



Episode #238

**Dr. Rebecca Branstetter on Supporting Differently
Wired Kids Through the Pandemic Holiday Season**

December 8, 2020

Debbie: Hello, Rebecca, welcome to the podcast.

Rebecca: Thank you for having me.

Debbie: Yes, this is a very timely conversation. And I also just appreciate you doing this kind of last minute. But I'm so happy that we get to squeeze this conversation in because we are talking about pandemic holidays, which are nearly upon us. And the struggle is real. So I'm excited to hear everything you have to share with us today. But before we get to that, can you give us a little bit more of an introduction to yourself and the work that you do in the world?

Rebecca: Yeah, so my fancy credentials are that I've been a school psychologist for 20 years. And in that role, I've really enjoyed helping families understand how their kids learn what's getting in the way, and what we do about it. And then, of course, it was school psychologists, I see all kinds of challenges in the schools. And really, there has been nothing like 2020, in terms of the layers of challenges that we have had. But what is really important is that not only am I a school psychologist, but I'm also a mom of two. And I always joke that I was a perfect parent before I was a parent. Right? I had all this knowledge, I went to UC Berkeley and I had my PhD and all those years of experience when I became a mom. And the thing that I think gives me some street cred is that I am pandemic parenting with all of you as well, I have a six and nine year old who have been on distance learning since the very beginning and never gotten off. So you know, it's one of those things where my personal and professional kind of roll together into one, in that I am just along with you like kind of building the plane as you fly it when it comes to pandemic parenting. But I have been able to connect with school psychologists across the country about best practices that are basically emerging as we go. Because I'm also the founder of the thriving school psychologists collective, which is an online professional learning community for school psychologists. So we meet all the time and think about how we can support parents during these crazy times. And now as we are rolling into the holidays, a lot of folks are having sort of COVID fatigue, if you will, it's been a long haul.

Debbie: Yeah, covid fatigue is this perfect storm that I'm sure you're sensing, you know, among the community that you serve, and your professional relationships and as a parent, and yeah, and just to add, being a parent, is a very humbling experience, especially when you've been working in the kids space for years, and you think you're going to nail it, and then our kids always have a different plan for us, don't they?

Rebecca: They do. And I think, you know, it's something that I talk to parents all the time about, about tapping into internal parental wisdom, because, you know, information is not transformation. So when I became a parent, I had a lot of information. But I wasn't really able to apply it to my own parenting without some really thoughtful consideration. That's so much more nuanced than you think. And we can probably even remember as parents when we first had our

little ones, and we're going through the first kind of developmental challenge of sleep training. And I very vividly remember having on my bedside table, two books that had great information, one was called the cried out sleep solution. And one was called the no cry sleep solution, both written by fancy people. And I remember looking at me, like, Wait, what? And so I had to very early on, take what I knew about child development, child rearing, and then apply it to, you know, my kiddos and you if you have more than one kid out there, you know that sometimes something that works fabulously works, not work for another child, right? So it's that dance between the inflammation and then applying it with your own kiddos because they all have their own, you know, particular needs. And one of my kids really benefited from one of those strategies that one of my kids did not. And so it's kind of the wisdom to know what's right for your kid.

Debbie: Yes. And we get to discover that wisdom daily. Our kids give us a lot of opportunities. Especially now we're getting a close up view of so much. So let's talk about what we're experiencing this upcoming holiday. So as we're recording this we've just been through for the listeners in the US we've just gone through Thanksgiving. And that was strange for many of us, but now we're coming into the Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa holidays where there's just so many more expectations. There are so many more ideas about what it should look like and what it should feel like and our kids, depending on their age, may have a lot of ideas about how they want to experience it. So what are you kind of noticing within the professionals that you talk to and the families that you're in community With like, what are some of the biggest things people are concerned about right now?

