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**Todd:** Here we go. My name's Todd. This is. Cathy. Welcome back to another episode of Zen Parenting Radio. This is podcast number 721. 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.

On today's show, we have our good friend Hunter Clarkes-Field. Yay. Yay. Hunter's a, an author. She's been a friend of ours since, I don't know, it's seems Years. Years, yes. Like the beginning. She's a mindfulness me mindfulness mentor. She's the host of a podcast called Mindful Mama.

Global Speaker number one, bestselling author of Raising Good Humans, which we're gonna talk about. And then today, on August 1st, [00:01:00] her second book comes out raising good Humans every day. She's got over 20 years of experience in meditation, yoga practices and you have two daughters, right? So welcome, Hunter.

So glad you're here.

**Hunter:** I'm so glad to be here and it's such an honor. I couldn't have imagined when I was like screaming at my phone and being like, but how? And listening to you guys and just being like, oh, I wanna be like Todd and Cathy, but I would be here. Shocking to you guys. It's such an honor.

**Todd:** No.

Well, we're just happy to have you on with us. That's a nice, so how long you been doing the podcast for? I forget.

**Hunter:** It's been 10 years now. Isn't that crazy? Yeah. We're on like in the four hundreds of episodes when you said 700, I was like, oh my God. But yeah, it's been 10 years. Does it come

**Todd:** out every week?

Are you a weekly trainer? Yeah, basically. We're weekly at this point. Now, is it all interviews or do you just talk solo sometimes.

**Hunter:** No. Sometimes what I, what has been getting a lot of downloads lately actually, is I do some [00:02:00] honor coaching calls. And so that people like those a lot. But yeah, other than that, it's interviews.

'cause I like to talk to people.

**Todd:** So somebody calls up or you schedule something with you saying, Hey, I issues, I need help. And they're like, great, we're gonna record it and put it up there for other people to learn from our exchange.

**Hunter:** Yeah. Yeah. Which I think is so cool and brave of people to do that.

I'm always like, thank you. This is, it's meaningful, right? For, to have people get vulnerable and share all this stuff.

**Todd:** Talking about vulnerability and sharing, Cathy was on TikTok last night and you found a bunch of the red, what's the,

**Cathy:** Red table. It's red table it Pinkett Jada Pinkett Smith and her daughter Willow and her mom.

**Todd:** And she had Demi Moore and her three daughters.

**Cathy:** And it's old, by the way. Okay. This is not a new thing, Todd. This came out like years ago. Oh, didn't know that. Yes. Yes. But

**Todd:** all three daughters have had significant challenges with substance abuse, I think. I mean, you talk about ~~Vulner~~ vulnerability.[00:03:00]

There's a version of people that'd be like, I'm not gonna say this to my next door neighbor much less put it out there. So anyways, it's, well,

**Cathy:** what was great about it, it was like a conversation, obviously it's, Jada's family, like her mom and her daughter, and they've all had issues that they've talked about.

And then you've got Demi Moore with her, two of her daughters. She did her daughter scout wasn't there, and they were talking about their history with their mom's addiction and there was no like, They were just talking about it and there is something, so I was glued Todd's are you still watching that?

I'm like, yeah, because just like your, the people who do that on your show where you're talking about not generalizations of people, ex experience. But somebody is asking a real question about their family and you are with their. Emotion. And as you said, what an honor to that they trust you.

**Todd:** Hunter, how do you navigate talking about your own challenges and vulnerabilities? And I'll share how we tend to do it. If, whatever, let's say I yelled at my kid [00:04:00] for blah, blah, blah. We always keep our kids we don't mention which of the three kids. And some people will be a little more ambiguous, so we're not outing any of their personal stories. How. Is that something that you subscribe to on your podcast sometimes where you're willing to kind of share something a little messy about

**Hunter:** yourself? Yeah, definitely. ~~And I, yeah,~~ I'm cognizant of trying to keep sort of the personal stories their own, but yeah, at the same time it's interesting 'cause when you have things like maybe with your own parents or with your kids, like it's also your story too, right?

Like some, my story of me losing my temper is also my story of me losing my temper. That I may not go into the details of the nudgy annoying. Things that my kid was doing 'cause she was hangry to like, provoke it in me, right? But but yeah, it is there. So yeah, sometimes I'll say I have a daughter since I only have two daughters.

It might be easier to distinguish between them, I guess. 'cause one is the older and one is the younger daughter. And, but but. I, I mean, I guess there's, [00:05:00] I think I, I feel comfortable talking about them when they were little and I just say, my daughter when she was this age, and it's, who knows which daughter it was and who caress anyway 'cause they were two years old, and then, nowadays, I don't know, nowadays there's. Frankly, I mean there's different challenges, but they're not the same parenting challenges that there were and I think they're, because I was able to like kind of turn around this ship that was going in a bad direction when they were young.

And so actually things some ways, like every day interactions and things like that, which are like intensely challenging when they're, like, a lot of things have gotten easier and easier as time goes on. Rather than escalating. I mean, there are a whole host of other challenges that come with living with humans in the world.

Right? But they're not necessarily parenting related as much. So, I get to kind of avoid, a [00:06:00] lot of that disclosure, I guess. Yeah,

**Cathy:** well you put in all that, Todd and I have always called it dividends because there's a lot of this hard work upfront where you're doing all this.

