

Cathy: [00:00:00]

Cathy: Okay, so Todd, if you are on an airplane and you're going to be on a really long flight.

Todd: Yes, I will eat the chicken pie. Gross.

Cathy: What movie do you hope is available on the plane? Like, what movie would you be like excited

Todd: about? Uh, how about Airplane? It's one of my second favorite comedies of all time.

Cathy: You know what?

Cathy: Actually, that's a good answer. Yeah. I'm going to take that answer. I'm going to go with Airplane. I like it. And I would, well, I would definitely say a comedy as well, but I would say something really. Simple, and that I don't have to think very much. Yeah. Like Adam Sandler, Jennifer Aniston. Just go with it.

Cathy: It's really bad, but

Todd: that's what I watched. All right.

Todd: You ready to start this podcast? I am ready to go. All right. Here comes the music.

Todd: Here we go. My name's Todd. This is Gabby. Welcome back to another episode of Zen Parenting [00:01:00] Radio. This is podcast number 738. 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 well being is a parent's self understanding.

Todd: On today's show, Kathy and I are going to fly by the seat of our pants. She said Well, I do have a topic. We have a topic, but that's about texted this to me on Saturday. Okay. Create a strong support system for your kid. Yeah. So that is our prep for today's show. Uh, but first, a few things. All right.

Todd: We have some special podcasts coming up, not next week, but the week after December 12th, we're going to be featuring Dr.

Todd: John Duffy and I'm going to give him some applause. Um, he wrote a book called Rescuing Our Sons, and then like the subtitle is, let me pull it up here, um, Eight Solutions to Our Crisis of [00:02:00] Disaffected Teen Boys. So on the 12th, we're going to have John on and he's going to talk about his book. Uh, a week after that, 1219, we're actually gonna have Michelle Accard with John Duffy.

Todd: Yeah, this is exciting.

Todd: Those are two of our keynotes for the Zen Parenting Conference. And you know Michelle's books? 2024. Can you

Cathy: help me out? Um, 14 Conversations by age 14. And then the new one is 8, 8. Why don't you look

Todd: it up? Yeah. Cause I want to give the right title. Of course. Of course you do. Um, but I am going to say that we are also doing a live Q and A with Dr.

Todd: John Duffy on Thursday, December 14th, uh, sponsored by Zen Parenting Radio and Men Living. Um, you're actually going to sign up through the Men Living website, but the link to December 14th, that's 7pm till 815. John's just going to. Give a quick two cents on his book and then we're just going to dive into Q&

Cathy: A.

Cathy: So for clarification, anybody can [00:03:00] attend and ask questions and MenLiving is sponsoring it and Zen Parenting too? Yes. Okay, so we're doing it and MenLiving are doing it. Correct. It's a collaboration if you will.

Todd: And before you say what Michelle's book is, These are in John, cause I'm reading John's book right now.

Todd: I got about a hundred page pages to go. I'm proud of myself because I usually read slowly, but I'm kind of tearing through his book in the best way. Cause it's really, really

Cathy: good. Well, that's such a compliment. Have you told John that? No, but I will. I told him I was texting with him today and I told him about some of the things you've been reading out loud to me.

Cathy: And I've been like, wow. Yeah.

Todd: Um, in part four of his book, he talks about the problem with our sons right now. And he breaks them up into these eight different categories. Porn. Body image, weed, mass shooters, video games, sexual assault, bullying, and sports betting. Oh my god. Right? It's so true. And um, what I think is great about John's book is like he's giving us without name, while protecting his clients, he's giving [00:04:00] us his best information of What these boys are going through in a way that I don't know how many other people can give us this perspective.

Todd: John works way too hard in my judgment. He has a bunch of clients, but he's been working with these boys for decades, and girls. Mm hmm. And he now... He sees the difference between the two. He sees it. So in a weird way, it's not like, um, data, uh... It's not research. Research, but it's... His experience.

Cathy: Well, and this is the thing that we talk about all the time with qualitative versus quantitative, right?

Cathy: Like, all of my work is qualitative as well. Like, I love quantitative. I love that to verify and validate. But I'm much more interested in my experiences when I'm talking to teen girls, when I'm talking to my college students, when I'm talking to married couples. This is really what's happening. Sometimes I read the data and I'm like, ah, it may show up that way, but that's not what I'm hearing.

Cathy: Well, it's funny.

Todd: I read the book. I think it's called a boys and men, uh, [00:05:00] by Richard Reeves and that's totally research based. Like, you know, and he's a scientist, blah, blah, blah. And Galway's coming out with a new book. I don't know when it's coming out, but. In a way, I think John's information is as valuable, if not more, because he's telling us what these boys are telling him.

Todd: Telling him. Yes. So, and Richard Reese can't do that, Galloway can't do that, John can do it because John's the one doing this. So anyways, um, two weeks from now we're going to have him on for a long, nice long podcast and then December 14th we're going to do a Q& A with him. So sign up now. What is

Cathy: Michelle's book?

Cathy: Um, Michelle, who is going to join us, like Todd said, where it's going to be the four of us. It's kind of my, like, dream podcast. It's you and me and

John and Michelle talking. And her book is called Eight Setbacks That Can Make a Child a Success. And I know the book has been doing very well because I see it everywhere.

Cathy: And like Todd said, both John and Michelle. our speakers at our conference on January 26th and 27th. Um, we consider them to [00:06:00] be two of the premier, um, voices when it comes to talking to teens and pre adolescents. Um, so we are just so grateful to have them and have them as friends and I can't wait to have these

Todd: conversations.

Todd: Tickets are going fast. Shefali is one of the keynotes and many others. It's going to be an incredible two day event. Please get your tickets. We're not doing, we're not streaming it. The only way to experience it is by being there.

Cathy: And that's kind of what, why Todd and I do kind.

Cathy: It's kind of got a different vibe, like the goal I was thinking about this yesterday because I'm kind of putting together stuff for the conference and the goal of the conference is to understand how serious these things are, and then to not take yourself so seriously so you can show up for them.

