

Todd: Here we go. My name's Todd. This is Cathy. Welcome back to another episode of Zen Parenting Radio. This is podcast number 726. While listen to Zen Parenting Radio? Because you'll feel outstanding and always remember our motto, which is that the best predictor of a child's wellbeing a parent's self understanding.

On today's show, I'm gonna answer some questions. One of my buddies who has a six year old daughter is wondering about, What, what, what is it sweetie? Wondering about what? I have no idea.

Cathy: Because I thought we were talking about perfectionism.

Todd: No, no, no, no. Sensitive, highly sensitive children. That's what we did last week.

I know. And it's just a follow up to it. Oh, okay. So it's just a few questions that I wanna riff with you on, and then you're gonna talk about perfectionism. Correct. But first we have a big announcement. Hold on. Let do drum roll.

Cathy: It's such a big announcement. It is because listen, everybody. We do this thing called the Zen Parenting Conference. Don't call it a conference. Don't call it a conference. And we've been doing it since what, 2015?

Todd: Well, I'm looking right behind you. I'm looking at the, posters. But yeah, let's just say 2015. I don't know.

Cathy: So anyway, the last time we did a live and in-person event was 2020 and it was literally a week before everything shut down. It was at the end of February. I remember it very well because we were just starting to hear a little bit about something called Covid. Anyway, we haven't had a live and in-person event event since then, but guess what, it's coming back.

We are doing it in January of 2024. We are hosting another Zen Parenting Get Together Community Speakers. What else? How else can I say it? Connection. We're so excited and the most important part of this year is we decided to focus all our energy on teens. Why? Because teens need support right now and we need to know how to support them.

We often think that what teens are going through is very similar to our history, like our time as Gen Xers, our teenage world, it's not true. Everybody, they're

going through so much more. Todd, do you have that list in front of you that we just read?

Todd: It's a different world. So 30 years ago, what? You and I back in the eighties, sweetie?

Yeah. We were worried about drunk driving pregnancy and drugs. Yeah.

Cathy: Which were significant, but right.

Todd: Today it's anxiety, depression, suicide, self-harm, cyber bullying, and serious mental health disorders. Yeah, it's just a different world and we love doing this event and we're doing it again and we already have some people signed up 'cause teams then got the inside, the inside scoop, but now it's open to the public and there is limited seating available.

So just, scroll on your phone if you're listening on your phone right now. And just click on the top link. It's the Zen Parenting, 2024.

Cathy: And on this podcast, we're gonna tell you, you have to go to the link to see the lineup. We're gonna make you go see our lineup for this year. It's incredible. You will be excited.

Are we gonna tell 'em or no? No. 'cause I want them to click on the link. Oh, it's a tease. It's a tease, yeah. Yes. And listen, here's the other thing. The other reason that Todd and I really wanted to focus on teens is because I talked to our clients, all the people we work with, and even my own daughters talking to them about their friends and talking to their friends and my college students, they are having a hard time getting services.

There are, therapists that have waiting lists. There is partial hospitalization or inpatient units that are full. There are groups that are no longer existent in existence. Like a lot changed because of Covid and the need has gone up. And so we, we thought, how can we. Focus on something, bring people together, bring these speakers all in one place, and create a community around supporting our teens.

Now, if you have younger children or children who are, in middle school or even young adults, like we, we have kind of a blend. We have 20 year old, 18 year old, 15 year old. You're, you're still gonna get a lot out of this of course. if you have an emerging teen or you have young kids and you really wanna start thinking about, how do I want to approach these years?

Yeah.

Todd: You don't have to have a no child of a, that's a teenager to do it. And to your point, if you have somebody in their twenties like, oh gee, I wonder if mental health is an important thing for somebody in your twenties. Of course, I think so. And then same goes if your kids are in, elementary or middle school.

So, We have 11 speakers. Yeah, if you include us and I'm sure we'll do a little talking. We have 13 US 13. Lucky number 13, Taylor Swift. So I like the fact that you're making people go to the website. Yeah. To check it out. But yeah, it's gonna be off the hook. I hope you all decide to join us because it's gonna be a wonderful two day event in Oak Brook, Illinois in January 26, 27.

Cathy: Oakbrook, for those of you who are listening from far away is outside of Chicago. So it's still a Chicago focused, event, but it's just a little, it's a little closer to the airport. And, close for our house. Makes it easy. And there's a parking lot. You don't have to worry about all that kind of thing, so, well, you don't have to pay for parking.

Yeah. But in Chicago, you know how everything is. We love the city, but everything gets a little more

Todd: Oh. Yeah. We tried to do it by the airport and it was a. That was a mess. Yes. So, yeah, it's about, it's a 15 minute drive from O'Hare and maybe 25 minutes from Midway. So,

Cathy: oh, and please join us. It's gonna be so fun. Todd and I are so ready to be back in this live event world.

Todd: It's gonna be off the hook. Okay, so here's my buddies, question. 'Cause we, last week we did something on highly sensitive people. Yeah. And I just, because I love. This guy, he said, I said, what questions do you want us to kind of cover?

So there's like seven of 'em. So I don't wanna spend 20 minutes on each one. Okay. How so? He has a six year old and he wants to know, how long do you let tantrums last for a six year old?

Cathy: Well, I mean, you know what I'm gonna say? It depends. It depends on the kid. It depends on why we should talk about tantrums.

Todd: What is a tantrum?

Cathy: Well, and that's the thing is I almost feel like we should just come up with a new word. Because I think when we think about a tantrum we think that it's unnecessary. There. Oh, Todd, the fly just went across the screen. He's messing with me. Yes he is. Because we're on Zoom. There's this fly in here and he's bugging me.

Todd: Cathy gets this piercing look in her eyes when it comes to flies. I cannot stand that. What do you like better? Flies are mosquitoes. Well,

Cathy: I don't love either one of them, and I understand their importance. But this guy, this fly that's in here, he's excited to be alive. Yes. He's, he's buzzing by our ears.

