

## 282: Upleveling Your Thoughts About Your Kids (with Tracy May)



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Jen Riday**

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## **282: Upleveling Your Thoughts About Your Kids (with Tracy May)**

You're listening to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast, episode number 282. We're talking about up-leveling your thoughts about your kids. So, you don't compare them to other kids but allow them each to live their best life. 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, have you ever found yourself comparing your kids to other people's kids, or perhaps comparing your kids to each other, or wondering why your child isn't on the path they are supposed to be on? Well, this episode is for you. My guest today, Tracy May is a mother of two boys who were each born prematurely, one at 22½ weeks, one at 25 weeks. One of her boys has some significant developmental disabilities as a result of that prematurity. Her other son is neurotypical.

So, Tracy is going to share her story and share her perspective of parenting these two boys and what that's like. And I hope as you listen that it will expand your awareness of there is no 'normal'. Every child has their path, every human has their path, you have a path, your spouse has a path. And what would it look like in your life if you stopped the comparison and simply accepted that you are you, your children are themselves, your spouse is themselves? And moved forward with thoughts of positivity about whatever path they're on, whatever they're choosing.

So that's my intention for you with this episode. I think you're going to love it. Before we dive in I want to share our review of the week. It is from Erica Bushwell. She wrote, "Dr. Jen Riday, host of the Vibrant Happy Women podcast highlights all aspects of self-improvement and more in this can't

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miss podcast. The host and expert guests offer insightful advice and information that is helpful to anyone that listens.” Thank you Erica, appreciate that.

Everyone out there now if you haven't left a review please do so, it helps our podcast to grow, to reach more people. You can do that at [jenriday.com/review](http://jenriday.com/review). Alright, well, I told you my guest is Tracy May. Let me tell you a little bit more about Tracy. Tracy is from my home town. She is slightly older than me so I did not know her in high school but I knew her sister, Terra, hello Terra if you're listening. And Tracy is a graduate of the Vibrant Happy life coaching certification. She is fantastic.

What she does is she helps parents of premature infants to handle the uncertainty of what their child's life is going to look like, the uncertainty of handling health. You may or may not be or know a parent who has a child who was born prematurely. But this episode is for you because we all have children with different abilities. And we all face uncertainty. How do we handle that?

So, as you hear Tracy's story I want you to plug yourself into this formula and into this way of thinking and recognize your thoughts actually do have a lot of power over how painful, how uncertain, how sad, how hard any situation with your children may be. So, let's go ahead and dive in.

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Jen: Everyone, I'm here with Tracy May who is a graduate of the Vibrant Happy life coaching certification. And she is a coach who is passionate about helping moms of preemie babies, process the stress and overwhelm so they can begin to embrace their new normal. Tracy lives in Iowa with her husband of 25 years and her two boys, Jack and Nathan who were both born prematurely. Tracy is also an author of a journal designed to help

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guide families through their journey in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, or NICU.

She is an avid reader who also loves knitting, scrapbooking, traveling, girls weekends and early morning quiet time with her coffee and journal.

Welcome Tracy, I'm so glad you're here.

Tracy: Thanks, Jen, I'm so happy to be here as well.

Jen: Okay, so I love how you took something that was really hard for you, something you went through and now you use that as a life coach to help other people who are going through that same thing. So, tell us more about that journey for you and how you're using what you learned and experience to help others.

Tracy: Absolutely. So go back to kind of where my story all started with this. I was 19½ weeks along in my pregnancy, my first pregnancy. And I was leaking a little bit of fluid and so I thought maybe it was just the baby pushing on my bladder and called my OB. And they said, "Yeah, we need to see you today." This was on a Friday and I went in there and I was dilated three centimeters at 19½ weeks. And to the point where they weren't even going to let me drive, they were going to call an ambulance.

And I convinced them to let me drive myself to the hospital. But once there they did an emergency procedure to sew my cervix shut, it's called a cerclage and put me on bedrest for three weeks, complete bedrest. So, no standing, walking, any of that. And that really saved his life. And I had, at that point I had nobody that I had known had had a premature baby. I was scheduled to have a tour of NICU the following day after, on that three weeks. And I didn't get to have that. I think that would have kind of maybe painted a picture of what we were going to be facing a little bit better.