And I know because I've read your book and I've known you for so long and listen to your show. You do all this hard work on yourself and you're willing to look at all these. Things and you're willing to do something differently with your girls and you're willing to like, just have a completely different perspective on how I wanna do this.

And what that does to your point, I'm just reiterating, is then later on, You cleaned up a lot. You know what I mean? And not you personally, but all of us, you're cleaning up a lot of things that then you can have easier conversations. Things are already on the table. The girls know that they can trust you.

They don't feel judged. They know that you have humility. There's all these things that are already out there. And how old are your girls now? 16

**Hunter:** and 13.

**Cathy:** Yeah, so you're right in it. So we're not JC as she's 20 Cameron's 18 and Skyler's 15. [00:07:00] So we're kind of, overlapping each other.

And how have you liked having

**Hunter:** teenagers? I, I love that question because I love having teenagers. I mean, honestly, the, I think it's great and it, I do see it was like all this like effort, so much effort when they're younger, so, so much effort and you could see it pay off, it is, it's just so much easier to talk to them.

It's, I like hanging with them. They're fun to hang out with. If they wanna hang out with me, they tell me stuff mostly, and, my one daughter is 13 now, and like 13 has its issues. Like 13 is there is separation at 13. And I'm just like, wow, I see that 13 is in you today. And it, I don't take it personally. I don't know. I maybe in a way I would've. Before but yeah, I love having teenagers. People are like, oh, you have teenage girls. The whole eye roll thing. And No, it's great. [00:08:00] Don't if you, yeah, I think that is something that you can aspire to, to make your relationships positive and good and open and authentic and be real with your kids and all of those things.

And then they just don't have, like when I was 13, when I was 14, it was a mess, right? There was just so much pushback. There was like, there was running into

the arms of not very helpful peers in like bad situations right. And escaping my family. And there were repercussions from that for years and years.

But yeah, I really think that shift towards. Away from, I'm a parent that has to control this child and I have to make them do these things. And I, not having boundaries, but that shift from authoritarian control to I'm in a relationship with a human and and when I'm, the definition [00:09:00] of discipline is to teach, right?

If we can move into that place of what do you need to learn in this situation? If we can look at conflicts and instead of saying who's right and who's wrong, who's gonna win and who's gonna lose? If we can say, what do you need in this situation? What do I need this situation, how can we figure it out?

Right? If we start, if we can make those shifts, and especially. If we can make 'em when they're young, it's really great, but we can make them at any time. And it just is like that shift to a relationship with a human. And then, you know who said it? I quote a friend of yours. 'cause I know that the, who wrote and I forget her name, she wrote The Soul to Soul, right?

Like that whole idea of soul to. Yeah. Who was, say her name again? Annie Burnside. I know. I wanted to shout her out. Annie Burnside and she sold to Soul versus roll to roll. That's so key, right? Like I'm a human with you, another human, and it's our relationship and then it can grow and get easier over time.

I feel

**Todd:** like [00:10:00] sometimes and I don't know how to say this without, it's coming off bad, but like our teenage daughters, Most of the time like us. And I know that there's a lot of parents out there that listen to this podcast like, my kid hates me and I screwed up and I don't know where to start. And I just wonder I find myself challenged to answer that question.

'cause it happens a lot. Can I,

**Cathy:** can I say this to frame it better for people instead of my kids like me, my kids don't, the frame that I like is, We are in a typical relationship with our kids that is very human, which is we have a good time together. We like each other, we're respectful of each other, and then there's challenges occasionally that we have to work through.

Sure. Because there's been a miscommunication or there has been, they feel that they're not, being seen in some way or we're having to, they feel, whatever it may be. We're in a typical relationship with them versus, as to your point, this authoritarian, we're in charge. You either, [00:11:00] it's my way or the highway.

And that lends itself to having more of, and some people don't like this word, but I'm fine with it, with the age. My kids are, I've, we have a friendship with our children, right? There is a peer-to-peer kind of thing. I mean, my oldest is 20 for goodness sakes, yeah. And so I think Todd then go into your question about how do we start now?

And, you

**Todd:** know, we were just talking to a friend and this friend said, oh man, I just I made some. Big mistakes, like I prioritize work too much. And now my sons, when they get home, they just wanna go in the room and the door's closed. And they have no interest in engaging with me. And I honestly struggle with my invitation to parents who have those problems is like, just find a threat.

Just find, and this just comes from John Duffy. He's just find one thing that you could pull on, whether it's games or music. Just to engage them a little bit. But that's like where my tools kind of run out to help them, like with something like that they can put into practice right now. And I just wonder if [00:12:00] anything pops to your mind when you have parents that ask those questions.

**Hunter:** Sure. I mean, I think it's never too late. I mean, that's the thing is like the universal skills. And in fact, like in the new book, I have a, I was thinking of chapter 37, why I want to date my child. I have a chapter called Why I Wanna Date My Child. And the thing is I like the language of dating, right?

Because if you're, like you're, you have, things are rocky with your partner and maybe your marriage, you're like, everyone's have a date night, that kind of thing. And the truth is that a relationship with a kid, it's Just like every other relationship, you need to give it time and attention and be open and vulnerable and, be human and give it that attention that it needs in order to grow.

And that's the same so that whole find a thread is right, right? It's find something, invite your kid. You wanna get to know them, get into their world and create that connection. 'cause ultimately, like we know that it's, if we're moving [00:13:00] away from. Using power or power over another human being then what is it that makes it so it's easy for you and you guys?