He's brand new. He is literally just, he's just coming to the world. So he's a, he's a little annoying. Tony, what is a tantrum? So a tantrum is, and again, let's not, I'm, I wanna play with that language. What people think a tantrum is, is something that is, inappropriate, disrespectful, dramatic oversensitive.

And really all that's happening in that moment is a kid is releasing their frustration, their sadness, their embarrassment, they are acknowledging their feelings. And a lot of times, especially with a six year old, because we're talking about a six year old, it's just their way of communicating and they don't have the ability to regulate all of those emotions yet.

Not because you've failed as a parent, but because their brain hasn't developed in such a way yet. So, just the word tantrum it's really not a problem to use that word, but I feel like in our minds there's a stigma against it. There we will say, are you gonna throw a tantrum? Like there's a bratty component to it.

Todd: So think even as parents, I think, I think you're right. I think the idea of us relabeling it, yeah. May give it different energy.

Cathy: So I would call it communication. I would call it releasing of emotion. I would call it an opportunity to slow down and stop what you're doing. Like parents who a kid starts kind of falling apart and they start kicking on the floor and that's when the parent starts, decides to start yelling.

You're just exacerbating it. Like they're already reached their limit.

Todd: Yeah. They're in their reptilian part of their brain and Well, and it's a six year old, so the six year old doesn't have a prefrontal cortex developed. It's developing.

Cathy: Yeah, it's developing. It's there. I mean, they can rationalize a little bit, but not the way an eight year old, nine year old, 10 year old, or an adult can. So they're just basically saying picture them like a like all of us human beings is like a cup. And during the day we fill up with more stuff and sometimes we get the opportunity to release some through crying or laughing. So we're just kind of always filling up a tantrum is when that kid's cup is so full.

They literally can't do it anymore, whatever that is. They may not be able to listen to you anymore. They may not be able to walk through the store. They may not be able to take the next what is it like direction from the teacher, whatever it may be. They are basically saying, I am full.

So you can understand why the goal is then to slow down, not to speed up. To stop and allow them to that's the opportunity where if they'll let you rub their back or hold their hands, sometimes they, they don't, and that doesn't mean they don't love you, it just means even touching is too much.

But if they let you, what you're trying to do is help them calm their nervous system down. You wanna help them regulate. And there is a teaching component, but I'd worry less about, I'm teaching them something and more about how to help them get back to a state of mind where they don't feel the need to kick, scream, yell.

And instead of worrying about when will this happen again, it's more about how do I get back to help them get to an equilibri

Todd: second question. Okay. How normal is it for a six year old to have a tantrum? Very normal.

Cathy: It's so normal and I.. And again for this, your friend who's writing this, I remember, I, I'm thinking of Skylar just probably 'cause she's our youngest and it's more on my mind.

But when she was around that age 5, 6, 7, do you remember when she would like sit there and I could see her eyes like welling up? And I would say, do you need to get your sad's out? Yeah. She would say yes, and then she would just cry and like move around and sometimes she'd, we'd hold her and sometimes she'd just kind of roll on the floor.

And so I tried to like not frame it as are you about to fall apart? I try, I tried to recognize that she was starting to lose her capability. I always picture her with

like waffles or something, right? Like there was always these times in the morning, a lot of waffles, lot waffles, a lot of syrup, a lot of stickiness.

Yes. And I would just say, oh, you just need to get your SADS out. I get it. let's go do it. And so, Just think about how much that language changes the way you view that moment. Because then when they're done, you can be like, wow, good for you.

Todd: Next question. How do you support a six year old? How do you support a six year old's fear without being pushy or passive, you know?

Do you have an example for me? No, I don't. How do you support a six year old's fear without being pushy or passive? I don't know where he was going with that.

Cathy: Maybe he's saying, how do you acknowledge or validate fear? Then not try and talk 'em out of it.

Todd: Yeah. I think that's what it, I think that's what he's asking.

Cathy: Yeah. I mean, when kids are afraid, yeah. You know why? Because they haven't done the things we've done because thing, they've had an experience, maybe one or two, that have led them to believe that every experience will be like that again. You've gotta remember they have a different brain. They don't have as much information.

They don't have as much experience. They don't have a, they don't have a rational thinking mind. That's, well formed. And of course they're gonna be afraid, like I was just talking to my oldest daughter or my, youngest daughter about going to, six Flags. She went on all these rollercoasters, and while she was telling me about it, she's like, yeah.

And then this one I went on. I had been on it a bunch of times, but then I was scared this time when I went on it. And then, but when I went down, here's what I did. And then I decided to not go on this one because, and she's even acknowledging when she's afraid. And then some, and even if she's done it before, she's still afraid.

Even though I'm talking about rollercoasters, isn't life a rollercoaster? Like sometimes they're afraid to go to school, sometimes they're not. Sometimes they're afraid to ask someone to be their friend. Sometimes they're not. So you

can acknowledge their fear every single time. Acknowledging and validating their fear is not reinforcing their fear.

Todd: What about a six year old who has verbalized thoughts like, I'm a bad daughter. She hits herself. Sometimes it's scary, some language she uses that does not come from us. She talks about herself and we have no idea where she's picked that up.

Cathy: Right. Well, and she's probably not using language that anyone nobody is saying to her, you're a bad daughter, but there's a message that she has that it can, that there, that there are actually good or bad people or that good or bad emotions or, that she either gets more love when she's a certain way and less love when she's another way.

And that's not, I'm not, this isn't about your buddy. Like this is human behavior. Yeah. This happens in every family. So acknowledging that and recognizing that. It's all about, first of all, the, the language of choices you always have to say to kids, it's not about you're a good or bad person. It's that there's good and not as great choices.

you don't even have to use the word bad. Yeah. You can be like, this was a good choice. This choice wasn't so great. So then you start to recog, they start to recognize that they are all of the things. Sometimes they make good choices, sometimes they make poor choices. And we all do. Yeah.