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But that night I delivered my son Jack who was born at 22 weeks, 22½ weeks gestation and weighed 1 pound 3 ounces. And because I had a procedure before he was born, they had given me a spinal. He was born at 10:33 at night and I didn't get to see him until about one in the morning. So just the anxiety and just the stress, tremendous stress of not knowing is he going to survive, what's going on. And that mental picture that I had painted in my head was vastly different of just how small and fragile he was that first time I got to see him.

So that started our journey really of what ended up being a month of touch and go, calls from the hospital saying, "I think you need to make your way here." Not knowing if he was going to make it through the night for the first month of his life. And fortunately, we were five minutes away from the hospital at that point. But it was, it was touch and go and he had a lot of complications. He was born in 2002 and in a time when 22½ week babies weren't surviving. His survival rate was less than 5%. So, it was dire for that first month. And dire really for quite a while.

But he ended up being in the NICU for six and a half months and will have lifelong complications as well resulting from his early birth. But he's alive and he's an amazing kid and he's our miracle baby. And so fast forward two years I delivered a second baby prematurely. I had known that I had never wanted to have an only child and knew the risk going into it. But knowing that I have an incompetent cervix which is the reason I deliver early, unlike a lot of premie moms don't really know why they deliver early.

So, I had the same procedure at 13 weeks along with my second son, Nathan. And made it to really 22 weeks before having to go on bedrest, so it was déjà vu all over again of going on bedrest. And my second son was delivered at 25½ weeks and was one 1 pound 14 ounces. So, I ran the gamut of micropremies with my two kids. And for the longest time I really

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just wanted to give back and help other moms go through that. And the way I knew to do that at the time was to get involved with the March of Dimes.

And so, I was heavily involved with the March of Dimes for about 10 years in various capacities and ended up being on their board of directors. And really it was my way of helping other families, connecting with other families. It was my way to find those families that were going through the same thing and share stories. And I did that for 10 years and in 2016 I had a health scare and I call it that. I really had cancer. I find myself calling it a health scare. I had cancer. Let's just not mince words.

And it really caused me and I just felt this strong nudging from God to just really take a deep look internally and figure out what I'm going to do with my experience. And how can I help maybe in a different way and maybe a closer tie than what I've had in the past. And a ton of soul searching took place and I realized then and it just kind of fell in my heart to create this preemie journal for families in the NICU to really help guide them through. And it's not just a journal to document your thoughts.

It certainly is that but it's much more in terms that it allows the families to really chronicle what they're going through. And really just get what's on their heart. There's so much heaviness that's on your heart as a preemie family, preemie moms especially, we bear a lot of that weight. And it really allows to get what's on their heart out on paper. But it also guides them through the medical stuff and keep track of all the stuff that preemie moms keep track of. So that's really what led me to the journal.

And then I found once I did that I thought once I got the journal out in the hands of those that need it most then that was – I was going to be fulfilled. And just felt this calling to do more and that's what really led me into your life coaching certification program to really, how can I really dive in deeper and get more personal with moms and meet them where they're at?

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Because we're all in different places at different times. There's no prescription or we're not all at the same place at the month after the NICU, or six months or six years after the NICU.

So how can I meet them where they're at and help them through, yeah, navigating their new normal? It just changes the whole dynamic once you have a preemie. And that's kind of what I have set out to do.

Jen: So, when you went through this both times what kind of support was available back then?

Tracy: Well, I really wish there would have been a support group, there was not. That would have been one thing that I really sought that out in the NICU when I was there. And so, I was able to connect with one friend that I met in the NICU that we kind of just stayed in touch with. And she was a year ahead of my journey so I had that support. And I really think that's why I gravitated towards the March of Dimes.

