



Episode #241

**Parenting Coach and Author Mercedes Samudio Talks
About Shame Proof Parenting**

February 9, 2021

Debbie: Hello, Mercedes, welcome to the podcast.

Mercedes: Hi, thank you so much for having me.

Debbie: I'm really looking forward to this conversation today. And before we get into the topic for today, could you just take a few minutes and introduce yourself, tell us about what you do in the world. And also, I always love to hear about my guests' personal why for what they do?

Mercedes: That's a great question. So I have been in this field for about over a decade, I started out kind of just doing case management, and then went in and got my master's and got licensed. And I primarily work with parents who are trying to really figure out what it means to be a parent, not just focusing on parenting skills, but really focusing on how do they find their space to still exist and thrive, but at the same time, hold a space for their children to exist and thrive and be healthy. And so helping parents to really merge those two elements of themselves is what I focus on a lot through my work with shame proof parenting. And then I'm also a speaker, I have my book, *Shame Free Parenting*. And so I opened up in 2019, a nonprofit called Diversity in Parenting, where we now also focus on the professionals who work with parents and support parents in the nonprofit also really focuses on bringing more diversity into the parenting and mental health landscape in terms of speakers, and in terms of the topics we discuss. And then I guess my WHY is, really, it comes from a myriad of places. But I would say the foundation for my why of working with parents and working with families is my own personal history with my family, I was raised by my step grandmother and not my biological parents. And the mixture of kind of our relationship and the tumultuous pneys of it really just kind of let me think of what would have happened if my mom, my grandmother, who I call mom, if she had the resources and the support to actually care for herself and for me at the same time. And so that question kind of permeates a lot of the work that I do.

Debbie: Yeah, and you share your story in the book...Listeners, it's called *Shame Proof Parenting: Find Your Unique Parenting Voice, Feel Empowered, and Raise Whole Healthy Children*. And I devoured your book, I just thought it was it just really spoke to me, it was so honest, and gentle and accessible. And I really felt like your message surrounding shame was a really important one and one that we don't typically hear in a you know, I'm using air quotes, a typical parenting book, this was not a typical parenting book, it was a really an invitation, I think, to examine yourself, and to learn who you are, why you are the parent you are and how to really empower yourself to show up in a different way. So let's start there, I'd love to talk more about this idea of shame. The way that you talk about shame felt different to me, you refer to Brene Brown a lot, which again, I'm a big fan of hers. But can you talk about that relationship between shame and the way we show up as parents?

Mercedes: Yeah, I think number one, shame is something that we have we experience kind of, just because we're human, I think as long as there's other humans around, we're going to compare, judge, categorize, and organize people around us. And I think parenting is one of the pieces of our identities, that really gets shamed and judged, because everyone has an experience with parenting, whether it's being a

parent, or your own parenting, or a combination of both. Plus, we have a lot of different examples of parents throughout our lives. So I grew up in the 90s, with 90's sitcoms, and the parents always having the right thing to say and, you know, so there's always these examples of how to do it, quote, unquote, right? And so I think because of it, people have their own ideas, their own ideologies, their own theories about how to raise a healthy child. And because of it, we tend to use our own ideas. There's a lot more science and a lot more space to talk about it in the academic world that we have now. And so people use all of that to say, Okay, if you're raising your child ABCD way, then they're going to be healthy. But if you're raising your child XYZ way, then they're going to turn out traumatized and unhealthy. And I think when you make it that binary, it makes it very easy for people to fall through the cracks and be kind of a bit of both, but not enough of either. And with that, I think it breeds a lot of shame. I also think we put a lot of expectations on ourselves. I have yet to meet any parent that says the way that I'm parenting is right for the level of information and energy that I have right now. Almost every parent that I hear, they say things like I suck, I failed. I've messed my child up. It's over. I'm the worst parent I've ever known. I wish I could do things better. So there's this space of constantly comparing yourself to whatever ideals you thought you were supposed to be embodying as a parent, and that breeds shame. And then, after all of that, you still have your own history before you became a parent that lends itself to the shame that you might feel bringing a child into the world. Am I educated enough? Am I financially stable enough? Am I emotionally and mentally healed enough? And I think all of that coalesces into this space, where shame just really sits on the shoulders of parents, sometimes they're really conscious of it. And sometimes the very unconscious space that they're in, that they don't even realize that a lot of their parenting decisions are coming out of that shame and guilt that they feel for existing in this space.