It's not about them as a person, it is about, This experience? What, because I think parents are very, they feel the need to tell their kids they did something bad or that they're bad because they wanna like drive a sense of like you should feel guilty about this. But unfortunately, if you say to them, you are bad, that doesn't drive guilt.

That drives shame that. That creates an internal sense of I am not a worthy human being. Yeah. So you wanna differentiate and kind of focus on all their parts. Yeah, and I would also say that there is something, and it may not even be from parents, it could be something she learned an experience she had in school, or an experience she had with a friend where she feels like.

For some reason she doesn't feel up to par. Yeah. For whatever reason. And having conversations with her when she's okay about that. Yeah. like when I say when she's okay, like before bed, when she's really lovey or when she's feeling good or you're in the car together saying, Hey, you don't even have to, like, you could ask her some questions, but say sometimes when you're really upset,

when you're getting your SADS out you say things like I'm not a good person, and say, I just.

I just want you to know you're one of the best people I know. And that I understand when you have a lot of feelings. That's how it feels. But I want you to remember that I think you're amazing and that you are worthy of respect and love and however your kid would receive

Todd: it. Well, and what I would add, to everything you're saying, which is all really good, and this may.

Be obvious, but I'll say it anyways. Don't try to teach anything when the kid's melting down. Yeah. Bad idea. Their brain shut off. You're not gonna get anywhere. Right. You're just gonna frustrate yourself. And then secondly, this

Cathy: is, but you can focus on soothing. Yeah. Yeah. You could soothe you.

You're not teaching with words. You're soothing.

Todd: Right. And I think, like we used to put our kids in cranial sacral positions where we put their hand on the back of their head

Cathy: or Yeah. Calm. Help them calm 'em down. Their nervous system.

Todd: just Yeah. How you hold them. Has certain energy points and we're not gonna

Cathy: get into it today.

Well, I can do a really quick one. Sure. If you can put your, if they allow you to hug them, and you can put one hand on the back of their neck, and this is really gentle. And then one hand on their sacrum which is much lower, like at the bottom of the spine. There's something about, there's two pulses there, and if you're really, if you can feel if your hands are real sensitive, you can feel the pulse.

And the goal is to, to help them calm down where the pulses start to pulse together. Now this is very reiki and, and you don't have to be able to feel that. Just know that your intention. It's all about intention. Well, and

Todd: I'll tell you, dude, it actually works. Oh yeah. At least it, it, it gave us some results.

Like there is something to where you put pressure, not even pressure. It's not even pressure. Right. Light, touch on the body. And then the other thing is this is all a big fat test to see how you can be chill when your kid's melting down. Right? So this is all an internal. Thing. And I appreciate my friend asking me questions on what do I do?

What you need to do is be self-aware and try to be as and I, we've all been there, right?

Cathy: Our kids, every single one of us, our

Todd: kids have melted down. Our kids have had tantrums, and it's super hard to be chill in the middle of a tantrum slash meltdown. And that's

Cathy: why while you're listening to this podcast, you your friend and everybody else is really start analyzing that.

Our fears around these things. What does a tantrum mean? Is a tantrum bad? Does this mean my kid is gonna have problems forever? Is my kid gonna tantrum their way through kindergarten and first grade? Try to really deflate, stay here or take some of the air out of that balloon because again, A tantrum or the releasing of emotion is just communication.

They're just letting you know Yeah, I'm overwhelmed. And their ability to release that versus stifle that is more healthy in the long run. Well, and be

Todd: cautious on, comparing yourself. Yeah. Or other kids. Yeah. Every kid. Because we were at a father-daughter camp, and that, that's where I ran, hung with my buddy, and he's probably looking at other six year olds that are not, Melting down in that moment, in that moment thinking they might melt down thinking what's wrong with my kid?

And like be super cautious of the comparison of one daughter versus another girl that you see, or even yourself versus another dad that you see 'cause comparison in that, through that lens is probably not the best idea.

Cathy: Yeah. Literally. I mean, the. Looking at other kids, our kids' age in certain scenarios and saying, my kids should be doing that because you know other kids their age are, it's really unfair because some kids really thrive in events like that, like what you guys did, or maybe in a class that's like their place where they have a really hard time at home being alone or being ignored, or.

Not that we should be ignoring our kids, but what I mean is that they are, they feel like no one's paying attention to them and that's when they have their meltdowns. So it's like you don't know anybody's story. And let me tell you just to like throw a big thing into this I study cults all the time and high control groups and abusive relationships and a lot of times the kids that are like never having an emotional experience to anything.

Are often highly controlled and not in positive ways. And now when I'm saying that everybody don't be afraid. Like if your kid's listening to you and doing a good job, that's great. I'm not saying you're, you're over controlling them. But what I'm saying is sometimes we look at families and we'll be like, wow, why does your kid do everything you say and why?

There was actually a. A big like parenting, and I wouldn't call her an expert. She was like a YouTuber and like she was on social media all the time and she would like always demonstrate how she controlled her kids. Like she would keep not let 'em eat meals and do all these things. And she was just arrested for child abuse two days ago and she's like a big person in that world.

And so my point is, is sometimes the controlling a child that is always is never having any kind of tantrum or, or, or. Communicating to you that they have different needs. That's not always a great thing. You wanna have a kid who has a mind and an experience with their emotions and can relate to, and that you can help soothe them.

That's how you build a relationship with kids. I honor the discomfort of being embarrassed and everything. We all, all parents have that where we're like, Ooh, this is in a public place. I get it. But I would focus less on that. More on, I'm building a relationship with my kid and I'm getting to know my kid better.