Because there really wasn't another outlet or support channel for me other than the March of Dimes for continuing support. And just having somebody to bounce things off of. Are you dealing with this? Hey, here I've got this issue or this diagnosis, I don't know how to process through it, I'm struggling. That was really my outlet at the time and really what prompted my friend and I to talk more about, okay, what does long term support look like? And in fact one of the things I took advantage of after I was a NICU graduate for two years, which was what we needed to be.

Then I was a volunteer at the NICU and really spent evenings once or twice a month walking around talking to families in the NICU. And just really trying to help them through their journey. So that lasted for a number of years too. But those are really the ways that I had an opportunity to connect.

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Jen: So that's so fascinating. When people get pregnant, there's every resource imaginable. When a developmentally typical child is born full term, we have every resource imaginable for ages and stages. But now I'm hearing you describe this whole world where with a premature baby suddenly it's all different. Your whole life is different and no one really outside of that understands it. So, you created your journal. And what's your journal called again?

Tracy: My journal's called My Preemies Journey. And then the tagline is your journal for surviving the NICU and beyond.

Jen: And then where can people get that?

Tracy: The journal's available on Barnes & Noble as well as amazon.com. And there is both a hardback and a paperback option.

Jen: Wow, way to go, Tracy. Look, you're making a difference in the world. I think a lot of us have experiences and we want to create meaning from them. And we don't want anyone else to suffer in the way that we have. And you chose to bridge that gap and become more skilled and able to help through becoming a life coach. Tell us how you realized that was your next step.

Tracy: Well, I think so, you know, I had started the journal back in 2016. And it was super exciting because you get to pick the cover and you are designing the pages and really being methodical about the flow of the journal and how you see using this journal and other families using this journal. And that was super exciting. And I poured my heart into that for a number of years getting that just exactly the way I wanted it.

And then I stalled a little bit when it came time for all the backend stuff, setting up all the software and the technology to be able to deliver this



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journal in a kind of a systematic way. And I stalled. And it was one of those things in we're right in the heart of COVID and I'm like this is when my preemie moms needs this most. Because hospitals were shut down, the families couldn't go see their babies. It wasn't like when I was there, I could sit there for an entire day with my child. And so that kind of just – I had fallen in love with my project all over again.

And really fought hard to really get those final finishing touches on it so that I could get it out. And that was September of 2020 and then on the heels of that it's like, okay, this is great. This is going to be life changing for a family of a premature baby. But there is way more to it. There is other things that go along with that where moms get, you get mired down in all of the heaviness, and a diagnosis, or a setback. There's so many, you hear this in the preemie world, two steps forward, one step back.

And it was really on my heart to how can I keep them moving forward in a way that they can really learn to love their life and learn to just live within the confines of this new normal and love their life. And that's really what kind of really pushed me to say I want to do this life coaching. And I know there's benefits in it for me as well, as well as helping my preemie moms kind of find that life they love and go from surviving to thriving.

Jen: I love that. Who doesn't want to thrive? So, a lot of people hear about life coaching, they're like, "That's weird." Or, "I don't get what that is." But tell us how you would describe, how is life coaching actually helpful for someone who's struggling in general or someone who's struggling with a premature baby specifically?

Tracy: Well, for me it's really just holding space for them to really get what's in their heart. There's no recipe for coaching somebody through a problem. It's really meeting them where they're at and just walking through and really, it's almost a discovery. Letting them discover what's holding them

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back. It's really, it's our own thoughts that are holding us back in so many ways. So, it's really holding space and letting them do that discovery and just talking it out.

And eventually they'll realize and come to this aha moment that yeah, I know I need to change my thinking or I never will be able to overcome what it is they're trying to overcome. And that's helped me even in my own life and how my own thoughts are getting in the way of things I want to achieve or accomplish in my own life. So again, it's not prescriptive, it's just allowing them to talk through and allowing them space to do that in a very safe way.

Jen: Okay, great. So, you mentioned up-leveling, kind of changing our thoughts. So, what would you say are the baseline thoughts people are having when they have a preemie baby, the ones that cause all the fear, all the uncertainty? Because as you learned in the life coaching certification we know that thoughts cause our feelings. They aren't random, our thoughts generate them. And if we want a different feeling we just need to change our thoughts. So, can you remember way back when what you were thinking and feeling as a result?