Debbie: So you just touched on three things. And I have questions about all of them. So let's start with the last thing you said. Because, you know, this idea of the way that we as parents may inadvertently recreate shame in our children based on our own experience as kids, and what was modeled for us. Can you talk more about how that might show up?

Mercedes: Yeah, I think it shows up quite a bit. On one end of the spectrum, we say, well, we were raised, and we turned out, okay, right, we're looking at that external version of ourselves, were we able to go to school, were we able to get a job, were we able to, you know, function in society. And we think, okay, we came out, okay, despite whatever our family or our caregivers or parents did to us, but then you have the other spectrum, where you actually had really good parents, and you feel like, I want to be at least half the person that my mom or my dad or my caregivers were to me, and then you've got everyone else in between who's kind of struggling between maybe having that such an idyllic childhood, but not hating everything about it, and then having to come into your own parenting. For some of us without even really reconciling what our own childhood meant for us. Many of us, I think, just kind of survived our childhood, or just kind of got through it. But we never gave ourselves the space or the time to really reflect on how did my childhood and early experiences shaped the person that I am. And then how will that person then step into this parenting identity and show up in a way that feels authentic for me. And then lastly, I always talk to my parents about the fact that

however you start off parenting will not be how you are in parenting, because parenting is a journey, you will start off parenting with what you think is important and salient for your child. But as your child grows, and starts having their own ideas and feelings and their personalities come out and their behaviors begin to show up, then you're going to have to really shift and change. But there's really no framework, or there's no permission, really, for parents to connect with the child they have. I think a lot of times what parents end up getting stuck with is trying to fit themselves and their child into whatever current parenting fad is kind of a parent and popular at the time. And so when you think about all of these different elements, I think it becomes, again, a huge burden sometimes for parents to really step into Who am I, despite what happened to me as a child, who am I, despite what the current parenting fad is, who am I? And I think there's a constant struggle for parents to kind of navigate that space.

Debbie: Yeah, I and I think that's one of the things I love so much about your book was, this is a conversation or this inner work that most parents don't give themselves permission to have, they don't take the time, they don't prioritize it. And it really does underlie everything that we do. And so making that space and giving ourselves the permission to do it feels really powerful to me. And I love what you also just said about this idea that it's a journey. And you say this in your book that our parenting manual just changes over time, like we create it, and it continues to change as our kids change as we change. And you also talk about this mismatch between parenting gimmicks, you know, whatever the trend is the the hot way of parenting right now, and our families and you know, my audience is families who are raising differently wired kids, neurologically atypical kids, and that, in particular, you know, this idea of there is this way to parent, and then we read those books, and we get very different results, right, that creates a lot of feelings of failure and shame. And so can you talk more about that mismatch?

Mercedes: I can and if you don't mind, if you don't mind me stepping into kind of a controversial space. I think this is one of the spaces where I find myself the most frustrated as a professional in this world because oftentimes, the families that are presented to us as the ideal family type are usually white, affluent, heterosexual, cisgender, able bodied, like it's the same type of family. And so if your family does not look like that, it can feel very disconnecting or out of alignment to try to connect with those parenting ideals. It's also where I think a lot of that failure comes from because if you are a family who has disability, if you're a family of a different cultural arrays, if you're a family who identifies in the LGBTQIA community, either as the parent or the child, we don't really have a lot of representation for those types of families. If you're a foster family, if you're a blended or step family, if you're a kinship family, like what I grew up with, I don't ever get to see grandparents reflected as caregivers or parents the way my family was. And so when you have families who don't look like that, quote, unquote, ideal family, and you're trying to shoehorn your family into whatever that ideally is, or whatever that current parent trend is, it really does set you up for failure, because there's no way an African American family can turn itself into an affluent white family, there's no way a disabled family can turn itself into an able bodied family, right. And so you're always kind of contending with where's my identity, or my family's identity being shown in these spaces, which is kind of why I created the diversity and parenting space, because it's really important for us to represent families with different challenges and unique challenges. I think