Todd: Dan Siegel wrote that book. I don't know which one it was, but the goal, that I have as a parent is to hopefully help my kid feel safe, seen, soothed, and supported. Absolutely. So just keep those four words in mind. Safe, seen, sooth, and supported. A few other things I just wanna mention about the comparison thing.

I don't think I can shut that, compare the, the one in me who compares. So I don't want my friend to think, oh, I'm feeling guilty because of like that one, that voice is going to show up. Sure. It's just not, don't give it that much influence. So that's one thing. And then what you talked about is how I heard so many times where a parent will say to me, oh, my girls are so dramatic and my boys, they're just so easy.

And I, I've said this before, The fact that, let's just say that a girl in a family is more dramatic. Oops. Sorry about that. That is well,

Cathy: how, how about more expressive? 'cause even saying dramatic makes its, sorry, babe. Why are we having all these sounds? Go ahead. Even saying the word dramatic, it's not dramatic.

Sounds like theatrical. Yeah. And really you have a daughter who's more, more expressive,

Todd: right? Yeah. Emotionally expressive. So what I wanna say is, if you're gonna gimme two different kids, one who's. Doesn't seem to have any problems, and I don't know if any kid doesn't have any problems and a kid who's telling me about their problems, give me the kid that's telling me about their problems because that's what.

It's called being a human being. And our job as parents is to be able to hear that. And sometimes it's hard to hear the tough stuff. You and I are going through some

Cathy: stuff right now. Yeah, yeah. I was gonna say, my sister and I were having conversations about this this weekend because, we we were kind of talking about our own family and our own history and people we knew and there was a time when with parents there was more of an experience of don't tell me anything unless you're gonna tell me good news.

Like if you're gonna tell me bad news, Or if you're gonna tell me that you're struggling with something, I don't wanna hear it. That it's kind of it. I don't know if I'd say that's a Gen X thing, but there was more of a, there was less opening for, I'm really feeling this way. So if you have, maintained a relationship with your kids and you're pretty connected, they will come to you when they're having hard times, which mean, which thank goodness.

But what that means is then when they're having a hard time and you have to continue to focus on yourself and work on how you manage that, not solve it for them. You're not the solver. You are someone they come to. And my work is always because I'm so I'm a highly sensitive person.

When my children tell me things are struggling with, it's so hard because I love 'em so much and I don't want them to struggle, but I also realize that what's happening is they're telling me their feelings. They're trusting me, and they

know I'm always there, and that's everything I have. Wanted. And so my work then is to make sure that I can show up for that.

That I am in a place where I'm not overly worried or like problem solving for them. Todd gets a lot of my, feelings. I'll come to him and say, help me kind of put this in perspective, and I'm telling you. Skyler and I were just talking about that Mark Twain quote about like, I've had so many problems in my life, and only 10 and 10% of 'em actually came true.

Yeah. What I'm, why I am using that is my girls are telling me all these feelings they're having, but really they're doing just fine. They're just normal human beings having this feeling or that feeling, and we've gone through so much change. Todd and I specifically, we have a daughter who's traveling internationally right now.

We have a daughter who just started college. We have a daughter who's gonna be driving in two weeks. Like there's so many feelings, emotions change, and our work is to stay stable and depend on each other, or our therapists or our friends, so we can show up for our kids when they need us, and that when they show up, when they come to us and they release what they're feeling, then they're better.

Yeah. Instead of pushing it down and saying, I'm only gonna tell my parents about good things that happen. That's, that's great. When good things happen, we wanna hear that too.

Todd: But I should have, said this at the beginning. But if somebody's listening to this like, well, sorry, I don't have any, toddlers or pre-adolescence, and it reminds me of that joke, which I love is what's the difference between a toddler and a teenager?

Nothing. Nothing. So all the things that we thought we were done with once teenager years come around, it shows up. Similarly. Yeah,

Cathy: and I would say we're not saying that in a disparaging way. We're not making fun of teenagers. I love teenagers. What we mean is that they go through the same process of separation.

Separation, individuation. Three-year-olds need to separate from us. From us because they need to do things on their own. I do it myself. no, I'm not gonna hold your hand teenagers need to do a very similar thing, and sometimes they're

on and off. Sometimes they're like, please hold my hand and sometimes they're like, no, not today.

So we have to recognize they're supposed to be individuating.

Todd: So I'm gonna, just everybody knows I'm gonna include this YouTube clip that I love and it's titled Dad Holding Space for his Daughter's. Big, big Feelings. Yeah. It, it doesn't translate on a podcast, but if you click on that, you will see an inspirational video of a dad knowing how to hold space for a.

I think she's a not somewhere between an infant and toddler. I don't know what the

Cathy: difference is. It's interesting that you're sharing this because he was the person I was picturing in my mind when I was saying, when your daughter's really we'll use the word tantrum to keep things streamlined here, having a tantrum that your ability to hold her hand or a rubber back that dad does it beautiful.

In this video that dad, that Todd's talking about, he does hold her and then she, she, she. Shakes away from him, and she, and he lets her, and he lets her, and then when she comes back, he's there. And then when she needs to move away, he lets her Yeah, you're, you're there and it takes. Patience and breathing.

Like these are not things you can learn intellectually. Yep. You've got to, you can start there, but then you've gotta practice it and you have to trust and you have to allow, and all these very Buddhist kind of Zen I was listening to, different podcasts the other day, and it was about, Things that were like economics habits, all these things.

And someone said, well, what's the common denominator here? And the guy said, it all comes back to Zen Buddhism, doesn't it? And what he meant by that is it's about being here. Yeah. It's about knowing that things change. It's about being in calming your body to be in the present. It's about, it's about understanding the bigger picture and the paradox.

This is why Todd and I named our show Zen Parenting. That's right.

Todd: We're gonna skip over the last two questions. Okay. 'cause they're huge. Is it? Is it no television? Limited tv or tv? Whenever. And then refer to next week's podcast

Cathy: with Devora Hener. Her new book is called, growing Up in Public. It's all about screen time and connecting to our kids through, what's it called?

