I am more likely to do the wrong things and get stuck in behaviors that don't give me the results I want in my life. So I say get rid of the guilt. It doesn't help. Instead, strive to improve, strive to live a life you want, and just strive to be your best self. It just feels so much better.

Well, my guest today, JoAnn Crohn, is going to talk about guilt-free mothering. This is essential because our entire society, at least in the past, has been structured around getting people to behave based on shame and guilt and rewards and punishment. But current research shows that this method is much, much, much, much less effective than other strategies.

So what are those other strategies? We're going to talk about those today in this episode. I'm super excited. So let's go ahead and jump in.

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Jen: Everyone, I'm talking to JoAnn Crohn today. She's a parenting educator who helps moms feel confident in everything from raising empowered, self-sufficient kids, to dropping the anxiety and guilt out of modern parenthood.

JoAnn is a former elementary school teacher with a master's degree in curriculum and instruction. And she has created self-paced digital courses for kids and parents that help them handle big emotions, create a morning routine, and conquer the homework drama. Oh, that's good. JoAnn is also an author, speaker, host of the No Guilt Mom podcast, and founder of noguilmom.com. Welcome to Vibrant Happy Women, JoAnn.

JoAnn: Thank you. I'm so excited to be here.

Jen: I'm excited to have you. We're all about moms not feeling guilty here.

JoAnn: Oh, my goodness. And it's like so much guilt that we carry around on ourselves, we put on ourselves. And so much like work and responsibility, and it's overwhelming.

Jen: Mm-hmm, it is. And where do you think all that guilt is coming from? And what do we do about it?

JoAnn: So a lot of the guilt I see is parents are afraid that they're going to mess up their kids in some way. They're afraid that either their actions in some way, like we like to refer like how all this fear based stuff is, you know, your kid isn't doing their homework at night. And then like, oh my gosh, if they're not doing their homework in seventh grade, then what about when they get to high school? And then they'll flunk out of high school, they'll never go to college. And then they're going to live in a van down by the river.

Jen: I've been there on that exact thought train. That is hilarious.

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JoAnn: And that's kind of like the fear process that we go through as moms. And so we put a lot of responsibility on ourselves to always to know the answer, or to do what's best for our kids. And then, on the other hand, then we run into this like counterpoint like, oh my gosh, they should just be kids. And let me just take care of these things for them right now. Let me like not have them stress so much.

So we're getting it from all angles, all this guilt.

Jen: Yeah, for sure. And then our parents come and visit, like mine are about to do soon. And we put it on ourselves imagining what they're thinking about our parenting.

JoAnn: Do you do that? Do you like put it on yourself with your parents?

Jen: I don't know. No, I mean they do comment, but I should ignore them. I shouldn't care, right?

JoAnn: I'm always told, so it's so interesting, like I love hearing about people's parents and how it affects like their parenting. Because a lot of what we do in parenting, like we're just taking from how we were raised. But like with me, my mom comes, and I get the, "Oh, you're such a better mom than I was." So I get it from that angle.

Jen: That's nice. So you have to reassure her that she was a good mom.

JoAnn: Yes. Yes, I constantly reassure her that she is a good mom.

Jen: I get if these were my kids I would blank.

JoAnn: No, no you don't.

Jen: I'm like, "Well, good thing they're not your kids."

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JoAnn: Exactly.

Jen: It's so funny. Love you mom if you're listening.

Okay, anyway, so tell us more, you know, you have the interesting teacher's perspective on kids. And what do you think parents are missing when they come in, they're so nervous about maybe they're not doing it right, their kids aren't doing well enough. And they're creating all of this guilt and shame and stress around how their kids are going to turn out. What would you say, as a teacher, a former teacher?

JoAnn: So it's so interesting because I've been out of the classroom for seven years. I started my business seven years ago. And when I was in the classroom, I came from this kind of like teacher perspective that parents like take care of things at home, teachers take care of the things in the classroom.