Right? And easier for us is, for me, when my kids are teens, it's because of the connection, right? It's the connection that makes this desire to cooperate and to workout problems and to all of those things, right? So it's like that has to be. That's everything. Right? That has to be cultivated. So Yeah. Find that thread and if it has been hurt and damaged and lost, there may need to be you repair that happens. There's, there's a real wonderful tool that I love for repair that I got from the Plum Village community of Thich Nhat Hanh and it's called Beginning Anew and I love this tool 'cause it could be like a letter, it could be a conversation, it could be an email or whatever it is, [00:14:00] but, This idea of w we have to just be open and vulnerable and say to our kids like that friend of yours, may need to say they were doing to do a beginning anew letter.

They might say to their kids like, Hey, these are all the things I appreciate about you. This is what you know, I wanna see. I see you and in your. Your beauty, right? And these things. And then in the second part, they would share their own regrets and say, Hey, this is what I regret. Like I've worked too much.

I miss this. I really regret this. Be human and open and vulnerable. And then in the third part, then you might have a chance to share, talk about any hurts and difficulties that they may have currently in the relationship in a way that's not accusatory. But I love this tool because like a, when you tell someone.

This is what I appreciate about you. They're like, oh, you're not just coming to me with a problem and complaining like you're seeing all of me. And then B, when you tell [00:15:00] them your own share, your own regrets and vulnerabilities, they're like, oh, you're being human. Okay, I'll listen to you. And then it opens up the door for this.

Then we can. Talk about whatever difficulties we have in front of us, but I don't think it's ever too late. I had a, I taught mindful parenting to a in-person group, low income group in my area, and there was a grandmother there and she was like there 'cause she was watching her six-year-old grandson.

But at the end of the whole thing she know, she's things with her grandson are better. Great. But she was like tears. She was so moved. And she said to me how she healed her relationship with her adult daughter. Using these tools and I think that's, True. Like you, that can happen. And it gives me goosebumps thinking about it still, because it's like, yeah, it is never too late.

Why would you ever say, oh, okay, well forget it. I give up. Right. I'm like, I'm giving up on this. No, there's never too late to turn it around.

**Cathy:** Well, and what you just said is the. What [00:16:00] I love about having these discussions about relationships with our partner or our kids is that they're universal.

There's nothing that we talk about that is like just for children. I really, I mean, maybe some people can point out, certain things, but for the most part, the humility that you're talking about, the ability to own what is yours, the ability to recognize where you've harmed, where you've hurt the decision to repair all that is with everybody.

That's, this is, and that's kind of the thing is I feel like. There's a lot of people who view relationships or partnerships or, friendships at work or whatever in one way, and they're like, yeah, but I'm different as a parent. And that's always my first question. Why? Why are you a different human with your kids?

Like, why do they not know you? Why do they not know the music you like? Why do they not know that you like to dance? Or why do they not know that you used to be an artist? Or what are the things about. You know your life that you're not sharing, and what message did you get, [00:17:00] that you're not supposed to do.

You find that with your clients and the people you talk to, that they don't share their true nature with their

**Hunter:** kids. Yeah, I mean, it's this feeling of I, there's a such a pressure that like, I have to be perfect, right? I wanna be perfect for these kids. I don't wanna mess up my kids, right?

And so this we're all so many of us are in this achievement mode, you get the grade you get. You get the GPA whatever, you get the job, and then you get to parenting and you're like, okay, I have to win this. I don't wanna mess up my kids and give them insecure attachment or avoid an attachment like horror.

And that's true. That's like real fear. So. You know that. But the thing is that just that achievement mode, it makes us so anxious and then we can't like, relax and be ourselves. And that's actually, sadly, paradoxically, that's exactly what our kids need, is us to relax and be ourselves [00:18:00] and and do the things that, that feed us rather than just being a blank slate.

Or like Andy Burn said just a role, right? That's. That's exactly what our kids need from us is to be real and authentic and just chill a little. Have a

**Todd:** really good example. One of our friend Team Zen members I won't name her name 'cause she may not want me to mention it, but she just wrote something either to you or to the team about how she always listens to her kid's music.

And she doesn't listen to any of her own music. Oh yeah. So we were, we just talk about this yesterday. Can you kind of quickly

**Cathy:** do an overview of that? Oh, well, we I actually, I run this women's circle in Team Zen, and we were talking about the aspects of ourselves that we need as moms, Very layered conversation.

But one of the things is she realized that when it came to music that she, when they were little in the car, it was always their music. Understandable. These are not crazy [00:19:00] things, but that she kind of continued that and perpetuated that. Now they're older and she realizes that she hasn't shared with them her love of pop music from the eighties and nineties, and they don't know that she loves that and she feels like she left that behind and.

The reason was because as she was listing her needs, she's what makes me happy is my music from my childhood. And so she's bringing that back into her life. And now she's kinda I wish my kids would've known that when I was younger. And I remember I felt similarly when my kids were little.

Todd, do you remember that? We kid and play.

**Todd:** Oh my God. Oh my gosh. It had 95 songs that lasted for 60 seconds. Yeah. And we had that. CD in the Toyota Four Runner.

**Cathy:** I know. It's like where you're like, oh, you listen to it over and over again. And I used to say to Todd, someday we will listen to this and be so sad.

