

Debbie: Hey, Dan, welcome to the podcast.

Dan: Great to be back, Debbie.

Debbie: Yeah, I should have said Welcome back to the podcast. It's been a little while, but you and I have been in touch, so it doesn't seem like it's been that long. But could you take a few minutes just to reintroduce yourself to my listeners? I talk about your work a lot and certainly refer people to your practice. But could you just tell us a little bit about who you are?

Dan: Absolutely. So I am a licensed psychologist by training and work and I am the Executive Director of our center called The Summit Center in California, predominately in Northern California with an office in Southern California as well. And our goal is to help children, adolescents, families and adults reach their developmental potential like fully, fully become who they are meant to be. And with that a specialty of ours in addition to working with learning differences and anxiety and other emotional developmental issues is focusing on gifted and twice exceptional individuals, all of those wonderful neuro diverse people with amazing potential. So we do a lot of testing and consulting and counseling for those folks. And I, the other part of my life is working on the Parent Footprint Podcast, which you have been a guest and are going to be a guest soon as well again, which I'm excited about. And that mission and goal is to make the world a more loving place, one parent and one child at a time.

Debbie: So good, so good. And I'm so excited about this conversation, because, well, I mean, you know, this is kind of a personal thing for me too. So I will benefit greatly from this conversation. But this is something that really comes up everywhere that I speak to groups of parents, especially as our differently wired kids get older and they're in the later middle school years or in high school and the pressure, for everybody just seems to ramp up. And it's a really confusing time, because we really want them to be autonomous. But we also feel like there's so much at stake. So I want to talk about that today. Like I want to really just get into what our role is in our child's journey as they move through this phase and the stakes feel so high. So I'm even just wondering, within your practice, is this something that clients come to you talking about? Is this a big theme in your work?

Dan: Oh, huge. It's huge. It's all the time. I mean, we work with kids of all ages, but a lot of adolescence and pre adolescence, adolescence, and then young adults and people going off to college and of course, this whole thing about getting them ready to go off to college and you know, when does it have to happen and where they're going to go and then as you know, since I feel fortunate sharing with you our own parenting journey when we get to meet up, with my own teenagers, young adults, it's ever present for my wife and I. So this is a very poignant topic.

Debbie: Yeah. And I just will say that it's something that we are living it to give it — we're talking about this because we are in this too. I don't think there ever comes a

point where we're immune from facing the same challenges or stressors that our listeners are experiencing.

- Dan: Right. And I think it just makes the life and the work more rich and boy does it keep me honest, in the sense of, wow, every time I think I've had every sort of differently wired parenting lesson, a new one comes. Yeah, just I'm like, Alright, alright, we've done it all. We're good. Okay. And then oh, didn't see that one coming. So it's just an evolving process.
- Debbie: Indeed, I can very much relate to that. So, I guess let's talk about, let's just talk about teens to start with, especially differently wired teens. What kind of things, when they're in the high school years, are they struggling with the most, you know, when it comes to their future? You know, where, what are they thinking about? And what are they most concerned about?
- Dan: Hmm, yeah, I can go a few different directions in that. So one thing that from a challenge perspective, themes are executive functioning, just managing everything and managing it well. Another one is social, of course, how the challenge of being either social challenges for neurotypical kids these days with technology and such and then being differently wired or neuro diverse that can present additional challenges. Where do you fit, you know, where do you belong, who you are. And then there's technology and screens, which are this whole other thing that we're all dealing with, particularly when you have really bright kids who like to dive deep into things, whether it's video games, or it's research or Reddit or creating, it's still often technology based. And then finally, sleep is a huge problem these days, whether kids are spending too much time on their schoolwork, because they have a lot. And they're taking too many challenging classes, AP classes, because they have to get into this great school, or they procrastinate because of the executive functioning issues. Or they're sucked into their screens, and they're staying up late at night when they should be sleeping. So those are like on the one hand, those are the challenges that I'm seeing regularly. And then if you pan over to, okay, but what are THEY thinking about? That's actually a really tough one. And I think it depends because, sometimes, depending on the child, the teenager, they're focused on different things. So sometimes they're just completely overwhelmed with everything that they have. And they are getting sucked into escapism through enjoyment activities like video gaming and screens and the social connection through that. Other times, they are completely preoccupied with their future and their GPA, and have unfortunately bought into the hype that we're all giving them about the limited amount of schools with the limited with the very low admission rates and the need to be at these schools with a very high GPA or they're not going to have a good future. So I just threw a lot out there. But those are the themes that I'm seeing some so far. And then again, I guess one more thing is unfortunately, when you have children who are anxious or depressed, they're just trying to get by, right? And then it just becomes about a day to day situation.
- Debbie: Right. And if we were to look at the high school years, you know, because yeah, you touched upon executive functioning, the social challenges, tech and then sleep and those, I'm like, check, check check, in those seem to me to be the things