And I admit, like fully admit that when I saw kids who didn't do their homework in class, I would give parents like the stereotypical, "Oh, set up a quiet area of the room and duh, duh, duh." And this is the advice that parents are getting.

And I wish that I could go back to when I was a teacher and tell parents something completely different. Because it's really not about getting kids to do all the things. It's about connecting emotionally with kids, supporting them in their strong feelings, and helping them really problem solve themselves out of situations.

So I think as parents, like parents think it's all on them. Like they have to know the right course of action, they have to know the right consequence to make sure their kid learns from their mistakes and won't repeat the behavior.

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But that's not it at all. Parents just need to bring kids in to the problem solving process and to acknowledge kids' strong feelings. And to help them through those feelings, rather than having all the answers.

Jen: Yeah, I like that. It's like creating a space for the child to learn, and discover, and grow, and make mistakes.

JoAnn: Exactly. And mistakes are so good. They're so good to make.

Jen: And ditching the idea that there's a perfect way or there's this perfect path. That's so silly. And I sure hope we eventually let go of this idea of the pipeline to the Ivy League schools because it's so bad.

JoAnn: It is so bad, it's so bad. It's interesting with the whole worry about college because I feel like I was one of those kids who I always knew I was going to a state school because my parents said right away that we're not paying for anything other than like a state school. And oh, by the way, you need like a tuition or a scholarship to go there as well.

So I was always under that assumption that that's what like the rest of the world did. So when I became a parent, and I started hearing all of this like Ivy League stress it was so foreign to me.

Jen: Yeah. What do you think is going to change in parenting, pre-pandemic to the post pandemic world? Any ideas that you've kind of garnered?

JoAnn: I don't know what might be changing. I do know a lot of things have come out though in the pandemic. Specifically the workload that moms take in the house, and how much is put on moms when like the original routine kind of goes out the window. How much moms have taken on schooling, how many moms have stepped back from their careers to make sure that their kids have exactly what they need.

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And so I think that during the pandemic, that was really amplified that we have all of this pressure on women to kind of be everything. Like they're the ones who are supposed to make the meals, keep the house clean, keep the kids okay, make sure the kids are schooled. And that's a lot.

Jen: Yes, it is.

JoAnn: That's a lot. My hope is that post pandemic, we start realizing that that exists whether there's a pandemic going on or not.

Jen: Yes. You know, mom's doing everything, that was really the main reason I started my podcast. The transition from trying to be and do it all to no more. I'm going to be happy no matter what, that was the transition. But I mean, I feel like there's another layer, which is women, and men, we should all get to do the things that fulfill us, that feel purpose filled and joyful, and ditch all those shoulds.

JoAnn: Yes.

Jen: So how does your work and your podcast help with that?

JoAnn: When I started the business I really thought of my own mom. And I mean, we were raised in a generation where our moms were supposed to be able to do it all. They went to work, and yet they were still expected to take care of the house and the kids and we saw that. Like that's what I saw growing up. And I think that our generation of parents is now trying to figure out another way to do things.

And my mom did everything and I felt I needed to do everything. And when I looked at my dad, it wasn't like my dad wasn't willing to do it, he was, but my mom carried this entire mental load. Like I remember him telling her like, "Just tell me what to do and I'll do it." And my mom's reply was like, "Why do I always have to tell you what to do?"

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And that's so clear growing up. I saw that in my own house, that I felt responsible for everyone in my house, so much so that I had no mental space to care for myself. And I think that's what a lot of moms are feeling. They have no mental space to even figure out what they like to do or figure out what personally fulfills them because they're carrying all of this like who needs what for school? What needs to be taken care of?

And so with No Guilt Mom and my podcast, my mission is to find this better way where it's a way that to give your kids the best is to give yourself the very best. And that means focusing on what you like to do. Like finding that if you don't have it already. Don't feel like you should be doing all the things. Like if you don't like playing certain games with your kids, and you're saying yes to them all the time because you feel like you should you feel as what a good mom has to do. You don't have to do that.