Cathy: I was like realizing how Todd and I tried to bring in a lot of Uh, not humor at our kid's expense, but like some ease, ease, some warmth, some levity, some pop culture, some let's talk about this. Let's relate to each other because we got to deal with serious things. But you, if you deal with serious things in a super serious manner, it backfires [00:07:00] on you.

Cathy: You have to have some space and openness and compassion and willingness to You know, take responsibility for your own actions and energy. So I think our conference is actually quite special, um, and it's because you people show up.

Todd: Well, and we are going to, we're having it at a different venue, so space is much more limited.

Todd: Yeah. Tickets are going quick. So if you're planning to do it, especially if you're planning to fly in, uh, make the decision now so that we can get a nice cheap airfare into Chicago. And

Cathy: one more thing. Sorry, I'm not yawning. I'm trying to open my ear. My ear is.

Todd: It's because you've been on a plane for a long time.

Todd: I want to do that thing where you like blow. I'm always worried that my eardrum is going to explode. I just did it. Did it

Cathy: help? No. Um, but my eardrum didn't explode. That's good. Um, I was going to say that a few people have asked us who have already bought tickets. They're like, well, when does it start?

Cathy: Okay. So here's the deal, everybody. Friday at one o'clock. So January 26th. It starts Friday [00:08:00] at 1 o'clock. That's January 26th. The next day, it starts again at 9 a. m. and ends around 5. Don't forget

Todd: about yoga in

Cathy: the morning, though. Oh, yeah, yeah. And if you're spending the night, or if you want to come in early, we have a yoga class that, um, that is happening at 8.

Cathy: So, or 7? What time's yoga? I don't know. But anyway, it's so cool. And I just want everybody to come in and enjoy this kind of new space and relax and be with people where you can take things in and watch clips from movies and listen to good songs and, and hear these speakers and take away something

Todd: that...

Todd: Be in community with other amazing parents.

Cathy: And then be in better communication with your kids. If you have young kids, you should still come. Because they're going to be pre adolescents any day. And a lot of the things that we say to teenagers, if you start saying those things earlier, and I don't mean talking about the deep, deep, deep stuff.

Cathy: I mean talking to them in a way or listening the way that teenagers want to be heard. If you start doing that when kids are younger, it's a lot easier to go [00:09:00] into these, you know, older phases with our kids. You've already established that. So, anyway. That is what we'll say about that.

Cathy: Um, and did you have any other announcements?

Cathy: Well,

Todd: I typically bring up the Zen parenting moment, uh, but the last, because we were in Italy, uh, visiting our daughter. I didn't do one last week. You didn't do one last week, and the week before that was the fentanyl one. So it's just like a public service announcement. Um, If you have not listened to the one that we did on fentanyl two weeks ago, it was a really, um, powerful, powerful podcast.

Todd: We interviewed Patrice, what's her last name? Lenowitz. And she lost her son to fentanyl poisoning, which I now know to use that language instead of an overdose. It wasn't an overdose. It wasn't an overdose. So check that out. That's the only other announcement that I had.

Cathy: Okay, that sounds good. Let's begin.

Cathy: So what I said to Todd was I was thinking about how important it is for us as parents to really build in a network for our kids to have [00:10:00] as they're growing up. And I feel like the earlier the better. And when I say a network, it's not about that I'm trying to give parents more to do. This isn't like a go out and do more, you know, like you have another job, go out and find people for your kids.

Cathy: It's the allowing. of other people to love our kids. And I know, you know, I was thinking about this last night and I know that there are some parents that have had experiences like traumatic experiences in their childhood or bad experiences with a coach or scary experiences with a teacher or other families or whatever it may be.

Cathy: Or they read the news or the media and they just, this freaks them out. So they often do the opposite with their kid. Like, they'll be like, you know, maybe not very trusting of other adults, and a lot of, I can tell I'm getting a cold. Can you tell?

Todd: Um, I'm going to choose that it's not a cold. Okay. And I will add to what you're saying.

Todd: I don't think it's a

Cathy: cold, but it's like I'm still [00:11:00] dealing with. Airplane. Airplane. Airplane health. Because my ears and stuff. I don't

Todd: know. We flew overseas. Okay. I, I just want to like, uh, interject that I think parents, specifically moms, have a kind of a rescuer or a hero putting everything on them. Yes, there's a martyrdom.

Todd: And this is a discussion that I hope will help Us all because I certainly have a martyrdom in me. You definitely do. Definitely. Um, that it doesn't all have to be, you don't have to be the only one doing this to support your kids. Yeah.

Cathy: Um, well, and let me finish this thought about, you know, parents who are like, I don't want my kids to be somewhere too long, or I don't trust this adult to be in charge of them.

Cathy: Or I don't want my kids to ever spend the night anywhere else. Or I don't trust a camp, you know, there's all these, like, because.

Cathy: Oftentimes it's that parent's history, which is real. Like it's not me saying, Oh, forget that. I understand that that's a traumatic experience. And that's [00:12:00] something where it's like, I am more leery about allowing my, my kids to do things.

Cathy: Understandable. But if you trust yourself. And you talk to your kids about things that, you know, boundaries for themselves, asking for help when they need it, um, saying, you know, having the ability to say no and making sure they know that you'll be there if they feel afraid or, you know, like for example, let me just focus on one thing, you know, I did allow my girls to have overnights.

Cathy: I can't remember what year we started

Todd: that. We probably started later for our oldest and, and earlier for our youngest, yeah.

Cathy: But when they would be somewhere, if it was a slumber party, if it was just them with another friend or whatever. I would say, if you want to come home at any point, text me, or have the parent call me, or would you like me to call at 9 and see how things are going?

Cathy: You know, they didn't have a phone really early on, but there are so many ways that we can make [00:13:00] sure That you are feeling safe in your environment. And I would follow through on those things. The reason why is

we have to have our kids. We have to allow our kids to have some experiences where they can utilize the skills.