Rebecca: Yeah, so one of the things that we're noticing from the pandemic is if your child had, you know, some challenges with managing big feelings, like disappointment, or anger or sadness, before the pandemic, those things are kind of amplified, right, magnified. So what I'm hearing and experiencing in my own family is that there's a big old expectation mismatch between what our kids expect things to roll out and how things are going to actually roll out. And there's also a lot of ambiguity, a lot of us don't know. So what's happening right now, there's a lot of canceled traditions, and there's a lack of socialization and things that kids used to be able to do over holiday break, have fun camp, see their friends eat, Grandma, you know, those things are all mostly canceled. So this is actually one of those things that I think is a weird gift, you know, very not great package, which is an opportunity as unexpected gift of helping our kids manage these disappointments, the anger or sadness around this, and just a real world example, that just happened is, you know, we weren't able to go anywhere for Thanksgiving, right. And that was a disappointment and a lot of the playdates that, you know, my kids really want to have right now over holidays that they're used to having they can't have. So this is a chance to teach kids how to cope with that. Because these cancel traditions and you know, this mismatch of expectations can really train your kids, it can really ramp up those big feelings.

Debbie: Yeah. And you mentioned not knowing yet, and I think that a lot of us are uncertain about what we're going to do for Christmas, because we're kind of waiting and seeing what happens. And, you know, are we going to travel, aren't

we and I know, for a lot of differently wired kids, that kind of last minute Change of plans can also be really hard, or just the uncertainty surrounding something. So can you talk more about that, and maybe specifically managing disappointment? Especially? I feel like we've been doing that really since March? Right. It feels like it's been one disappointment after another. And right now, because I feel like our kids are. So they're just done. I mean, we all are, we are done with this. So just wondering if you have any specific language or how we can really, I don't know, help them manage this disappointment in a way that feels. I don't even know the right word. I just feel so bad for our kids who are probably building resilience right now. But we've been asking them to do a lot.

Rebecca: Yeah, our kids deserve medals. And especially our kids are differently wired right now. I mean, their whole world got turned upside down. And as adults with coping skills, our worlds got turned upside down, and we're struggling. So can you imagine being a little person, and you may already have lagging skills and just managing your big feelings? I mean, it's a lot. So I think there's kind of a distinction I love to make between processing and problem solving. So right now, I think the time is ripe for processing. What I mean by processing feelings is when kids have into kind of like in the moment strategies. When you tell your kid No, we can't go on a playdate because their family did a big Thanksgiving dinner. Right. And so now I don't feel comfortable having a playdate, even if it's outside, you know, and then they have a reaction. So one of the things I talk about in my Make It Stick parenting course that I have, in collaboration with Elizabeth Sauter, who's a speech language pathologist. And one of the metaphors we use when kids are in stress mode, they kind of go one of two ways. And if this were not a podcast, I would show you puppets to illustrate but you can visualize I'm sure. So when kids are stressed out, in that moment, we see either kind of one or two kind of directions they go, they can either kind of turn more porcupine or more turtling. So porcupine is that sort of acting out, or yelling or throwing her outside behaviors just like really big reactions, right. And like a porcupine, that kind of quills out you can't hug them and they're just really agitated. Or your child may go towards being a turtle, which is sort of withdrawing, putting ourselves on the covers retreating, not talking right? Kind of that withdraw behavior. And of course, we have kids that you know, can turtle pine, you can create a new word, which is they can be really angry and lash out but also be very withdrawn. And so when you see these behaviors, maybe as a result of some holiday disappointment, I think one of the things that is so crucial is that that is not the time for problem solving. Because their brains are not online for problem solving. Their brains are in fight flight freeze when they're stressed. I kind of liken it to you know, if you had a rough day and you come home to your partner, it's a kind of worst day and it got in an accident and you know, all these things went wrong and work was horrible. And, you know, I don't even know if I like my job. And, you know, maybe what you need in that moment is for someone to be like, Man, that's tough. Tell me about it. Versus, alright, we're gonna get on LinkedIn, or we're gonna get you a new job. And you know, like, you don't really want people sometimes to jump into problem solving, you want them first to like you. And so yeah, that is top and our kids in the same way. And so there's a concept that many of your listeners probably know about, called co regulation. And this is kind of that shared state of calmness. When caregivers come to a