that parents are probably preoccupied with and that we are concerned about and really feeling feeling like, Oh gosh, we need to solve all of these issues and you know, help my child really have a grip on them all or else, you know, and then insert whatever future fears you know, we have. And so, if we were to take a step back and look at high school as a time in any kid's life, what is it really about, ideally what would be our goal for our child during that time of life?

Dan: Great question. I think ideally, it would be about them learning to step into themselves and being able to learn about who they are, what they care about. Be able to explore their interests, learn skills like time management and planning. I mean, those are all really important things, there would be an emphasis on meaningful work as opposed to, you know, quality over quantity. And there would be, I would say that the evaluation process would be meaningful at times as a support as opposed to more factory based. And finally, it would be a time where people are excited and have time to figure out what's next as opposed to being anxious about what's next and feeling like they might not have the possibilities or the opportunities that they would want because of all of the stress related to grades and transitioning to college.

Debbie: Right. I love that vision. And it seems like even parents who maybe kind of wrap their head around that and might be really on board with that when it comes to high school again, the stakes feel so high. Many of us find ourselves getting sucked into this over emphasis on grades or on making the resume look good or finding the right mentor or getting an internship or being in student government or all of these things. And I'm just wondering, why do you think parents do that? Why do you think so many of us get distracted almost and find ourselves unwittingly emphasizing things that aren't actually the things that would benefit our kids the most?

Dan: Because we're being told by our little micro society and culture and also the macro one that that's what is needed, right? So we have to give ourselves a break. And I know I mean, being in this field and talking to people like you and others who are always trying to figure out how to raise healthy people and doing all the reading and going to the conferences. I can't get more information than I do and still, it is so hard to resist these worries and these and these pressures of, Okay, what is your child doing to prepare themselves on paper? What is their GPA? Are they going to take the ACT or SAT? And who are they going to tutor with? And is it going to be individual really expensive or group? And we know that many of our differently wired people do much better one to one than in large group settings? Are they going to work with a college counselor who's going to mentor them? And it's like, it's all the focus on the stuff and no focus on how does your child feel about themselves? How confident is your child, what's your child into right now? What drives your child? Where do they see how they are enjoying or not enjoying their life right now? What changes do we need to make so they are healthy people? And it's like, that's on the back page and we aren't able to turn the page because we're stuck on the resume and all of the checkpoints that we're supposed to tick off for our kid to be "successful" in the future.

Debbie: So how do we avoid that trap? You know, I'm thinking of Ned Johnson and Bill Stixrud's book, *The Self Driven Child*, which I probably referred to at least every third episode, but it's really about helping our kids develop their own sense of you know, autonomy and having control over their lives and finding what lights them up and trusting that that is going to motivate them to create you know, the life that is best for them. And I love that and I'm trying to practice that very much as I know a lot of parents are and it just feels like it's always this tightrope, you know, when should we be pushing it? Do grades matter? Do they not matter? You know, I'm just even curious about your thoughts about grades.

