

[00:00:00]

**Todd:** Here you go. My name's Todd. This is Cathy. Welcome back to another episode of Zen Parenting Radio. This is podcast number 712 why listen to *Zen Parenting Radio*? Because you'll feel outstanding and always remember our motto, which is the best predictor of a child's wellbeing, is in fact a parent's self-understanding.

**Todd:** Tease out today's show. Actually, before you tease it out, I'm just gonna say hi to three new Team Zen members. You ready, sweetie? Yes. Robin from West Palm Beach, Stephanie from Houston, and from Lake Placid, New York. I'm gonna give them a pause.

**Cathy:** That's West Coast, Midwest, and east Coast.

**Todd:** That's right. So, if you don't know what Team Zen is, check it out on our website.

**Todd:** It's 25 bucks a month. It's a way to talk to Cathy and I on Zoom and we have a ton of other resources available on our Team Zen Circle page.

**Cathy:** It's an app, so basically you can, it's like a place you can go get everything Zen Parenting plus connect with people that I think you'll have a lot in common with.

**Cathy:** Plus get resources plus talk to us. And it's just really easy, accessible and right before we came down, I was eating and I felt the need to scroll, but instead of scrolling through things that make me stressed, like Twitter, I scrolled through our app. And that was

**Todd:** enjoyable. It's actually a good idea.

**Todd:** That should be like our tagline. Stop scrolling and start connecting. Or

**Cathy:** just scroll through our app. Well, I think it's not a great tagline, but our app is, is

**Todd:** positive, but our, but ours is more interactive, I would say. Correct. Whereas, you know, Twitter or TikTok. It's more like mindless scrolling.

**Todd:** Well,

**Cathy:** well I was gonna say, you'd be surprised Todd, like that people put things up there that are really interesting to read. Like someone just put up a podcast that I'm gonna listen to someone put up a really good, speech from graduation. Like there's just a part of it is a lot of it is us and our work, but a lot of it is other people just sharing.

**Cathy:** So anyway, just a

**Todd:** great place to go. And I forgot to tell you, but I came up with a Team Zen theme song. You ready? Let's hear it.

**Cathy:** That's funny.

**Todd:** So when you tell the audience, is it because of all of our power dynamics? That's right. What is this song? What is

**Cathy:** it? Yeah, it's the theme to Succession. Yes.

**Todd:** Why am I playing that today? Are we gonna talk about it?

**Cathy:** We're gonna talk about Succession, but for those of you who are like, I didn't watch Succession, don't worry, we're not gonna, you're not gonna be totally lost cuz we're gonna talk about the dynamics, the family dynamics.

**Cathy:** And we'll use Succession as the backdrop, but really anyone

**Todd:** can relate to, if they wanted to come up with a theme song that just makes one uncomfortable, this is it.

**Todd:** They do a good job with that because I hate that theme song and I think I'm not supposed to like it. Stressful. It's a lot of

**Cathy:** strings and it's, it's, it's constantly going up. Like it's constantly getting more tense Yes. And more tense and it doesn't decrease the tension.

**Todd:** Well, it's so funny cuz we, so we just watched the series finale last night and Succession goes down probably, I don't, I can't say it's my top 10 favorite shows because I never watched the third season.

**Todd:** But I will say, when I think of. The scoring of a show, I always think of lost the lost finale and the strings. I don't know what, you know, there's all these different instruments that I don't pretend to understand. But it, in the lost finale,

it gave me such a sense of deep sadness. And, and this theme song to Succession gives me, I'm just rattled.

**Todd:** Like, it brings my tension and my stress in my body up. It's so interesting how instruments could. Give us feelings. Well, and

**Cathy:** I think it's the notes, like, I don't know a lot about music, but a lot of flat notes. A lot of like, like they sound off. Like, it, it's not the right way to say it. It's like the way that they are on top of each other, it's uncomfortable.

**Cathy:** So it's not like there's strings that soothe you and then there's strings that make you go cringe a little bit. But we're just, because of the show, this song becomes just a mem or the theme is just kind of like, it gets you excited to watch.

**Todd:** Can I just share one more string thing? In a, movie?

**Todd:** No, it's a Beatles song, A Day in the Life. Okay. And I'm gonna play it.

**Todd:** Geez,

**Todd:** welcome. So the reason I play that is it's, it's also kind of haunting, right? I got another one.

**Cathy:** Oh, you got, what do you got? I got so there's a song by Janet Jackson called If. Okay.

**Todd:** That's one you put on my

**Cathy:** birthday playlist called, that's called again. That's, that's a sad song. So there's just this part in it where it's just a bunch of strings and I think they actually took it from a Supreme song, but I always think about it.

**Todd:** Is it at the beginning?

**Cathy:** Try play the beginning.

**Cathy:** This sounds like the video. Can you get to the song

**Todd:** Is that how it is it

**Cathy:** the, no, this, this is, this must be a video. You're probably not in the right place, hon. All right, let's go back. That's not a song. How about this one? There you go. So listen to this.

**Cathy:** Oh, that's all Stranges right before that? And then the other one I'm thinking of, oh, what do you got? It's, you guys weren't listening to me the other night and I kept trying to say, I think you were kind of listening to me, but I don't think anybody cared. I was talking about the white snake song, Still of the Night.

**Cathy:** Here I go. Okay, let's, here I go again. That's a different one. So in Still of the Night, there's this part, it's like toward the end they like build up to it forever. And this dude plays his guitar with a bow.

**Todd:** Doesn't Jimmy Page do that a lot and lends up maybe,

**Cathy:** I mean, I'm pr I'm willing to believe that the guy in White Snake didn't create,

**Todd:** all I know is we started with The Beatles and we're ending at White Snake.

**Todd:** That's all I gotta say.

**Cathy:** So it's like toward the end, keep going. Sorry everybody that you have to listen. This not White Snake, but Todd doing this. You're passing

**Todd:** it. You went too far. Well, sorry, the, the fans are not gonna be able to hear it,

**Cathy:** but it's so good. And I, is it, well put it this way, when I was, I'm still a white Snake fan, but when I was really into White Snake, I would play that song and, and it's a, you know, it's one of those songs that it, that's what you're waiting to hear, right?

**Cathy:** It culminates in that moment. And so it's a big buildup. This is what

**Todd:** I'm waiting to hear, sweetie. I love this song too. This is the only Wait eight Snow Wait Snake song. I, I know. I believe that.

**Todd:** This defines my wife. That's all I gotta say.

**Cathy:** You wanna know why he made it his

**Todd:** mine?

**Cathy:** He made it his mine. This is one of my all time favorite hair band songs. Obviously. I think a lot of people love it, but we all, when we listened to it, I was a junior in high school, we all thought we were so alone that we were the ones.

**Todd:** He was singing to you.

**Cathy:** I know.

**Cathy:** I was like, I just am so alone. Just like this guy. Even though I wasn't at all, but it, it was the internal loneliness. Right. It's the, here I go again on my own.

**Todd:** We gotta wait for it to kick in, right? Sure.

**Todd:** All right. It's kind of one, like an anthem for being

**Cathy:** single, right? And I just think, you know, at that phase of your life, if you've been hurt or like a friend has left or you're just going through another breakup, you just think that you're just starting over again and again, and you really are.

**Todd:** Okay, so we're nine minutes in, haven't even started the content. sweetie We

**Cathy:** had to do some Janet Jackson White Snake Beatles. Yes. And Succession being stuck. Yes. So here's the thing. We're gonna talk about Succession, but we're gonna talk about in terms of, family culture and the things that can really get in the way.

**Cathy:** Now, Succession is an extreme example. For those of you who have watched it. You're gonna know this. For those of you who haven't, I'll just give you the premise is that. It's this family. It's a family that is, based on, and, and this is kind of interesting, Todd, I'll read this to you cause I found this.

