

EPISODE 031 - MY #1 PARENTING TIP WITH NANCY RAY

Intro

Parenting can be so overwhelming at times. Some days I feel like I'm doing it pretty good, I'm a good mom and other days I feel like I have tried to do everything right and my kid's behavior is still wild and defiant and they know how to push my buttons and they do it over and over and I kind of lose my mind on them. Yeah, I'm going to go there right at the start of this episode because I don't think it helps anyone listening if you think I'm the perfect mom or I've got it all together because believe me I don't.

However, I am going to share my number one parenting tip that has been a real game changer for me and Will, and for our kids. No matter the age of your kids, I know it's going to be beneficial for you, too.

You're listening to Work and Play with Nancy Ray, Episode 31.

Much of our daily lives can be divided into two categories: work and play. Simply put, that is where our life and our legacy take place. This is a podcast all about learning to work and play well, which leads to a healthy soul and a fulfilling life.

Let's dive in.

Content

So when I was pregnant with Lyndon, my second, I think I was two weeks before my due date, and a friend of mine approached me and said, "Hey, I am filming this parenting course for this lady named Amy McCreedy, and she needs some people to be in the course. There's kind of a group setting. She needs some people to interact, to ask questions, to talk about things. Are you interested in it? She'll give you access to her course and you can try it." And I was two weeks from having Lyndon and thought, "Man, I really want one-on-one time with Millie. I don't want to give up my last free Saturday and do this."

But then I started thinking, well, what if this thing that I had heard nothing about, I knew nothing about it, what if this was going to really help me with my parenting? What if this was something that would be really beneficial for our family? And so ultimately I looked into it. I decided to do it and I was one of the people who helped film Amy McCreedy's course called Positive Parenting Solutions. And I didn't help film it, I was in it. Kind of not as an actor, but anyway, I was one of the people in it.

So bottom line is that's how I got introduced to this thing. I had never heard of it before and it was really interesting. I took the course actually after Lyndon was born, which I think ended up being perfect because after that newborn phase I knew I had access to this online course and was like, "Okay, this will be good to start working through." And our friends who are videoing it or filming it said this stuff she is teaching is really good, really helpful and they would share little bits of it with me.

So anyway, I kind of wanted to share that story. That's how I got introduced to the course, I hadn't known about it before. And after Lyndon was born and I started working through the course, I was kind of amazed at the things that she was talking about. She taught me a lot of new things that I did not know. So Amy talks about child psychology a lot in her course and she teaches the fundamentals of how children kind of see the world and what they need. I don't know how this happened, but somehow I got out of ever taking a psychology class in all of my years of education.

So I was immediately drawn in and fascinated by it. Her teachings are based in Adlerian psychology and one of the things that Alfred Adler teaches is that the two greatest needs of a child are belonging and significance. And a lot of misbehaving comes from those two basic needs not being met. So one of the best ways that we can meet this need in our children is to carve out what Amy calls mind, body, soul time for each child. 10 minutes, twice a day. So you give each child all of yourself, your complete undivided attention for 10 minutes.

You can even set a timer and at the end give them a hug and say thank you so much for a special time together. But you have to stick to the rules, okay? And that's no distractions, no interruptions. Put your phone in the other room, have the other parent watch the other kids and the kid gets to choose what he or she wants to do to play. Now I like to put parameters and just say no screen time for right now, at least while they're little, but whatever they say they want to do, you got to do it. Within reason, of course.

And Amy's theory, which has been proven to be true in the Ray household, I can speak from experience, is that if you give healthy and good attention on the front end on a consistent basis, they won't seek attention with bad behavior on the back end. So you're going to spend the time either way. You're going to spend the time doing mind, body, soul time with your child once or twice a day, completely undivided attention, complete focus on them. Or you're going to be spending that time in arguments or misbehavior, discipline, correction, things like that.