Dan: So let's, um, let me as I try to hit the first part of the question and then go into the question about grades. Because the thing that pressures us to focus on all of these very real things that do objectively matter, like grades and scores and experiences, is the idea of our time constraint that we're seeing this after senior year or for some people before senior year have kids who are on the more advanced end of the spectrum, academically and are accelerated is we're seeing like, Okay, we have to have them ready by this time to do this. But what I've learned over time, not only from just all my clients over the years and seeing so many different roads in so many different paths, but now also in our own house is, we can take the pressure off of the time, someone can take a gap year, someone can go to two or three years of community college, someone can go learn a trade work on their own startup and it's still going to be okay. So all of these things, for example, if you're going to if your child is really, for whatever reason, bombing out in high school, a bright child bombing out in high school for a variety of reasons, executive functioning, emotional, social, you name it. They can be done with high school and get healthy and then take community college classes and then matriculate with their community college grades, not their high school grades, then they don't even need an ACT or an SAT, and they have actually a higher chance of getting into one of the schools that they want to matriculating with an A than going straight from a high school. And so, realizing that there are all of these different paths and our neurodiverse, our differently wired kids need time to grow, they often need time to heal and recover from whatever their terrible schooling or social experiences were. And that impacts their development, that impacts their attention and focus and executive functioning. And so if we can take a step back, and we really have to be intentional about this and aware that these are real messages that we're getting that have some truth, but we have to filter them with, what are we going to do in our family? And where is our child in his or her level of development and awareness and readiness right now? And realize, oh, gosh, there are over 5000 colleges and universities in the United States, with many great ones with very high acceptance rates with very nurturing environments. And it's all about as the Challenge Success out of Stanford White Paper talks about, it's all about fit for looking at success and well being in the future. So yeah, grades matter. But they do. And we just have to realize, though, how much are we going to focus on the grade versus well being and engagement?

Debbie: Such a good reminder, and you shared so many great ideas in that answer. And I'm taking all these notes. So even just that reminder of a gap year, I think is really important. And I know within our population, especially I think they can be

so useful. I have a friend whose child took a gap year, and it just made all the difference, you know, had gotten accepted to a college, a university, and then just deferred for a year and that year changed everything and help that be a much more positive experience. But you know, in everything that you're talking about, it really is about our idea of what success looks like, right? And I always say this, and I think especially with twice exceptional kids, and you know, the listeners of this podcast, do not just have twice exceptional kids. But I think when you have a gifted or a 2e kid, you also as a parent have this idea that, Well, they've got all this potential. And so we have these very high expectations for what they "should" achieve. So I'm wondering, because you also talked about your parent footprint, you do a lot of work with parents around being really intentional about who they want to be. I'm wondering what are your thoughts on where that rigidity around what a successful future looks like for us as parents, what are the roots of that? And how can we go about kind of challenging that?

Dan:

You know, I think a lot of it comes from our fear that the world is a constantly changing, unstable place, right? There's a lot of good stuff. And there's a lot of stuff that's scary going on at a number of levels. And so what we do is we go back to what we feel will keep us secure and not anxious. And that is, if you get a high school diploma with a really good GPA, then you will have opportunities to get into really, really good schools, colleges, and then if you get into a really good college and you find your major, then you will get a really good job. And so that's how our generation was raised. And in our generation of growing up, it was mostly true. First of all, it wasn't as hard to get good grades, there wasn't the crazy AP thing going on the college admissions percentages were not as low with, you know, with the exception of some elite schools. And you could learn something in college and whether you focused on your business degree or your econ degree or your psychology degree, you could either go into your field of study or you can go into a new field. And nowadays, it doesn't hold up across the board. What we're seeing is, colleges are costing exorbitant amounts of money for people to get general education and not necessarily have a job waiting for them on the other side. And so we have to look at instead of the system, we have to look at our child and where is our child and what does our child need to be become a solid, resilient, fulfilled person. And I firmly believe that if we can focus on that, the rest will work itself out. But if you have to be aware of like, what do you want for your kids? That's the question. I always tell people like, what do you want for your kids? And then back out how you're going to get there. And everyone says, Well, I want my kids to be successful and happy. Okay, so what is success and what is happiness? And if success is making six figures, or multiple, six figures, that doesn't necessarily mean happy, we know that. So it's really breaking it down with parents. And, and the other thing I think about my son who when he was young, he just turned 18. And when he was young, we were playing the game of Life. And he got the opportunity to pick a house, his mansion, his, I don't know, his suburban house, his mansion, his log cabin, or like this little shack, and he had all this money. And he says to me, he was like, six, seven, something young. He said, I think I'm just going to take this one because it's the cheapest and why would I want to spend all my money on a place I'm just going to sleep. And I went, and this was a time in my life when I think we were feeling overwhelmed with mortgage and bills. And I'm looking at this guy and thinking,