You can find things that personally fulfill you that you could like introduce your children to that show them how when you take care of yourself, you are a better person and you're a better parent. And so our podcast just reaffirms that message where the best mom is a happy mom. So you have to take care of you first. And then teaching kids to be self-sufficient and help out, that's second.

Jen: Isn't it true? Kids are so aware when their parents aren't happy, and they internalize a lot of that. So it is truly the greatest gift to be just happy. Mary Poppins, Maria, from the sound of music, I know, they're not real, but they're happy. And they weren't cooking all day. They were all about the fun, right?

JoAnn: They are. And it's so interesting though, like what we think we should do as parents. Like just a few months ago my husband called me out on something that I was kind of like shoulding myself through was bedtime. And my kids are, I mean, I have a 12 year old and a seven year old and I was still, what I like to do in the evenings, like my favorite thing is

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just to tuck myself in and to read. And I read for like an hour or so before bedtime.

Well, what was happening with my 12 year old who is staying up later and later because, you know, she's getting to be a teenager now and her sleep schedule is changing. I would get all comfortable in bed and then she would come in and she'd be like, "Okay, I'm ready, come cuddle." And I'm like, "Okay." And I would push myself to do it.

And I didn't realize it, but I was getting resentful about bedtime and I was being pushed through with like fear. I feared that if I didn't do bedtime with my kids that I would miss this like great emotional connection with them. And this time that they would like tell me all their secrets and all their thoughts and dreams. And it never happened like that at bedtime. But this is like, it was my fear.

And my husband was like, "If you don't like getting out of bed, just set the limit. Like tell her that 8:30 is bedtime and past that you're not going to tuck her in." And that was a hard thing for me to do as a mom, because the first time you tell your kids something like that they're really, really sad and pull out the tears.

But then as it goes on, like the next night was easier, and the next night was easier. And now like I climb into bed and I'm like, "I'm going to have my reading time. Like this is it." And my daughter comes and kisses me goodnight in my bed now.

Jen: Nice. Isn't that funny? So you set a boundary, she is shocked, "My mom has a boundary about this?" And she created all this meaning like, "Oh, how horrible." Maybe she did, I don't know.

JoAnn: Yeah.

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Jen: "She doesn't love me." But then she came around. Boundaries are like that. I wonder why we are so resistant to setting them.

JoAnn: Like the first time I actually stuck to the boundary, because there's a difference between setting a boundary and sticking to a boundary. Because when I told her I'm like, "Okay, it's 8:30." She's like, "Okay, I'll be a bed by 8:30." Well, the one night she was ready at 8:35 and I said no. It was awful. She was crying. She said she was scared to go to bed, like everything. But then it was better after sticking to it.

Jen: Yeah. And you know what helps me to set boundaries? I always repeat a little thought in my head which is, my ability to set boundaries now will become their ability to set boundaries later. They're going to thank me for teaching them this.

JoAnn: That's good.

Jen: You know?

JoAnn: Yes, yes.

Jen: Yeah.

JoAnn: I love that, I need to keep that in my mental repertoire.

Jen: So it's so funny, for your husband it's easy to just say no, you know?

JoAnn: Yeah.

Jen: And you mentioned with your parents your dad was totally ready and willing to help, but your mom, it sounds like she was not giving up control fully. What's your experience with talking to various moms or your own personal experience of perhaps a lot of this pressure? We think it's

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external, but we're putting it on ourselves. Or we're worried other women are going to judge us, you know?

JoAnn: Yeah.

Jen: Or other men. We have a story, I think, collectively that the patriarchy and men are making us do this. But I don't think that's true because in my experience 95 to 99% of the time, it's women feeling like other women are going to judge. Isn't that weird?

JoAnn: Yes. And I totally have something that happened the other week that relates to this. And my daughter, she's in dance and her dance class just entered pointe. And I knew nothing about pointe shoes or anything like that. This is totally new to me, so all of my education has come through YouTube and asking a lot of questions at the dance studio.