Tracy: Yeah. So, there is I think probably different thoughts that I can pull out or even today. I think it's the comparison kind of thought like why isn't my baby doing this at the same time the other baby that's next to me is doing? Or getting a diagnosis like well, okay, this is going to mean x, y, and z. And instead of saying, "It's just a diagnosis." It doesn't change anything. But I think just hearing certain terminology or certain words or seeing babies progress at a faster pace maybe than your baby's doing.

Or mine instantly goes to well, is this what their whole life is going to be like or why isn't my baby? Instead of my baby's on their own timetable and they're doing things according to where they need to be, at the time in which they need to do it. I guess a couple that come to mind for me.

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Jen: Yeah, that's so cool. Well, so you have Jack, tell us about Jack and what he's doing. And what thoughts help you celebrate where he is versus feel sorry that he isn't where other kids might be?

Tracy: I learned a lesson a long time ago and this has probably helped me. I would say he was probably in early elementary at the time. And I have high expectations for my kids. And one of the things, one of the thoughts that were holding me back was thinking that he should be able to do things that other kids could do at his age or why is he not doing things other kids his age are doing? And I remember really kind of going through that and really realizing that you know what? I need to set realistic expectations for him.

And that was me up-leveling my thoughts of really setting appropriate expectations for what he's capable for. And that was a gamechanger for me for really the rest of his time when he was in school is just really not getting disappointed if he's not standing still on the stage during a concert, a choir concert or something like that. Just like you know what? He's enjoying the music. He's moving his body. And I need to be okay with that. So that was huge for me as just setting the right expectations and not having these expectations that were unachievable for him.

But he graduated from high school during COVID and that was a very stressful time because we had to spend – there was a big push in March and May through 2020 to kind of get him through the last little bit before he graduated. And one of the things that I also think that it was helpful for us too is sometimes when you have a child with a disability you feel like you're kind of boxed in a little bit. And you're not allowed to deviate off of the path that you see set forward for you.

So, what I mean by that, for us is with what I had seen from other families with kids with disabilities in our school district and other school districts as

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well within our state, those kiddos, they graduate from high school and then they stay at their home school for the additional three years kids can go to high school. And when Jack was – probably before he as a sophomore, I thought that was going to be our path. Okay, yeah, he'll go and he'll graduate from high school and then he'll do this three years and then we'll figure out life beyond that.

And my eyes were opened and I do share this with others. And I think this perspective helps other families as they're thinking about what does this mean for my child. But when he was a sophomore in high school, and again every kid's different. Jack has a visual impairment. He's dual disability. Has a visual impairment due to his early birth as well as an intellectual disability. One of the things that we were opened up to when he was a sophomore is hey, there is a program outside of your school two hours away.

But it's a program designed for kids with visual impairments to help them really home in on some independent skills and really focus on those life and independent living skills that are so necessary beyond high school and into adult life. And that's the first time I saw us being able, just even the thought of deviating away into a different path where it was solely focused on kids with visual impairments. And so that's what we ended up doing for him. And that was a lot of – I'm a big mama bear with that kid.

And it took a lot of soul searching and introspection on my part to be able to get comfortable with that. And I realized I was really being selfish, honestly, in that it wasn't about me anymore. It's like what is going to be the best thing for him to set him up for adult life. And so, he just finished in May of this year, he finished the first year of this program. It's two hours away but we see him every weekend. And he thrived. He just had an amazing year, such that we're going to take advantage of the next two years and he's ready to go back at the end of August.

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So, for us it was just making sure we were open to new perspectives and ideas and being open to listening to things and not being so focused on this is the path for him. Because there's a lot of different ways that you can go and we found one that works for us that I think is going to set him up nicely for adult life.

Jen: That's cool. A couple of big nuggets in there. I think we all do this. We all think our child should follow a certain path. And I did this with my oldest, it became apparent that graduating from high school was going to be a struggle because of significant mental health struggles for him. And I had to mourn the loss of the path I thought he 'should have'. And now instead of comparing like in your instance, you comparing Jack to other kids or me comparing my son to other kids. Just celebrating, hey, he's living his best life. He's on his own path.