how come he is so wise? And could someone have shared that with me? And fast forward to the 18 year old artist, who all it's about right now is creating and living and it's not about stuff. And so his path, we're still trying to support his path, which you know, one day, it's I'm going to take a gap here this next day, I'm going to go to this art school. This next year it's I'm going to focus on my business that I've been working on, and we're just trying to stick with them. It's like, hey, as long as this guy's engaged in life, because we've certainly had many years related to school where that was not the case is like, we're good. And yeah, we got to keep the guardrails on but it's like, that's very different than our other ones who are looking, you know, everyone's in college and one is going to be looking at college, which is a different path. And so it's like knowing that all of this is out there playing on us. But all that matters is that your child is engaged in life and feels purpose. And I feel and just from my years of clients and adults work, the rest works itself out.

Debbie: Yeah, I love that so much. And I agree 100%. So, I would love to know how we do this. So you were just talking about that. Our goal is to have our kids be engaged in life to feel their purpose. And that that's really our job right now is to figure out what they need and support what they need. So what does that actually look like? And how can we strike that balance between being supportive and not becoming too enmeshed? Or over involved or having too much scaffolding? Do you have some words of wisdom about that?

Dan: Oh, those are all the tough questions, I think so the first thing is, I'm going to say this probably too many times, is this idea of awareness. And we need to be aware of several things. We need to be aware of what our own expectations are for our kids. We need to be aware of where they come from. And we need to be aware of what messages we're giving them. Now, I know that kind of sounds big, but it's essential. Like what are we worried about? What are we thinking? What is our expectation that we are putting on them, right, wrong, or indifferent. We need to know what those are. So that's on the one side of the page, so to speak. And on the other side of the page is, who is our kid? Where are they developmentally? What are their strengths? What are their interests? What are their challenges? And what, and here this is key, what level are they invested in their own life versus just kind of being told what to do or just blowing in the wind because they don't feel they have any power or control? You know, and I feel it's this interaction between, who am I, what do I care about as a parent? What do I want for my kid? What am I telling them either verbally or non verbally? What am I modeling for them and how I'm living my life? I'm sure we can unpack that one. And then where are they and what do we need to do to support them? So for example, if we have a child who's in ninth grade, and has really low executive functioning, first question, does your child know they have executive functioning challenges? Does your child care that they have executive functioning challenges? And how can we support them in terms of getting them on board to care and be invested in improving them for their life? And for something they care about, because if it's not linked to something that they're intrinsically motivated for, it's not going to stick and there's going to be more conflict. And often when we have conflict in the home, it just gets in the way not only of course of our relationship, but it gets in the way of how we're helping our child grow in

a healthy way, instead of a resistance sort of way. And then, of course, there's scaffolding but I could keep going on.

Debbie: So yes, there's just there's just so much here. Because, you know, even with that, you know, again, you're talking about what are they motivated about, and I think a lot of it too, is really just tuning in and looking for windows of opportunity. So if they are struggling with executive functioning, for example, it's identifying moments where you can see hey, this is an opportunity to slip in something in order to ask if they want support in this area, because you've noticed that they are coming up against themselves in working towards the goal. So we have to really be tuned into who they are and continually evaluate that, right? Like, we need to always just be stepping back and saying, okay, what's going on right now? Where are their interests, you know, what kind of support that they use and then just being super connected so we can take advantage of opportunities when they arise.

Dan: Right and I'll give again, I'll give a personal example here because that relates to the scaffolding to and engagement and how parenting shifts based on this. So with our 18 year old artists who is close to the finish line of high school, which is going to be a huge feat for all of us and deciding between a few schools and having to do some online classes and needing to know some admissions requirements in order to figure out if he could change or drop classes or graduate from one of the two high schools that he's attending, he needed to gather some information. And what my wife and I felt, and what guidance we were getting from particular people is, hey, let him make the phone call to talk through these scenarios with both admissions departments so he can decide and you can feel if he's engaged enough with his decision to make these other decisions, kind of like this is on him. Now, of course, an artist, dyslexic dysgraphic, with executive functioning challenges. So I was taking that approach and guiding him along the way. And at one point, I just realized, you know what, he is totally working hard on catching up on his online classes. He is totally invested in all of his art projects that he's doing. He is really excited about going to one of these two schools and he just said, "I don't have time to make these calls." And I even wrote out the questions for him. And "I don't see why I need to make the call. I just need to know the information so I can make my decision. Can you do this for me?" And it was interesting because I actually wanted to initially, just because I wanted to help get the question. So we all could stop worrying about which way to go and all these different things that we've been talking a lot about, but I'm like, No, no, no, I need him to, like he needs to step up and take ownership of this. But then when I looked at the whole picture, my wife and I felt all I needed to do, we knew the questions to ask, is ask these admissions people three questions. So he had the information that he can then run with. And so again, I'm not saying I did it, right. But I'm using that as an example for everyone to know. This is an 18 year old and most people would say, Hey, you know what? That's on them. They should do it. But when we're scaffolding and have had years of scaffolding, you just I feel have to be thoughtful about what's your own like chips in the game here, how much of it is our stuff and how much of it is our child's development so we can help them get to that next place in a way that is