But when you get pointe shoes, the ribbons and the elastics aren't sewed on the shoe. Like dancers have to do that themselves so it fits on their foot. And for her first pair, so like we did them at home. And my husband was actually going to take care of it. He's a really great sewer, much better than me.

So he and my daughter were like sitting in front of YouTube and watching this tutorial on pointe shoes. And I was the one who'd gone to the like dance shoe store with her and gotten like they cut the elastic for me and they only gave me a little amount.

And so he was watching this video where you had to cut the elastic in four pieces. And I knowing full well that they didn't give me enough elastic for that. So he just cut it and my heart was like, "Uh, okay." Because you just feel like it's being done wrong and then she'll go to the dance class and everything will be sewed on wrong. And then it's like two hours' worth of work down the drain.

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And so they were trying to figure out how to put these elastics on. And I saw that they weren't following like the explicit directions I got from the dance studio. And so I butt in and I'm like, "I don't think this is the way. Don't worry about it, I'll just figure it out tomorrow."

Jen: Oh, yeah.

JoAnn: I shut down the whole process. And thankfully like my husband is very communicative with me. And later on, like half an hour later I'm like, "Oh, how's it going?" He's like, "Fine." I'm like, "Okay, what's wrong?" He's like, "You totally took over. That was supposed to be my job." And I'm like, "You know what? You're absolutely right, I did take over."

And then find out the next day that he was totally right. And I created two hours' worth of work for myself by insisting this thing that wasn't even correct in the first place.

Jen: Oh, man.

JoAnn: But it's just like an example of how like it's that control. It's the fear of getting something wrong and having everyone say like, "Oh my gosh, don't you follow directions? Why aren't you paying attention more? Like, how could you do this?" You know?

And so I think that we, as women, do those things, and we get in our own way like that when other people in our lives are extremely capable.

Jen: And having a collective story, if you think about at least in the US, a collective story that men just aren't as good at really anything to do with kids or the home. And that kids themselves are kind of incompetent and will mess it up.

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I wonder what would change if we could change that story and just start believing the idea that men are awesome. They're better at sewing than we are, like you just said.

JoAnn: Yeah.

Jen: You know, my husband, I'm starting to believe and stick to the story that he's a better cook. Which would not have always been true, I was better. But I didn't want to cook anymore so it serves me to believe this new story.

JoAnn: Yes, I think that's great. I think that's great. My husband is like naturally better at a lot of home stuff than me. Like when it was time to teach our kids how to load and unload the dishwasher it was my husband who did the teaching because I am horrible at it.

Jen: You probably throw it in, I do too. Yeah, no organization.

JoAnn: I'm like, "It's in, what's the big deal?" And my husband's like, "No, the water is going to collect over there." And I'm like, "So you just dump it out and you wash that one. It's fine."

Jen: Yeah, that's so funny. Well, so part of your work, shifting topics a little bit, is helping to teach kids to manage emotion, you know, and to feel empowered. So tell us more about how you're doing that.

JoAnn: So when I was in the classroom there were always those students who they were labeled as kind of difficult students. But I never saw them that way. I saw them as, you know, they have really strong emotions, and they don't have adults listening to them. So they need to act out to make sure their needs are met.

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And there's always like some need that they're not getting, but they don't know how to communicate very well. And that was something I believed as a teacher, but I hadn't really fully like developed it until I became a parent.

And my son, he always had really big emotions, like even as a toddler. I remember the day he was born the first thing I said was, "Wow, he's loud." He had a good scream in that delivery room.

Jen: Yeah.

JoAnn: But like he's been that way. And, you know, I was heavily influenced by Dr. Harvey Karp's *Happiest Toddler on the Block*. Dr. Daniel Siegel and Dr. Tina Payne Bryson's *The Whole Brainchild*. And just really helping kids figure out their emotions and learning about like their brain and how their brain works. And then communicating those emotions.

