



SOS for Parents in the Trenches

with Debbie Reber, Founder of TiLT Parenting
www.tiltparenting.com

SENG Conference
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About TiLT Parenting

TiLT Parenting was founded in 2016 by Debbie Reber as a podcast and online community aimed at helping parents raising differently-wired kids do so from a place of confidence, connection, and joy. Debbie is passionate about the idea that being differently wired isn't a deficit —it's a difference. She hopes to change the way difference is perceived and experienced in the world so these exceptional kids, and the parents raising them, can thrive in their schools, in their families, and in their lives.

The TiLT Parenting Podcast is a top podcast in Apple Podcast's Kids & Family category, with more than 1 million downloads, and regularly features high-profile parenting experts and educators, as well as insightful conversations between Debbie and her 14-year-old son Asher.

Learn more & get involved:

TiLT Parenting: www.tiltparenting.com

TiLT Parenting Podcast: Available on iTunes, Spotify, Google Play, Stitcher, Soundcloud, Podbean, PlayerFM (more than 150 episodes)

Differently Wired: Raising an Exceptional Child in a Conventional World by Deborah Reber (available as hardcover, ebook, and an audio book)

TiLT Together Parenting Groups: In-person parent groups created and led by members of the TiLT community, in more than 35 cities in the US, and 3 countries worldwide. Learn more at www.tiltparenting.com/together or www.facebook.com/tiltogether



Question Everything You Thought You Knew About Parenting

Reflection Questions

Where am I regularly coming up against my own parenting expectations not meshing with our current reality?

How might my beliefs about the way things "should look" be keeping me stuck?

Get Out of Limited Thinking

Make a list of 3 things you believe you "should, do" "have to do," or "need to do," when it comes to raising your child, paying special attention to school, activities, friendships, summer camps, vacations, and birthdays.

Question each assumption one by one by asking yourself, Is this really true? To take it one step further, come up with at least one piece of evidence for how each assumption might actually not be true.

Belief / Thought:

Is it *really* true?

How might it actually *not* be true?

Belief / Thought:

Is it *really* true?

How might it actually *not* be true?

Belief / Thought:

Is it *really* true?

How might it actually *not* be true?



Get Out of Isolation and Connect

Consider Where You Might Be Isolating Yourself

Answer the following questions with a yes or no:

- Am I avoiding certain situations or conversations because of who my child is or concerns about how he or she might behave? Yes / No
- Am I being inauthentic in the way I show up in my daily life? Yes / No
- Have I become less engaged in outside interests or more secluded in general as challenges with my differently wired child have increased? Yes / No
- Do I feel as though most everyone else doesn't (or can't) understand what I'm experiencing and what's hard in my world? Yes / No

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, how might your family's life improve as a result of your becoming more engaged and connected?

Plug the Leaks

Make a list of the areas where you would love some extra support and brainstorm where you might start to look for help—a parenting coach, a therapist, a couples counselor, and/or online communities dedicated to supporting parents like you:

What I Need

Where to Find It



Stop Fighting Who Your Child is and Lean In

Reflection Questions

What aspects of who my child is am I not fully accepting?

In what ways, if any, am I secretly hoping an issue/trait/ aspect of who my child is will eventually "go away" or that he or she will ultimately become "normal"?

Recognize Where You're Fighting Reality

What are your "hot-button issues," a.k.a. areas where you regularly argue with reality in relation to your child?

Reframe What Is

How can you make a conscious choice to accept and embrace aspects of who your child inherently is instead of becoming frustrated by them?



Parent From a Place of Possibility Instead of Fear

Reflection Questions

How might fear be holding me back from making decisions that would benefit or better support my child?

How might my concerns about the future be unhelpful in the way I'm parenting my child and the choices I make?

Get It All Out on the Table

Make a "fear's greatest hits" list by writing down the parenting fears that regularly get you spinning.

Apply the “Gift of Maybe” to Your Fears

Choose one or more fears from above and rewrite them through the lens of possibility.



Let Your Child Be On Their Own Timeline

Reflection Questions

What am I afraid will happen if my child develops at his or her own unique pace instead of what's typical?

What aspect of my child's developmental timeline is most concerning to me and why? What is at the root of my concerns? Are they based in reality?

Challenge Those Timeline Beliefs

Make a list of areas where you're concerned about your child's unique timeline. For each one, consider the following questions: *Why does my child need to know how to do this now?* and *What "negative thing" would happen if he [she] learned this later?* Lastly, for each item, come up with at least one example for why your child mastering that skill in their own time is actually perfectly okay.