Cathy: We're trying to teach them. Of course, we're not going to put them in dangerous situations on purpose. And hopefully we vetted certain situations way ahead of time. So we were not feeling like every time we bring them to someone's house, we're unsure if they'll be unsafe. Like hopefully. They're family friends or people we know and that we're trying to allow our kids to have experiences where they can ask for help if they need it or they can do something different and trust themselves in an environment that's not their own home.

Cathy: And I think depending on who, the age of your kids, it's going to look different. Like the, you know. The first couple of overnights that our kids had were either with my sister, which was easy, or like our best [00:14:00] friends. And so we, they kind of had the experience of being away from home in an environment where we knew they were okay, where they knew they could ask the adults for help.

Cathy: And then from there, if there was a slumber party, moving up into adolescence, early teen years, they already had, they had a phone by then, but then they had this ability to know they could do it. And also know they could leave if they needed to. So we're building this foundation inside of them over time.

Cathy: And the reason, and this, and there's more that I have to say about that, but I have seen and talked to a lot of parents who are leery about doing any of that to make sure that their kid never has anything happen to them. Which I understand, but If our kids never are away from us and they never have experiences with other families or other, you know, like a camp or a weekend away, they can't build, they [00:15:00] can't build that in themselves.

Cathy: They can't trust themselves to manage it. Does that make sense, Todd? Yeah.

Todd: And, you know, there's times when parents want to bubble wrap their kids and save them from having any type of experience. There's times, you know, lawnmower parenting, whatever term you want to use. And this is where I'll kind of maybe be annoying to anybody who's younger who's listening.

Todd: You know, back when we were growing up, 70s and 80s, um, I don't know, I think our parents Loved us just as much, but cared a little bit less to make sure that we were safe. Uh huh. Different cultural norms. And, you know,

whether it's, you know, I just remember being on my own all the time. Right. I mean, not all the time, but being on my own.

Todd: And what's weird is we're the parents now, and we had that experience. I found value from having that experience. Yet at the same time. Kind of the default is, think about how often we don't have any idea where our kids are. I know. It never happens. I [00:16:00] know.

Todd: Find Friends, we use Find Friends, there's a whole bunch of other apps out there.

Todd: Um, back in the olden days, in the 1979 whatever, our parents, if we weren't in the house, we We, they didn't really know where we were, um, and somehow we screwed that up. We protected them, I'm judging, generation, generationally, uh, too

Cathy: much. Well, there's many reasons for that. Okay. One of them is media exposure.

Cathy: We now have access to every bad thing that happens everywhere all the time. We now have access to statistics about things that happen to kids. We now have stories of, you know, kids being harmed or, um, you know, even our own history maybe of molestation or unwanted touch. And we have all this information now that then lives in our brain as it's happening right this minute.

Cathy: That this is our reality. And a [00:17:00] lot of that happened, Todd, uh, that started with America's Most Wanted. Um, it started with, um, What's John's name? Adam, Adam, when Adam was Adam Walsh. So yeah, I'm not blaming John Walsh. I, I like that he started a show to help find people we couldn't find, but the whole Adam Walsh story really changed the dynamics of culture.

Cathy: And what's

Todd: weird about it is Yeah, I remember reading Julie Lithcott Haim's book. She said, our kids are actually safer now than they were before. Now what's weird is, except at school,

Cathy: which is so messed up. Oh my God. I can't even, it's so hard to even comment on that.

Todd: So the odds of somebody getting scooped up at a mall.

Todd: like happened to poor Adam Walsh. Yeah. It's happened more back in the 80s than it does now. Yet we act as if it's, there's, there's danger around the corner. Correct.

Cathy: And you know, and there's all these things because there's also, who was I having this conversation with about societal [00:18:00] norms and how we, it was, it was, I feel like someone I was emailing with a mother I was emailing with about part of the fear is that if something happens, we parents in this generation feel will be blamed.

Cathy: So the cultural norms have also shifted to if anything happens to your kid, where were you? And historically it was, you know, the, when we were kids, I'm not saying our parents were never blamed for something, but it was typically like, what was that kid thinking or that person who hurt them? You know, that's a person we're focusing on or, or things happen.

Cathy: And we need to move forward, but there's such a culture, you know, I just remember this is a good decade ago, but, you know, kids who were walking down the street, who were, you know, going to go take the train, or they were going to go to the grocery store by themselves and parents started to get over involved and where are your parents and, you know, You know, and then police would be called because the kids were left alone, and [00:19:00] there's this new culture of, um, hovering with our kids.

Cathy: And, and while we personally can't change that culture, I think within our own boundaries of our own home, we can allow our kids to have some experiences within reason where we feel like there's somebody who cares about them as much as we do, or I don't know if that's possible, cares about them in a deep way and allow them to have an experience where they can learn to trust themselves in new environments.

Cathy: And You know, a few things that, uh, you know, we can talk about personally, Todd, is we already talked about, you know, doing, you know, sleepovers. We also did, when I was a kid, I didn't go to camp, but my kids did go to camp. You didn't go to camp when you were a kid,

Todd: right? Uh, I went to day camp. I went to Ray Meyers basketball camp, which is two weeks overnight.

Todd: But generally speaking, I, I didn't do many. S you know, four, four week, six week overnight camps. Yeah.

Cathy: And neither [00:20:00] did I, I mean, I did things in high school, like a journalism camp or whatever, but it was only like a weekend or like Palm Camp or whatever. But it, these camps were like that. Our kids did, they started when they were really young and it would only be for like four or five days, and then the next year it would be a full week.

Cathy: And then when my girls were in high school, they did like a two week camp. And that is quite a thing because they are. Not with their phone. Yeah, that's the

Todd: best money we've ever

Cathy: spent. And, but scary. I mean, what would, what would I do when we dropped them off? I would lose it. Yeah. You know, because it felt so out of control.