porcupine or turtle moment, with calm, it regulates your child, it reduces their stress response, there's no faster way to calm your child down than to bring calm because I've said this before, and I've done it not Tik Tok, but Instagram real about it. And it was like the most popular thing I've ever posted, which was an escalated adult cannot de escalate and escalate a child meaning it's kind of a check yourself before you wreck yourself. Philosophy, if you will, in another way, which is your child's a porcupine and turtle it does, you know good to come in full porcupine quills blazing or you know retreating from them when you bring calm to the chaos that can help them. So process before problem solving. Some of the language I've been using with my own kiddos that has been like one of those things like why did I not have this golden phrase in my pocket my whole life? It makes sense. You feel that way? There's nothing that calls my kids down much like I can't help this play day. That night is terrible and crying and you know, it makes sense that you would be so disappointed right now. Look, I'm not solving the problem. I'm not making the Coronavirus go away and I'm not making her best friend's family not do a big Thanksgiving dinner so that we can't see them. I'm just telling you, it makes sense that you feel that way. So that's the in the moment strategy. Mm hmm.

Debbie: I love that language. I'm always so grateful when my guests tell me exactly what to say. And, you know, we talk a lot on this show about empathy. and supporting them and holding that space for them. But I really like this language of it makes sense, because it's validating as well. It's not just saying, you know, oh, you're really upset, or I can see you're upset, I'm here for you. But at this edition it really makes sense that you're feeling this way, I can see how that would really resonate.

Rebecca: And it works for adults too. Like if you're a porcupine or turtle because let's you know a lot of parents are working from home, I'm one of them. And my kids know are in Zoom calls and I'm just one like zoom call away from being a meme or like my kid walks in the screen with pants off or something like I'm just, you know, nuance around parenting and a pandemic at home. And, you know, this stress that we all feel as parents, you know, out there as you're listening in, except that you're stressed right now, of course you are, we're doing the best we can under the circumstances. And it's another thing that I think is so important. Another phrase that has been my go to since I don't know, March 13. Approximately, um, is when I do any sort of like, criticism of myself and parents, you know, out there, I know you do it like you feel guilty because you snapped at your kid or you aren't spending enough time with him. Because you're attending to your work and you feel bad about it or you know, you make a parenting decision, and it doesn't go well. And just you know, you make the best decisions you can at the time with the information and none of us needs to beat ourselves up for not being psychic. But one of the phrases that I love to use at this time is when I find myself criticizing my parenting, or projecting criticism on my kids for their behavior, I add a phrase to the end of it. And that phrase is in a global pandemic. So let me give you an example. My child tore up her math homework. In a global pandemic, my child is not focusing on zoom, and I'm getting emails or my teacher. In a global pandemic, my house looks like crap right now, in a global pandemic, like, I did not get through my emails today, I got like nothing done in a

global pandemic, it gives ourselves empathy. And when we do that we actually are modeling for work on how to give ourselves grace. So it's a double gift.

Debbie: I love that. I'll be using that as well. I mean, I've definitely said that sometimes like well, we are in a global pandemic, after all, but I can see again, the value of just adding that to everything. because it provides context. It reminds us constantly that these are unusual times. And as I've been talking about for months, it is definitely a time to lower the bar for all of us.

Rebecca: Yeah, I sometimes say relax your standards, to a level appropriate for a global pandemic. And I say that with my school psychologist colleagues because they know they want nothing more than to be back at school helping kids and you're doing it on zoom and they're doing the best they can with what they can Right now, but yeah, it's tough for everyone. Yeah. And so those are sort of like, in the moment strategies that I found really helpful. One of the other things that I'd love to share with your listeners is an opportunity to be proactive. So we're like just about to have our holiday breaks, our kids are still kind of in the distance learning phase. But we're thinking about the holidays, and we're thinking about the things we are not doing the things we don't know we're doing. And by the way, the opposite of, you know, when you think about, like, uncertainty being a bad thing, right, the opposite of uncertainty is not certainty. It's actually presence. Hmm, it's being present. And this is how it is right now. This is what we know. This is the information we have on the table. We do not know if we're going to do our trip. That's we are being president, we are worried about grandpa. That is what is. So it's changing those what ifs to what is, right. And I actually do a mental exercise in my own brain. I like like, you know, neon lights or whatever, like in front of my brain. Like they pop up like, what if what if it is what's that? What is that? And I delete it? I put it, what is this? I don't know right now. And there's something concrete about just kind of leading into that present experience.

Debbie: Such a good reminder. And yeah, the opposite of uncertainty is presence. I've never heard of that before.