somewhat collaborative as opposed to micromanaging or not doing anything at all and then floundering.

Debbie: A couple of thoughts. One is that there's also on the flip side, there are you know, as Julie Lythcott-Haims writes about in *How to Raise an Adult*, there are many parents who do everything up to you know, calling college counselors and doing all of that work, so I think you know, like you I tend to want to go in the in the opposite direction and really give Asher a lot of opportunities to do things on his own. But I had a similar situation this year, I was like, Hey, man, you're in ninth grade, it's time to step up. So, you know, you do the research and tell me what activities you want to do. And then I'm happy to, you know, arrange for them, but at a certain point he was like, I've just moved. I've got a lot more going on, and I'm really stressed right now. And if you could do that research for me, and I was like, okay, and I and I really I'm so grateful that he was able to express that to me. And tell me I was like, Yeah, okay, I got that. And it made total sense. So I think it is a trial and error. And, hopefully our kids, I mean, just the ability to advocate is something a lot of kids don't know how to do. So being able to say, hey, wait, I actually need some help with this is a huge skill.

Dan: It is. And as I was going through that process, and even as I'm telling this story, it's so funny, you should mention the *How to Raise an Adult* book because not only am I staring at on my bookshelf right now, that voice was in my head. I'm like, because she talks about all those Stanford parents. I'm like, Oh my gosh, am I I don't want to be that person. And that's what I was wrestling with. Which was, am I doing too much, am I enabling? You know, and I'm consulting with a few people to figure it out. And then at the end of the day, I just had to follow my instincts, given the situation. And then once I could give him the baton from that information, he was able to run with that. So it was like I knew that was the obstacle. But again, this isn't about right or wrong. I think it's about us trying as parents to be very aware and intentional and knowing, you know, what if that one wasn't the right thing to do, the next time we can do a different thing. With these kids, like, there's always another parenting opportunity to do it differently and it's just about trying to assess, okay, how did we handle that? Well, how did our child respond? Would I do it differently next time?

Debbie: But this is also really about the timeline, right? It's all so interconnected, that we have to always be questioning these timeline beliefs that we have, we have to always be checking in and seeing you know, sometimes our kids make these growth leaps that we don't recognize at all, and so we're doing too much scaffolding. So it really is a ballet of sorts. And I actually just wanted to circle back to something else you were talking about, which is the messages that we are sharing with our kids, whether we realize it or not. I actually just interviewed two women for the podcast about a culture of body positivity in the family. And I, you know, thought I was doing a good job of it. And even in that conversation, I'm like, gosh, there are so many messages verbal and nonverbal that I have been giving that are not what I intended, and having the opposite effect. And so I think, even how we respond to a grade, like, you know, even if it's a great grade, like, we have to be really conscious of the way that we are reinforcing this value system that might not be benefiting our kids.

Dan: Totally. And can I give us a quick story about that here?

Debbie: I love the stories, bring them on.