Yeah. Because our kids will be older, and so I don't even know if we still have that. But I remember then, back then we had the capability to burn CDs. I'm aging myself here, but I would make a CD with. Some we couldn't play. And then I would put in a Backstreet Boys song and then something else [00:20:00] put in a smashing pumpkin song.

And I, and we did that for sanity. It wasn't like, I want you to know my music. But it's I wanted the kids give us a little something. Give us a moment. Give us, so, just going back to that, like it's, I guess I, what I'm handing back to you is

we can give parents permission to bring themselves and their joys to their parenting.

They don't have to accommodate their kids' interests 24 7. They can accommodate theirs

**Hunter:** too. Yes. Yes, definitely. I mean, and that makes such a big difference as far as like you just being a relaxed help human being, right? Our kids don't need it's great, like good, go to the music class.

I remember we did, music together that was like our whole thing and then, go to the different things. But We fill up the days, like that's another big thing is because of this anxiety of wanting to do it right? Like we fill up the days with this class and this class, and then we're going to Disney and then we're doing this and the big blowout things and [00:21:00] that's.

Wonderful, but that's actually not what your kids need most. If, because then your brain to kind of go to that mindfulness piece, right? Like your brain is always what's the next thing and the next thing, and I'm planning and I'm looking at the schedule and next week, and I'm doing all these like logistics constantly of like meals and clothes and out the door and to the next place and time pressure and all these things.

And. Really, our kids need some space. If that's stressing you out, that is definitely stressing your kids out. 'cause the pace of childhood is slower. Yeah. And they need some space to be kids especially little kids, like elementary and below. Like you need that time to just play.

And then from mom or dad you don't necessarily need, you do need them to some degree to be the person who gets you from place to place of course. But what you really need is [00:22:00] for them to express delight in who you are and how are they gonna do that if your brain is constantly forever in the future.

And the thing about it is like we think, oh, I'm gonna do all these things and then I'm gonna, and then when I get to that, that Cancun vacation, then I'm gonna, Be present with my kids. I'm gonna enjoy it. I'm gonna be, it's gonna, that's gonna be the moment when I will be there. And then you've trained your brain to be constantly logistically organizing forever and ever into the future.

So you can't even do it then when you get there. So It's like they, our kids really need us. They wanna be seen, they wanna be heard, right? They want us to just

put the phone down, lower the laptop lid, maybe turn the burner off even for a moment and just like just. Turn our bodies and our hands and our eyes to them.

Be open to who they are. Listen to, what's going on. And that's the reason why my [00:23:00] kids talk to me now is 'cause they learned, she learned, when my oldest was four and was telling me all these elaborate stories about my little ponies. I listen to her a lot, a good amount of the time, not all the time.

And now she is okay, mom sees and hears and listens to me. So it's like it's, and when you can do that, when you're not like, oh my God I have to do a bazillion things to be enough to be a good parent, right? If, when we can just say, okay, actually me being relaxed me. Me listening to Smashing Pumpkins, me sharing like my great love of Cyndi Lauper is that's enough.

That's like the connector, that's the glue, and that's what they want.

**Cathy:** I so agree. And as you were just saying, like on the beach in Cancun and we're like trying, than our brain. We've programmed our brains to look at the next thing. And we've obviously programmed our children's brains to look at that.

Yeah. Because they're [00:24:00] like, where are we going to dinner? What's happening next? And even we, the way that we interact or the way we're scheduling our days, our kids believe that's what they're supposed to do too. And it can make them uncomfortable when they're not. I actually saw on TikTok the other day, Hunter a,

it was just this girl she had on her earphones and she was, it was like a voiceover and she was walking around her house getting water and the voiceover was saying, my dad is watching TV right here. And he just said, hand my mom is in the other room, my brother's upstairs, and she's and people are home and they're around.

And then she says, I've just gotten my new, my first apartment on my own and now I'm alone. And I never appreciated just having people home and around, even if they were doing different things. And I think that, and again, we can this pendulum can swing really far where I'm not saying we should go in our home and, be away from each other and do our own things all the time.

But it is okay to have a sense of peace in your homework. One person's reading and one person's doing this, and then you have [00:25:00] conversation and then it stops. And we're all kind of flowing around each other and not everything is

planned or organized. And I think that scares parents, don't you, Hunter? Like I think parents feel like if I'm not planning, I'm dropping the ball.

I mean, that's at least what I hear.

**Hunter:** I definitely get that sense of I've, I have to be, I have to be on Yeah. Doing, acting like working for the family to be valuable and to be worthy. And that's the thing that's heartbreaking is like then you're, you don't realize that you are.

Teaching your kids that, right? You're teaching your kids that's what they have to do, like to, to that they're not gonna be good enough unless they're actively, proactively doing all these things or accumulating stuff and experiences and things. One of the, one of the best things my mom ever did was, I grew up in like a lower middle class family.

Like my dad had his own small sign business and mom's a nurse, but mom, she. [00:26:00] She did riding lessons, horseback riding lessons for herself 'cause she liked it. And that's not like a long class activity. And so it's kind of expensive. But there was no question. She just I remember just hanging around these barns, like holding giant carrots and like watching horses because, Mom was like, I'm gonna do this for me and this is what I wanna do.

And it was no, there was no discussion about it. No, hand wringing or anything. And I, it, we never talked about it, but it's only oh yeah. Like it was, this was her value of taking care of herself and doing something that she loved just for her was just a norm in my household. And I'm realizing that really isn't, wasn't the norm for so, so many people.