Rebecca: I got it off of Instagram where I get much of my wisdom. And I've tried to source the original person who said it. And you know, when you do that, like 6000 people come up and like everyone said it, so I'm not sure.

Debbie: Yes, Socrates..

Rebecca: And Maya Angelou. So anyway, I'm not sure who said it. Thank you to whoever said it, because it really resonates with me. Yeah, um, one of the other things, and this is an art activity, which if you have younger kids, or teenagers to my colleague, Elizabeth solder, and I have partnered together and our make it stick parenting course, she has teen boys and I have young girls. So we try these across the gender and age spectrum. Are you familiar with the concept of a future sketch?

Debbie: No.

Rebecca: So I can attribute it to Sarah Ward, she works a lot in executive functioning. And I've written a couple books on executive functioning. And I'm always citing her because she's fabulous. executive functioning is all the skills it takes to reach a goal, right planning, organizing forward thinking, all of those things, when we think of executive functioning, executive functioning, or planning skills during a pandemic, right, when you're not sure what's going to happen. There's actually a really interesting opportunity. So if your child has ADHD, or if your kid is anxious, and they just cannot live in that, what if space, it's just really hard for them. Or if your kid is maybe on the spectrum or kind of quirky, and like, they really struggle with like, flexibility, right? This was the plan. And now it's not the plan, all of a sudden, there's an opportunity to teach here. So here's an activity that I recommend trying and I've tried with my kids. And it was actually one of those things that I did at the beginning of distance learning. And now I'm rebooting and I think you can reboot this many, many times. So one of the things about future sketch is the ability to plan actually involves a mental imagery process, you imagine your future self doing something, this is a great because it lends itself to, you know, being able to draw, so kids who don't have really rich language or vocabulary, they can draw these things. So for a quick example, what I do with my kids at the beginning of the pandemic is I said, draw a picture of what you think distance learning is going to look like when we go back to school. If everything went well draw a picture of what that would be. And I drew one husband Drew, one and two girls drew one and we compared them, our future sketches were really different. My eldest was, you know, on her bed with the puppy, you know, we got a quarantine puppy, you know, they're all the rage, right? And then my little one was alone at the breakfast bar with the puppy. And I am drawing them like sitting, you know, designated office space together, and then my husband does something totally different. So, look, we were able to head off at the path. These challenges, like, first off, it was an opportunity for problem solving. You do this when you're in a nice, happy space. By the way, no one should be in porcupine or turtle note when you're doing these planning things, right? And you plan out like okay, so you both want to have the puppy, how's that gonna work? And it's an opportunity for problem solving. Or, hey, you do yourself alone, but I think six year olds might need support from their parents during distance learning. Let's talk about that. Right. So you can do that. So when it comes to the holiday, you can draw and actually this came up to me because I watched... Have you, I'm sure you have you seen the movie *Elf*? Have you seen it recently? Okay, so this is our like transition to holiday rituals. Like we all watch elf, right. So there's a scene in which Will Ferrell as elf, decides that he wants to hang out with his newfound father and he gets an Etch A Sketch out. And he writes, we're going to do ice skating and snow angels for two hours in your whole role of Toll House cookie dough and snuggle right? He's got his list. He planned it out. And then the dad looks at him kind of funny and he shakes it. He's like, okay, no, we're not gonna do that. So what is your kids' sketch of the holidays, Christmas going to look like? What's Hanukkah going to look like if things go well? And look, if they draw a picture of themselves at the big, you know, holiday dinner, and Colorado and you, you know where you normally go, and you're not going to go this year, then you can talk about it. It's a great visual plan. And then you can use it as an opportunity for teaching executive

functioning and planning skills, teaching ways to cope with anxiety, teaching flexibility. And the great thing about the edger sketch metaphor is like, you have to might have to like, shake it up, it might have to happen, some plans are not in stone. So it's kind of a nice board thinking and contingency plan heading things off at the pass, when it comes to things that might be limited or changed. And also just like a big ol massive, unstructured time, like nothing probably gets parents more porcupine, or maybe I'm projecting when kids are like, I'm bored. Right. And they have like a whole world of things, or whatever, right. And so all this unstructured time at home, you might say let's draw a picture of a number of activities that we can do over break, right, let's do a 12 days of fun, have a calendar. And we're gonna draw 12 different things we could do when we're feeling bored, unsettled, annoyed, cooped up, whatever feeling might be happening for your family.