Cathy: Now I trusted the camp. I knew like my, my best friend had gone there when she was a kid. We knew a lot of the counselors who continued coming back, the person who was in charge. Like we trusted that the. The institution itself. Yeah. Um, but to be away from your kid for that amount of time, but here's the interesting thing.

Cathy: They had hard times there, but guess what? They got through it. And [00:21:00] interesting ways, like I remember my youngest, she ended up being put in a cabin, she's a little old for her age, like her birthday's in September, so she got put in a cabin with a lot of older girls where she was younger as far as grade wise, and she said the first couple days it was so hard, and by the third day they were all like braiding her hair and helping her, and she realized.

Cathy: There was so

Todd: many things that you would have been there and had any type of influence, you'd be like, no, no, no, no. My kid belongs in a different age bracket because all these girls, you know, two years is a big difference when you're like 9 Um, but the fact that we weren't there, they had to put on their...

Todd: big boy, big girl pants and deal with some significant adversity, homesickness, all that stuff. I, you always struggled more with the camp drop up. I just kind of knew like, yeah, there's going to be parts of this week or two weeks that are going to suck. [00:22:00] And I don't, I just, I'm not. Tuned into their experience in the same way you are.

Todd: So it was always easier for me to do that.

Cathy: Well, and I think the thing that was helpful, and this is something to think about parents when you're talking to your kids. My kids wanted to go. There wasn't a forcing. There wasn't a you have to. There was, yeah, I want to go back because they had met people or they're actually, they each had one friend that was from our town that was going with them.

Cathy: So they wanted to go with them. Um, and like my. One of my daughters had to like really pump herself up for a month ahead of time because she'd be so nervous to go. But anytime I'd be like, this is not something you have to do. She'd be like, no, I want to do it. So we were supporting them in taking care of themselves and allowing other people to help take care of them.

Cathy: And that can be really hard. as a parent to know how to, how to, um, put that into practice. Oh, and I

Todd: just, you know, I love, um, providing [00:23:00] resources on this podcast. And if there's like parents out there that have kids that are eight or nine years old and thinking about doing the overnight camp thing, I'm 100 percent on board with this experience for no other reason than they, They don't have their phones.

Todd: Now, eight year olds usually don't have phones, but 12 year olds do. They sure do. Um, and they have a taste of what it was like for us, because for two weeks, they were getting mosquito bites. They were running around. They had some structured time, some unstructured time. They were bored. They were bored.

Todd: They were scared. They were challenged. They were joyful. None of it through their phone. Right. And then I always remember that. I figured our kids would be so excited to get their phone back and they hated that. And then you just get like a little taste of that drug, that phone endorphin drug, and then they get back into the swing of having their phone

Cathy: all the time.

Cathy: Yeah. You know, just kind of on this note, this kind of encapsulates everything we're talking about here. A couple summers ago. [00:24:00] Um, my daughter went to a camp that she was really interested in. It was kind of more of an arts camp and it was supposed to be three weeks. Is that right, Todd? Uh, two

or three. And to her, that seemed like a lot, you know, she knew she could do a week, but she's like, I'm not sure I can do three weeks.

Cathy: And we found out, or we were able to talk to her once and she's like, you know what? When I'm done with a week, I think I'm done. I don't need to do the three weeks. And Tanya and I are like, great, we'll come get you. And when we came to get her, she was glad she had gone, but she was glad to be done. And she was also like, I don't want my phone back for a while.

Cathy: She's like, I'm going to try since I was supposed to be a camp anyway. Mentally, I felt like I was going to be a camp longer. I'm going to try to not have it for a few more days. And she She saw the benefit that, like Todd said, it's this, um, it's this experience that they, that, as Deborah Heitner would call them, digital natives have never had because when they, or they [00:25:00] haven't had it since they were, like, before adolescence, um, and they can't remember that time very well, so they're so used to being like, okay, I'm standing here for five minutes, I'll look at my phone, and to have an experience of like, Not feeling that pressure or not seeing all these notifications, like your, your friend just shared something, you better go like it right away or they're going to question why, you know, you can actually say to them, sorry, I didn't have my phone that week, you know, it's like an out, it's an out of that race.

Cathy: So, that's one thing. Camp. Not everybody can do camp. Maybe there aren't camps around you or there's not a camp that you feel like you've heard about that has whatever reputation. Um, other opportunities are, you know, neighbors, family friends, um, you know, going on trips with other families. I re I remember the first time J.

Cathy: C. wanted to do that, she was actually, I think, a sophomore in high school. And, I... She really wanted to go and you and I kind of [00:26:00] remember the surfing experience. Oh, California? Yeah. Yeah. And we, you know,

Todd: it. We didn't really know the family that well. Right. So it was a little. It was new. Not off putting like, okay, let's, let's.

Todd: Yeah. Pause and make sure that this is a good idea. And it was, and she had a wonderful time, but yeah, I remember that being a little. It was new. Yeah, it was new to us. Yeah,

Cathy: because that's like, you know, and, and I knew she could contact us, but she couldn't be like, Hey, come pick me up. Yeah. So what I've kind of always followed.

Cathy: is if my girls really want it and they can explain to me why and they seem very confident in their ask. Like there's a sense of I want to do this and we decided to do this and here's what we're going to do and I'll be gone this long and I'm really looking forward to it and I'm kind of like, I feel the need to follow their lead, unless there's some glaring red flag.

Cathy: And of course, parents, everybody listening, you know, your situation. So this isn't about do what Todd and I did, you [00:27:00] know, if there's a red flag and you follow that, but if you are feeling that, that experience, you know, so your kid is coming to you with something and you're like, yeah, there's really nothing inherently dangerous in here.

Cathy: This is an opportunity that they seem really excited about, you know, what a gift. So. Like, now that our girls are older, it's so interesting to see their, they had different trajectories and what they did and what they chose to do, and each of them had... different big experiences. Like my middle daughter was the first one to go abroad, you know.

Cathy: And on that note, Todd and I, um, you know, as we were saying, cause my ears were popped, we just got back from Italy seeing my oldest daughter. And there's all sorts of stories we could tell about that. But the one that was most endearing was the fact that she has a family there that she's been living with that love her.

Cathy: And that's pretty. Damn cool. Yeah. You know?

Todd: Well, not only that.

Todd: I mean, so she's in Italy [00:28:00] and the people that take care of her in their apartment don't speak English. Yes! They only speak Italian. So to see your 20 year old daughter speaking Italian, you know, cause they, they fed us on our last day in Florence and it was such a warm.

Todd: Warm, gratifying. They, it seemed like they loved our daughter as much as we did, and they just met her a few months ago. And that's what happens.

Todd: Like, we have amazing children, and we're biased, of course, but we think that they're amazing. And there's just, and you know, just to see your, your

kid kind of, she knew more about everything than we did, because she's been there.

Todd: And it's just, it's really fun to let your kids teach you, teach you, and not like, even like, In some created scenario, like it's the truth.

Todd: She's better at international travel. She knows Italy a lot better than we do. She speaks Italian.

Todd: She knows how to get around like, and these kids, [00:29:00] um, all have these special gifts, abilities, talents, experiences, and I think that's one of the goals is to put your Put yourself in a position where your kids actually do lead.

Todd: And, you know, this 20 year old Italian experience is one, but I've said a million times, you know, my three year old was walking to preschool with me. She was much more mindful than I ever was. She's looking at the ants. She's looking at the clouds. She's doing all these different things. Um, and I was just trying to get to preschool.

Todd: So it doesn't matter. Or your kids, when they're like newborns, they're teaching you how to be patient because they're not letting you sleep that much. Like there's always a lesson in it somewhere.

Todd: And next time you get reactive because your kid's gaming too much or your daughter's like, you know, on the wrong TikToks or whatever, it's all an opportunity for you to learn from it.

Todd: And maybe it's patience. Maybe it's compassion. You [00:30:00] know, we're talking about Duffy. I'm in the middle of his book and all he says is like parents. Be on your kid's team.

Todd: Like that's really, that's, that's all he says in the entire book is like, you know, hardcore discipline does not work for a depressed kid who's smoking weed in the basement gaming.

Todd: He knows that he's not doing well. He doesn't need another person to tell him that. So can you be. Compassionate and empathic and loving and soft and non reactionary towards your kid who's driving you nuts in that moment because he should be out there with friends, but instead he's in the basement.

Cathy: And think about it, you know, Todd and I have used this on many shows, so this is repetitive, but again, you got to go that either the.

Cathy: the neighbor or aunt and uncle scenario where you're watching a kid like distance yourself enough so you see a kid who's in a basement smoking weed all the time playing video games. If you were, if you were not their parent, how would you talk to them? What would you say? What would you, how would you relate to them if you [00:31:00] didn't feel such heavy pressure to, and I'm putting this in air quotes, do something about it?

Cathy: Because we know that the way people When they're understood and seen and heard and more fear and more shame and more guilt and more judgment only pushes them further into that hole and pushes them further from you. So they don't want to listen to what your quote unquote advice is.

Cathy: And we so we know this in theory, do you know many parents I've heard tell me these things like say, well, I know what I need to do is I just need to be compassionate.

Cathy: And then I'm with them and they're with their kid and they're not doing that at all. No, it's they know it in theory. Yeah. But they don't do

Todd: it. Yeah. Because they're in the backseat of their brain. Right. They're in their scared animal. Yes. And they are worried that this kid might be smoking weed in the basement for the next 30 years.

Todd: Right.

Todd: So instead of us acting in the present moment, we're, we're thinking in the future of what [00:32:00] this might turn into instead of what is happening in this moment right now. And you talk about like, what does it mean to be compassionate? I'm going to pull out Dan Siegel. He wrote whatever that book was.

Todd: Our kids need to feel Whatever

Cathy: book was the whole

Todd: brainchild. I don't remember. He's got a bunch of them. I forget which

Cathy: one it was. Well, and just so some clarity, he had, he writes books about children's brain development. So he's explaining how the brain works at certain times. And

Todd: the four needs are the kids needs to feel safe.

Todd: Kid needs to feel seen. Kid needs to feel soothed and the kid needs to feel supported. And I love when you bring up the example of be their aunt and uncle, like there should be a book out there, you know, parenting book. Be their aunt, you know, what would the aunt, a loving aunt or uncle be to their kid?

Todd: Because that, I don't know, I don't have a good way of explaining this, but it's less volatile. It removes the, the The baggage of, of, because I think it's, it's all our stuff, right? Like, I'm in charge of this person. [00:33:00] And if this person turns into a failure, then how does that look on me? Where if it's an aunt and uncle, like, Hey man, I'm just their aunt and uncle.

Todd: So I'm going to do my best to support this kid. And if he turns out to be a failure, Weirdly, that's what will get you to that place, that soft, compassionate place.

Cathy: Yeah, it's kind of like there's different levels because there is the level, the surfacy level of I want my kid to look or be a certain way so people think I'm good.

Cathy: That's kind of the surfacy, narcissistic, you know, it's all about me level. But then there's also the level of, I love this kid so much that I'm terrified something is going to happen to them, which is, it's still fear based, um, but it really is coming from a place of, I feel like my heart is walking around on the street and I need to protect it at all costs, but there is a, an inability to recognize that protecting, or are you really protecting?

Cathy: Are you actually in a roundabout way keeping them? From having life experiences, because believe me, like I'll [00:34:00] just talk about JC for a second. She got on a plane to Italy and she didn't know where to go when she got off. And then she went to Germany at one point and got on a wrong train and got off and doesn't speak any German and had no idea what to do.

Cathy: And her SIM card in her phone was not working. These are not things I would ever set my kid up for or be like, yeah, go do that. I, those things terrify me too, but guess what? She figured it out. And now she, like Todd said, is emboldened. She's bigger. And let's take it off JC for a second because she's 20.