**Cathy:** Oh, I love that so much. I love this discussion. 'cause as you said that about your mom, like I think about my mom and and sometimes it can be the things that bug us when we're young. Like my mom was always practicing calligraphy, [00:27:00] so it's why I write my name the way I do. She loved yoga way before it was a thing.

And she loved health food stores and chiropractors and all these things that I would be like, ugh. And now it's such a part of who I am and I am, or my, and my dad had plenty of things too, like things about cars that I understand and things about, movies that I love because of him.

And I think that this conversation is important. Like it's the reason I listen, I was just telling Todd yesterday, I listen to Yacht Rock all the time. I have like in my

car, I have Yacht Rock programmed in and right next to it Hairbands, like I go back and forth between these channels and Yacht Rock is my parents, it was a time.

When I was young and I knew my parents were listening to these songs, I didn't necessarily love them. But now they're very soothing. And the reason I'm saying this is it's not about me personally. This is about sharing your life with your kids. Gives your kids something of you. 'cause now my parents have both died.

Like they're not here. And I, they still, I listen to Iraq all the [00:28:00] time because then they're here, so it's it's not always about death, but it's about having that relationship that continues on. And if you didn't know who your parents were, if you didn't know their interests or their loves,

**Todd:** I think the deal is when our kids are born, We think we're supposed to be deities.

Yeah. We are in charge of everything. Yeah. Yeah. And then our kids figure out, we're just a bunch of suckers who decided have babies who have no idea what hell's going on.

But

**Cathy:** there's usually a big story behind all those things too. Like our relationship when we had them. There's so many things that they don't know.

**Todd:** And I struggle with this right now. There's still a part of me, not a big part, but a part of me that wants my kids to think I'm perfect. They know. For certain that I'm not close to perfect. But I think the more that I am able to show them my imperfections. It's scary. Like I want them to look up to me.

**Cathy:** Can I, or can I say this? 'cause you're talking [00:29:00] about imperfections or just your joys Yeah. That they may not agree with. Like imperfections is like our failures. Yeah. And our challenges and it's both.

**Todd:** It's both our joys and our messiness

**Cathy:** your, yeah. The parts of, that you, there's so many things about you, Todd,

**Hunter:** but there's a fine line there, right?

Because we are not gonna give all our messiness to our kids. Right. Because that's not because, and I know that's not what you're saying, but I just want the listener to understand that you need to have your friends, your therapist, your whatever Yeah. To unpack your stuff with and to like, last night I was at the pool and I was really, Sad because of something my daughter was going through, but I didn't wanna, at that moment burden her with that.

So I went to a friend and I stood there while she inflated her kids blow, inflatable, whatever. And I she gave me a hug and I had to cry. And I, I, so it's but you're right. We wanna show them we need to be human. But it's a middle [00:30:00] path. It's not I'm just gonna be all my messiness and it's not gonna be, I'm gonna be perfect.

It's like a weird middle.

**Todd:** Well, and what we, what Cathy and I say in the podcast all the time. Well, these are my words. I guess. Parenting is an art form. Like anybody who's looking for a rules of parenting, forget it. Because there's some days one thing might work and other days the opposite might work.

And I think it's the idea that there's no way to parent. The idea is just for me to tune in to see what I think needs to happen in this moment. And I'm gonna screw up half the time. And when I do, hopefully I

**Cathy:** learn from it. So, and even playing, you were talking about Annie's book, soul to Soul Roll to Roll and there, and I'm all, I love the soul to soul.

And that's where we wanna put our energy and that's where everything begins. That's the root. But it is interesting that we do have a role. Meaning we are to your point Hunter. I'm reiterating that we are the parent. So to your point, [00:31:00] we can't, we're not, I don't go to my kids with my problems.

I, I share with them challenges I've had. I share with them, maybe some history of life or my joys or things I love, or that today was hard for this reason, but I'm not going to them with things I would go to my therapist with because I do have a different role in their life. That maybe when we get older, as my parents got older, obviously things started to shift a little bit where I was in more of a parent role with them.

But that's way down the road. When our kids are little, there is a, I'm gonna share with you, but I like your, I like you saying that point of, and Todd's adding to that, it's an art we share messy, but they are not the messy, they are not the

people we go to with the messy. They are the, they're watching us live, but they don't, especially child developmentally appropriate.

There's stages, like there's, they're not gonna see everything. Maybe they have seen us cry, but maybe we're not gonna cry every day. Yeah. [00:32:00] Where they feel the burden of that.

**Hunter:** Yeah. I mean, that's the thing is so my oldest daughter is going through a health challenge and she's, she has a she's in a lot of pain and so I, she had gotten some hiking poles to help her walk when her feet and legs hurt.

And and it was really, it's hard for me to see it. Yeah. And that's what made me really sad yesterday. And so I cried to my friend and then I walked home and I played with the dog and everybody was still at the pool. And I walked home. I played with the dog. I sat outside in the garden for a while, and it was good.

But then, my, a younger daughter, she's so intuitive. She's mom, I went to say goodnight to her. She's mom, you, what's going on with you? You seem sad. Like she could see it, she is just oh, and so, but it was nice though. I mean, speaking of that, that line of well, yeah, I'm, I am feeling really sad 'cause I'm seeing [00:33:00] Maggie struggle.