Dan: Okay, so this is so this is a different child, and it's about grades and perfectionism. So I know many of our families have a little perfectionism that can run through it. And so one of my daughters was taking this very challenging online class, like a digital photography class. And the directions were really difficult. And it was overwhelming to her. And so the way this online class was structured, she kept avoiding the actual activities, but there were a lot of academic tasks. So she was avoiding the projects, avoiding the projects, avoiding the projects, and she basically found a way to do all of the academic stuff and have a C in the class and be done. Like she could get a C in the class without doing one of the digital photography, like activities, which is what the class is about. And she's like, I'm not doing it. I don't get it. I'm not doing it. I said, You know, I can help you do that. And so she said, "Hey, I have a C. And Dad, you say you always tell us it's not about the grade. Right?" So I was like, Okay, I've got to dig deep and think about that because that is true. What's my message here because I'm thinking, hey, do a few of these assignments. And yeah, you actually can get an easy A, you know, here I am buying into the like, you're still gonna have to apply to college and of all the classes you take, this is an easier A. But I didn't say that I'm thinking, Okay, let me think about this, talked it over with my wife a little bit. And then I found what my explanation was. And I said something like, hey, sweetheart, I agree with you. Mom and I do not care about your grades. We care about effort. And we've talked about perfectionism a lot. You know, you get that from me. So I get it. And the bottom line is, you're not doing that stuff because you're afraid you can't do it great, because you don't understand it. So you're avoiding it. So I actually don't care about your grade, what I care about is how you can do the assignments. And honestly, if you don't even do them, well, I don't care because that would be you taking on perfectionism even greater. And I'm happy to help you with the first one but we're doing this. And I took a chance with that, because she is strong, and she is fiery, and it wasn't pretty, but we did one. And then by the time I got to number two, I said for the next night, because she had this plan, I said, Would you like to help? She said, I got it, I could do it by myself, thank you. And it was because she was able to do it. But again, it was this, especially with our perfectionistic kids, it's like, what are we focusing on? And how do we talk about stuff outside of the grade? Because often the grade is the evaluative thing that is the discourse about what everyone's doing.

Debbie: Yes. And, first of all I love that you took some time to check yourself and then go back and I think that is just a nice reminder that we can notice and what are the signs that we are reacting in a way that's not in alignment with what we really believe? And we usually know that we usually feel bad after the conversation or we notice like our body is more revved up or you know, we've been triggered in some way but it's it's a lovely reminder that we can leave that conversation, reflect on it think about, okay, what do I really want to do here and then go back and re engage with our child and either repair the situation or problem solve and hopefully grow through it together.

Dan: Exactly. But none of these are easy, right? These, especially when our kids are like pre adolescent, adolescent, young adult, it is so nuanced, and it's how we be our authentic self, while also trying to say though, like the right thing, it's like, it's hard to have that combination sometimes.

Debbie: Exactly. Exactly. Especially as you know, many of us and at least the moms that I know of teenagers are also going through their own complicated emotional, hormonal journeys at that time, which can really confuse everything.

Dan: Yes, yes.

Debbie: It's complicated. And I want to ask you one more question. And that is if you have any thoughts around how we can best support our kids through this process and whether, you know, a lot of these kids haven't yet identified maybe an area of interest. And there's such a pressure to discover your passion and some kids don't know what their passion is, and how can we show up as the best guides for our kids so that they can kind of discover who they are?

Dan: That's a great question. Let me say one thing first about the passion thing because I love what Dr. Sylvia Rimm who's many people know as a veteran psychologist in the world of gifted and I was at a conference with her and she gave a keynote about I can't have a catchy title, but it was really bashing passion. And that she said basically, we have this over focus on passion these days. And I do have parents in my office who are worried that at age 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 that kids have not identified their passion yet like worried. And what she basically said is she didn't find her passion till she was 40. And if she was told If she didn't have a passion, her future was not going to be bright, it would have changed the course of her life. And she said, we have to teach kids to engage, to step up to their responsibilities. And if and when we find our passion, it's awesome. But to lead with that, as a primary goal is often misguided. So I just want to say that's a really interesting way of thinking about it. Because I do want our kids to find what they really care about and what they're really interested in. But I think passion with a capital P is not everyone gets there, and they certainly don't get there before 18. So in thinking about this question we want our kids to be engaged in life. And again, I'm going back to the Challenge Success Research out of Stanford, like the number one, we want well being health and wellbeing and engagement and their data shows that the number one factor of child well being is school engagement. And that doesn't mean have to be a brick and mortar school, like just engaged in learning. And so to me, it's really about are the lights in our kids' eyes on? And a lot of us have these bright eyed kids and when they get to early adolescence preteen adolescence, it starts to fade, and it could fade for hormonal reasons for social reasons for academic reasons. But really, it's about trying to sidle up next to them physically or actually metaphorically, and help them figure out what is going on in their life so they can keep stepping in a direction that they are engaged in. And it could be a job, because sometimes jobs I've seen with kids like that job becomes their place when their school situation is not that great of a place, or it's their club, or it's their cousin or their aunt or uncle. So I feel like again, I'm focusing it back to it's really about our kids. Learning about who they