I feel like those thoughts generate so many more positive feelings, is that true for you as well?

Tracy: Absolutely, because if you don't and you don't have that kind of thought process it just, it can really just weigh you down. And as moms and parents it's okay to grieve. And honestly I probably have one day a year where I, there's no rhyme or reason to the day but there's one day a year I just feel the heaviness. And it's okay to grieve. And for the longest time I didn't associate that being out of the NICU for as long as we have with grief. But it's okay to grieve what we feel like we're missing out on or our life doesn't look the same and then you move on from that.

Staying in grief for long periods of time doesn't do you any good. But allowing yourself a short period of time to grieve and then move on and have the thoughts that yeah, they're living their best life. We're doing the right thing for them is really how you kind of process through and move on.

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Jen: That's so great. That's so great. Now, you have another son, tell us his story.

Tracy: Yeah. I don't want to overlook Nathan. He had a much different stay in the NICU. So, while he was born at 25 weeks, he stayed 88 days in the NICU. Jack was 196 days in the NICU. But it wasn't an easy stay either. It certainly wasn't, Jack's is critical but it wasn't a walk in the park. And I would never say any time in the NICU is a walk in the park. It's a life you never knew existed until you have a preemie, unless you know somebody intimately that's had a preemie.

But he was a little bit delayed, I would say his first two years. And we worked hard with our AEA to get him where he needed to be. And today he's 17 years old and he's a neurotypical child. He has no complications of his early birth, none of the stuff that we dealt with, with Jack did we have to deal with, with Nathan. And he is going to be a junior in high school. And he's doing awesome.

Jen: Okay. And that's interesting, you have the neurotypical child and then the one with the developmental disability. How do you parent them differently? I mean what have you – I think there's so many lessons you have to have learned that would be interesting, if you can put words to it.

Tracy: It's parenting different. And I'm very conscious about that because what I don't want to happen is for Nathan to feel like we pushed him aside because Jack does have so many needs that have to be met. But it is really getting deliberate about, the expectations are different. And for the longest time I thought I have high expectations and that needs to be consistent across the board. And from very early on with Jack I learned, you know what? Those expectations need to be tailored for him. And I tailor them for Nathan.

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And it's making sure that both of them have individual time with my husband and I. And really talking. We're a very open communicative family. And I'll be very honest with Nathan and say, "I know you may feel like this but that's not the case." Just to make sure that, sometimes 17 year old's and any kid they get something in their head or they get a perception. And I want to make sure that he understands where we're coming from.

But I've always tried to make sure with them that they knew they were both loved but that we had different expectations for them for a reason. And that doesn't mean – I have high expectations for Jack but it's within the confines of what he can do and the same for Nathan. And it looks different. And just trying to articulate that specifically for Nathan so he understands that. It's a constant pivot to make sure that they're feeling loved and they're feeling like they're getting our attention. And one's not getting more attention than the other. And sometimes that looks different.

And I think we have not done it perfectly throughout their lives. But I think they both understand where we're coming from with each of them.

Jen: Wow, well done. That can't be easy. But I think what it illustrates really well is each of your kids has a path. And I think so many parents all over the world get stuck with this idea that there is a one right path. And you have this beautiful opportunity to illustrate for other parents, for all of us that every child has their path. So how do you apply that knowledge as you coach with families who have a preemie, helping them create this idea that there is no one path? You know what I'm saying?

Tracy: Well, I think it's just, it's providing that perspective and then allowing them to see what that looks like for them. I mean sometimes I think again we're so hardwired a little bit to think okay, this is how it has to be. But I think when you can open that, open up somebody's mind and just by holding space and allowing them to kind of talk and cross through it. You

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can start to unlock some of that to see okay, yeah, I can maybe pivot and do things a little bit differently than I had because I only thought there was one way to do it.