**Cathy:** So the family is fictional. Okay. The, the Roys are fictional, like, so that's something that Jesse Armstrong, the creator has said. They're fictional, but they're based on a lot of different families. The first one that everybody brings

up is the Murdochs. You know who the Murdochs are? Okay. So they're the Fox News people and, you know, you know, what's his name?

**Cathy:** Rupert Murdoch has sons and I, he also has daughters and they are, there is always talk of, they're being like infighting and who's gonna take over. And Rupert Murdoch still hasn't left. As far as, you know, we found out from this, This what was it? The Dominion lawsuit that Rupert Murdoch said he didn't have an active role, but then they found out during the lawsuit he actually did.

**Cathy:** So he's still, even in his nineties, it's such a Logan Roy move, right? Like he just is not leaving. So, That's one of the families that's similar to, it's also similar to the Salzberg, which I didn't know. This group, it's the people who own the New York Times. I guess their family has this kind of dynamic.

**Cathy:** The Hearsts, you know, the Hearst who were the, you know William Randolph Hurst family. They were newspaper moguls. The Maxwells. And this was really interesting. He was also a newspaper mogul, and his daughter was Ghislaine Maxwell. Who was the guy, the, the woman who was helping Jeffrey Epstein. Oh, wow.

**Cathy:** And so she was just sentenced to prison a little bit ago, as we all know. And then the Carnegie, who, Brian Cox, who plays Logan Roy, said that that's who he, he, that's who, who he pulled from for inspiration for his character. Basically a kid who had nothing, who grew up and figured out how to be this kind of, I don't even wanna use the word character, like this kind of force

**Cathy:** in the universe because Logan Roy is not a very human. Person. Obviously he's a human being, but he, he doesn't act in a very human way. He, his whole goal dehumanizes, he's, he dehumanizes people and he uses people to get his needs met. He is not somebody, and his needs are power. His needs are power.

**Cathy:** His needs are power and money. And, but I think power over money, don't you think? I think that's, well, money is a vehicle to power. Correct. But once you have billions of dollars, getting another billion dollars doesn't mean anything so it's like, how do you keep power? So I just thought that was interesting.

**Cathy:** All the different families that they kind of pulled from.

**Cathy:** But, so what are the lessons from Succession? You know, like what it, I like. I watch this show, I watch every show because of human behavior. Like I love, so I watch a lot of cult shows. I watch a lot of scary things. I watch a lot of uncomfortable things like Succession.

**Cathy:** And And I don't love them all, but there's something about watching how people relate to each other. That is really interesting to me.

**Todd:** Interpersonal, interpersonal communication, relationship, all that good stuff.

**Cathy:** Family dynamics. Yeah, like history of trauma. You can see it. And, and people who are great, like shows that aren't that good, they don't have writers that do enough of the investigating and the character development, but really good writers have really good background on their, their characters.

**Cathy:** And you're like, this makes sense. This is what would happen. And so it, it's just one of those shows that obviously Todd and I highly recommend, but these are kind of the things that I pulled out of it. And Todd, please, you know, I'm coming in with my three things, but I want you to elaborate with things that you really noticed

**Todd:** and you know what I'm coming in with, sweetie.

**Todd:** What I'm gonna tell you what I'm coming in with. Okay. Not true. Well put it this way, I put no thought into this podcast. It's all Cathy, and I'm just gonna riff off of what you say. Okay.

**Cathy:** So the way I wanna do this is I wanna talk about the things that the kids were lacking and the things that we can learn from this show.

**Cathy:** Like what were the things besides the, there's obvious things, the trauma they experienced, the, the world they grew up in, the, their dad being you know, neglectful or even cruel, their mom [00:13:20] being really, you know, neglectful. Like, there's those obvious things, but it's like, what, what are the things in our own families that we can learn about?

**Cathy:** And the first one that I thought about was internal motivation. Versus external motivation?

**Todd:** Internal or an intrinsic, or is it the same thing?

**Cathy:** Same thing. Okay. So intrinsic motivation, ex extrinsic or external motivation, and then also internal validation versus external validation. Okay. Cuz they're, they're similar but they're different in how we play them out.

**Cathy:** So the first thing you know, I was talking about the Roys, cuz that's this family in Succession, they didn't have any internal motivation except. To please their father or to be seen as their father. Every, so I shouldn't say they didn't have any. That was it. But they didn't have anything of their own.

**Todd:** But

**Todd:** the, the fact that the motivation came from their father means it was extrinsic.

**Cathy:** Correct. And, and that their, their internal sense of self, like their, the things

**Todd:** that's completely dependent upon completely what Dad thinks of us.

**Cathy:** Nobody, when they were children, honored them and, and were like, what are you interested in?

**Cathy:** What do you wanna do? Who are you? They were pushed aside. They were put down, they were made to feel less than, and then the only time that they ever felt some sense of warmth is if their father gave them praise, praise, love. You know, like during shivs there's a scene where, and by the way I'm gonna say this.

**Cathy:** There if you haven't watched Succession, there might be a few spoilers in here. We're gonna try not to be so overt. But it's hard to talk about a show. I'm not gonna like go through the whole finale, but I don't know exactly where we'll go.

**Todd:** Oh, be forewarned.

**Cathy:** Be forewarned. So, but there is a scene in the, at a funeral where Shiv mentions to be, you know, the time when, when my dad would spend time with me or talk to me or be around me, that's when I felt warmth.

**Cathy:** You know, that's a very common experience is when you have a narcissistic parent or when you have a parent that's neglectful when they, they



can be cruel to you all day long, but if there's a moment where they're actually engaged with you, you feel something that you aren't used to feeling.

**Cathy:** The majority of your life. And so there is, everything was about getting that again, you know, was finding that. And so, you know, even we're not Roy's, you know, all of us listening. But it's like when, how are we talking to our kids about having their own sense of self versus having to please us to please us or the external world.

**Todd:** Do you think it's, nature or nurture that I think it's very normal, specifically when you're younger. Like we want to be noticed by our best caregivers. Right? Of course. It's, we wanna be absolutely validated and loved and seen. So one, it's normal. Two too much biological too. Biological, because that's probably for our own safety.

**Todd:** We gotta make sure our caregivers love us, cuz if we don't, they'll stop loving us. Survival. But then if it's too much where our happiness is completely dependent upon whether or not my mom or dad loves me, that could be a problem too.

**Cathy:** Well, it, it ends up being a lot of these other things that I've written down.

**Cathy:** We can end up having enmeshment, we can end up being really codependent. We can end up, you know, emulating their behaviors, you know, being just like them. them We can end up, you know, having no sense of self. What did, did what did Romans say? He said, we're just a bunch of eggshells with tape or something.

**Cathy:** Like, there's nothing. We're all, he kept saying We're all bs. We're all bs. We're just a bunch of eggshells in tape. Or like, you know, basically meaning there's nothing in of substance. Of substance for them. And he, he realized that at the end. Like they always knew it. They always knew it. Which is why the only thing that made them feel of substance is having a parent and not even a parent.

**Cathy:** Their father noticed them. That's the only thing that filled them up. And that was always dependent. On the moment, on the experience. They could not depend on it. In any way, shape, or form in their lives.

**Todd:** And for some reason, I'm thinking of the movie Wall Street where Martin and Charlie Sheen are in the elevator.

**Todd:** And Charlie Sheen says something like that, I just wanted you to be proud of me, that's all. And Martin Sheen. And you know, I'm sure that there's quite a bit of truthfulness in that scene and Martin Sheen's, like, it's yourself I that you gotta be proud of yourself.