And she's and for her that was a moment where she was like, yeah, it's really hard for me to see her struggle too. And I'm worried about camp next week and blah, blah blah. And it was this moment of opening, but it was, and there is that pa that place where you need to have space for yourself, right?

We need to recog, I had to recognize in that moment, Like this is hard right now. I need to like, take some space away from the pool and RAF night and I need to have some time alone and that, and process to that, to a certain degree that I can, and then I'm able to also then, share that some of that humanity with my kids.

So it's a little of both.

**Todd:** I'm sure your daughter knows this, but do you explicitly say it from time to time in those moments where you're having let's say one of those emotions of sadness or fear or any, let's just say sadness in that case [00:34:00] do you explicitly say, listen, it's not your job to fix me, take care of me.

Even console me. Do you say that? Do you indicate that? Is there an intention there? Does she know that? Because I think, well, I.

**Cathy:** That story sounded joined. Yes. Yes. Know what I mean? Hunter said, I'm feeling this way, and her daughter then got to say, me too. Yeah. So. In that situation. I know what you're saying to us.

Yeah.

**Todd:** There's other times when we Yes. Yes. I have. Having a really crappy day. And then we share that crappy day with our kids. And even if I don't want my kids to think, make me feel better. Yeah. They take it upon themselves to do it. And I think that's an important kind of distinction that we wanna make.

Right. But

**Hunter:** also like, as they get older, that's a beautiful thing for them to do, is to take it upon themselves to make you feel better. That's like them being in relationship with you. And that's really beautiful, and yes, I have said that yeah, I'm feeling sad today. No, it's, honey, thank you so much.

It's not [00:35:00] your, it's not your fault. It's not anything you did, it's just this is what's, you don't, it's not your job to have to make me feel better. And I think it's important to say those words explicitly, but then you're right. Like it's, you're talking about this transition like right from young, where we're protecting that bubble of young and innocent ness.

Right. And we, we, they're gonna see us be real. 'cause that's life, right? But it's like we do our best to kind of protect them from the anxieties and worries and things of the larger world, right? And then as they get older, like they know more and more of it. They seem more and more of it.

They're more and more aware. And then if you get, if you've got a 20 year old who's says, oh dad, I'm gonna make you cookies 'cause you've had a rough day like, Rock on. That's a great person there. I know.

**Todd:** Well, and I'll give my person example of how not to do this. Trying not to throw my dad under the bus every morning.

I would [00:36:00] get up in the morning, go to the grocery store, get him a long John the newspaper before I went to school, and he was okay.

Is a long John a beer?

**Hunter:** No, it's a donut. It's

**Cathy:** a donut. Oh, a

**Hunter:** donut, okay. It might be, this is like a east coast, west coast thing. They like mid by Midwest device, what do you call?

**Todd:** And the East coast. What do you call like the long donuts? Rectangular donuts. Oh,

**Hunter:** that's a crawler.

**Todd:** Oh, is that interesting? So every morning I do that not every morning, but many mornings. 'cause I wanted to take care of my dad, and my dad had every ability to go to the grocery store himself, but at the time he was in a bad place and he was okay with being taken care of by his 10 year old son.

And I'm sharing that story for the parents out there, that I just want them to know the distinction because I'm still trying to unwind some

**Cathy:** crap. I was gonna say, and that wasn't, that was a continuous. There was a power, there was a shift there where it was like, you take care of me versus [00:37:00] and this is why it's an art, because this is why these conversations and I appreciate, your books Hunter and you know your new one.

You put these things in essay form and talk through a specific situation because there are no hard and fast rules. Like we can sit here and say don't dump on your kids, don't dump on your kids, but then is dumping, sharing how you feel. And then having them agree with you.

And then you have some common bond and you realize each other's humanity, that's fine. Right. Because

**Todd:** If we want our kids to be able to express emotions, right? They need to see us express emotions.

**Cathy:** So like all the things, it's why, I mean, I say this a nauseum, but it's why everything is paradoxical.

I mean, it's why, that's why we use the word Zen. It's like everything is. Is, yes. And everything is this and that and, but, and like there is, there are no hard and fast rules. And so the ability to be in, what I will say to, to the stories we're talking about, Hunter, [00:38:00] is that what I struggle with the most now that my girls are the age that they are.

Even though my therapist doesn't love that I use this word because it's just, they're, it's codependency where I felt like I was more clear when they were younger about I could differentiate myself from them. I did not feel enmeshed with them when they were younger. Whereas now that they're older, the experiences they're having, feel.

So similar to experiences that I'm having and I'm like feeling them so intensely that there is I'm not okay until they're okay. And you just sharing your daughter's health challenge. I know, I just had something go through my body when you said that. 'cause I know that feeling of even though all of our experiences are personal and different of like we wake up and those are our thoughts is them.

And so, do you struggle with that too? Separating during the day. Like my stuff, their stuff, or, and you may not use the word codependency, whatever word feels right to [00:39:00] you.

**Hunter:** I mean, no, I mean, I don't struggle with that in the same way. I mean, I definitely think that, we enter our right, like we, my feeling, I feel your feelings and and that's okay, right?

Like human beings, we are intermeshed and interdependent. And I think that there's, in some ways like. In some ways, I'm like your therapist's, like I don't love the word codependent because human beings are supposed to be a dependent on each other. We aren't supposed to be like little human individualist silos that just exist on our own, even though we have that ability to do that now.