about family programs that just focus on making sure you have consistency. But if you have a differently wired child or a child who has different types of abilities, or lack of abilities, then you really are going to have a hard time being consistent with the child who might need different levels of care when different issues come up for them. And so I say all that to say that I think the failure comes from not just the fact that we're trying to fit ourselves into these parenting trends as they come and go. But we're also not seeing enough representation in different types of families and exploring how if there's a grandparent or an aunt or an older sibling taking care of a child, there's a different set of challenges and issues that they're going to need to be addressed. If you're a parent of a child that's disabled, or view yourself as a parent is disabled, you have different challenges and unique issues that need to be addressed. And so I think we can really help offset a lot of that fill your space, if we show parents and families that your family number one isn't broken or wrong, or deficient in any kind of way. And if we start to showcase different types of families, even just putting up pictures of families that are different on our website, or on our materials, mentioning caregivers, instead of always saying parents because again, sometimes it's a caregiver who's taking care of a child, not the actual biological parent, right? Like really embracing the fact that families look different, especially in 2021, when you're not all the 2-parent, 2 child, dog and a picket fence household. And so I think if we can start doing that, it might help us to start closing that gap on how much failure parents and caregivers feel as they're trying to raise kids.

Debbie: Such a great answer. And, yeah, I mean, as you're talking, I'm just thinking, I've had this podcast for almost five years. And I know my language has changed so much, even just always, when I mentioned a partner, I say "if you have one" because there are a lot of single parents out there. And it's a constant journey for me to make sure that I am inclusive and the pronouns I use, and just always doing that ongoing work. And it's so important, because, as you said, you know, their parenting space is overwhelmingly white, it's overwhelmingly you know, just one kind of core demographic, and it really is ignoring the needs and voices of so many different people. So, you know, I want to talk more about shame proof parenting, but you talked about your Diversity in Parenting. So can you tell us a little bit more? Because I'm curious to know how, you know, you're using that nonprofit, like, what are the strategies or the projects that you're doing to further this mission?

Mercedes: Yes, so it actually came out of my frustration, as I've mentioned, already, with seeing, you know, summit after summit, conference after conference, where there's kind of just this sea of homogeny, right, where everyone looks the same. Every parent expert looks the same, every topic is kind of focused on one type of family. And I thought what would happen if we had a conference or a summit that had more diversity, and so in 2019, I did my diversity and parenting conference, the first one, and unfortunately, then we had to deal with a pandemic. So I couldn't do it again. But the first year, we really focused on having a diverse set of speakers, so speakers who come from all walks of life, and then allowing those speakers to speak on topics about what it means to have these different identities in a family system, whether it be as a caregiver as a professional or as a child, and to really explore so we had topics such as looking at ODD, at ADHD in children of color, we had topics of looking at racism and parenting and feminism and parenting. We looked at topics such as postpartum

depression and families of color or families who have different identities. We looked at disability and how disability affects a family, we looked at grief in families and how families feel that way. We looked at LGBTQIA families and families of adoption. And so we had all these speakers coming in talking about not just parenting or families, but looking at the unique challenges of diverse families. And from the success of that, I thought, what if I turned this into a nonprofit where all of the work that we're doing is to really help professionals in the mental health and parenting world, really get some training around how to engage parents, how to support caregivers, how to really look at the different family types and family structures and identities that encompass a family. And to also have these topics and trainings be led by diverse speakers, speakers who actually embody some of this diversity we're looking to learn more about. And so the first initiative that we did was the conference. Right now, we are launching a diversity in parenting community, which is going to be an online community where it's community based where we're learning we're growing, but it's also going to have courses as well, for professionals who want to enhance their skills. And eventually, as I grow and get more kind of research and empirical data, I also want to create a certification for the parenting identity development model where I train professionals on how to actually help a parent or caregiver get into contact with their identity. So the identity is what leads their parenting decisions, not the current parent trends, or the newest parenting strategies, they're really leading from that space of Who am I and what is my family need? And what can I offer my family? And what might I need to do to bring in other support for my family if I can't do it.