Debbie: I love that I am a big fan of getting everyone's expectations out. Because we all as you said, we all tend to have a different picture in our mind of what this is going to look like. And that addition of the drawing and picture is such a nice creative way to go about that especially if kids are not as verbal or they're more into drawing as a way of expression. But I love that because it does give you the chance to problem solve around things. And then also just kind of see where everybody is. And maybe then you plan what can we make happen? You know, what are the things that we can do that we can each kind of check off our list. And I even like the idea of making sure that everybody gets like one or two things over the holiday that they really own or that's really special to them, so that everyone can come out the other end feeling like they got to do something that felt really special to them.

Rebecca: Yeah, I think this is an opportunity, again, in a very troubling package as a gift here, which is that we can collaborate and teach problem solving skills, we can distill the holidays down to actually the essence of what's really important, which is connection. And even before March 13, when children play out here in California, we know I've always looked at the research on resilience, and trauma prevention and stress management. And the number one thing over and over, hands down. No contest in the research that protects kids from stress is connection. And it doesn't have to be a lot. It doesn't. It can be 10 minutes of playing Harry Potter Legos with your kids, it can be doing go noodle dance breaks, or it can be shooting hoops. It can be making cookies together. What's important is that kids feel seen and heard and connected. And actually, as I was preparing for this podcast, I was trying to think of creative ideas for new traditions COVID style that would tap into this opportunity for connection. And the mantra I've been saying is connection is protection. And it really is. And we've found that over and over in the research and in my own family is that when we're stressed. And even though we're together, you can be with someone and not connected. Am I right? Yeah. So you're physically together, figure out opportunities to be emotionally together. So if you like and I would love to, you know, pick your brain. This is one that came to me this morning, because my kids still love to do art. And you know these connection chains that they make in kindergarten where there's like little strips of paper and they make them into links and they like tape or glue them together and then make a big old long chain.

I was just thinking this morning. This is something I want to do with my kids. I haven't tried it on for size yet, but it is to get out slips of paper, and then write on them all the things that we might like to do have a break together. Build to Hedwig Harry Potter, things that maybe I haven't had time to do because I've been you know working from home and they've been distance learning. Take a walk in the neighborhood and do a scavenger hunt. Doesn't matter what it is, something your kid likes to do, get them involved and then I was thinking you can pull from a jar or something. And then every time we did them, we would make a chain and then maybe by the end of break we'd have a really pretty decoration so Get creative, maybe a connection chain.

Debbie: I like that I, I'll just share the things. First of all, I work more than a full time job. And I somehow think I have all this leisure time, but I am going to create time for myself this break, and I'm thinking about crocheting, which I haven't done in years, I'm like, I'm gonna make a big throw a scrapbooking, like, I've got all these big projects of which I'll probably just make a dent in one. But I do like that idea of, you know, putting everything in a jar, and having all these things so that, you know, you can even wake up And see, should we just scroll the dice and see what's on deck for today and, and then collecting them in a chain. That's a very sweet idea.

Rebecca: And it's something that we're built into our family culture that a lot of families, you know, honestly, there's a lot of things like I know, but I don't do, like I know all the research on gratitude. I know it's the surest, fastest way to reduce stress, right. But it's one of those things that is sort of hard to cultivate, it sounds so simple, right? But it's not easy to fold gratitude into your day. So there's three things that I actually would love to share with your audience about cultivating gratitude practices. And this is sort of the season of giving and the season of being thankful, right. So I am all about practical ways to infuse this into your family culture. So I do want to share that our family has a gratitude jar. And we put in little moments that we called the love jar, because they like bombed it with stickers, and stuff like that. It sits on our kitchen counter with a little post its and everyday, people just kind of put them in there as things occur to them. And we read them out together every Sunday on ice cream sundae with ice cream sundaes. Okay, it's become a ritual. And I was reading one of these articles, or one of my favorite places I write for them is Greater Good Science Center, they take science and turn it into real life. So the gratitude piece of that I was reading why the pandemic is so hard for you. And one of the reasons is because a lot of rituals are gone, especially coming of age rituals. And so this becomes our family ritual. And it's amazing and adorable to read what your kids appreciated. And one of them is just like, so cute. Like I love when you know, the puppy snuggles up to me, I love when my sister gives me a hug, like things like you do, oh who know, right? Or like, you can reinforce your husband's taking out the compost behavior if you like, like, I really love how you took out this compost, right? A little Attaboy, because you want them to repeat that behavior. But it's a fun ritual, this gratitude jar. And I actually, I'll take it a step further, because why not? So I know the jars there. And like the first one, the jar was there, we're all jazzed about it, right. And then I sort of fell by the wayside. And there's been a Sundae, or two or like one sticky and they're like, Oh, we got to reboot that. So