Life 360. Yeah. And find friends. And then also sexting. It's a really great episode.

Todd: Yeah. That's next Tuesday. And we've done a million podcasts on, yeah. Screens. Screens and tech. And then the last question, she says, where's the line from doing things for her and letting her do it herself? Still working through that myself.

Cathy: You will, you will for the rest of your life. Dad, if this is a dad, yes it is. Like you, you, you just keep you, you kind of go, I always talk about going in and coming out. Like you start something for them and when they're like, I got it, then you back up. And then if they seem to be struggling, you ask, would you like my support?

Can I help? you say it in a kid friendly way.

Todd: He closes by saying six is challenging. We have a super sweet and funny and smart kids, but sometimes she could be a monster and he is

Cathy: all human beings. Right? All human. This is not just, and when I say this, I'm not trying to not say your situation has unique components.

'cause everybody I totally get that. But what I'm saying is that all human beings are all of those things. Yeah. Yeah, I could be a monster. We, funny, sweet. Monstrous. Mean, judgmental, kind. Loving hard on ourselves, hard on others. Like that's human. Yeah.

Todd: Okay.

Perfectionism.

Cathy: Okay, go. All right.

So I've been kind of like doing some research. I've been writing about this lately, so I've found some kind of fun research that I thought people would appreciate about perfectionism. If anybody identifies as such. I don't. Identify as a perfectionist, really, but I like all people, I have tendencies.

You do too, wouldn't you say,

Todd: Of being a perfectionist tendencies. Yeah, of course. Well, I mean, we're all, all of them. Right? Right. Good point. So there's a perfectionist in each one of us there is that's either pushed down or overly

Cathy: around. And there and some people, if you're an an Enneagram person, if you are a one on the Enneagram, that tends to be that.

They, they often call number one the perfectionist. Or there was another word that they used for it, but it's just this belief that if we can, focus on doing things exactly right, it will decrease, Our emotions, like we'll be able to stay calmer and that we'll get a jump on things before the outside world tells us that we did something wrong.

So I'm just gonna give you something that it was really interesting to me. So, perfectionism, I mean, it's basically, it's us trying to, get get to impossible standards and be impeccable and make sure that we do everything exactly right. But there's three different types of perfectionism, and I found this really interesting.

It's either inflicted from within, so that's called self-oriented. We are internally trying perfectionistic, we're hard on ourselves or projected onto others. So that's other oriented. Like for example, if I expected you to be perfect, Okay. Or three absorbed from those around us. That's called socially prescribed.

So that's basically with this generation, with Gen Z, maybe millennials as well, all of us, but more so millennials and Gen Z, they are experiencing that socially like, oriented kind of, Perfectionism where they're absorbing it from the ether. 'cause they're seeing it on social media every day, on YouTube, every day.

So they believe they're perfectionistic because they're trying to get to that standard all the time. So, which is a pretend standard, correct? Yeah. Well it's a false made up. Created filtered

standard.

Todd: There's, so get self-oriented, other oriented, and then the one that we see, what's between other oriented and socially

Cathy: prescribed, again, projected onto you.

I believe you should be perfect. Okay. So you're either doing it internally and it's just your dialogue that I need to be perfect or you're putting it on me, or I'm

telling you, I'm like, I can't believe that you are. Like you made a mistake. Right. Okay. And then the social, the other one is where you're absorbing it from the outside

world.

Todd: Got it. And then it probably turns into some self

Cathy: oriented, correct. Yeah. It's kind of a cycle. Yeah. Okay. Because remember, the more this is so old school, Todd, you'll remember this. This is like an old Deepak Chopra thing that you and I used to talk about like 20 years ago, is that if you are judgemental of yourself, if you have this like self-oriented perfectionism, that is the way you see the world and that's why you'll judge other people.

Sure. So really that's why I am using this Deepak Chopra thing is it was the first time I had heard someone say, If you decrease your judgment on yourself and you are more compassionate toward yourself, that becomes the lens of how you see everybody else. Yeah. So then you'll naturally be less judgmental of others.

For sure. So, so here's the interesting thing. I loved this perfectionism where people think that it's like this way to be impeccable.

Todd: There's a fly right behind you, please. Oh my God. Are you serious? Yeah. Grab the towel, turn around up top. Oh, you missed him. Oh.

Cathy: Oh, dang it. Oh, that was so, that was, so this is a play

Todd: by play.

Oh. Oh, there. Wait, no, he's flying around. Let's keep talking. And if he's, he's, he's right there. He lands. I'll let you know. He's right there. That's not it. That is too,

Cathy: no, he's flying around. Just, just talk about something for a second.

Todd: Deepak Chopra. I haven't read a book of his. You're not gonna catch him.

He's flying around. He, there's one right here too.

I think you're swatting a, oh, now she's getting mad at my, oh, there you got that one. Okay. Okay. Okay. One down, one to go. All right. I think there's two in here. Okay,

Cathy: dudes. Oh, there's another one I, there is this thing that happens like every, if you've listened to the show before, like for years, there's this period of time where their flies are like, More.

I don't know if it's always in this early fall. But it's like there'll be no flies and then all of a sudden there's like flies. That's my deep

Todd: thought. That's my deep thought. I forgot to play this earlier, by the way. Okay. Let's used the word literally. Yeah. So I just found this, that literally, this is the most moving

Cathy: thing I've ever heard.

Literally, literally, literally. Is literally. The greatest town in the country. Literally, literally, literally. There's literally nothing in this world that

Todd: you cannot do. Literally

Cathy: lit. I think that's about enough. That's Chris Traeger. That's my buddy. Chris Traeger. That's right. Okay. Parks and Rec everybody.

Parks and Rec. That's Rob. Lowe's character. Literally. So, okay. So three things I wanna say about perfectionism, and I think you'll enjoy this conversation. Okay. So perfectionism is actually anti resilient. Because we become so fragile.