Debbie: I love a woman with a plan. And I love that you have a big plan for diversity and parenting. It's awesome. And I'm excited for that.

Mercedes: I heard once that if you're, if your goals don't scare you, they're not big enough.

Debbie: Yes, I relate to that as well. Love it. And, you know, thank you for sharing that. And I'm looking forward to following your work and seeing how this grows. It's so important, you know, as someone who came into this space, not as a parenting expert, but just as a parent trying to empower other parents with kids who don't quite fit in, I'm continuing to just learn even what the parenting space is like. And, and it's just so important that we get more voices heard. And I just appreciate and rally behind the work that you're doing. So I just want to now connect something you talked about just a minute ago about really helping parents, parent from a place of their own identity. And that's something you talk about in the book as well. You talk a lot about intuition and parenting. And I really loved the way that you talked about this. And you shared some strategies for how parents can get better in touch with their intuition. So can you share one or two of those with us? Because I believe we're our own best experts, right when it comes to our kids. So how can we really learn to tune in and trust that?

Mercedes: I think first really figuring out, where is that coming from? And so one of the things that I noticed when I work with parents is especially when they're working with their kids and other systems, so kids and school systems are kids and community systems. Everyone has so much to say about their kid that it's sometimes drowns out a parent's intuition, where they know what their who their kid is, they see this child 24-7, they have to care for them 24-7, and these

experts or the psychologists or teachers, they see the child for a less amount of time. And one of the things that I noticed is that my parents would say, you know, when the school called me, I immediately knew what that was about. But when I read and listen to the message, I let my fear take charge or I knew what my kids' levels were. However, when I sit in an IEP meeting, I let all the jargon and all of the talk about my kids abilities make me feel less confident as a parent to help them through it. And so what I often do with my parents to help them build their intuition is we began to talk about who their child is, tell me about them, the ups, the downs, the highs, the lows, the brightness of your child and even the darkness of your child. Because this person that you're raising is a full human. They're not just their behavior, or their test scores or their academic abilities. They're a full human. And so when we can tap into that, I think it allows us to really see the full picture of who our children are. But then also tapping into our own spaces. Having parents slow down enough to say, Who am I? What do I notice? What do I feel? Right? I talk to parents who'll tell me, they get two, three and four o'clock and realize they haven't eaten all day because they've ignored their needs for other people. And so ignoring your needs, also messes up your intuition, because you're not able to tell whether that feeling in your stomach is hunger, because you haven't eaten all day, or it's actually alerting you to something that's going on in your life. And so really getting back to also just meeting your basic needs, and meeting some of your needs, helps you to really delineate between, okay, what's going on in my body? Is this something that's alerting me to something in my family? Or is this my body letting me know that I need to stand up or that I need to eat or that I need some fresh air? And so I think a lot of times people get very woowoo with intuition, we think it means it's going to tell us about the future, or, you know, it's going to give us the lottery numbers, right. But a lot of times intuition is just tapping back into your body, sitting down and listening to what is happening inside of you. Because that lets you know, okay, is this something I need to be paying attention to? Or is this something that can be put off into Maybe another time when I have more energy for it. And again, I think the overarching idea for finding your intuition is not really giving it any value, not saying my intuition is good or bad. But just learning how to listen to that gut feeling to that tightness in your chest, to sometimes listening to that sound that you hear or actually picking up the phone. When you feel inclined to call your friend or text somebody. Those levels of intuition I think help us to feel connected to ourselves. Because we're trusting that my body, my mind, my soul is telling me the right thing, versus what maybe a teacher might say, or what an administrator might say about our children.