Cathy: Let's talk about like a kid who, you know, they, they start something new. And we, as parents are like, maybe they start a new extracurricular that they've never done. And we, as parents are like, why are you doing that? Why don't you go back to baseball? You always play baseball. You're good at baseball. We know baseball.

Cathy: And this kid's like, I want to try something new. And they go in and they have a hard first day and a hard first week. And maybe the first month.
[00:35:00] But then when they start to learn whatever it is, chess or whatever they're learning, they're like, wow, I can start new

Todd: things. Well, it's so funny because you just told me a story about your girlfriend who has a son who is a junior.

Todd: Yes. Oh my God. I love this story. And he is. He, he tried out, oh he didn't try out because it's a smaller high school. He joined the football team. He joined the football team. And he joined the wrestling team. And he's never done either. And he's never done either. And there's a part of me that's like, Oh, I'm scared for that kid because he's going to get worked.

Todd: Like he's probably competing against kids who have been playing football and wrestling for a long time. And that's what sucks is if you are in it for success, that's not. And if success means winning the medal, that's not a good recipe for success because he's behind schedule. But if it's new experiences, if it is establishing resilience, if it's teamwork, friendships, if it's friendships, um, there's so much for [00:36:00] him in that.

Cathy: Well, he already finished the football season. He loved it. Yeah. He met, you know, lots of people. He met a coach who I think was the one who inspired him to go into wrestling. Yeah. And. These, we, we in our brains Todd, like, and this is, I, because I work with moms, I hear this from moms all the time. We create these plans for our kids and we decide, like I had, um, someone that I worked with a couple of years ago who was like, well, my kid is going to do this.

Cathy: And if she doesn't do well here, she's going to do tennis. And then if she does doubles, she'll be able to, she had it like all worked out for her. And I thought, my goodness, where is your kid in this mix? Yeah. And You're not even allowing for them to be inspired by someone new, or someone outside of you, or a coach, or a teacher, or something they see on TV.

Cathy: You're just creating the plan and playing it out the way your brain tells you it should look. The way the br way your brain tells you it should look to keep you feeling safe. [00:37:00] Yeah. But it really has nothing to do with them.

Todd: Well, it's funny, you know, we started this podcast creating a strong support system for your kid.

Todd: And we talked about family and friends and sleepovers and all this other stuff. Camp. Camp.

Todd: It's so interesting how much influence potentially a coach or a teacher or a drama teacher or whatever has on our kids. Um, because, you know, there's part of my kids You know, I'm like, Oh, I'm so proud of you and your ability to do blah, blah, blah.

Todd: I don't think it lands that well because they know that I'm going to support them regardless of if they suck at something or not. We're forever on their team. We're forever on their team. However, if a, if a coach says, I see some talent in you and you should think about doing this. Like coaches and teachers have so much, and this is where you and I have had some disagreements with Duffy and I'm able to talk about this with him, is he, he, uh, because I'm reading this book and you haven't read it yet, sweetie, he doubled down on the idea [00:38:00] of one extracurricular activity.

Todd: Yes. And now. John is supporting children who are challenged in a therapeutic session. Correct. You and I have subscribed the idea is if the kid wants to do something, they can do it. Or if they want to be done at three o'clock, that that's fine too. Now what's interesting is all of our kids end up finding something that they want to do, but it's not because of our insistence that they must do one thing.

Cathy: So cool. I don't, because I know we've talked about this historically. I don't think there is any disagreement with Duffy. You say that every time, but there's not really disagreement. It's just the way it looks. This is what I mean. Like you said, he's working with kids who are feeling disconnected, who don't have something that they can focus their energy on, who feel isolated.

Cathy: And what does a kid like that need? They need something like a team. So what he's saying is, I feel like kids need these things. I agree. I agree. And. In my own family, though, me as a parent, I'm, I'm not being a [00:39:00] therapist, I'm just being a parent. If I am watching one of my daughters struggle

with something, and they don't like something, or they're done with something, or something is run its course, run its course, and they're like, I'm not going to do this anymore, and I'm going to take a break and see what kind of plays out.

Cathy: And then, you know, like one of, I'm thinking one of my daughters who did that, and then she ended up coming home every day and baking, and then she got really into painting at home. So, she was still. Doing things. They just didn't look like school extracurricular activities. I, as a parent, could see that, but if I'm working as a therapist, and I'm working with kids, and they're feeling lonely, isolated, I may be like, there's some, you need to do something to, to combat the, this isolation that you have.

Cathy: And, and I, because I'm not in your home, I can't trust that you're going to come home and build something. You know what I mean? Um, do we really disagree or is it just the way it looks?

Todd: Um, I don't know. Maybe we'll ask him about that. Um, [00:40:00] one quick tangent, and this is something you helped me with. Uh, you talked about baking or painting or dancing and singing.

Todd: And our kids love some of our kids love doing some of that. And I'm always like, okay, let's look up at the park district catalog and let's get them in a baking class or let's get them in the ballet class or let's get them into a singing class. And you said, why? And I'm like, well, because she likes it.

Todd: And that's how you learn. You learn from people who are trained at this. So if they want to build on it, they have to do that. And, and I'm giving you kudos here. If they want to do it, we're on board, but maybe. All they want to do is bake, and they don't want to learn from anybody.

Todd: They want to learn by reading a recipe book, or they want to learn on a YouTube thing, or maybe singing.

Todd: They don't want to learn how to sing. They just want to sing. I actually just said that to my good friend, my [00:41:00] good friend, Frank, because his daughter's taken up, um, sewing or whatever. And I think he said something like, well, let's get her into a sewing class or something. He's like. Maybe yes, maybe no. So anyways, it's just.

Cathy: And I think when the kids were little, there's two parts to this. I knew that they had a love of something. And I knew that the idea of putting a social component on it. And this is my kids. Again, remember, you have to know your

own kids. Because some kids need the social outlet. So you're putting them in a social situation to help them burn energy.