Todd: What is the opposite of resilience? Being weak or

Cathy: being the inability to be resilient.

I mean, I don't know what the exact word would be, because weak is kind of, yeah. look it up. We've got chat on G P T or whatever. So we become so fragile in the face of any kind of failure. That we don't do things, it's like self-sabotage. So perfectionism is actually not an ability to like stay on top of things.

It actually makes us very fragile because we are unwilling to make a mistake, acknowledge a mistake, or even have the possibility that there would be a mistake. Resilience comes from, oh, I'm doing things at a normal tone and pace as everybody else, and, Ooh, I forgot something. Sorry about that. I'll fix that.

But, A perfectionistic mentality is that that can't happen. Right. So, so what word did you come up with? Oh, it's, I'm struggling here. Okay. So, the other thing is that it is in our culture. I got, this is so great. It's like our favorite flaw. Right. So we build up perfectionism as being actually a good thing.

Think about a, fragile, that's the opposite. Fragile. Fragile. Okay. Well then I actually used that word. Okay. So it worked out just fine. There you go. But perfectionism is like a, when we're doing a job interview tell me what your weakness is. Well, I'm a perfectionist. I just make sure everything is right and we as a culture love that.

We're like, well, then this person's gonna be on it.

Todd: I remember learning that in college that that's how I'm supposed to answer that interview question.

Cathy: Yeah. It's like we put perfectionism on a pedestal. Yeah. Where we're like, actually, that's worthy of respect when actually, again, it's self-sabotaging.

It's, you don't want someone on your team who, He's so perfectionistic that a, there's a lot of things that can come out of perfectionism. Number one, you're unwilling to admit mistakes. Yeah. So you can't repair or apologize. Number two, you're so afraid of making mistakes that you're not taking care of yourself and you're so judgmental that you're worn down.

Or number three, you have no ability to like pay attention because you're always so hyper aware of what could go wrong. Like you're not enjoying things. Like there's, there's a sense of intensity about you that. Kind of keep, even if it's not affecting other people, it's affecting you. Yeah. This is not about your if you're a perfectionist that you're a drag for other people, but it's not a great way to live like your brain is always on overdrive worried. This is, I thought this was interesting. So as far as our culture, like, like loving a perfectionist, these were some examples they gave Monet Claude Monet the artist. Oh, I love him. Oh, Monet. I love his work. Moer, what was that guy's name in breakfast called?

Todd: Monet really pumps my mad. Okay.

Cathy: Well this is not him. This is Monet, the artist on the eve of an exhibition. He famously vandalized a set of his paintings that he felt were lacking. Okay. Yikes. Because he just couldn't handle it. Charlie Chaplin. Insisted on 342 takes for one shot in his movie City Lights.

Yikes. And Stanley Stanley Kubrick. We know this story when filming The Shining had a typist repeatedly tap out all work in no play makes Jack a dull Boy. So he could be absolutely certain that the sound recording was authentic and perfect to each distinct letter.

Todd: Well, we listened to pop culture and where they did eyes Wide Shut. Yeah. And Kubrick was beyond a perfectionist.

Cathy: A perfectionist, yeah. And these are the kind of directors that like yell at people and slap people and

Todd: and people will be okay with it because it's Stanley Kubrick.

Cathy: They're like, he's a genius. Yeah. Right. And it's actually not genius. It's abusive.

Yeah. We we're ve I'm actually reading a book right now. By Marine Dowd called Burn It Down, and it's about Hollywood, and that's what we've done. We did that with Harvey Weinstein before the whole Me Too thing. We're like, well, he's a genius. He's won all these Academy Awards and so we're just gonna let him do these awful things.

Todd: Sweetie.

Shakespeare in Love. Who did that beat out?

Cathy: You don't wanna know. Saving Private Ryan.

Todd: Yikes, right? Shakespeare in Love Yeah. Is a better movie than Saving Private Ryan. No, come on.

Cathy: It had a better marketing campaign. Stop it. I mean, and this is a thing Gwyneth should have won for Best Actress, which she, which she did.

It was worthy of getting the nomination, but saving Private Ryan did not win. Best picture. I mean, mean, come on. So anyway, that's a whole nother thing. Todd and I are going into our pop culture. So. Anyway, this whole idea of that a perfectionist is somebody that we should hold up and regard as being some kind of genius is not.

Always true. We really have to, again, just saying that it's our favorite flaw and that, that our culture holds it up to be really valuable. We've gotta like question,

just like we were saying to that dad about question what a tantrum means. Right. Question, what genius really means? Like, who do you wanna spend time with?

Who? As far as a manager or a parent or a coworker, or just somebody that you're working with, do you wanna be with someone who's such a perfectionist that they can't let go?

Todd: Well, and I feel like perfectionist is like the opposite of authenticity, right? I mean, maybe it's possible that some people are more perfectionistic, so they are being authentic.

But if you're a human being, you're flawed. Right? So let's just own our flaws.

Cathy: Oh. And it's like such a relief to recognize that, and then you don't have to work so hard to pretend you're not like, I'll go back to the story. She's exhausting. I was telling about my daughter and going on rollercoasters and stuff, and she'll often say like nobody else says they're scared.

Like everybody everybody says they're not scared or she, all my daughters have said this I'm going on a ride, or I'm going here for the first time, or we're going on the bus and nobody else is scared. I'm like, of course they are. Every and not because they're flawed human beings, but because they're human beings.

Yeah. Everybody gets afraid. What we have an inability to do is admit it, and it goes back to what I was saying before. It's this vulnerability thing where we've learned from our parents or coaches or friends or community that when I say I'm scared, people don't wanna hear it. They're like, no, you're not.

You shouldn't be. Yeah. Instead of, oh, sure, that's normal. That's understandable. Because when you can release that valve, that pressure of I shouldn't be scared, or I shouldn't be having a tantrum I It's less daunting. Yeah. You can actually move forward with less overwhelm truth. So, and then here's the one you're gonna love Todd.