actually this is something on habit formation. This is kind of for parents, but you can teach your kids if you want to cultivate a new habit, parent with something you already do. So I make coffee every morning, make coffee without fail. And while it is brewing, I take 10 deep breaths. And I think of something I'm thankful for that morning. And then I write it down in the gratitude jar, because I'm already doing that now. They're paired together, I never forget one gratitude. And the research on gratitude is so fascinating. So our brains are evolutionarily primed to scan for negative. And if we in the morning, see something negative our brain scans for more negative or brain loves patterns, you know, your brain is going to be scanning for negative things. But if you start with gratitude your brain actually it's kind of spooky, like you start scanning for the positive. There's a concept that I just learned called positive rumination. So if you think of rumination you usually think of like brooding and thinking about all the bad things. And just like rehashing, I'd say that there's positive rumination, this is a gift we can give our kids helping them, look for the good. Look for the connection. Look for that gratitude, and making it visual. A lot of our kids with additional needs, need some visual reminders. We need visual miners. So the gratitude jar is kind of something that you can do on your own for the holidays, and then keep it going.

Debbie: I love that positive rumination. That's great. I never heard that before. That's awesome across it. I like it. So you've shared so much today. I'm just going to kind of recap and then I have one more question for you. So we talked about processing, and co-regulating with our kids. We talked about getting present, helping to set expectations and then problem solving. We talked about prioritizing connection with our kids, planning things for everyone, right so that we all get things to do. And then this gratitude practice. Can we just touch on one other thing before we close out this conversation and that is, you know, you talked about parents' stress before, it's something that is just a very real thing right now. So any words of wisdom or great ideas for how we as parents can manage our own energy that we haven't talked about yet today?

Rebecca: Yes. So a lot of times we think of self care as parents, like, Oh, that's a nice to have, or that's a reward. At the end of the day, you know, a bubble bath, or some chocolates, and I'm pro bubble bath, I am pro chocolate, I'll go right on record. That's a nice thing to have. But self care is more than that. So care is something you kind of do off the job. It's your crochet project that you're going to do, right, you're going to carve out some time for self care. But what's actually more important, is self compassion, self compassion, you can do on the job as a parent, when the stress is really happening, what I mean by self compassion, it's treating yourself like you would a best parent, friend, when things don't go well. So look, if you're having a bubble bath, and eating chocolates, and you're saying, I'm doing self care, but you're sitting in that bubble bath, and you're beating yourself up for making a big fat parenting mistake, or you're sitting there worrying about your kid and you know, going down a shame spiral or something you should have done differently. That's about self care anymore. That is, you know, beating yourself up and self care behavior. So, parents out there when you think about behaviors, yes, self care, Sunday should be every day, carve out you time, get some rebooting energy, take a walk by yourself, all those behaviors are super

important. But also your mindset is important. When you're in stressful moments, these holiday seasons when things are not going well. Cultivate your internal parent pause button. Take a breath, stop. Be mindful, I am feeling upset, worried, annoyed, frustrated, cooped up, exacerbated whatever name it to tame it is something that Dan Siegel says right, name it to tame it. And then remind yourself we're in this together. Look, there's a common humanity here. We are all struggling. You're all in stress, and maybe not all at the same time. But we are absolutely all in it together. And then thirdly, what would I advise my best parenting friend to do? So like if Debbie came to me and said, I had the worst day, my kids blew up, and then I blew up at them. You know, I would probably lean in with great compassion. I mean, like, I get it. This happens. We're all in this together. We all have shorter fuses, because we're stressed. And what do you need right now it makes sense that you know, Debbie, right. Instead, sometimes parents go to beating themselves up. Instead of giving themselves the same loving tender care, they would give a best friend. So make sure in addition to self care, carving out time, you're also giving yourself some self compassion.