Debbie: Yeah, I love that idea that the body is really always giving us information. And you know, the hard part of the challenging part is a busy parent, as you said, who may not even have Remember to eat until the middle of the day, is slowing down enough to listen right taking the time to tune in. And notice.

Mercedes: Yeah, and I think one of the things too, that happens with our parenting is that we do get told by almost everybody in society that once you become a parent, it's all about the kid. That's kind of just the norm. That's just the societal norm. And so I have to sometimes work with my parents to help them understand that if you are not feeling grounded, and present, that is going to be really hard for you to even focus on your kid. Most of my parents come to me when they're at their most stressed, they've had a lot of behavior issues, they've had a lot of mishaps

happen, or maybe even someone in their community birth and because of the things that have been happening at school or out in the community. And so a lot of my parents come to be so stressed and so overwhelmed by what's happening to their family, or what's happening to their child. And what we often do is we say, I love using this question, it's the miracle question. It is a therapeutic technique in my training, but it asked if you woke up tomorrow, in your family, your parenting and your child, were exactly what you wanted, what would that look like? And it's such a great reflective question, some of my parents have exactly what they want to see, some of them are unsure, right, some of them even feel guilt or shame for what they wish they could have in their family. And I explore all of that with them. Because for the positive things that you want, we look at that. But even for the things that make you feel a little guilty and a little ashamed to admit, we have to look at that, because that's also a part of your decisions, right? That's also a part of how you're showing up for your family, the stuff that you kind of ignore, or you try to hide, because you don't want anyone else to know about it. You can't do that, you really have to pay attention to the fact that your miracle answer is if I woke up tomorrow, I wouldn't have a kid anymore. And I'd be single and be able to travel everywhere. Okay, let's talk about that. Let's talk about how that's in the back of your mind. When you're being tasked with having to manage a meltdown or manage a tantrum in the back of your mind, you're thinking I wish I could just escape, right? And so that's going to make you kind of be pulled in two directions. One part of you is present to help your child but the other part of you is thinking about your beach escape somewhere, right? And so we have to talk about those things. Because if we don't, then we're ignoring a whole half of who you are. Because quote unquote, we need to focus on the child. And I always tell my parents, you can't focus on the child until you focus on yourself enough to understand your responses. Your thought processes your consciousness around showing up for yourself and showing up for your child.

Debbie: So good because the beach getaway, when we don't examine that that not only affects how we show up for kids, but invariably it's going to leave us feeling a lot of shame and guilt that we are not processing. So I love that. Thank you. Can you talk about then you offer a shame proof parenting framework in your book and how would you even just define shame proof parenting, like, what are we working towards? What's the goal?

Mercedes: The goal is to improve parenting, to recognize how shame has kind of woven itself into the fabric of your family. It's not to eradicate it. The analogy I often use is like a bulletproof vest, bulletproof vests don't get rid of bullets, but it really does stop the impact of the bullets from killing you. Right. And so when you have shame proof parenting, we can't eradicate shame, because it's just too much a part of our culture, it's too much a part of our humanity. But what we can do is we can lessen the impact of shame by acknowledging it, by paying attention to it by connecting with each other, by allowing ourselves to say we are experiencing a crisis in our family, but we're not going to start pointing the finger or finding a scapegoat, right, we're not gonna say, Oh, it's because of Mercedes ADHD, always because mom is too unorganized, right? We're not gonna try to point the finger, we're gonna say, okay, as a family, we're going through something together, let's come together to figure out, how do we manage it? And the effect is that if we can do that, more often than not, we learn how to withstand the ebbs and flows of life

together as a family, as opposed to allowing those ebbs and flow to tear us apart and start to fight within our family with each other.

Debbie: And I imagine, you know, as we're recording this, we are still very much in the midst of this pandemic. And so we're getting a lot of practice, a lot of opportunity to be with our family and to work on this right.