Cathy: I knew my kids that would deter their love of the thing. They would be more worried about, I have to go to a class, I have to perform for a teacher, I have to worry about these other kids, and it would deter their learning. So what were some things we did instead? I had one of my daughters want to learn how to bake pies and I asked my brother in law to spend time with her.

Cathy: One of my other daughters wanted to. Sorry, I keep getting stuffed up. One of my other daughters wanted to learn how to bake and one of my girlfriends said, I'll see her every week and I'll bake with her. [00:42:00] One of my other daughters really loves to do like these acting. She makes these TV shows with one of her friends and one of my friends.

Cathy: One of my friends is one of my daughter's best friends. That's awesome. Can you, I mean, think about that. I mean, and she'll say it's so weird that one of my best friends is 52. Um, you know, like one of my good friends spends time with my daughter and it has nothing to do with me. Um, the, and then my, my sister and her husband, my brother in law, they were just, well, you know, like I already said this part, but they were in Germany and my daughter who's in Italy.

Cathy: They flew her to see them, and they spent like a week together. Like, these are the experiences, and those of you who come from big families, you may be like, well, duh, of course this is what you do. I think this is, in bigger families, in families that are super connected, or live amongst each other, this is very normal.

Cathy: And you'd be like, yeah, that's what you do. But there are families that feel more isolated. They're, they're not close to their [00:43:00] parents, or they don't live by their siblings. And we have to create. an environment where these things can happen. Well, and it's funny

Todd: because you had mom, dad, sister, and Aunt Peg.

Todd: That was it. That was it. Yeah. And I had mom, dad, sister, brother. Cousins. 42 cousins and aunts and uncles. So we came from a completely different. Yeah. family experience. And I wonder how that plays into how we parent.

Cathy: Well, that is why, I mean, everybody who listens to the show or read my book knows that when my girls were 13, we had a party for them.

Cathy: And we, it was just with women. And I said, All these women who are at your 13 year old party, um, and they were adult women, of course, and some of them were cousins that were in their teens, um, I said, these women are here for you, and these women are your family. They're, they are, some are related by blood, and some are neighbors and friends, and you can go to these women.

Cathy: And my girls 100 percent took me up on [00:44:00] those things. They are very close to these women. And that was the whole point. Like, I was trying to... I think a lot of my loneliness as a kid, I had a lot of wonderful things and the, the, you know, having a sibling and having an aunt that I was close to and parents who were together and, you know, and I had fantastic friends, but I didn't have that extension.

Cathy: You know what I mean? Like I didn't have like, Oh, I can go live at this neighbor's house or I, I think that. I wanted that more. I wanted more options of people I could talk to about things. And it was a different time. People didn't talk about feelings and all these things we do now. Um, so that wasn't normalized.

Cathy: But I, I think for my girls, I want them to know, like Duffy is a perfect example. Duffy. is so good. My oldest daughter is, is, knows he and his wife very well, and he's supported her in so many ways. He even mentions, mentions her in his book. There is [00:45:00] these connections that my girls have been able to make that have nothing to do with

Todd: this.

Todd: Yeah, we did not make it happen. It just kind

Cathy: of happens. And that to me, just kind of like going to see JC and seeing this family that loves her that has never met us. They don't know anything about us and they have their own family with her. It's really beautiful and it's very, um, it, it brings us all together as a family.

Cathy: Then you see what I mean? All of a sudden then we're all connected and you know, same with like my daughter, you know, has friendships and, you know, close friendships and a partnership that we know everybody really well. Like they, you know, they, that brings all these families together. And I think that. You and I can talk a lot about this in hindsight, like, because our girls are older.

Cathy: For those of you that are listening that have younger kids, you have to decide what those pieces are for you. Who are the friends that you would like your kids to be close to? And it can be hard because if you have friends who also have young kids, [00:46:00] they may not have a lot of time to spend with your kid.

Cathy: But are there... You know, babysitters, like our girls had some babysitters that they adored and I was not great about that. Like, I was totally martyring out when the kids were young. I didn't love having babysitters. It made me uncomfortable. And I, I think I was so hands on with them that I just felt, I don't know, like I felt bad leaving.

Cathy: I felt like... I don't know. I mean, it's hard for me to remember because I could say a bunch of things like I didn't know what they were learning or, cause it wasn't like I felt that they were inherently unsafe. It just, sometimes you remember it'd be really hard to get out the door. Well,

Todd: it's because they didn't make it easy on us.

Todd: Yeah. They would be clinging to us. They didn't want us to go. And all that. Yeah. Uh, but once again, that's good old sweetie, you are an empath and you, I'm just really good at compartmentalizing. I don't know if it's a [00:47:00] strength or a weakness or maybe it's just neutral. But. And it's not like I'm numb to everything, but yeah, okay, you're going to cry.

Todd: We're going to, me and, me and mom are going to go out, we'll be back in three hours. You'll be fine. And I would close the door and that would pretty much be it for me. And it would take you a good 15 minutes or so to.

Cathy: I think when a kid, because these are very paradoxical things, when a kid is saying, I need you, or I'm not comfortable, or I'm scared.

Cathy: These are things we teach them to tell us, and it's hard to differentiate between a normal, like they're having a new experience with a babysitter, and they're really frightened of something, or this is not the right time to go out. Like, I, I don't have any advice for anybody about, Do it this time, but not that time, because you have to feel in your own body, like this feels right, or this is a have to, you know, there were experiences where we had have to's, where we have to leave, um, but it, it didn't always feel.

Cathy: [00:48:00] Right.

Todd: Well, and you said they need us, I'd say they wanted us, but they didn't need us. Right. They were in good hands with a good babysitter and in 15 minutes after they cry a little bit they'll be fine. Yeah.