**Cathy:** And that's a very cliché thing, especially in a movie.

**Cathy:** But to your point, it's acted really well in Wall Street. And what he is trying to say is, I, you know, it's like we can understand, of course we want our parents to be proud of us, but I think our parents are proud of us when we're proud of ourselves. Now the healthy parents, are not parents who are working in their own self-interest or who, or who are narcissistic or super enmeshed or codependent, then that can be a little iffy.

**Cathy:** But the goal is like, you know, we've talked about this before, but the thing that I've really appreciated in, in raising my daughters. Is the experiences as a parent where you see them find something and find joy in it and it fills them up. If it be music, if it be, you know, a class they've taken, if it be the, you know, an inter, like an extracurricular activity, a sport, whatever, and you watch it take hold of them. Not because you introduced it, but because they found it. And so they have a sense of ownership and pride. And then as a parent, I don't even know if the word is pride as much as appreciation of like, oh my God, my, my kid has found something they love.

**Todd:** We did a podcast in year two. So we're on 11 or 12, I don't know what year we're on. We're on 13. Year 13. So podcast number 68, we wrote, this is what we titled this just said, don't tell your children, you are proud of them. And then it, I, I'm sure you probably wrote this, sweetie, instead of telling your children you are proud, why not ask them how they feel about what they did?

**Todd:** Instead of having them, I impress you. Why don't you ask them to reflect on their sense of accomplishment? It's a great way to get them intrinsically motivated.

**Cathy:** That's what we're talking about here. It's interesting. That was our, you know, you guys have to go back a decade, but that was our most, most controversial show, I would say.

**Cathy:** I mean, we've had other shows where people have had comments, you know, but I just remember so much pushback on that one. And the thing is, is it's not, you don't have to take it. So literally, of course you can tell your children you're proud of them occasionally. It's not like, don't use that word.

**Cathy:** That's dumb. What we're saying is if our children are only motivated by us being proud of them, then just the nature of what we're proud of them about. Is it our desires? Is it our dreams? Are we, are we like, you know, saying we're proud because they did something we wanted them to do.

**Todd:** It's like, it's like Greg Brady wanting to be an architect, sweetie let's be honest. Right, right. You really wanted be Johnny Bravo. You just wanted to be Johnny Bravo. It's interesting because I think you're right. Like I am not a fan of saying to my kids that I'm proud of them because I, there's an ick factor in it for me. Like, oh, please, the father figure, blah, blah, blah.

**Todd:** But I'll, I'd be much more likely to say it if it's something that they did on something they wanted to do than on their choice.

**Todd:** Nothing to do with me.

**Cathy:** Well, and I do now say occasionally that I, I say I'm proud of you for, but it's always about because of you made this choice on your own. You just graduated high school.

**Cathy:** Like look at the, the accomplishments, like, so again, like I said, it's not about never saying that. It's about being clear about why and when you're saying it. Because if you're proud because your kids are pleasing you then that's, that is driving their external right motivation where everything becomes about your feelings versus what helps them feel like they're thriving.

**Cathy:** It's really, and I wanna say it's subtle, but it's not that subtle. No. Like they, they know, you know, when kids tell me, they have, you know, cause I do talk to a lot of teens, a lot of college students, when they tell me what their interests are, that something really lights them up. And then they say, but I can't tell my parents.

**Cathy:** Yeah, to me that's very sad. Totally sad because it's something that they have realized that feels in alignment with who they are. If it be, you know, I've, I've told Todd about a lot of my students over the years, but students who have been like, I have to study this or I can't go into social work because my parents want me to be in business.

**Cathy:** Or, I wanted to minor in photography, but my parents said I should be minoring in this instead. Or I wanna do, you know, this, this acapella group. But my parents think that distracts from my studies. It's like we're directing their lives. We're becoming too involved.

**Todd:** And we usually direct it because we love them and we want to keep 'em safe.

**Todd:** And like the business thing is easiest. Like, oh, go to business school. Cuz there's a lot of job security in there. I understand that parents will say that, and I don't wanna say, I, I just want to say out loud, I understand why a parent would say that. Sure, and. Let's let these kids figure out their own journey.

**Todd:** And if it means that they're not gonna make a lot of money, cuz they're not going into a business school, I think if you happen to be, as somebody who loves something and chooses to do that one thing for a living, they're gonna be pretty good at it. And if they're, they get to be pretty good at it, whether it's playing the violin or playing in a band or being a physical therapist like you.

**Todd:** Abundance will show up if you do. What is that you love?

**Cathy:** Most of the time there's there's many pathways. Like they may start with something and it leads to something else. That leads to something else. Like pathways are, they're not always, they're not linear. You know, they're gonna, things run into each other.

**Cathy:** You meet someone, you do this, this changes. Like, you know, I can in, hi, I, in hindsight now can look at my life and my dad told me this all the time. He is like, you're gonna look back and understand why everything was the way it was. You can't do it in the moment. And, and we shouldn't force ourselves to see the path.

**Cathy:** But now I look back and I'm like, this went to this and this went to this and this happened for this. Like, I see how I got to where I am and I took a lot of, I wouldn't say they were wrong turns, they were just like, oh, I think I'll try this. I'm gonna be this. And then all of a sudden I'm like, I am not happy doing this.

**Cathy:** And then it, I moved on to some, but I had to have that experience to get to the next place. And so, trusting our kids, In that process of learning, rather than directing them in a linear fashion to first you do this, then you do this. That to me is somewhat controlling. That to me is micromanaging.

**Cathy:** That's, that's like adult helicopter parenting, you know? Like where we're still telling them how to do things. Now the thing is, there is a balance, like you were just saying, you know, telling our kids, you know, it makes sense

to talk to them about finances and about what, you know, how much it costs for an apartment.

**Cathy:** And if they're like, Hey, I'm gonna live in New York and do this thing, it's like, okay, do you know how much it costs to live in New York? Like there are real life experiences that they need to understand and we, if we have good communication with them, good connection with them, that door opens for them to ask our opinion about things.

**Cathy:** And so there is a place, it doesn't mean, again, it's always this swing where we're either like, over controlling or we're not doing anything. And the goal is always that place in the middle, you know, the, these that place where it's like we don't direct them, but then when they ask for advice, we can offer the wisdom of our life.

**Cathy:** Like our girls, you know, I want them to figure out what they wanna major in in college. I'm not gonna take part in that. That's their lives. But there's also things to take into consideration. Like, my oldest daughter had an opportunity this summer to be a research assistant, and she was, you know, thinking, should I do that or should I do this other thing?

**Cathy:** And, and I, and when she asked my advice, I'm like, take these opportunities that are being handed to you. And again, if she wouldn't have done it, she's an adult. That's her choice. But she asked my opinion. And so I shared, this is, this makes a lot of sense. But I also don't feel as if, but everything else.

**Cathy:** She's choosing her own way and then she just wants some support along the way. So it's just the different, it's just this balance and you know, you know, finishing this one up and the internal versus external validation is similar. Like these overlap in many ways. But we also want our kids to feel that their lives are meaningful because what they feel inside is lining up.

**Cathy:** Because if you go through life trying to line up all your externals so you feel good, like, you know, here's my partner, these are the amount of friends I have, these are the things I do. This is what I do for a living. This is the amount of money I make. It's all external.

**Todd:** Well it's funny, like social media is such an interesting, I didn't think about it until just now, but like, you know, our addiction to likes and our addiction.

**Todd:** Yeah, addiction to views. And that's all external validation.

**Cathy:** It, right? It is. It is. It's all looking to the outside world to say you're good enough. Yes. And the thing that we're hoping, you know, all these things we talk about on the show, all these conversations we hope to have with our children are about them trusting what goes on inside of them.