And so that's one of the things I do now, is helping kids figure out how they feel, letting them know that it's okay to feel that way. Because many kids push down their emotions because they're like, "Oh my gosh, it's not okay that I'm sad. Or not okay that I get mad at things." And they feel a lot of shame.

And so one of the things that I talk about in one of my courses is the shame monster. And talking about that shame and talking about those feelings and those thoughts that you have that like, "Oh, I made this mistake, I'm not a good person." And how that's not true, that's like your shame monster talking.

Jen: I like that.

JoAnn: Yeah. And just bringing that to kids was so important to me, because I felt all the feelings when I was younger. And especially like in middle school, and I had those feelings of like, "Oh, you know, I'm not a

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great person. Or, you know, no one likes me because I just don't know how to talk to people, or I'm not cool. Or I made this mistake." And once I learned more about shame, about how the brain works, about emotions, I'm like, "More kids need to know this."

Jen: Yeah.

JoAnn: And so that's what I try to do.

Jen: Well, how old is your toddler now? I mean your son.

JoAnn: He is about to turn eight in July.

Jen: And is he still kind of a bigger personality?

JoAnn: He does have a bigger personality. But now he's very, he recognizes his emotions really, really well. Like he will still have his really big like outbursts.

I mean, it was just the other day, he woke up a little late. And so he was crying that he wouldn't be ready in time. And he was kind of freaking out about that. But he's the first one to be like, you know, I feel sad, or I need to go sit in the other room because I'm really mad.

One of his big cues is hunger. And so we've been working a lot to help him figure out like, when is he hungry, and that's contributing to his emotions versus like when he's upset about something that's like other than hunger.

He recognizes his emotions, and he has strategies to deal with them so that they're not really blocking him from friendships or from living a fuller life. And he's so sensitive. And he's the first one to be like, I mean, just the other night he said he felt ashamed because he was teasing his sister.

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Jen: Oh, wow.

JoAnn: And I'm like, "Oh, bud."

Jen: He had the words.

JoAnn: He had the words, he had the words. So yeah, he still has big emotions, but he knows more how to communicate those so he can get what he needs.

Jen: Yeah. So you mentioned before, as a teacher there were the kids in the classroom who were showing big emotion.

JoAnn: Yes.

Jen: And that it was because they weren't being heard. Do you mean at a deeper level they weren't feeling like they were understood emotionally, or what do you mean by that?

JoAnn: I feel like that. I mean, I can think of one kid and just for anonymity sake I'll call him like Alex. And Alex, he came up through the grade levels and every single teacher complained about him. Like he was the one who constantly got sent to the principal's office. He was the one who you're like, "Oh, wait until you get him next year, then you'll be in for it."

And he came into my classroom and the first time I met him I realized, "Oh my gosh, like this is a very clever kid. And he is very charismatic, has lots, lots of potential." But as soon as something bored him or he felt that he was being ignored and he wasn't being like appreciated or listened to, he was just kind of being told what to do, that's when the behavior would start. And that's when he would be extremely disruptive, or he would like call other kids names.

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And the way I handled it when I was a teacher is I had to send him out of class because I had no other tools in my toolbox. Now, however, I realize that he needed more from us. And he probably needed a lot more talks with the school counselor, and a lot more figuring out how to communicate what he needed better so that he could be more successful in the classroom. And I wish that I had had the strategies and the knowledge that I do now as a fifth grade teacher to him.

Jen: Yeah, yeah, that's cool. And I just want to point out anyone listening who has kids like that, my hand is raised, it is not always the parent's fault. It's actually not usually the parent's fault. It's often just big personalities. My kid is smart, easily bored, will not be confined to the box, will question every rule.

JoAnn: Yes.

Jen: And that's going to serve them. You know, Einstein was in a lot of trouble in school all the time. Elon Musk, in a lot of trouble in school. And now look at the brilliance, you know. Just wanted to point that out for parents.