Like that just doesn't make us happy or healthy or anything. So we kind of, we are interdependent with each other and that's okay, and that's normal and healthy. So in one sense, there's that on the other sense. I also don't feel like I have to solve all my kids' problems, and I want to, God, I want to, like I wanna wave a magic wand and just make this thing go away.

[00:40:00] But I like my help, there we realize our helplessness to fix their problems like again and again and again. All throughout their lives, right? Like they have this problem and we can be, it's always much better if we're just like kind of a sidekick or a coach helping them to supporting them as they solve their own problems.

That's always better. Right? So I I don't know. I can do what I can, but I'm also, I guess I'm also like, okay, yeah, you wanna go to the barn for this afternoon? Take the electric bike, get yourself over there. I don't feel I don't feel a lot of

pressure to be the solution to all their problems or their ride to everything, or, and I'm okay with, no, I gotta, I'm going to a dance class tonight.

You gotta find a ride to this thing. Sorry. And [00:41:00] having my own needs and having my needs be equal priority with their

**Cathy:** needs, their, yeah, I think that my. My difference is that there is what I do, which is allow them to have their lives and I'm not involved in their, there's a lot of separation.

And then the way I feel that this is where my work is it's less about, I feel the need to solve their problems. 'cause that's their life and the, but there is a, I think it's just, I remember. They're, I remem I am not that far. I mean, I am far from being a teenager, but they're more adult situations and so you know how things like when they were eight, I didn't remember being eight at well.

And so the enmeshment, I didn't have it at all because I was like, you need to go through this and whatever. Whereas now I'm saying with my words, you need to go through this. But I'm walking away remembering the feeling of it. It's just so intense and I don't, and I don't think that everyone has that experience.

I think. I [00:42:00] think Todd would attest that mine's pretty intense.

**Todd:** Well, there's, yeah, you have, there's certain things that you're worrying about our kid had a struggle yesterday with her college classes and I was like, whatever. It's all gonna work. And you're like, worried because she's worried.

It's so, I'm.

**Cathy:** Uninvolved she's doing it herself, but I'm thinking about it, but then that's what I, that's what

**Todd:** I'm working on. But then you throw something at me, like money or whatever. Yeah. And I'm like, or my dad, like the, I might get all reactionary and I'm like completely jacked up. So we just have our own triggers, Achilles, whatever.

And so.

**Cathy:** So Hunter, I, because we haven't, I wanna dig into your book, but before we get into your new book, I have to ask about raising good humans. Your book has been a bestselling book. It every time anything I put in, as far as parenting,

your book will pop up at the top. I told you that a while ago, but I'm always like, shit or sorry sweetie, no swear ins parenting.

It's doing so well. [00:43:00] I'm so. Pleased for you, and I'm sure you feel so proud and so tell us about that experience of writing that book and having such a success with that book. Was that a surprise? Was there a thing that happened where it just went crazy? Or was it kind of a slow burn where everybody just seems to have it now?

**Hunter:** Oh, I, yeah, no, I mean, I wrote the book and I put, I did my best to write the book, but I kind of was like, this is amazing. I'm a published author if it sells 3000 copies, I'll be so happy. This is great. And then like time went by and I think the pandemic helped my book.

Interesting because people were kind of home. It was released in December, 2019 and then people were home. I don't know but yeah, I didn't, it was kind of a surprise to me. I did things, but you know, I did interviews and I did all these different things, but. But it was this sort of slow burn and then suddenly it was like, kind of like summer of 2021, I was like, I got [00:44:00] this royalty check.

And I was like, oh my God, my book is doing really well. Wow, this is really surprising. And now it's been, I have it in like Japanese and Brazilian, Portuguese, and it's over 200,000 copies. And I'm just like, I don't, I'm, it's a little surprising to me. I think I, I feel like. The book Gods have blessed me.

Thank you. Oh, Book Gods. And and yeah, but I, yeah, so I feel very fortunate and my husband's always honey, your book was at number blah, blah, blah, blah on Amazon today. And I'm like, wow, really? That's amazing. Yeah. I guess it's resonating with people.

**Cathy:** Yes. That's wonderful. ~~And.~~

And so going into writing this next book did you have an idea? Did because the next book has a similar title, but it's a different structure. So can you kind, can you explain, why you went in this direction? What [00:45:00] was, what did you feel after, finishing this book that you still wanted to tell and dive into?

**Hunter:** I felt like one of the things that really inspires me is I actually I'm pretty sure I heard you talk about it on an episode of your, of Xper Radio way back when that you talked about the Book of Awakening. Yeah. Right. And it's

that 365 day book. And so I love books like that where there's like a little thing every day.

And that's what I actually pitched to the publisher's person. I'm very grateful that they said, Hunter, that's too many pages. How about 50 things? And I was like, oh, okay. Now that I now I can recognize that would've been really hard if I had done like 65 and I was like, oh my God, I have 300, left.

But anyway, so I wanted to, in reason good humans. I really wanted to focus on like these essential things. I found like really practical tools like mindfulness tools to help us be less reactive and skillful [00:46:00] communication. Right? I was like, 'cause I was like, okay, this is like the how of how do you do it, right?

Like here's some really practical tools. And then with raising good humans every day with the format of this like smaller book and these 50 short little chapters are like, Three to four pages each. I was able to expand. And that's the thing as like I've been doing this podcast like for 10 years, interviewing all these experts on all these different things, and I've learned all this stuff about all kinds of stuff including like about our hou our homes and our environments and our schedules and all these different things.