Mercedes: For better or for worse. Yeah.

Debbie: Yes. So you offer a framework in the book, which looks at how we respond to ourselves as parents, how we respond to our kids. And then you also talk about our relationship with the people in our lives who watch us parent? So can you maybe just touch on each of those briefly?

Mercedes: Yeah, so one of the things that I think is really important for us to pay attention to in our parenting is awareness. And I think awareness helps us to pay attention to what's going on. How are we all doing? And it also helps you as a parent and caregiver to check in with yourself, like, what does it mean to take care of myself? What does it mean to make sure that I'm okay, what does it mean to make sure that I am showing up presently for my family. So that's number one. Another one is empathy. I think empathy becomes the foundation for shame proof parenting, because it helps parents to realize that I have to first be empathetic to myself, if I'm walking around, telling myself how horrible I am, and how useless I am and how I just mess up everything, that I'm already feeding myself this negative energy that when I do have to show up for an issue, whether it be something like doing a school project, or managing someone's emotional kind of meltdown, I'm going to go into it thinking I'm already a failure, I'm going to go into it thinking I already suck. And so when you enter into situations like that, with no empathy for yourself, it doesn't really leave you much space to be empathetic for other people. And so in a family, when we're trying to improve our family, we really do need to realize that each person is doing the best they can with the skills and the information they currently have. And I think if we can do that for ourselves, first as the caregiver or parent, it gives us more space than to say, my kid is not trying to hurt me, they're having a hard time with their emotions. The same as I sometimes have a hard time with my emotions. Knowing needs is something that I constantly drill into my parents, please take care of yourself from your basic needs, like eating and sleeping, to even some more of our intangible needs, like being heard, or feeling like we belong, or feeling like we are being supported. A lot of times I tell my parents, if you don't feel supported, then it's going to breed a lot of guilt and a lot of resentment. And then that's going to be part of your parenting decisions because you're parenting from this space of anger and resentment, because no one's helping you. And so really knowing what do I need to stay afloat? What do I need to stay present, some parents just need small things, and some parents really need a lot. But wherever you are in that space, once you know your needs, then you start to realize, okay, maybe my child or my family members are doing these behaviors to get their needs met to competence is another one that I think is super important as well. Every time I do a parent workshop, I asked my parents to raise their hand if they feel confident in their parenting, and I get one or two out of you know, a group of 30 or so parents, then I'll say, right now I want you to take some time to think about something you know you do well as a parent, you don't need anyone to tell

you you do it. You don't even know if people know you do it well but you know, in your heart, you make a great sandwich or you are a great listener or you're good at creating things or you're a great, you know, roll around and horseplay parent, what are you good at? It's in those moments of knowing what you're good at. That really gives you the strength to look at maybe some of the parts of yourself that aren't so great, the parts of yourself that maybe you do need some support on. I often joke when I talk about confidence in the sense of, even though I'm not a parent, I think about how can I help people. And I know that I help people best when I'm listening to them and supporting them. However, I know that I'm not really, you know, the person who is militant and likes to stand on my soapbox with a megaphone yelling at people. And so the parent educators who do that I support them, because I know I'm more of a behind the scenes, helping people kind of person. So the things that I feel confident in, I'm able to do things that I don't feel so confident in, and I can allow others to do and not to get myself for it. And then the last two points are resilience and support. Resilience is this ability for a family to come back together after something has shaken them. And so it's this idea that even after something happens to us, whether it be minor or major, that we can come back together as a family and say, Okay, how do we want to deal with this? When we build resilience as a family, it allows us to build coping skills as a family. And so each and every time we go through something together, and we can come back and say, okay, that shook us, but how are we going to move forward, we learn then how to ride those abs and those flows of being a human together. And then of course, support, I don't think any parent framework can really exist without the idea of helping parents understand that support is going to be one of your best parenting skills, where you have to learn how to ask for help, you have to learn who will help you, I coach a lot of parents on not just assuming that because your family members are there, they're always going to be the best support for you to really sit down and ask yourself, what do I need, and to know that that need is going to change when you have a baby, that's going to be a different need than when you have a toddler. And it's going to be a different need than when you have a school aged kid or a teenager, right. And so to always constantly kind of look at is my support system currently helping me with the things that I need supporting now as me and my child grow together, and to always feel good about reassessing it and reflecting on whether or not those people still resonate for you or not.