So, I'll give you a quick example. And this is one that I wish we would have uncovered this years, years before we did. Again, this is another kind of nugget I would share with a preemie family. But when Jack came home from the NICU, he came home with an NG tube. And he was on the ventilator for four months. And so, the kid had such severe oral aversion because all he knew for that six and a half months or four months I guess, until he was taken off the ventilator. But that ventilator tube changed every week, in and out, in and out, in and out.

And so, he developed such a gag reflex. And so, we went home on an NG tube and we then when he was one and a half years old, we had a feeding tube surgically implanted. And we were following the protocol that the doctor laid out for us. And again, we put doctors on pedestals for a reason. I trust them like no other. And you're like, well, they're telling us we need to follow this protocol for a reason.

But in doing so with Jack, because he was so reliant on a feeding tube and we didn't want to pump his feed overnight because I woke up one morning and he kind of had the cord wrapped around him a little bit. And that terrified me so I said, "We're not going to do anything overnight." So, we had to get his volume of feed liquid into his belly over the course of the day. And we had to run it at a slow drip because he was so – propensity to kind of vomit. And we did that. And we had to have him sit for two hours, four different times during the day.

And we did not help him at all in terms of his fine motor skills and his gross motor skills by just having him sit. And finally, we took matters in our own hands and said, "You know what? We're going to do this differently. We're



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just going to syringe this into his stomach.” No doctor told us that. I didn’t ask permission. I said, “I’m going to try this.” And so, I think again it’s allowing women and telling women, “It’s okay to experiment.” There isn’t one right way to do things.

That feeding example is just one example where we stopped having him sit for two hours and said, “Okay, we’re going to take a syringe and push in the volume over 15 or in a couple of minutes and wait 15 minutes. And over the course of one hour, we will get in the feeding.” But it’s really just giving them permission to think differently about things. And there isn’t the one way to do things. And it’s okay to deviate and try because you try it and it doesn’t work. Then you learn, okay, let’s try something different. But if we don’t try we’re kind of just really holding ourselves back a little bit to what can happen.

Jen: Yeah. Giving people permission to be the expert of their own lives really.

Tracy: Yeah, exactly.

Jen: I love that. That’s powerful. It’s a stark viewpoint of every child really is different. And I’m still comparing all of my kids to some ridiculous norm that doesn’t even exist.

Tracy: No, I know. I know. And it’s hard. I mean we’re just wired that way. We are just wired to compare. And honestly, that’s probably one of the last times that I really had one of those days where I just – it was a pity party for myself, was that I got on Facebook that day and it was when Jack turned 16 and all of his friends were posting pictures of the first day of school and driving a car. Driving their fancy new cars to school and thinking he’ll never drive. But then you have to spin it in a different way.

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And what I share with him is, “Jack, okay, you’ll probably never drive. And at least until there’s a self-driving car. But there are other ways to get where you need to be than driving yourself. And you’ve got resources and support to be able to do that.” That’s a hard thing for him because he sees his brother driving. And in all of these comparisons, especially when they get older. When they’re younger it’s like okay, all kids kind of progress at different ages but those milestones of, hey, you turn 16 and now you get a car and you start driving.

And now you’re 18 and you graduate from high school and now you get a job or you go to college. Well, those things are all different. And while they’re hard you just have to work through them and that’s, I guess, what we’re trying to do.

Jen: Yeah, really reaching acceptance for yourself but also helping Jack reach that too. Yeah.

Tracy: Yeah. And it’s hard when you’ve got the intellectual disability to be able to process some of those things. The reasoning just takes a little bit longer sometimes with him.

Jen: Yeah. And it’s funny, the other day I was telling my husband a story. And he goes, “Oh.” I just felt a stab of pain. I’m like, “Oh, that’s so sad I thought you might laugh at that or like that story.” He’s like, “Well.” Then I kind of verbalized, maybe I shouldn’t have but I did. I’m like, “I kind of feel sorry for you.” You know how some people; blind people can’t see a sunset and you’re just sad they’re missing out. I’m like, “It must be hard to miss out on this emotional feeling that most of us are getting from the story. That’s sad.”

So, I think everyone has something they’re missing out on, whether it’s the license or getting the joke.