JoAnn: Exactly.

Jen: But at the same time, we can sharpen our tools, sharpen our skills to help them feel understood and to help with that misbehavior as it's happening. Like you said.

JoAnn: Yeah, so the thing that I saw is like teachers aren't, they're not getting that training about how to help with that specific kind of misbehavior.

I mean, the training that I got in classroom management was, you know, rewards based. Which science and research has showed, it doesn't work.

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Moving kids up and down a chart based on their behavior for the day, that doesn't work. And that just induces a lot of shame.

Jen: You mean, you were taught to list all the kids in the classroom and move people up and down?

JoAnn: Oh yeah, we green zones.

Jen: That's terrible, that's terrible.

JoAnn: It's horrible. It's horrible. It's so bad. And then we had something called think time where if kids were like being kind of disruptive, they would go to another teacher's classroom to like think about their behavior and then come back.

And in theory you would think it works. But in reality, it was the same kids all the time and there was no behavior change happening whatsoever. The biggest thing about think time is that you as a teacher would simply get a break from the behavior for a little bit. But it never fixed things.

Jen: Yeah. So my son, I might have shared this on the podcast before, in fifth grade his teacher had two groups. The respectful and responsible group got to go five minutes early to recess and art and all the things. Everyone else had to clean up the room. And guess who was in the everyone else group. All the kids on ADHD meds.

JoAnn: Of course.

Jen: So what message was that? They weren't respectful, and they weren't responsible because they were never in that group.

JoAnn: And kids internalize that.

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Jen: I know.

JoAnn: Yeah, they do the same thing at my kids' school with numbers. They give them a number at the end of the day. And like, three is at okay, four is you did something extraordinary, two is like you need work, and one is anarchy.

Jen: Oh, it's like a grade for each day. Oh, so sad.

JoAnn: Yeah, it's a grade, but then you always have the kids with fours, and they get fours consistently. And then you always have the kids with ones, and they get ones consistently. And it just doesn't help anybody.

Jen: You know, and it locks you into a perception of yourself. I'm a one or an A student, I'm a four or a D student.

JoAnn: Yeah, exactly.

Jen: So I've long thought that the school system needs to change. And this is controversial, don't get me wrong, but a lot of people say that the school system was set up to create automatons that are happy to work in the factory.

JoAnn: Yeah.

Jen: So what are your thoughts on that?

JoAnn: Okay, so it's so interesting because there is a book, it's called The Good News About Bad Behavior by Catherine Reynolds Lewis. Have you read this book?

Jen: I haven't.

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JoAnn: Okay, so it deals with this exact topic. And it's about how schools are run right now; it was really great in the 1950s where you had to be told what to do. And if you didn't do it there would be like a factory catastrophe or something. Because like everything was set up just so.

But now, now we value innovation, and we value creativity. And the schools have not been changed with those same values. They're still very, like you do it this way, you follow the rules, you check all the check boxes on your assignment, you fill out your worksheet.

And some schools are, you know, some schools are changing like that. So not to not to say all schools. But as a whole, the worksheets and like the tests, and the state tests, which I can go totally on a tangent about state testing.

Jen: Yes.

JoAnn: It's not raising the kind of people we want for today's society.

Jen: Oh, and plus, let's talk about the lack of emotional regulation skills, they're not being taught. The fact that finances are not being taught. Essential real life skills, hello, add them to the situation already, come on.

JoAnn: There's no social emotional learning, like none. They will schedule a weekly, no maybe not even weekly, maybe monthly lesson with the school counselor where they come in and give a 30 minute like lesson on social emotional learning. And that's it.

And meanwhile, like all of these behavior problems that like teachers see in the classroom would be so helped if kids knew how to communicate their emotions better and they knew these social skills. I mean, teachers wouldn't have to deal with arguments or fights on the playground nearly as much if kids knew how to solve their own problems with each other.

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Jen: And a big part of that problem is the lack of the adults understanding it. Like you said, you didn't have the skills.