**Cathy:** Where sometimes they're doing things that other people won't understand. And, [00:26:40] and I don't mean that in like, they become conspiracy. There's like, this isn't like off the rails. It's things like they, someone offers them a job that pays a certain amount of money and someone offers them a different job that pays 'em maybe less and they take the one for less because they're like, this feels more in alignment with who I am.

**Cathy:** And it may not be the one that everybody wanted me to take. It could be like, right now most kids have now chosen a school for next year in this, you know, 2023 class, but they may have gotten into an ivy. But then they choose a school closer to home because it feels more like them. So they're not gonna get that external validation, but they know internally what's right for them.

**Cathy:** So

**Todd:** where I go, I, for some reason I'm thinking back on the social media, how we're addicted as a human species to get likes on Facebook or Instagram or whatever. And what I want to say is that we are all miracles, right? Every single one of us and each one of us, the fact that we were even created and born is like insanely improbable.

**Todd:** And that we never need an to do anything to prove our value. We already are. We already are just by the nature of our existence. And I know that may seem hoity-toity or like very kind of new agey spiritual interesting. But it's the truth. We, and if we could believe that, then we can go like do all these amazing things.

**Todd:** But if we're always do it from the outside in versus the inside out. It just doesn't work as well.

**Cathy:** Well, this is the way I look at it. Okay, there's all this unlearning we have to do from our childhood, right? Things we learned that were like, oh, that wasn't really true. Or things that people told us that we had to like unwind because it took us down the wrong path or, or, you know, believing that external validation makes us worthy.



**Cathy:** And as adults, we've had enough experiences. Hopefully, you know, we've had people in our lives that have died or we've had maybe a close brush with an illness, or we're dealing with an illness or a divorce or something that's been really life altering. And we've looked at life in such a different way where we see the only thing that matters is how we feel about ourselves, our connection to others, our trust in, you know, something bigger, whatever you wanna call that.

**Cathy:** And that we see life for what it is. So why are we teaching our children something different than that? Why do we believe we need to run them through this machine? And then someday they go through, you know, if it'd be a 25 or 35 or 55, they go through some kind of midlife crisis where they realize what life's all about?

**Cathy:** Why don't we raise them with an understanding of what life's all about? Right. And they're still gonna go through hardship, and they're still gonna have to learn, and they're still gonna have challenges. It's not as if that, you know, they may end up having a lot of earlier challenges because they take different paths and different roads.

**Cathy:** But then they're still in alignment with themselves versus all of my clients, every, you know, every person that I work with or I have worked with, or every teenager that I'm talking to, they're trying to unwind all this crap that didn't serve them. And what they're figuring out is exactly this internal validation, internal, you know, motivation.

**Cathy:** And why not, you know, I'm repeating what I said, but. Let's help our kids understand that early. They're still gonna be, you know, at the mercy of social media and, and external, you know, praise. It's not like they're gonna not have that experience, but maybe they can have a little stronger sense of self as they go through it.

**Todd:** So, as I'm thinking about this, I can think of moms and dads listening to this being great, Todd, how do I, great Todd and Cathy, how do I do this? And the answer as it always is, is model it. Like how. I still, externally val, validate that we all have it. So literally this, this may be like frustrating, a frustrating invitation, but the best way of teaching this to your kids is for, for us to do it ourselves.

**Cathy:** Well, and that's the thing is these aren't, you know, everything in life, as you guys know, we say all the time, it's paradoxical. So nobody goes through life and doesn't care at all about external validation. We all want praise, we all

wanna be told we're good enough. We all wanna, you know, make a certain amount of money or, or demonstrate to the world that we have some kind of skill.

**Cathy:** That's okay, but is that it? Or do you also have a sense of self Where if those things, and when those things fall away, you still have a foundation. You're like, okay, that was icing on the cake. That was interesting. That was fun. That was a path. And now I have the sense of self again. Romans saying, you know, Eggshells in tape.

**Cathy:** I'm not eggshells in tape. Like there's, I know who I am and that wasn't all of who I am. So you don't teach, like none of that matters. Of course, it matters. People like likes, they like to be praised. They like when people comment on their work, but that's not all of life.

**Todd:** And to what degree is it that you're basing your own value on?

**Cathy:** Correct. And do you have a healthy balance of the two? And not a perfect balance, but a sense, again, I, a foundation? You know, in, the book I wrote in Zen Parenting, the book, the, you know, I based it on chakra's and the first chakra. The root chakra is all about establishing that sense of foundation, the sense of belonging reminding our kids that exactly what Todd just said, that because you're here, you belong.

**Cathy:** You know, like, you don't have to prove to me that you're worthy of being here on this earth or as my child or whatever. You already belong cuz you're here. And establishing that in the way we talk to kids and valuing them and honoring them, that sets a foundation, that that's the roots from where they grow.

**Cathy:** And so it, you know, and for parents who maybe didn't do that as much when they were little, you can do it now. There's no, you know, there's no time limit on this necessarily.

**Todd:** There's a million examples of bad, what I'll consider bad parenting. But the, you know, the movie that just flashed in my eyes as you were talking, what was in Boogie Nights where, the mom, the mom in Boogie Nights, What's his name? Adams. What's Dirk Digger's real name in that movie?

**Cathy:** Something Adams, you're right. Eddie Adams. Eddie Adams. That's it. Good.



**Todd:** So Eddie's like a 17 year old kid and his mom is just Oh my God. Like the worst.

**Cathy:** Well, she's just not well. Yeah, she's not well. She's not well.

**Todd:** We should do we should just play a bunch of movie clips of bad parenting on this podcast.

**Todd:** See how

**Cathy:** that lands. And, and just remembering, and I, you know, I feel like I have to do this as a social worker all the time. That those parents who were calling bad parents struggled and were probably traumatized as well. You have to see the cycle. It, it doesn't mean they're let off the hook or that their behavior doesn't need to change.

**Cathy:** It just means it doesn't come out of thin air. Hurt people hurt people. And people who have never seen or, or, you know, experienced another kind of role model, practice what they experienced. They do the same thing. Fair down.

**Cathy:** Okay, so can I go on to number two? Sure, babe. Okay. So as we said, the first one was internal external motivation or validation.

**Cathy:** The second one is talking about enmeshment. Okay. The family in Succession. I feel like we totally got lost from Succession, but the family in Succession is completely enmeshed.

**Todd:** Okay. So just so I know, is it enmeshed or

**Cathy:** enmeshed? Enmeshed. I mean, what did you say? It's e nm. Yeah, so I'm kind of enmeshed.

**Cathy:** Enmeshed.

**Todd:** It sounds like everybody's always saying enmeshment, right? Enmesh, but enmesh. It's enmeshment. Okay. Yeah,

**Cathy:** so it's enmeshment is the relationship between two or more people where the boundaries are really permeable, where they're, they're unclear, you know what I mean? They like blow in and out of each other.

**Cathy:** In an enmeshed relationship, there is no emotional independence, there's no separation, especially between parent and child. This can lead to a child's inability to form individual thoughts and like having their own beliefs and their own behaviors. They're so in. Overlapping with their parents or their family that they don't even know where they begin and their parent ends.

**Cathy:** There's no separation. There's no separation. So I wanted to read and so how is this related to Succession? How is it not? Yeah, I mean these kids were, are so enmeshed with a narcissistic parents that they don't have any sense of self. They don't. And so again, because they don't know what they like or what they're, what they're interested in, like, it's really interesting because, you know, Shiv in season one, she's the daughter.

**Cathy:** She's really, I found her to be so interesting in season one because she actually is working against her father. Hmm. She's working for a news organization, let's say that, at t c, which is the news organization, excuse me, at tn, which is the news organization that Logan Roy runs, let's say that's Fox.