Debbie: So much goodness. And I just say, as you're talking about this, I'm looking at my computer, I have a big, bright fuchsia Post-It that says what do I need right now that I've written just so I can remember, I need to look at that multiple times a day. And always be assessing, because it changes day to day sometimes, right?

Mercedes: It really does. Especially in a time like this, I think when it's so uncertain, our needs do change every day.

Debbie: But you know, what I love so much about this framework that you just walked us through is that these are all things that we as parents can do to shame proof our family to shame ourselves as parents, and these are all the qualities that we want our kids to have. We want them to know their strengths. We want them to have coping skills, we want them to be resilient, we want them to know how to get support. So this is such a powerful framework, because it's kind of like the gift that keeps on giving. Right?

Mercedes: Yes, and I think it's a framework, because it's not saying if you do ABCD, in this order, your pants will be perfect, it actually helps to build supports around you and your family. So that way on those days when things are not perfect. In those times when things are really, you know, conflictual or intense, you still have this framework that you can rest on, you can remind yourself that this is hard, I'm going to give myself empathy, you can remind yourself even though this is hard, there are things that I feel good in, you can remind yourself, oh my god, this is so hard for me and my family. But I have a support system that I can, you know, text or call and get, you know, support on and so I like this framework, because it takes us away from doing ABCD steps. And it makes us just really build it and kind of what you just said, these are lifelong skills that really actually extend past parenting and even just extending to, how do we support ourselves being healthy humans. And at the end of the day, we want our children to be healthy, we don't want them to be perfect. We just want them to be healthy. Do they know how to help themselves? If things go awry? Do they know how to take pride in themselves when things go well, right? We want to be able to model that for them. And I think this framework allows the family to do that together. So everyone's learning how to be healthy.

Debbie: Yeah, and it is, you know, there is kind of a vibe, like in your book and you talked about, you know, your anti parenting gimmicks, you say that you don't always like the parent, quote unquote, parenting experts. But that's because you say that the strategy is always a means to an end. It is never the real issue. And you know, what you're providing with us is, you know, a collection of tools that we can incorporate into our own, you know, intuitive parenting manual that's unique to our families.

Mercedes: Yes, definitely.

Debbie: All right, well, Mercedes, this has been such a fantastic conversation. I really encourage my listeners to check out this book. I will have links in the show notes, pages. For the shame proof parenting website, Mercedes book, the parenting and diversity, her nonprofit, but is there anywhere else where you'd like I know you're pretty active on Instagram, like where else can our listeners connect with you.

Mercedes: So I always joke around and say this, but I'm all over the internet. So if you type in Mercedes Samudio you'll find me everywhere. But those links that you talked about are really good. You can also connect with me on my main website, shameproofparenting.com. My nonprofit website is diversityinparenting.org. And so those are the two places that if you're interested in any of the work that I'm doing, or any of the ideas that I talked about, those are really good websites to kind of get started. And I'm also on Instagram so you can follow me on @diversityinparentinginc or at @mrs.samudio.

Debbie: Well thank you again for taking time to come by and share with us today and thank you for the work that you're doing in the world. And again, we look forward to supporting you and cheering you on.

Mercedes: Thank you so much.

RESOURCES MENTIONED:

- [Mercedes Samudio's Parenting Coaching Website](#)
- [*Shame Proof Parenting: Find Your Unique Parenting Voice, Feel Empowered, and Raise Whole, Healthy Children*](#) by Mercedes Samudio
- [Diversity in Parenting, Inc](#)
- [Mercedes on Instagram](#)
- [Diversity in Parenting store](#) (use code TILT for a 10% discount)