JoAnn: Yeah.

Jen: So for everyone listening, we're not putting down the school system per se. We love teachers, we love principals, all of it, we're grateful.

JoAnn: Yes.

Jen: But as a society as a whole, we can move forward and improve emotional and social intelligence. So what steps would you give those listening? Things they could try with the kids in their lives and with themselves.

JoAnn: So one of the big things is actually finding out what kids are upset about. Because as adults we have a lot of assumptions when kids like show behavior that we don't necessarily feel is the best or optimal behavior.

Things that I hear a lot are like, "My kid doesn't respect me" or "I'm like fed up with all this backtalk." And we never stop and figure out exactly what the reasons are behind the behavior.

And so something that I like to do is, for example, like if your kid is screaming about their homework and they're like, "I just can't do it. I can't do my homework." And it's a common thing that kids say. Our first assumption is to sit down and like coax them through every single problem, kind of like be their personal cheerleader.

But what we find is like that doesn't work. They're still fighting with us the whole time, they're pushing back against us because something else is going on.

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And so an entryway in is when the kid isn't upset anymore, you have to do it when they're really calm outside of the situation. Like if they're screaming about homework, the first thing I do is I usually just take away the homework, and I'm like, "Okay, this isn't the time, let's just take a break."

And the first time parents would do something like that the kids will be like, "No!" And they'll just erupt in this big thing. But, you know, after like five or 10 minutes everyone will calm down again. And when they're calm, you can ask them, be like, "I noticed that you were having a really hard time on your homework. What's up?" And start asking them questions in a very curious way without any intention to solve their problem, but more to find out what the problem actually is.

Jen: Yes, coaching essentially, questions.

JoAnn: It's exactly like coaching. But asking like those questions and they'll say like, "I don't know." And then you can go further. You'd be like, "Well, what about the homework don't you like?" "All of it. Like I don't like all of it."

And then you could start picking it apart, "Well, you know, there's these problems with like the vocabulary. Or there's like these addition problems over here, was it the addition problems?" And then you start getting somewhere. They're like, "No, no, those were easy." You're like, "Oh, so was it this over here?" And they'll be like, "Yes."

And then you can keep drilling down until you figure out that, oh, my gosh, it wasn't all of homework. It was that they were having a problem understanding this really small concept that they were giving themselves a lot of like shame about, that they couldn't even concentrate on the rest of their homework.

And so once you start figuring out like these little issues, you can just focus on that little issue and figure out like, okay, is this something that you need

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to talk to the teacher about? Or you could just skip it, and just do the rest of the assignment, you're going to totally be fine. And it's just this little piece of the puzzle.

But that's something I was not trained to do as a teacher. I was not trained to find out what that little thing going on with the kids were because, and I think parents get this too, you're given all these possible things and you're trying to guess all of these possible things instead of just going to the child and asking them questions until you find out what their individual issue is.

Jen: Yeah.

JoAnn: And it's usually so much smaller than what we assume it is.

Jen: Yeah. And to not assume that misbehavior is just some little thing that they do, but to understand there's always an emotion and a feeling in their body that is the impetus of any behavior.

You know, if we're happy we might sing and skip. If we're frustrated or feeling shame, like you mentioned, we might have an outburst. And to go to the depth to help them understand what's there, what they're thinking and feeling, it's so cool that you're teaching this.

JoAnn: Yeah, it was so cool when I started using it in my parenting, and it's made all the difference with my son and with my daughter as well. Especially as she is in middle school now, just trying to figure out what actually they're thinking and what's going on. Because not only does that help me in my parenting, but it also makes them feel that they're understood. And I think that's very important for a kid to know that they're understood by somebody.

Jen: Yeah, we all just want to be seen and heard, right?

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JoAnn: Exactly, yeah.

Jen: See me, hear me, somebody. Well, you're doing great work in the world, JoAnn. And everyone go follow her, listen to her No Guilt Mom podcast. Where else can they learn more about what you're doing?