**Cathy:** Cuz that's how they're kind of, you know, saying it is. And then, Shiv worked for like A M S N B C, you know, like a more liberal leaning and she was also supporting. A, a presidential nominee that was much more liberal. That was the Democratic nominee. So it was like, she was interesting in that she was kind of had a different, you know, belief system, but we come to find out that was more about being the antithesis of him.

**Cathy:** That really wasn't her own beliefs. Because wasn't it at the end of season one or maybe the beginning of season two where he, he says, you know, I really kind of wanted you to come in and she's like, okay, I'll drop everything. Like she,

**Todd:** so she, she departed her values in, in a moment's notice.

**Todd:** Moments notice when daddy said, why don't you come join

**Todd:** my team?

**Cathy:** And were they even values or were they just her trying to push against him? You know, so again, so I just wanted to read a few things about enmeshment for those of us who are like, do not, am I like dealing with this in my own family? So, a person who may have enmeshed relationships would include someone who does not have a strong sense of self, which is what we're talking about.

**Cathy:** Depends on others to provide validation, cannot function well alone, has difficulty acting alone and having a level of independence within a relationship. Is unable to think or act separately from the family without feeling like they're betraying their family does not engage in activities for their own enjoyment, but instead looks to others to figure out what to do most of the time.

**Todd:** So if you're, somebody's listening to this and they're asking themselves, oh, I am I enmeshed with my dad? Or am I enmeshed with my daughter? You don't have to check all those boxes. No, it could just be a few of them to a certain degree and, you know, who knows, like how to actually diagnose it, but,

**Cathy:** and it's not even really a diagnosable thing.

**Cathy:** It's a, it's like a word to kind of notice your boundaries. Which we're gonna get into boundaries in a second, but Todd, here's some examples in a family, for example a mother who calls her son's ex-girlfriend to ask why she broke up with him. Yikes. That's some enmeshment. That's like where you're the mom is just as hurt.

**Cathy:** You know what I mean? A person who cannot make simple life decisions without consulting her parents or his parents about everything. Again, it's okay for kids to consult their parents about certain things that parents should be that support system. But if there's a child who literally can't do anything, and this could be adult children too, Todd.

**Cathy:** Of course.

**Todd:** You know, it's more glaring when you see adult children than that.

**Cathy:** A family member who takes it personally when someone else in the family wants to move away or wants to take a job that they didn't think was what they were gonna do. A parent who relies on her child for support through a divorce, you know, like if there's a divorce going on and the parent like, makes a child their partner or, you know, wants to like unload on their child. A person who has no understanding of activities, that he or she enjoys and instead takes on the interests of the family or the closest friends. You know, the person who really, again, there's just no, there's nothing, they don't have their own, they only have others. And there is a healthy balance in like, you know, Todd is interested in some things that I wasn't interested in and then I learned from him and now I am interested in those things.

**Todd:** But you still aren't playing pickleball.

**Cathy:** No. Well that's cuz you don't ask me to as much because I'm not as good as you and you're very competitive.

**Todd:** I will ask you sometimes when I am in a certain mindset Right, right. Which means I want to go have fun with my sweetie

**Todd:** but if it's I wanna go get a good workout in and, and, and become better at pickleball, I will not ask you,

**Cathy:** will you be my partner when we play Wii tennis? Yeah,

**Todd:** you're pretty good. You've got a little ways to go, but you're doing well.

**Cathy:** How about when I just try and hit it and it just, the ball never hits my cap.

**Todd:** No, it's not that you, I was like, what button it, which button button do I press? And I'm like, there's no buttons. Just swing the thing. A or B. A or B And it's neither. Okay. You just swing it.

**Cathy:** So Todd likes a lot of sports, so I try to engage occasionally. Because he likes those things. Or games.

**Todd:** Are you telling me you're only playing Wii because. I

**Cathy:** wouldn't have who I am, I would probably not buy a Wii, but because we have a Wii I will play with you. So just like you wouldn't, I think I,

**Todd:** it's the best investment we've ever made myself.

**Cathy:** You wouldn't listen to Whitesnake or Backstreet Boys. Oh, Backstreet Boys. I'm in on, you're in on it because of me. I know you would,

**Todd:** but that's my point. But you're not in, on Wii or pickleball. I am [00:40:00] in on Backstreet boys,

**Cathy:** but I am in on Wii and pickleball cuz I play You're not like, my whole point is, is that the, we have enhanced each other's lives with the things we're interested in. We have introduced things to each other rather than me, you know, needing your stuff, sweetie.

**Cathy:** What?

**Todd:** Who says Yeah, which one is that? It's Brian. Oh, Brian.

**Todd:** I've seen these guys in concert, by the way.

**Cathy:** Dude, I, that's true. It's because of me when I sing. I want it that way.

**Todd:** What we really hard to turn the song off, and I hope all my friends make fun of me for loving the song because it's a great song. Everybody loves this song, right? Even the people that say they don't love it,

**Cathy:** they love it.

**Cathy:** It's dumb. It's just, it's part of our like, cultural awareness. Like it's just one of those songs everybody knows. Hey,

**Todd:** tell me

what,

**Cathy:** One time, so Todd and I, I've seen Backstreet Boys about, I don't know, like seven or eight times, but I, Todd's gone with me about four times and one of the times that we were there, we got to be VIPs. Do you remember?

**Todd:** Well Bradley set us up. Yes.

**Cathy:** We were in Northerly Island and in Chicago and we were like there with like 10 other people. You know, talking

**Todd:** with them, you got close to Brian and AJ and Howie and Nick. Kevin and Kevin. Yes. Look at that. I just rattle 'em off. Thanks.

**Cathy:** So point being is we share with each other and that's great, but if you are somebody who doesn't have, like, you're basically just pulling your identity from other people's things.

**Cathy:** That is, I mean that's its whole thing, but there is, that's an enmeshment thing where you're like, I don't know what's mine and what's somebody else's. And sometimes we end up sharing it like I, this, all these things we're talking

about are not, matter of fact, they're all on a continuum. They're all, yeah, it's this or that.

**Cathy:** It's not this or that. It's not black and white. It's all nuanced as, as all things are. But you know, it's, so this is important too. The opposite of enmeshment is disengagement, and that's when personal and relational boundaries are so rigid and family members come and go without any knowledge of each other.

**Cathy:** Like that's like almost neglectful where people don't know each other at all. And so you're so like

**Todd:** disengaged. And there's times when I am in my computer and one of my kids will walk in and I'll check to see how they are and they say, fine, but I don't tune in. There's sometimes some disengagement that I practice.

**Todd:** Well,

**Cathy:** I would say you have disengaged moments, just like every human being. So do I. I mean everybody does, but I'm talking about disengagement as a practice. So where like if you are a parent right now who has no idea what your kids are interested in and you're not asking questions. And you're like completely like, oh, I don't care, teenagers, whatever, that's disengagement of their lives.

**Todd:** So if there's an ex from their lives, X access on one side it's enmeshment and the other side it's disengagement. My center of gravity I would hope would be right there. Smack dab in the middle, right? That's the goal. But. In all honestly, I think I lean slightly towards the disengagement.

**Cathy:** I think so.

**Cathy:** Todd, I think you're very, I mean I know you're trying to be vulnerable and I'm not trying to tell you what to think, it's just that I don't, I think these words are strong. And I don't think you are ever disengaged. No. There's

**Todd:** probably other words, like more adjectives we need to get. Cuz disengagement is all the way at the end.

**Todd:** Correct. And enmeshments all the way at the other end.

**Cathy:** Logan Roy is disengaged he could care less what his kids are interested in. All he's interested in is what he's interested in. That's disengagement. But it is, there is, we can notice, like if we take the word as more of a, an adjective, we can notice when we are disengaged.