Now I'll be the first one to tell you this is easier said than done. It's very challenging. It seems pretty simple and the first time I heard of it I was like, "Okay, I can do this. This is great." But it can be really challenging. Life can just get in the way. So I want to share with you five tips that will hopefully help you to make mind, body, soul, time in your house a success. The first tip is to talk with your spouse about it and make sure you're both on the same page, that you guys are working together making sure that each of you has mind, body, soul time with each kid.

So Will and I, when we do it, we try to take turns and we make sure that we each are getting one on one time with each kid. And we definitely try to do it at least in the evenings. I try to do

it also in the mornings, but as you're getting started, if you can't do individual time with each child in the morning and evening, just start with one. Choose one, either just the mornings or just the evenings, but make sure that you're getting individual time and your spouse is getting one on one time as well. It's not just for one parent, it's for both.

The second tip is to try a couple of different methods in your home and in your rhythm to see what works best. So with our kids, one thing that we did was we staggered bedtimes. We didn't put them all down at 7:30 at night, but we now do 7:00, 7:30 and 8:00 so that we can make sure we're really giving each child at that time the one on one time that they need.

The third recommendation or tip that I would have is maybe mom has the mornings and dad has the evenings. And so whichever parent is not doing mind, body, soul time, you can be watching the other kids or doing dishes or doing whatever else you need to be doing.

The fourth tip is to make sure each kid sees you getting mind, body, soul time with the other kids because it's really important. And this is something Amy taught me, it's really important that each kid gets their special time but also sees that mommy is treating everyone fairly and that the other kids are getting their special time too.

And then fifth, name it something special. So I call it mama Millie Time or Daddy-Millie time or Mama-Lyndon Time, Mama-Beaufort time. I don't call it mind, body, soul time because I think as a two year old they'd be like, "What is that?"

But if I say it's "Lyndon-Mama Time," she knows what's going to happen or "Mama-Lyndon Time," she knows that it's just the two of us that are going to kind of hang out and have fun together. So if you name it something special, you could call it your special time or whatever, it will be helpful for your kid to kind of know what's coming and what to expect. So do we do this perfectly in our house? Absolutely not. We miss it, we don't do it perfectly. But do we see a difference in behavior when we implement it and are more consistent with it? Absolutely, yes.

Every single time when we are having regular special time individual with each parent and each kid twice a day, I can't tell you enough the benefits of this practice. It's incredible. It really is amazing, the behavior changes that I've seen. And so I just had to share that with you because of how it's affected our parenting and ultimately how it's affected our lives. Now I did want to just talk about how this is the Work and Play Podcast and how I've been doing a lot of thinking about how we as parents almost live in this work mode all the time.

A lot of times our schedules revolve around our work and we have to work to make money to live and it's important to pause and think about how kids don't see the world the same way as us. They see the world through play. That's how they connect with us. That's how they trust us. That's how they literally live and do life. I mean, I think about my kids in preschool now, they go to school and they just play all day because that's how they're learning and experiencing the world. And the beautiful thing about this mind, body, soul time, it is a tool that allows us on a consistent basis to speak their language.

I was listening to a podcast episode, I think yesterday and two moms were talking. Well, one of the moms had teenage kids, the other one had younger kids. And she said, “Is there any advice you can give me and how to stay close to your children as they get older into the teenage years?” And the mom of older kids simply said, “It starts with the Barbies. It starts when they’re little. It starts when you get down on your knees with them and you play with them. And if you can do that through the little years, when they become teenagers they’re going to think that it’s normal to just open up to you and speak their heart to you because you started on their level so long ago.”

So if you can just get down on their level and speak whatever language they’re speaking at that age, it’s going to be so beneficial. So mind, body, soul time is going to look different for me than it would for a mom of teenagers. But still just planning on that connecting time. For a mom of teenagers, that might mean that you just sit on the edge of their bed and talk right before they go to sleep. Or maybe you go for a brief walk with each of them after dinner every night. Or I don’t know, you can choose exactly what it looks like, but I think it’ll be more conversational and less play. Or maybe it will be play. Maybe it’ll be tossing the frisbee with your son or something, I don’t know.