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Tracy: Absolutely. I mean don't let those thoughts dominate your life because it's very easy to. I mean sometimes I think that's where I can help too, preemie moms is helping them think through those things that are probably really hard for them to overcome and think about, and not have it be in their thoughts all the time. Because there is things that are very easy to keep in there like for Jack, well, constantly. Well, "I can't drive. I can't drive. I can't drive." "No, you can't right now but here is other things that you can do or you are doing or ways in which you can get there."

And so, it just, it's that constant reframing for them to make him see, okay, it's not one way of thinking. And we are very one way of thinking in certain aspects.

Jen: I love that, just he's living his best life. You have to almost come back to that thought, he's living his best life.

Tracy: Absolutely. I mean he's got the best personality for a kid with a disability. And in some regards he is oblivious to some of all the craziness going on in the world. And he's just a super happy kid, yeah. So, there is, yeah, definite bright spots and positives to some of the limitations he has. And when you look at it like that then you're like, okay, that's true. But sometimes people just have a hard time even getting there and that's where, yeah, the thought tables and the up-leveling really helps because you really see where their thoughts are holding them back.

Well, if you continue to think like that, nothing's going to change. And what do you want to change? What do you want? Okay, then your level of thinking is not going to get you there.

Jen: For sure, yeah, that's cool. Well, this has been awesome. And my big takeaway is that everyone has a path and there's no shoulding about it, of what people should be doing. And I think as a preemie mom you had to

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learn that quick and maybe in a painful way. But now here you are and you can celebrate all paths. So well done, kudos to you. Where can listeners go to learn more about your coaching?

Tracy: So, they can go to my website which is [www.miraclemomentsmatter.com](http://www.miraclemomentsmatter.com). On my website is the NICU survival guide. So, if you are listening and you do know somebody that's in the NICU or have had a premature baby, it doesn't have to be in the NICU. The survival guide is really kind of a step-by-step process through some of the heaviness that weighs us down and process through that to better navigate your new normal. So that would be one way. I'm at Miracle Moments Matter on Instagram and Facebook. And yeah, that's where you could find me.

Jen: Okay, awesome. Tracy, congratulations for finding your purpose, taking your mess, and making it your message as they say and living your purpose and making a difference. I love what you're doing.

Tracy: Well, thank you, Jen. And thank you for what you're doing. The coaching certification was a huge step for me. Even the things I learned from a personal development standpoint in my own life that I can help process through things better as well as helping other preemie moms and other women. It was life changing for me, so thank you for what you're doing as well.

Jen: Thank you. You're welcome. Alright, well, thank you so much Tracy, and I'll see you around.

Tracy: Thanks, Jen.

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I hope you learned something important from that conversation. And that is this, we each have a unique path. We each have unique struggles. There's no need to compare ourselves or our kids to anyone else. What is important is to learn to manage our thoughts about those struggles. To learn to think thoughts that empower us and help us feel hopeful and positive. Thoughts like I've got this or this is their path, this is their journey. They can do what they're meant to do.

And what else is important is that we take those struggles and we learn compassion for others going through similar struggles. And like Tracy perhaps, to even put yourself into a position where you can help others going through those struggles. I firmly believe that each of us, each of you listening has lives that you are meant to touch, that your struggles give you an ability to help others in a way that no one else can. Each of you listening has a song that you are meant to sing, that if you don't sing it will be lost to the world forever.

I want you to think about that, what do you need to become in order to help others cope with and thrive through struggles that may have been similar to things you've experienced. Something to think about, food for thought. Of course, Tracy chose the path of becoming a life coach which gave her the ability to ask powerful open ended questions and create a space, a sacred space really where people can discover for themselves how they want to up-level their thoughts and thereby have new feelings about whatever situation they're going through.

I love coaching. Can you tell? I'm so proud of Tracy and what she's accomplished, what she's doing to change the world and using her struggles and what she's learned from them to make the world a better place. And I believe each of you out there listening can do the same thing. I want to thank you so much for listening. I will be back again next week. Until then make it a vibrant and happy week. Take care.

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