Debbie: Such a great reminder, listeners, leave this in the show notes pages. If you haven't listened to my conversation with Kristin Neff, she is kind of a self compassion guru. And it is such an important thing that we practice right now. So thank you for reminding us about that. And also listeners know I am like the unapologetic self care practitioner, that is my jam. So again, great reminder and something I was recently on a pandemic holiday webinar with Laura Vanderkam and Christine Koh. And one of the things I took away from that conversation is to even make sure that 10 minutes a day you do that one thing for yourself, it might be a walk, or it might just be, you know, it might be my crochet project, which I will do whilst streaming the Great British Bake Off or something like that. But you know, think about making sure that you proactively make that 10 minutes, 10, 15 minutes for yourself every day to do something. So thank you so much for that. So before we say goodbye, can you let listeners know where they can learn more about your work and connect with you?

Rebecca: Absolutely. So if listeners want to go to rebeccabranstetter.com, there's a variety of resources on there. But the one I'd love to point your audience to in the context of what we just talked about is a free downloadable tool. And it's 25 self care practices that parents can do and 10 mantras you can tell yourself, so it's a combo deal. It's both that self care behaviors. And these are those like things you can do in less than five minutes to mentally reboot when you're stressed. And then there's also the things you can tell yourself like some of those in a pandemic kind of phrases that I've mentioned before, so I always have a new opt in that kind of pops up on the current one is all around this parental self care and compassion during the coronavirus because we have an opportunity when we tend to our own self care and self compassion, guess what? We're modeling that for our kids. And I know that self care falls under those things I know, but don't do for parents, for myself, for everyone like that. Yeah, I know. And so this is meant to be a really practical guide for you to circle and put on your fridge like, I'm going to do this one, because we can forget, and we love our kids and what to attend to them. And we can sometimes backburner self care. And that can backfire. Particularly when we're trying to co regulate.

Debbie: Yes, yes. That's great. I'm so happy that you have that tool available. Do you have a favorite mantra for the holiday season that you can share with us?

Rebecca: Ooh, okay, I have to think about that. I think I'm gonna go with connection is protection.

Debbie: Hmm, that's great. Thank you. All right, well, um, listeners, I will have all the details, including the link where you can go check out this awesome download, which I'm gonna check out and visit Rebecca's website. And I just want to say thank you so much for sharing all of these strategies. There's a lot of different takeaways. And I appreciate you walking us through all those today.

Rebecca: Well, thank you, too, I find whenever I do any of these things, I actually just kind of Prime's me for doing them with my own family. So as I mentioned, at the top of this, you know, that being a professional and working with kids, and then being a parent are two different things. And this podcast has really helped me integrate those together. So I am going to be right there along with you doing my gratitude jar, my connection chain, and, and all of these strategies that I've mentioned, as well, because even parents and professionals need reminders as well. So thank you so much for having me on. It's been a real pleasure.

RESOURCES MENTIONED:

- [Rebecca Branstetter's website](#)
- [Rebecca on Facebook](#)
- [Rebecca on Instagram](#)
- [Peace of Mind Parenting: Simple, Proven Strategies for Raising Calm Kids in a Crazy World](#) (Rebecca's online course)
- [*The Thriving School Psychologist: 4 Steps to Better Time Management, Lower Stress, and More Impact in Your School Community--Beyond Testing*](#) by Rebecca Bramstetter
- [*The Everything Parent's Guide to Children with Executive Functioning Disorder: Strategies to help your child achieve the time-management skills, focus, organization needed to succeed in school and life*](#) by Rebecca Bramstetter
- [Greater Good Science Center](#)
- [Sarah Ward / Executive Function](#)
- [Elizabeth Sauter](#)
- [Dr. Kristin Neff on the Proven Power of Self-Compassion](#) (Tilt Podcast episode)
- [Webinar with Laura Vanderkam & Christine Koh](#)