JoAnn: You can go to our website, noguiltmom.com. And that has all of our courses for kids and our parenting course as well.

Jen: Cool. Thank you so much for being on the show, JoAnn, this was awesome.

JoAnn: Thank you so much for having me.

So when I got off the interview with JoAnn and turned off the microphone, we were talking and I said, "Well, I was jumping all over the place. I hope you were able to follow me, you seemed to do really well." She said, "Well, that's because my dad says I am the most jumpy conversationalist there is." So we were two peas in a pod. And I hope you were able to follow it and gain something good from it.

I want to challenge you all this week to let go of the guilt and the shame and the shoulds just a little bit more every week. And the thing you'll do instead is to honor your heart and your feelings.

If you let your feelings be the guide you would never choose guilt or shame because why? When we feel guilty or we think thoughts of, I'm not good enough. I can't do this. Everyone else is so much better than me. I made a mistake. I'm failing. I'm a loser. I'm a terrible parent. My child is not good enough. You get the idea, how do we feel? We feel lousy. We feel down and we feel depressed.

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When we feel lower vibration, lower mood emotions, what happens? Well, as I've taught you before with the thought table, our thoughts yield this feeling. Our thoughts of not good enough yield shame and guilt. Those feelings lead us to behave in what ways? Well, we tend to do nothing, scroll on social media, eat ice cream, not take action. And our result is we're probably not doing anything that helps us feel better. We're not doing the things that would help us improve. We're not improving our relationships.

What do we do instead? We decide that we want to feel amazing. That feeling becomes the pivot. We want to feel proud. We want to feel loved. We want to feel happy. And we back up one step, because our thoughts generate our feelings, and we decide what thought will help me feel like I am good enough, that I am amazing?

Well just think the thought, "I'm good enough. I'm learning every day. I'm improving right now. I'm looking for all good things. My kids do so many good things." You get the idea. And those generate a different feeling, positivity, excitement, enthusiasm.

When we feel enthusiastic, what happens? We probably go interact with them more, we probably smile more and have more fun and do more positive things. And the result, better relationships, progress in our lives, living the way we want to live. It's that simple.

So be more aware of your thoughts and feelings like we were talking about in this interview. And let your feelings be the guide. Just like JoAnn said, those kids at school, when they were misbehaving a lot of people don't realize there's always a feeling before every single action.

Remember, there are facts provable in a court of law. I am a woman for example. There are thoughts, I am a great woman, right? That thought generates a feeling of, well, confidence. That feeling leads to an action or a

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behavior. Oh, I'm a great woman, I'm going to go be kind to someone. And that behavior leads to the result of, I have friends, I'm happy.

The same thing works with our kids. When our kids are misbehaving, that is the action. That is that action section of the thought table. And we need to back up and think about what thoughts are they having? What feelings are they experiencing, that are leading to this particular behavior or action?

If they are misbehaving, the result is they're in trouble a lot. Let's back it up. What are they feeling? Maybe they're feeling shame. Maybe they're feeling not good enough. Maybe they're feeling anxious.

I know my son in kindergarten had some misbehavior issues. And later, as he has matured, he's been able to go back and explain he was feeling social anxiety. He was always worried he was doing the wrong thing and his behavior followed.

So I want to challenge you to really hone in on what your kids are feeling. And then the step right before that, what are they thinking that is causing those feelings?

And this is deep work, many adults can't even do it. But as you practice, as you listen to this podcast, as you join us in the Vibrant Happy Women Club and work on these things, maybe as you become a certified coach through the Vibrant Happy Women Coach Certification you can improve these things.

You pass on a legacy of deep emotional and mental intelligence to your kids. You'll be able to ask questions and help them identify thoughts and emotions. They'll pass it on to their kids, and so it goes. It is a powerful legacy.

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So keep doing that work. And I thank you so much for listening today. I hope you found it helpful. And I will see you again next time. 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.