It’s fun to think about those things as a mom of really young kids right now because I can’t really picture it in my head quite yet. But for those of you listening who might have older kids, get creative and let the kid choose what you guys are going to do. So anyway, just a few thoughts. Let’s get out of our work minds as adults, always doing, always accomplishing things, always moving onto the next thing in our schedule and let’s make sure that we incorporate play in this small way in our lives with our kids on a daily basis.

So, that’s it. A simple yet profound way to change your parenting that I am positive is going to help you.

It’s time for the Work and Play Cornerstore, which is where I have a little bit of fun and draw mostly from my personal life and experiences to bring you a book I’m loving and a thing I’m loving. I’ll get a commission from anything bought through these links, which will help continue to bring this podcast to you every week. Plus it’s just fun to get a friend’s recommendation, so stay tuned to the Work and Play Cornerstore at the end of every episode.

Now today I’m not actually going to add a book, I’m cheating. I’m going to add a course. My friend Amy McCready’s online course, **Positive Parenting Solutions**, which is where I learned about mind, body, soul time. Listen, I can’t say enough about this course. Will and I have watched the entire thing, we’ve taken notes, we’ve actually gone back and re-listened to it over and over again. It’s the kind of thing I know we’re going to continue to draw from as our kids get older and enter into different phases of life.

So couple of things I just wanted to point out about her course and why I wanted to recommend it to you today. First of all, Amy teaches a toolbox of discipline strategies. Mind, body, soul time is one of those tools in her tool box and it’s really helpful to approach discipline and guiding your

children with a lot of different tools and not saying this one thing works every time. So that's been really helpful for us. The second aspect of the course I wanted to share with you is that she has this entire separate series. There's advanced modules and an expert series where she really dives into some difficult things as a parent.

One thing we've run into is sleeping at night or getting ready for bed on time or getting out the door without it being stressful. She has individual classes within the course that address each of these things in depth. So she has one called the Bedtime Blues, she has one called Morning Mania and then in her expert series she brings in experts to address things like potty training or talking to your kids about sex or social media training for kids. A lot of those things are in my queue to listen to. And actually just recently we've just re-listened to the entire potty training one, which was so helpful because we just potty trained our middle child. So anyway, I can't say enough about the course. It has been extremely helpful and valuable for our family.

Okay. Next, the thing I'm adding is called the Door Monkey. Hang with me. I know that sounds so weird, but when Beaufort, my youngest son was born, I was up all night feeding him every two to three hours like the newborn life is. But what do you know that Millie three years old at the time literally would come into our room—because she had never done this before—walking into our room in the middle of the night and wake me up and get in the bed with us between feedings.

I have never been more sleep deprived in my life. Well, going back into Amy's course and listening to what Amy teaches about sleep training in the Bedtime Blue, she taught about this thing called the Door Monkey. We basically put it on the door and it locks the door so it can lock... This sounds terrible. It's not terrible. Lock your child in the room, but there's a two inch gap. So it secures the door to where the door's actually cracked but you can't open or close it. So it takes away the danger of smashing your fingers. It's really more of a safety issue.

So if you have a child that sleepwalks or that wanders into your room a lot at night, this Door Monkey will come in handy. We actually call it the safety lock in our house because Door Monkey sounds a little bit weird. But I'm going to leave a link in the show notes for the Door Monkey or what we like to call the safety lock because that kept Millie in her room and gave me my sleep back and I learned all about it from Amy. So it's awesome, the course is awesome and I hope you guys enjoy those recommendations from the Work and Play Cornerstore because if I can help just one parent get their sleep back, it's all worth it, right?

Thanks so much for listening to Episode 31 of Work and Play with Nancy Ray.

Everything I've mentioned today can be found in the show notes at nancyray.com/podcast/31. And you can find me at nancyray.com or follow me at nancyray on Instagram or Facebook almost daily. I'm going to close with words from my friend Amy:

“When you take time each day to emotionally connect with your child, behavior improves.”

Thanks for listening and I'll see you next time.