All right. Survivor bias. I loved this because I think this is true with parenting too, so our celebration of perfectionism is survivor bias. This is what happens when we only hear the stories of the winners, right? There's plenty of evidence, that illustrates why for most of us, still perfectionism doesn't apply that many benefits, for example.

I'm just gonna read this. I haven't read this before, but I'm gonna see what it says. For example, one recent analysis of workers found no link between performance and self-oriented perfectionism at all. So what that meant is that people who are really hard on themselves and are like, I need to do this perfectly, they're not doing it better.

Yeah. Than people who don't feel like Yeah. being hard on themselves. So it's not working. Right. You're, you're still showing up as a human being like everybody else. Right. But we do this with parenting too, like, I'm gonna go off of perfectionism for a second. We'll have a, we'll grow up in a home where we're treated poorly, or no one pays attention to us, or they throw us in the deep end of the pool or whatever it may be, and we'll be like, you know what though?

That's why I got strong. Yeah. At what cost? And there may be some truth. You did get strong. I'm not denying your experience, but it's a survivor bias. It's like couldn't it have been different?

Todd: Right. 'cause we'd only have one path to evaluate. Right. If my kid let's I never get hit by my parents, but like if my parents hit me when I was younger and I decided that, oh, that pushed me to Excel and be number one in my class, right? Or whatever. Like we don't have the other scenario, whereas, right, maybe my. What if my hypothetical parents loved and nurtured and met me with compassion? We don't have that version to evaluate because we only have this one path.

So I think, '

Cathy: cause that's that one person's mindset. Yes. Right. And you could, I bet we could. I don't know if you know control group here, I don't know if anyone's actually done this study. 'cause it would be hard to know which way was gonna go which way. But there are plenty of kids. Have been nurtured, supported, taken care of, not perfectly, because you don't want a perfect parent.

'Cause then you think everybody else needs to be perfect. You want a human being as a parent. Yeah. Whole, whole parent. And that they, but they, there's love, there's a, there's connection and that person can grow up and to be a, a great success. There can also be somebody who is not treated well, who is not validated, not seen by their parents, whatever.

There's not that connection and they may grow up and be successful. And I'm putting that in air quotes because while they may rise to the challenge of being

in the Olympics or being great at sports or starting a business, what's going on in their internal world? Here's, are they really better off for that?

Todd: Here's what I see. Okay, this is about increasing the odds, right? We can love our kids with compassion and try to do it our version of perfect. And that doesn't mean that there's a possibility that the kid might get off track because of all these other variables that happen in a human being's life. But all we're trying to do is increase the odds that they're gonna be quote unquote successful people. Yeah. Now we can do a whole podcast on what successful people, what that means. 'cause a lot of people are like money and fame, right? And all that. Like, I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about did the person make an impact of those around him in a positive way. For me, that's successful.

Cathy: And is that person, to me, success is all internal. Like not only internal, but a big part of it is I can go out and I could put out a newsletter that reaches 10 people and I wrote something really important and I sent it to those 10 people. And that to me will feel like a success because I feel good about what I wrote, I feel good about sharing.

And then there's some people who wants it, who want it to go out to a hundred thousand people. And Success is a internal experience of I feel like I am myself. I feel like I am in alignment. I feel like actually I have a great quote, Todd from somebody, her name's Karen Horne, and she, this is, I wrote this down on this piece of paper.

Ironically, it really wasn't for this, but she said, there's nothing more joyous than being all of ourselves and all of our feelings and saying, and doing all that is mine. And there is nothing more uncomfortable than trying to be somebody else or somebody. Perfect. Yeah. Be yourself. So you be you. Success to me is you are being yourself.

And sometimes that's your authentic self. Your authentic self. There was something it said, it said to your point about what success is and what we're focusing on, there are pathways out of this perfectionism. If we choose to organize our society in a way that prioritizes human needs rather than economic needs.

Yeah. Progress should be measured in metrics that measure wellness. Not GDP. There you go. I think that Gen Z and millennials are doing a great job with this. It pisses Gen X off 'cause they're like, you should be doing grunt work and you should be doing this and you should be doing this just like I did.

But what a lot of millennials and Gen Zs are saying is, I don't wanna just do things to take home a paycheck. I wanna do things that make sense. I wanna do things and then take a break. I wanna do things and make sure that I'm, I'm also here for my family. Now. I know sometimes that gets messy, but to at least start to move those things into the conversation is a, we have a much more healthy society that way. Yeah.

Todd: No. Yeah, and for me it's just the whole idea of increasing the odds. Like who knows how much parenting impacts kids? I'm guessing that we have the most influence, actually, I'm guessing we are.

Cathy: Well, I, we do know that size. We do, of course, parenting impacts.

Todd: Yeah. But, but if we, and there's no guarantees in life. No. Right? All I'm trying to do is try to put our kid in a position to to be quote unquote successful. And for me, it's when, on my good days, safe, seen, sued, supported, love, compassion, all that stuff. It's not like the disciplined stuff that sometimes gets thrown around so much, especially with us Gen X folks, because we got disciplined and we think we're okay, and maybe we are okay.

But could we have been better, I'm guessing? Probably.

Cathy: Well, we also got a. I mean, we kind of got ignored. Yeah. Like, not because people didn't love us, but because it was culturally appropriate then. Yeah. You would just say, bye kids. And we had to kind of go do it ourselves. And it didn't mean we weren't, again, it was, it's not about love, it's about we kind of had to be a little more scrappy and I talking about our conference that we're doing, in January, this Zen parenting 2024 conference.

Woo woo. Talking about teens. A lot of parents that I talk to who have teens, they still, I wrote about this a couple weeks ago with when I was your age. They still think they should be doing. They should be parenting their teens the same way they were parented. And I'm telling you, it is not the same time.