Area of Concern:

Why does my child need to know this now?

What "negative thing" would happen if he/she learned this later?

How is my child mastering this skill in their own time just fine?

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Why does my child need to know this now?

What "negative thing" would happen if he/she learned this later?

How is my child mastering this skill in their own time just fine?

Be Prepared to Deflect the Doubters

What can you say to people who confront you or say insensitive things regarding your child's unique timeline? Write out a "script" or two so you are ready with the language to respond confidently and in a way that respects your child when someone suggests your child is "behind" in some way.

Become Fluent in Your Child's Language

Reflection Questions

What might my child be trying to communicate to me through their challenging behavior or unexpected emotional reactions?

How might becoming more fluent in my child's language support them in their journey?

Get to Know Your Child's 'Key Phrases' (not just verbal)

How does your child express love?

How does your child express fear?

How does your child express anxiety?

How does your child express anger?

How does your child express happiness?

How does your child express contentment?

Adapt Your Language So Your Child Can Understand You

What communication methods do you have that are most effective in ensuring your child is able to receive the information you want to share? (Remember—this won't all be verbal.



Give Loud (and Unapologetic Voice) to Your Reality

Reflection Questions

*Am I comfortable using the language surrounding my child's diagnosis if s/he has one?
What am I afraid will happen if I am open about what's happening in my world?*

How might my experience, and that of my child, improve by giving a voice to my reality?

Disclose in a Way That's Right for Your World

Write out your personal philosophy surrounding when and how to disclose what's happening with your child and your family in a way that feels positive, rooted in love as opposed to fear, and in alignment with your personal values.

Tilt 8

Practice Relentless Self-Care

Reflection Questions

How well am I meeting my physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs right now? If I'm not meeting those needs well, how could my lack of a self-care practice be negatively affecting my ability to effectively parent my child?

How might weaving more self-care into my life positively affect me? My child? The state of my family?

Create Your Ideal Self-Care Practice

Brainstorm a list of self-care activities (from easy-to-implement to special occasion items) that you can commit to incorporating into your life.

Defend Against Your Self-Care Roadblocks

Potential Roadblock

Plan for Defending Against it

Create a Plan With Support and Accountability

How will you consciously build self-care habits into your daily life? What is your plan for staying accountable?

CHALLENGE: Assess Your Current State of Self-Care

Conduct a one-week self-audit in which you track your daily activities (ie: sleeping, eating, working, exercising, reading, projects, creative outlet, watching TV, housework, etc.) and get clear on how you actually spend your time. Where are the gaps? Where could you create more balance?

Tilt 9

Let Go of Your Impossible Expectations for Who You “Should” Be as a Parent

Reflection Questions

Where do I think I'm failing as a parent? In what areas do I experience guilt or shame?

What do I regularly tell others I could be doing a better job with when it comes to my parenting?

Unleash Your Inner Critic

When are you most likely to judge and shame yourself for parenting decisions, in-the-moment reactions, and other things that result in your feeling like a failure?

Give Yourself a Break

How can you be compassionate with yourself after less-than-brilliant parenting moments? What is your plan for recovering, letting go, and moving on?

CHALLENGE: Affirm Yourself

Write out an affirmation centered on your intention to parent your child in the best way you can right now. For instance, *I am doing the best I can with the information and resources I have available to me. And I'm working toward becoming an even better parent every day.*

Find Your People (and Ditch the Rest)

Reflection Questions

What are the signs my body gives me when I'm not with "my people? "

How do I, and my child, pay the price when I spend time with people who just don't get it?

How might my child feel more secure as the result of spending more time with people who see and appreciate him or her?

Tightening Up the Circle

If you're ready to "declutter" your relationships, evaluate them by answering the following questions to determine who gets to be in your inner circle:

- Does this relationship bring meaning and joy to my life? Yes / No
- Do I feel free to be my authentic self when hanging out with this person? Yes / No
- Is this relationships reciprocal in that we're both benefiting from it and getting our needs met? Yes / No
- Does this person accept and appreciate who my child is? Yes / No
- Does this person acknowledge my personal challenges relating to parenting my child? Yes / No
- Do I regularly make the choice to not involve my partner? Yes / No

Make a list of people you regularly interact with who leave you feeling unsupported and/or unseen, and determine how you want to proceed with each relationship.

Find Your Water Holes

Where can you look to find more of "your people?"

School Groups:

Facebook or Social Media Groups:

Organizations / Community Groups: