

FEBRUARY EDITION

BUZZING WITH...

Parenting during a pandemic

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When the world went into lockdown in March 2020, life as well all knew it changed. I went from working remote to working remote and having to help my eight-year-old daughter (Jordan) navigate virtual school. My three-year-old daughter (Izzy) was also home full time. This was a struggle that I had never experienced. My day now consisted of meetings (where I had to cut my camera off because a potty-training Izzy was running naked across the room), helping Jordan log on and complete her assignments all while trying to keep my house clean and cook meals for my kids. It was beyond stressful. There were times where I would get frustrated and so would my girls. There was so much yelling and so many tears were shed.

One day I realized that we cannot continue this way. I started looking up ways to organize our day and ways to work from home with kids and I ran across articles that talked about “conscious” or “gentle” parenting. After reading them I realized, my girls and I were struggling because I was struggling with my own fears and emotions. I started to question my own upbringing and how I was taught to express my emotions- which was really me being taught to suppress and ignore them. I ordered books and started reading. I started talking to my therapist about what I was learning about and a whole new way of thinking opened for me.

I am thirty- four years old and was raised by “old school” methods- lots of spankings, punishments, and yelling. I was taught that children should be seen and not heard that as a child you are to never question adults. This is probably like the way that most of us grew up. As an adult, I can admit that I did not “turn out okay”. I have major anxiety and instantly shut down when someone yells at me. I often don’t hold my boundaries because I really don’t want to deal with conflict, and this has hindered me in many ways in my personal life. After reading up on gentle parenting I realized that I may have an opportunity to change the trajectory for my daughter’s lives.

As a gentle parent, I believe that my daughters have big emotions, and it is my job to help them learn to really work through them. My girls are allowed to ask me questions- for example- one day we were going to the store with my mother. Jordan asked me, “mommy, where are we going”? Before I could answer, my mom says to her, “none of your business, just ride in the car” Jordan of course gets upset and starts pouting. My mom then tells her she needs to “fix her attitude”. I instantly jump in and say that we are going to the store to get groceries. Later, I talk to my mom about her response. There was no harm in Jordan asking where we were going nor was there a reason to keep it a secret. Dismissive behaviors like that lead to kids who shy away at asking questions when they truly don’t understand. Additionally, she wouldn’t have had an attitude if she wasn’t being dismissed and if her simple question was answered.

The biggest challenged I have faced since I have decided to make this parenting transition is the way people react when I tell them that I do not hit or spank my girls. Children are people just like adults. When we hear that a spouse is hitting their partner, we of course call it out and are upset. Why is it any different for children? If we want to end the cycle of physical and emotional abuse, we must learn that we cannot “beat” people into submission- no matter the age. At that point the child isn’t behaving out of respect it is out of fear and I can firmly say that the “spankings” I received as a child did more harm than good- especially when it comes to romantic relationships.

Ever since, my outlook has changed, my girls have changed too. We talk more and we talk about everything. Jordan loves to lay in bed with me and tell me all about her day. I constantly reassure her that she is safe with me (and so are the secrets she tells me). Izzy is three so of course meltdowns happen but when I am calm, she eventually calms down too, and we are able to move on from the meltdown much easier without constant yelling and crying. My only regret is not learning about this sooner and I completely believe that the cycle of emotional trauma and physical abuse will have stopped with me.

Links to some books:

The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture your Child’s Developing Mind.

https://www.amazon.com/Whole-Brain-Child-Revolutionary-Strategies-Developing/dp/0553386697/ref=asc_df_0553386697/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=312177564685&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=2441217269419028055&hvpon=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9010489&hvtargid=pla-436541850135&psc=1&tag=&ref=&adgrpid=60258870697&hvpon=&hvptwo=&hvadid=312177564685&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=2441217269419028055&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9010489&hvtargid=pla-436541850135

Gentle Discipline: Using Emotional Connection--Not Punishment--to Raise Confident, Capable Kids

https://www.amazon.com/Gentle-Discipline-Emotional-Connection-Not-Punishment/dp/0143131893/ref=asc_df_0143131893/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=312177564685&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=2441217269419028055&hvpon=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9010489&hvtargid=pla-439019427249&psc=1&tag=&ref=&adgrpid=60258870697&hvpon=&hvptwo=&hvadid=312177564685&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=2441217269419028055&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9010489&hvtargid=pla-439019427249