are in the world, and being able to step into the world with some choice and with some empowerment. And if they can do that in a healthy way, I don't think it matters what direction they go, because they're building those essential ingredients to health and wellness, which is, I have choice. I can make a difference in my life and others, I can cope when things don't go my way because I have choices and I have skills. And most importantly, I have people who love me that I can count on and reach out for help when I need it. I think the rest takes care of itself.

Debbie: Yes, um, gosh, this is just so good. I'm just so happy to get to share this conversation with our audience. I don't think that we can hear these messages enough. And I just, well you know that I just love the work that you do and your focus on intention and how we show up and that is just critical with these kids and I think it's just such a nice thought to, to focus on them being engaged in life. I mean, that's all we could want for any of us. Right?

Dan: Right. Right.

Debbie: So, okay, I want to know where I'd love for you to share with listeners where people can connect with you. But before that, also, I don't know if you have any parting words of wisdom? Do you have any kind of one last thing that you want to say one thing you want parents to be really resonating on as they turn this episode off?

Dan: Yes. So I think something that's been really important to me in raising our kids and then also in my experience with my clients is to remember that all these moments and developmental stages are temporary, and even in the most difficult and darkest times. It is a part of overall development and it's a part of that story. So remember that it's temporary. And we're not going to know the outcome of the parenting story or our child's development until they get there. And so many people talk about their past difficulties growing up, and their road to becoming fulfilled, happy, engaged people. And so I just want to acknowledge that it can be so hard and so overwhelming and a time so we feel so helpless with what our kids are dealing with, but you are there guiding them. And this is one step in one chapter in the story.

Debbie: I love that so much. And it's just such a good reminder. I was just talking with someone last week, when I was out in Chicago about that I used to write books for teenagers and I did that in part because I was a recovering teen and I wanted to share with other young women like because it took me so long and I had so many missteps and painful mistakes along the way. And I was motivated by this idea that I want to help young women kind of skip over some of that hard stuff so it doesn't take them until their 30 to kind of discover who they are. But at the same time, I am who I am because of those experiences I went through. Like, that's my story. And we all have our story and so that I love that reframe that this is temporary and that our kids are on their own journey and we need to respect their journey, not try to control it and just be there for them.

Dan: Yes, totally agree.

Debbie: So okay, well, thank you so much for that. And then before we say goodbye, could you once again, let listeners know kind of the best places to engage with you? I know that you're on the Instagram, and where else can listeners connect with you?

Dan: Yes. So there is Instagram. Dr. Dan Peters and there is Twitter, Dr. Dan Peters and I would say the main places to access information, what's hopefully helpful, helpful information to you all. Two main places. One is The Summit Center website, www.summitcenter.us. And the other place that will have all of the podcasts and other blogs and writings as well is at the Parent Footprint website, which is www.parentfootprint.com.

Debbie: Perfect. And listeners, as always, I will include links to all of those resources in the show notes page, so you can head over there. And Dan, Dr. Dan, I just want to say thank you. Always a pleasure to chat with you. And I just think this was a really fascinating conversation I think will be helpful for many people. So thank you.

Dan: Always a pleasure, Debbie. Really appreciate it.

RESOURCES MENTIONED:

- Dr. Dan Peters' website
- Summit Center
- The Parent Footprint
- Dr. Sylvia Rimm & Gifted Education
- The Fashion of Passion: Are We Setting Goals Too High? (blog post by Sylvia Rimm)
- Psychologist and Author Dr. Dan Peters on Parenting with Purpose and Intention (Tilt Podcast episode)
- *How to Raise an Adult: Break Free of the Overparenting Trap and Prepare Your Kid for Success* by Julie Lithcott-Haims
- *The Self-Driven Child: The Science and Sense of Giving Your Kids More Control Over Their Lives* by William Stixrud and Ned Johnson
- A "Fit Over Rankings": Why College Engagement Matters More Than Selectivity (Stanford Survey)