**Todd:** So how about this? If I think all human, all human beings, like the odds of some being smack dab in the middle and having a healthy relationship is, is not realistic and I would, so like, it's more like, which way does one person, like if there's somebody listening and they think of, you know, if they're in a couple, if they're in a partnership, it's possible that both parents might be closer to the enmeshed.

**Todd:** Right? And or both parents might be closer to the disengaged or one might be on one side, one might be on the other. I just think it's an interesting, Exercise to say, what's your center of gravity?

**Cathy:** And, and instead of it being a label for you, maybe think about it as your tendencies. These are kind of I mesh tendencies or, because I definitely lean much more toward enmeshment.

**Cathy:** You know what I mean? Like, I do become overly emotionally involved in things where sometimes I can't feel the difference between myself and what my girls are experiencing. And I also get very interested in what they're interested in. I love sometimes the music they share with me.

**Todd:** I would say you're a little more enmeshed with the world.

**Todd:** I know. We, we saw a few squirrels, let's just say playing out front today and they looked like they were kind of like mad at each other. And you said something like, I think we should go help them or something like that. And I'm like, we needed

**Cathy:** to break that up. There was some Me too things going on out there in nature and I was like, they need to get up with the times cuz one squirrel was not interested

**Todd:** and the other squirrel was interested, very interested.

**Todd:** And you're like, so, and you didn't say, I don't think we sh you're like, what if we went out there

**Cathy:** and tried to, I said, I, I'm feeling the need to break this up

**Todd:** and you can't tell I had zero interest. And it's probably for me watching Channel 11 nature shows because there are these people with a video camera that has a really high lens, a good lens, and there's a gazelle getting eaten by a lion.

**Todd:** Right. Don't get in the

**Cathy:** way of that. I know. And, and honestly, I, I didn't get in the way of it, nor do I really think, but your tendency, right. Well, let me give you an example of something that I pay attention to. I noticed in the news last week that there were some people in Yellowstone and there was a bison who had kind of like the, the rest of the bison had crossed the, the street or the road and there was a baby bison left on the other side and some people were trying to guide it and they were touching it.

**Cathy:** And kind of trying to get it across the road. And guess what happened? It's a bad idea. The, the mother didn't wanna, didn't want that baby in the herd anymore. Cuz they touched it. So they had to euthanize it So crazy. And I guess my point in saying that is it's like a sad story to, to not to, to be over involved.

**Cathy:** Like, we're not such a

**Todd:** awful story. Listen to then parenting radio, we'll inspire you. Everybody.

**Cathy:** Bison, baby bison, baby bison. But so my point about the squirrels is I'm not really gonna engage. My feelings though are like, I'm kind of annoyed cuz I'm humanizing

**Todd:** these squirrels. I remember we had some landscapers and he was, he was telling me a story about little bunny hutch and there's a bunch of money, like, and the guy's like, do not touch them.

**Todd:** Don't touch, because if you do the mom, what's that? What is that? Moms are so great nature and everything's so great and they'll like give themselves up. But if they smell at all, like. A human, they're like, you know what? I'm not interested. But

**Cathy:** you're humanizing them. You're making it sound like they understand something different.

**Cathy:** Their whole way of knowing this is their child is the way they



**Todd:** smell. So is that why it's not so, so does the, you're,

**Cathy:** you're acting as if they're conscious, like they don't smell. But I'm

**Todd:** gonna leave this, I know you don't know the answer to this question, but is the mama buffalo or the mama bunny rabbit, does it really not think that that's its baby?

**Cathy:** It obviously Todd, I mean, just by

**Todd:** I thought it's like this. My baby is now contaminated with human smell, so I'm not gonna

**Cathy:** help it. We're saying the same thing though. The baby doesn't smell like it's mine or this baby. There's something different about it. I, I don't know enough. I'm not like, I'm not an animal expert, but there's something about that that cuts off the mother's ability to recognize this child.

**Cathy:** So whatever the logistics of that are, whatever the details, I don't know. But it's not, like you said, you're, you're saying, oh, moms are so great, but they leave a baby behind. They're not intending to do that. That's not their intention. But something gets in the way. It's like, why I didn't disturb the squirrels?

**Cathy:** Because this may be their, the way they mate, this is how they dance. This is how they dance. It's just, it seemed a little aggressive from my end.

**Todd:** It, it was an interesting morning. Let's just say that like we should do, let's do one of those parenting animations and see what the animator can do with this, with this segment.

**Cathy:** Oh, we were sitting by the window for a long time. All right. So I was like, I'm like, run, run. And then she wouldn't run. No. And then, then we're like, well, maybe this is the way.

**Todd:** Well there's so many great maiden dances. There's that, that bird that gets, there's a bird, the male bird that cleans up his little space.

**Todd:** And then he does this crazy ass dance. Yes. To impress and like, like titles.

**Cathy:** Right. It's so funny. And what's so funny is when then it doesn't work. No. Because the other bird's

**Todd:** like nothing. And you just feel his disappointment, like, oh, this poor guy. He's like, I laid it all out here. That's right.

**Todd:** He got vulnerable and he got his ass hand. He sure did. He did the dance. How many more do you have by the way? Oh, just

**Cathy:** one. Okay, good. We're, so I wanna finish a measurement with this though, that, that. You know, going to Succession again, Logan Roy uses condemnation and emotional con, you know, emotional currency through the whole show.

**Cathy:** Like, that's, that's how he controls his kids. He praises another child above another when they do what they, he wants them to do. You know, if, if Roman is, is, you know, engaging with his dad, then he's like, you're the one and the other ones suck. Or you know, if it's with Kendall or if it's with Shiv, he uses that enmeshment to mess with them.

**Cathy:** And the, you know, the description is like, think about it this way. Like those kids are already very rich. One of my favorite, lines was from like an episode like about five weeks ago when Matson is trying to like, talk Kendall into like a new deal and Matson's like, I'm just trying to make you rich man.

**Cathy:** And Kendall's like already rich. Check. Like he's like has been, I'm already rich. So, but these kids are already, like, set up for their lifetimes financially, generationally.

**Todd:** They're their grandchildren's, grandchildren are set up

**Cathy:** billionaires, so they're, they don't need from their dad anything financial.

**Cathy:** They just want his attention. So it's often described as like golden handcuffs. Like they just want him, you know, like they're, they're trying to, you know, deal with their narcissistic father as if they're gonna get anywhere with him and they're not so, you know, and he's emotionally abusive.

**Cathy:** So anyway, let's do the last one, number three. And it's the need in a family, the importance of having strong boundaries. Okay. And that's the truth. If when it comes to codependency or narcissism or just anything in between, like the ability to have. Boundaries in your life where you do know where you begin and end.

**Cathy:** So you do know what feels okay and what doesn't, or you are in the practice of knowing it. Cuz obviously sometimes we miss the boat on that. Sometimes we think we're doing something for us and then we recognize later we are doing it for everybody else. Or sometimes we're like setting a boundary that's too rigid and then we realize we have to be more compassionate.

**Cathy:** Like there's all sorts of play interplay in here cuz it's a practice. But just for clarity, Codependence, like if you, codependency means that you feel responsible for other people's feelings and happiness. So codependent parents are like obsessed with talking about their children's needs or dealing with their children's needs.

**Cathy:** Instead of tending to their own feelings, they take on the emotions of their children. I have struggled with this. I have talked about, my therapist doesn't like when I say I'm codependent, she just says You have codependent tendencies. Because I'm not all the time, I really do know where I begin

**Todd:** sum but up.

**Todd:** Even Logan Roy, who's a fictional character, he's narcissist for sure, but he probably has moments of not many. But loving, give, you know, charitable, blah, blah, blah. It's, it's, you know, just one label does not define anybody.

**Cathy:** The only time I ever saw Logan be somewhat that way was with his intimate relationships. Like with, at the beginning with Marsha or with Security

**Todd:** Guard his, his best

**Cathy:** friend with his best buddy. What's that guy's name? I don't remember. It's not Carl. It's not Frank. What's his name? Anyway, he said, he tells his, the guy who's been like helping him his whole life, like, you're my best friend.

**Cathy:** Like he has. He still has narcissistic personality disorder. I'm sorry. He's, he's for sure it's so who he is. But he does have moments. But, so codependency is like taking on the feelings of other people. I have always struggled with this, but I do have, I do practice boundaries. I do have an understanding. I can like recognize that I'm doing something that's codependency, you know what I mean?

**Cathy:** Like, I'm like, I see it. Narcissistic parents on the other hand are so self-absorbed that they value their own feelings above anybody else's. So they lack

empathy and they [00:53:20] disregard other people's needs. So it's like the two extremes.

**Todd:** I just so in the Team Zen app I just put in two words.

**Todd:** One is boundaries, , and we've done about Zen Talk number five, podcast 589, podcast 590 Zen Talk 39. So we've done so much work on boundaries, which is great because I think it is something that is super important. And then I just for fun, I don't remember doing this, but we did a whole podcast at codependency.

**Todd:** Podcast 680, which was not too long ago. Maybe six months ago. So, oh, and then 691, we had some co-dependency stuff going on. So anyways, I just, a lot of the things we're talking about today, we, we, we have talked about, had a deep dive into each one of

**Cathy:** those things. It's why it's so easy to recognize in a, in a show like Succession, cuz it's so blatant.

**Cathy:** It's so like, you know, all-encompassing. But the reason I'm talking about boundaries in terms of codependency and narcissism is you have to have boundaries for each of these things. If you have a narcissistic parent, you have to know what your boundaries are because theirs are, are our. They're not going to stop doing or being who they are.

**Cathy:** So you have to know what your limits are. True. We, you know, there have been experiences that Todd and I have had with, you know, people who are narcissistic and we have had to create our own like, story about, and not even a story our own choose our own path. Like, we're gonna go do this thing, but we're gonna be with this person for this amount of time and then we're gonna end it and we're gonna go home because this person won't end it.

**Cathy:** This person will ask for more. So we have to have our own balance. People

**Todd:** taken, you give 'em an inch, they take a foot,

**Cathy:** right? Exactly. Or a mile. You know, cuz foot's not that much, but they'll take

**Todd:** a mile. Well, well, and an inch is 12 times a foot is 12 times more than an inch. A mile. There's a lot of inches in a mile.

**Todd:** So what if we do a yard? No, I have like inch foot thing because I feel like the mile thing is like, I don't,

**Cathy:** I think it's give an inch. Take a mile, isn't it? I don't know. It's, I think I'm using the phrase, but it doesn't matter cuz you got the, but

**Todd:** we need to figure this out. This is important. You're right.

**Todd:** Give an inch and take a mile. Yeah, that'd be damned. It's not. Give

**Cathy:** an inch and take a foot. Yeah, you're right. What else? Okay, so here's the thing also, this is true with codependency on both sides. If you are, you have to have a sense. If you are a parent who feels like you're so over-involved in your kids' lives or their emotional lives, or you're just so overly invested and everything is about them, you have to be conscious of your own boundaries.

**Cathy:** You have to set some boundaries around I will engage if they ask my opinion, but other times I am going to take a deep breath and allow my children to live their lives. And that is can be true if they're four years old and they put on a mismatched outfit to go to school, Skylar. And that could be true when they are 22 and are making life choices that are very major, we have to honor who they are.

**Cathy:** And if they ask for advice, of course we give it. But we have to be thoughtful about these things because to Todd's point at the beginning of the show, how do our children learn? Learn boundaries by watching us set boundaries. If it comes to,

**Todd:** it's the best learning tool of all time.

**Cathy:** Absolutely. And I think when we think about boundaries, we think about that we have to be harsh or we have to be like, no, are we there?

**Cathy:** Boundaries don't even have to be recognized as boundaries. Like we don't have to be like, I'm going to set a boundary. We just say things like, like for example, I'm supposed to have dinner with this group of friends and I love them dearly, but I'm not great at night. I'm much better during the day. And so my boundary is like, I wanna do lunch together, because when I say I'm not great at night, what I mean is I'm just more active and on for a lunch.

**Cathy:** Do you know what I mean? But if I have to wait till a seven or eight o'clock dinner, I'm tired. Yeah, I do. I just got asked to speak a couple of weeks

ago, somewhere in town, and the thing didn't start till eight 30. I'm like, and for me, a work boundary is I can't work that late. You know? I mean, I could choose to write that late if I wanted to, but I don't wanna wait all day to go to work at eight 30.

**Cathy:** So those are work boundaries I set up and those, and these are just small little things I don't have to tell people. I just say, that doesn't work for me, or This would work better. And that's okay. Like the not every boundary is some insistence on See me, recognize me. It's more about how do I get through life and feel, again, it goes back to number one, like internally motivated, internally validated by how you know my choices and how I'm gonna get through life.

**Cathy:** Like how I have to teach people how to treat me. I can't just walk through life and expect people to know how to treat me and, and it's different depending on who you are. Todd was just saying the other day we got into, it wasn't really an argument, but he was talking about people being sensitive.

**Cathy:** And he said, you said, you said this person is just like you, Cathy. They kind of expect people to treat them in a certain way or some, what did you say? Do you remember? No idea. And I said, wait a second. I don't really expect the world to treat me a certain way, but you, Todd, or my best friends, or people close to me, I do let you know because you're the most important people to me.

**Cathy:** So I want you to understand me. But I don't walk around the world saying, everybody should treat me a certain way. Because who, who has time for that, first of all, for me to explain, you know? And, and will people even really recognize that or care about that? Cuz we're not in invested relationships. I'm not in relationships with everybody but the people I care about the most, I would like them to know that, you know, this is who I am and this is what works best for me.

**Todd:** Yeah,

**Cathy:** well, you know, that's just like,

**Todd:** Your opinion, man. Straight sweetie. So in closing the expression, give him an engine. He'll take mes been in use since the late 18 hundreds, though it's derived from a phrase found in John Haywood's 1546 work. So here we are, whatever, 600 years later, 500 years later.

**Todd:** But yeah, it comes from John Haywood. That's interesting. You know, that we're gonna quote John Haywood today.

**Cathy:** No, I'm glad he came into

**Todd:** our show today. Give him an inch and I'll take an L. That's what he said in his book. An L was a unit of measurement for clot that was about 45 inches in length. So technically it's a little bit closer to a foot than a mile, but somehow our culture decided to use mile.

**Todd:** I stand with my foot. I'm going to stand with my foot. You and John Haywood, me and John Haywood from

**Cathy:** 1546. Yeah, I'm glad you've made a new friend. That's right. So this, I'm gonna finish this with about boundaries. So boundaries create safety in families. They reflect respect for everyone's needs and feelings.

**Cathy:** They communicate clear expectations. They establish what's okay to do and what's not. This is okay, this is not, as a child grows up, boundaries should gradually shift to allow for more autonomy. That's where Todd and I are in our parenting to give our children greater privacy, developing their own beliefs and values and so forth.

**Cathy:** In healthy families, children are encouraged to become emotionally independent, to separate, to pursue their goals, become themselves and not be extensions of us. Like I have to, you know, I have to, with my girls now, I have two adult children. And I obviously have opinions or thoughts or whatever, but they get to choose.

**Cathy:** And then I'm the support system and, and we've been working up to this since they were in adolescents. Like this isn't just some dramatic, like, you know, they turn 18 and we change, like as your kids grow up, you've got to give them more autonomy. That's how they develop internal validation. That's how they develop internal motivation.

**Cathy:** They start to trust themselves.

**Todd:** Whatever mistakes do you notice that they're gonna make, as long as they're not irreversible, which is. Whatever, running out in the street when they're three years old. Right? Like that's the stuff you gotta like. Be a control freak around. But everything else, like, that's how we learn, not from when times are good, not when things work out.

**Todd:** We learn from when stuff went wrong



**Cathy:** and we learn by that we chose all these experiences like, you know, if we are directing our children's lives and we're saying do this, do that, then anything that does go wrong, they can kind of attribute to it being our fault. Right. But if our children are making their own decisions, it, it's interesting Todd, I think about when we first started parenting and we had little kids, and I remember a discussion that you and I had when we were really starting to talk about emotional labor and your involvement and my involvement.

**Cathy:** And one of the things that I brought up, and I can't, I can't take ownership for this. I think a teacher gave me this, but if I make all the decisions for the kids, then you could so easily blame me. But if we make decisions together, when I say blame me if something goes wrong or if it doesn't happen the way things should, like, let me go back to Succession.

**Cathy:** There's a scene where Rava, who is Kendall's wife, and they have two kids, and I maybe ex-wife, I think they're divorcing and Rava shares with Kendall that because the environment has gotten so, the environment being our political environment has gotten so like chaotic that their child who they have an adopted child, is starting to feel unsafe and has an experience that's really scary on the street.

**Cathy:** And Kendall says to Rava, well, where were you? Why weren't you there protecting her when Kendall hasn't seen his kids for months. And just this blaming of you're doing all the work, so I'm gonna blame you for anything that goes wrong. And when we're parenting, we have to co-parent or else one parent can make the other parent a scapegoat of something.

**Todd:** I have a real world example of this. Let's hear it. I don't know how old I was. I was probably 10. Okay. It was, I was in little league, it was the end of the game. My dad went to all my games. This is not a fun memory between my dad and I. Okay. And it was towards the end of the game. Seventh inning. Cause I think we played seven innings at the time.

**Todd:** And I was short, stopped, whatever. And there was a player that was caught in a rundown. Rundown is when they're stuck between two bases. Bases. But there's also a man on third. Okay. And I was executing the rundown and my dad screamed, throw home. So what did I do? I threw home, but I threw it. Either I, I threw it off the plate or it was too late.

**Todd:** The guy was safe. We ended up losing the game. Hmm. That's hard memory. And my dad, like, we were both so mad at each other and I stay. Love you dad, but. He shouldn't have said that. He should have allowed me, but I was



always like, I had my radar on like, oh, my dad said something. I need go do it. Of course he should allowed me, and he ended up messing me up because that was not the good choice because if it was, then I would've thrown him out.

**Todd:** So, sorry dad, you made a mis, that was a bad day for you.

**Cathy:** Well, and we can just focus on that as far as parents do that on the sidelines of games all the time. This isn't just your dad. How many parents are like, Ron, go there. Kick. And it just really disconnects a kid from not only their own internal Totally, but from the coach's words.

**Todd:** That's what Silent Saturdays are for. I know we don't do soccer anymore, but we did. But we were part of AYSO. And did these things like twice a year. Is it ASO or A Y S O? People aren't here. Call it ASO. Okay. I grew up saying AYSO. American Youth Soccer Organization. And they do these things called Silent Saturdays.

**Todd:** And I used to hate 'em because that means all the parents have to shut up other than clap. That's the they can do. And then somebody explained to me why they do that and it's every Saturday should be Silent Saturday because there's so many parents out there telling their kids to kick the ball as if the kid doesn't know that he's supposed to kick the ball. Just be quiet on the sidelines.

**Cathy:** Everybody right like that. They don't know they're supposed to. There was this parent on the sidelines, this is like eight years ago, so this parent probably doesn't remember this, but who was saying kick it, get a goal and I'll take you to Portello's. Kick it.

**Cathy:** Get a goal. Like, like bribing their child while they were in the game, while they're on the soccer field. And can you imagine like that kid or the coach, like the pressure, they then they can't hear themselves. Then the kid can't play a game. That is connected to their teammates. They can't play a game that's in the best interest of their team cuz they're doing what their parent thinks they should do.

**Cathy:** And the parent doesn't know anything about what those plays are. It's such a talk that's like a form of amesh right there where you're like, you are too involved. Oh you need to pull out.

**Todd:** Well that's, and we're gonna have John O. Sullivan on at some point. He's we've had him on before. We had had him at a conference.

**Todd:** But I think sports is such an interesting. Will you explain what John O. Sullivan does so people know what that means? He's written books on how to guide our children through youth athletics in a healthy way. In a healthy way. And, we've all seen the YouTube clips. We've probably all been present where these parents get way too invested in what's going on with whether or not their kid wins or loses a baseball game.

**Todd:** I remember when I was a little kid, there was parents screaming at the umpire. The umpire was crying. The umpire's like a 14 year old kid's so wrong. Umping a 10 year old game. So yeah, I get pretty triggered pretty quickly when I see [01:06:40] parents taking youth athletics to.

**Cathy:** Seriously. Seriously. And getting too involved.

**Todd:** Because it doesn't happen with orchestra.

**Todd:** It's not like we we're yelling at our kid cuz they miss a

**Cathy:** note. Well sometimes things happen at home. There are parents who I guess that's true. Insist on practice and insist on playing in front of people and insist on their kids performing. Like there we're that over involvement. If you wanna, if it's an enmeshment, you know that where you really don't know where your kid begins and you end or you know, vice versa.

**Cathy:** Or just imposing our dreams. Or our expectations on our kids. There are no boundaries there and that's not okay. So my last thought about Succession is, Todd, what I thought about after, cuz we finished the finale last night. I'm sure a lot of you did. Kendall and Roman and Shiv. Now Shiv as we know, has, is gonna have a different experience because of what happens with Tom.

**Cathy:** But Kendall and Roman are basically left with 1.8 billion and they're still not okay. No. If that doesn't teach you all, you need to know right. About what money is. And that they, we end that show like thinking, oh my gosh, these poor people. And they have more money.

**Todd:** 99.9% of humanity. But

**Cathy:** they don't know who they are.

**Cathy:** No. And that's what life is about. Their

**Todd:** dad messed him up. It's bottom line. In closing, I wanna say hi to Jeremy Kraft. He's a Baldheaded Beauty. He does painting and remodeling throughout the Chicagoland area. Sixty three oh nine five six eighteen hundred. Give 'em a call if you have any projects and you live in Chicago.

**Todd:** Cathy has an amazing book called Zen Parenting, Parenting Ourselves and Our Children in an Unpredictable World. I do this thing called Men Living, where we create spaces for guys to connect, heal and thrive, live deeply, authentic, vulnerable conversations. I also do coaching, so if there's any guys out there that want to do any coaching, hit me up at [toddadamscoaching.com](http://toddadamscoaching.com).

**Todd:** Anything else, sweetie? I

**Cathy:** think that's it. Oh, one last thing. Cause I haven't talked about it for a long time. What about Succession versus Backstreet Boys? Anyway, I, I have a newsletter that I put out every Friday. It's called Zen Parenting Moment. So I write something I actually wrote about Succession last week and grief.

**Cathy:** And then there's also in the newsletter, the things that Todd and I are doing. So all you have to do is go to [zenparentingradio.com](http://zenparentingradio.com) and subscribe to that

**Todd:** newsletter. And don't forget to join Team Zen, and don't forget to subscribe to our YouTube channel.

**Cathy:** Actually, Todd, will you put all these things in the show notes then?

**Todd:** It's all at the very top of the show notes.

**Cathy:** Perfect. So all these things we just said, you can find them in the show notes. Oh,

**Cathy:** now I can see that falling

**Todd:** the way that it used to be.