We came up in a completely different time. Some of it worked, some of it didn't. And we need to focus on what's happening today, what our kids need today, and what their challenges are. Not telling them they shouldn't feel a certain way. 'Cause we didn't, that's not fair.

Todd: So are you ready for a movie, movie, lab?

I am. Let's hear it.

They do to you.

There you go, sweetie. Yeah. Your breakfast club, you didn't even know you were doing that, Allison. Yeah. Isn't that the worst? I think a lot of this is probably gonna get me into trouble, but. John Bender got cigars burned onto his arm. Yeah, he was abused,

Cathy: but at least his parents did not. At least, no, what's the word? He wasn't ignored. Right. He was abused.

Todd: Yeah. And I guess I would rather be ignored. Yeah. But, but being ignored is really messed up.

Cathy: Being ignored can Okay. Abuse messes with your psyche. Absolutely. Yeah. There's, there's just no, you can't say that sentence. That's why I'm not letting you Yeah. Because nobody wants to be abused.

But someone is noticing you. Yeah. Right. Almost too much to where they're harming you, being completely ignored. There's like a lack of sense of self. Yeah. Like if nobody even acknowledges your presence. Yeah. I mean this is why you know a lot of kids, and, and this can be true no matter what. Again, this isn't an absolute with being ignored, but a lot of kids like to color their hair, get a lot of piercings, get a lot of nose rings, get a lot of tattoos. And that's not always, sometimes kids do that because they do know themselves and they feel validated and seen, and this is how they wanna express themselves. But sometimes kids do that because they're like, I gotta stand out a little more.

You know what I mean? Like, there, there's, I'm not feeling seen. Right. And so When, if your kids are doing things or going, 'cause it's one thing to get a tattoo or, or a nose ring, it's another thing to get 10 of 'em. Yeah. Right. So those kind of conversations where it's like, does this make you how how do these things make you feel like we've been very, the girls as they become adults and everything, they can do what they want with they can make their own choices about tattoos and piercings and such, but, When they tell me what they're interested in, I'm always curious to why.

Yeah. How does that make you feel? is this something you've been thinking about a long time? all all that kind of curiosity. Not, I'm not, what's the word? I'm not berating them about it. I'm just curious.

Todd: Well, and we've done I think, a podcast on ACE score. Yeah. Ace for Adverse Childhood Experience.

We also have done a podcast on emotional neglect. Yeah. Which is the opposite of that ACE score. Right. So, all you gotta do is,

Cathy: well, it's in there. Emotional neglect is in a score. Yeah. Oh it is. So it's set, there's, it's kind of one of the last lines of one of the sentences. Got it. like, 'cause because complete emotional neglect is a form of abuse.

Yeah. Like really it's, I know these words feel really strong, but it is like when a child is, their emotions are, their needs are completely avoided or told that they're not real. It's not that that hurts their psyche and their sense of self. So. A few other things that I wanted to say. Oh, I loved this, Todd, you'll like this.

Okay. There is a difference. So this is about making mistakes. thinking about perfectionism, it's more important to talk about humanizing versus humiliating. So as parents, When our kids make a mistake or, or they're struggling with something, what we wanna do is come in and humanize Yeah. Their experience.

Like, oh yeah, this happens. Oh yeah. It can be tough. Yeah. You still have to clean up your mess. Like if a kid breaks a, a glass to say, oh it's a bummer that happened. You still need to clean it up. But it happens to all of us. Sure. So they still have to deal with it versus a kid breaks a glass and we say, You do that all the time.

You're always dropping things. You're breaking things. Like you can't be trusted with anything that's humiliating. Yeah. That's telling them that there's something innately wrong with them because they made a mistake. And one way we can go as developing children, if we're afraid of being humiliated, perfectionism is a path we can take.

And I'm not saying it's a healthy one. Right. I I'm saying it can become a, a voice in our head that tells us we aren't enough. And then we feel the need to so humanizing is the

Todd: key. I love it. Yeah. I love it. All right. Are we ready to close the shot? Yeah, I think I'm good. Let's see.

Jeremy Kraft, he's a bald-headed beauty, does painting and remodeling throughout the Chicagoland area. 630 956 1800. We did not talk about Team Zen. But we do the sentence. Yeah.

Cathy: He's, paddle, like try and do it off the top of his head. I'm like, say the thing, join the

Todd: circle, which is the Team Zen membership platform.

It's an app with Zen Parenting Radio's complete parenting Content collection plus live talks all in one place. 25 bucks a month, cancel at any time.

Cathy: Okay, let's do something fun. Let's do this live Now. Do that, but use your hands.

Todd: Join the Circle, which is the team membership platform, an app with Zen Parenting readers, complete parenting content collection, plus live talks all in one place.

Cathy: So you were higher. So, but no one talks like this.

Todd: Well, sweetie, you are a, I talk professional hand talker.

Cathy: So I was telling Todd we were reading something before, like and if I don't use my hands, my voice inflection won't change. Like I'm doing it right now. Like I, when I did my audiobook, you should have seen the producers.

They were like, oh my God. I was like talking with my hands. The whole, they didn't care, but it, they kind of laughed at me a little bit. So, Todd is a wonderful reader. You have a great voice here, a great podcast voice. But if you wanna mod, if you wanna go up and down, I feel like using your hands. Yeah. You don't use your hands.

Todd: I don't know if I do. I have to kinda look at our old footage to see if I use my hands, but right now as I'm talking to you, I, my hands are laying gently on the table. You're going like this. Yeah, I know. We gotta, we gotta put that in a YouTube clip. It will be so bad. Good. Okay. So yeah, we talked about all that stuff, so, all right, we're gonna go ahead and close shop.

All right. We're gonna play the music. Keep trucking everybody. Sign or, register to attend. Register for the event. It's gonna be off the hook. Keep trucking.