And there were just so many thi varied things that contribute to a peaceful, more relaxed, more enjoyable. Parenting experience that I wanted to, I love the idea that I could just separate it out into all these 50 little chapters and so that someone can open it up in any place at any time and just be like, okay, I'm just gonna do this one thing.

And I think that's what I [00:47:00] do well, is I translate. Things that are, can be, research or things that can be kind of complex and, you can dive into any of them in depth. And I translate it in a way that's really like relatable and really practical for people. And I think that's what this book does.

**Cathy:** Yeah, I agree. I agree. I know I was having fun. I read it a while ago. Hunter allowed me to see it when, a while ago, but I was kind of going over. The chapters again last night. And they're good titles too. Do you have such a cliché interview question, but do you have a favorite, do you have a chapter that you're like, this was the most fun to write?

**Hunter:** That is a good question. I'm not sure. I do have a one that was the most fun to write. I did I liked being able to write the How to Pause chapter because I remember being like, like all these parenting coaches would be like, and step one, pause and then say this thing. And I'd be like, but how do you pause?

How, so I was even to kind of get [00:48:00] that into four pages, right? And and then kind of diff I enjoyed, I enjoyed, I really enjoyed like getting some of the quotes for the beginning of the book. In chapter five I'm losing it. I quote my friend Carla Berg and she says, kids do idiot, idiotic, obnoxious stuff that's unlikely to change anytime soon.

So if you plan for keeping your goal depends on your child's ability to do the same, that's going to end poorly for everyone. So I love that. And, other

**Cathy:** It's hard, hard to find, quote, like I did quotes for, I've done quotes for all my books and sometimes they don't like, especially I had to really do some research for this last one because I was like, here's a quote I love, it's by this person.

And then my editor would be like, no, it's not. It's by this. You got this from the wrong place. Or this wasn't actually said this way. Quotes are really interesting. They're not really what we think they are. Did you struggle with that sometimes?

**Hunter:** Yeah. Yes. Finding the like right attribution because that you would be like, [00:49:00] oh, and then you'd have, you'd find like a.

Some webpage. I was like, this has been attributed wrong by everybody. And I was like, oh no, I think I attributed it wrong in something. Now let me find a, the right thing. So yeah, it, that was a challenge.

**Cathy:** I know I had the, it was just it was a funny experience that I was spending just as much time on quotes as I was writing.

So Hunter, what's next for you? I, obviously this book, I'm not trying to jump to the next book that you're gonna write, but what I mean is now that this book is coming out today, 'cause this is coming out August 1st, what. Are, what are your hopes for the book? What are you, do you plan on doing a lot of speaking?

What? What's coming up for you?

**Hunter:** Yeah, I mean I, of course I hope the book does well. It's so funny 'cause now I have all these like expectations, right, that I didn't have the first time around but yeah, I am doing some speaking. I'm gonna be going out to Laramie, Wyoming, and outside of Detroit in a few weeks to do some talks and workshops there.

And I got to go to Egypt earlier this year to do a talk, which is bananas. And it was so [00:50:00] cool. I took my 13 year old daughter and. We spent four days in Cairo that's it. Like we're in, and we were out like maybe three and a half days actually. And and so yeah I wanna do all those things that we're actually coming out.

The publisher we're, I've written in, we're coming out with a, raising good humans guided journal Good at the first of the year. So, so that'll be out too. So it's a little whole suite of things, which is so crazy to me. But But yeah and tonight it's it's August 1st. This coming out. We're having a book launch party in New York and I get to give away books like Oprah and t-shirts and so it'll be fun.

I kind of, I think the first time around they were like, nah, everything's digital. You don't do any parties. And this time we were like, we wanna have a. Thing with in person, we're gonna do a, an event. So we'll be toasting to raising good humans every day tonight. [00:51:00]

**Todd:** That sounds lovely. Well, and we wish you the best of luck on this new book.

And congratulations on all your success. I feel like we've kind of been going along together here for about 10 years and it's good to know that you're out there teaching trying to raise good humans, right. Anything we forgot to ask or anything you wanna do to promote yourself? Aside from the two

**Cathy:** books Yeah.

Where people can find you and everything.

**Hunter:** Well, as podcast listeners, you can go to the Mindful Mama Podcast. And I and of course, and I'm doing a I do now I do a Mindful Parenting Teacher training program. I'm teaching people to teach it, so that's all you can find, stuff like that all at mindfulmamamentor.com. And yeah, and I just wanna, I mean, a lot of the inspiration for this. As you guys know is comes from you like I was II was in my painting studio painting. About my frustrating moments and [00:52:00] listening to, I remember like listening to ZPR like again and again, and it helps so much to hear real people share.

So honestly, and and so I hope that everything I'm doing is continues that, right, that continues that authentic thread of empowerment and encouragement and

vulnerability. And so I just wanna give a shout out to you. But yes, you can find me at all those places too.

**Cathy:** Oh, that's nice to, thanks Hunter.

We appreciate it.

**Todd:** It's out today everybody Raising Good Humans Every Day. So go out the link to Hunter's book will be in the notes, so just scroll down and buy your book. And Hunter, thanks so much for joining us. It was really a pleasure. Thanks Hunter. Yeah,

**Hunter:** thank you.

**Todd:** All right. So we will catch everybody else on the next episode.

Zen Parenting Radio next Tuesday. Keep tracking everybody.

[00:53:00]