Cathy: I think when your challenge, and I'll speak for myself instead of being general, I think because my challenge Most of the time it's feeling that I'm not heard or understood, which is old, it's not like happening currently, but it's kind of my default like fear.

Cathy: When a kid is telling you something and you're like, yeah, yeah, yeah, but I'm still gonna go, you're fine. It goes against... My own experiences, my own like wounds and that, and yes, part of it is I can feel them and I'm their mother and I'm empathic, but it feels like I'm doing to them what I felt was done to me and that has, there's some very fine lines in here because I wasn't always right.

Cathy: Yeah. I was, some of it, I was too risk

Todd: averse. Yeah, and I'm probably too risky. [00:49:00] Yeah. And there's balance somewhere in between. Yeah.

Cathy: Um, But, you know, I, I just, anyway, I, I think that that's why this is an interesting conversation. And if you're listening to this and you're like, well, some of it I agree with, or some of it I'm doing or not doing, or, oh, everything you're saying I do all the time, um, because there's also this experience, you know, I'm going to come fully, you know, swing the pendulum all the way the other side.

Cathy: And this, these experiences are good for them if they feel connected to you first. You know what I mean? Like, this is not pawning your kids off on other people. This is, you have a positive relationship with your children, so they have that firm foundation, that steady base, where they can actually have experiences somewhere else and then come home and feel safe again.

Cathy: You know, this is, these are attachment theory things, you know. Do your kids have a, a healthy attachment to you where yes, they do miss you, but they want to [00:50:00] take risks and yes, they turn around to make sure you're there, but they're going to go out and do it anyway. That's what you're looking for is it's not about saying, Hey, I'm doing great because my kid is, you know, their cousin's house.

Cathy: It's seven days out of the week and I don't have to worry about them. Like, you know, it's more, you know, that's the pendulum full. The other way is you have, you've built a relationship with them that allows them to have these experiences.

Todd: Um, so I have a, an outro song. Cued up. That goes with this? No, not at all.

Todd: So why don't you think of, because you're not going to like mine. Jeez. So what

Cathy: is the, tell me what the outro song, what it means. Like, it

Todd: means this is the song that's outro ing.

Cathy: I know, but like, am I supposed to go with the topic? Am I supposed to just go with Zen parenting?

Todd: Just, Whatever, sweetie. All good.

Cathy: No, you're not giving me enough. Like, you have an outro song that I'm not going to like. You chose it because why? You already did this

Todd: outro song. I'm [00:51:00] going to keep doing it until you come up with... You did! Remember? I did closing time. I know, so now it's your turn again, unless you want to hear this.

Todd: This is the end.

Cathy: Why are

Todd: we ending? Because we're 51 minutes in and I need to eat my yogurt. But no, I'm going to do a summary of what we talked about and you think of a song. Okay, you, I'm going to try. Here's a summary. We talked about, um, the 80s of what it was like to be a kid in the 80s. Uh, summer camp being awesome.

Todd: Okay. Uh, we talked about You have to be an aunt and an uncle to your child. That energy. Um, Dr. Siegel's, uh, proposition that our kids just simply need to feel safe, seen, soothed, and supported. The influence that coaches and teachers have. Uh, if your kid wants to bake, paint, and dance, let them, they don't, may not necessarily want to get into a class.

Todd: And then your sweet little family party thing that you [00:52:00] have done for each of our three daughters. That's the summary. Okay.

Cathy: So I'm sitting here and the song that keeps coming to me, and I actually pulled up the lyrics because I'm not quite sure why. This is kind of what happens when I write a Zen Parenting moment.

Cathy: I, like a song comes into my head. And I am thinking Goodbye Yellow Brick Road by Elton John. Have you ever read the lyrics to that song? No. I don't understand it fully. And so I'm not quite sure if it matches this

Todd: show. Okay. It doesn't matter. It doesn't have to match, sweetie. You're overthinking it a bit.

Todd: Well, and I'm a big fan of Yellow Brick Road. Uh, let me see if I can find the, where he says that. You can just start it from the

Cathy: beginning.

Todd: Oh,

Cathy: okay. Here we go. Yeah, I like the beginning.

Todd: You want me to go to the beginning? I like the beginning.

Cathy: All right. You don't have to play the whole song, but I just like the way it starts. Yeah, it's nice. Good [00:53:00] piano. Man,

Todd: I

Cathy: ain't gonna come from down. Man, I ain't going to land. I should have stayed on the farm. I should have listened to my own mouth. I'm not sure it's more uplifting than that.

Cathy: It's

Todd: okay. I just like to mix it up. I didn't sign

Cathy: up for you. So

Todd: is this a song about, um, Wizard of Oz?

Cathy: Well, I mean, that's the Yellow Brick Road metaphor, obviously, but I'm reading, he and Billy, or Billy, Benny Taupin, I think it's the guy who wrote One of them wrote the lyrics, one of them wrote the music, and their songs are whack.

Cathy: Do you know what I mean? Like, they're interesting. Like, this is a beautiful song and I love it, but I don't really get it. Um, like, Crocodile Rock, Benny and the Jets.

Todd: Tiny Dancer. I don't know what is. That's a great song. It's a great song. I don't know what it's about though. [00:54:00] I don't get

Cathy: it. But you know what I'm gonna do?

Cathy: I'm gonna dedicate five minutes to kind of reading more about the two of them and what they were writing about. Alright. You know what I didn't watch? What? Is that movie Rocketman. Did you watch that? No. Why didn't we watch that? I don't know. That sounds like something we would love.

Todd: Um,

Todd: um, go ahead and purchase your tickets to the conference. Tickets are going

Cathy: fast. Maybe we'll play a lot of Elton John music.

Todd: Maybe not. I'm a Billy Joel guy, sweetie. You could be both. No, you can't. Yes, you can. You gotta choose. They used to tour together. I know. I don't think they liked each other that much.

Todd: How do you know

Cathy: this? Why would they tour together? I

Todd: haven't heard stories. You have not. Keep trucking, everybody.