

Tilt Parenting Podcast: Dr. Jody Carrington on Lifting Up Educators, Parents, Caregivers, and Anyone Else Who Supports Children [Transcript]

Debbie Reber: 0:02

Welcome to the podcast.

Jody: 0:03

Hello, Debbie, thank you so much for having me.

Debbie Reber: 0:07

I am really looking forward to this conversation. I was just mentioning before the record that I don't even know how your book got on my radar. But I instantly connected with the title. It's called kids these days a game plan for reconnecting with those we teach lead and love. And then I devoured it, and really just enjoyed it. So I can't wait to talk more about that. And before we get into the heart of our conversation, can you just introduce yourself, tell us a little bit about your story and why you do the work? You do?

Jody: 0:38

Yeah, I'd love to. Okay, I'm coming to you, from a small town in Alberta, Canada, and I grew up in a small town. And it was actually a teacher that changed my life, there was it's still to this day a K to 12 school. And I can tell you the first and last name of every teacher I ever had, I knew where they lived. I knew, you know, all the things that they were doing. And there was probably 22 of us that started kindergarten together and the same 19 of us that graduated together. Okay, so everybody knew everything about everybody. And I have to tell the story, because I remember where Mrs. Holly Norstrom was standing, the day that the most popular kid in our class was killed. I remember what she was wearing. I remember what she said, I have no idea. You know what the details were, but I remember how she made us feel. And I remember thinking as a 16 year old kid in that moment, that's what I want to do for the rest of my life. I want to make people feel the way Mrs. Norstrom made us feel. And it's funny because I spend a lot of my time now talking to educators talking to people who influence little people. And it all comes back to this. I do not remember a single thing about the literacy and the numeracy that women taught me. I do not remember a specific lesson. But I remember what she wore, I remember how she smelled. I mean, that sounds a little creepy, but it's true. I was wild musk from the ideas, pharmacy until I was 23. Because I just wanted to be like her. And so and I decided I want to be a psychologist so I told my dad that he was so friggin excited that I would get out of small town Alberta that he was like, Okay, I'll pay for it. And so he didn't know it's gonna take me 13 years to get a PhD. Anyway, so I went on an I did an externship during my undergrad degree with our national police force called the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. And I started to get really entrenched in this idea of trauma. And what happens when hard things happen to kids to families, how do we support them? How does it really mess them up? And I decided I wanted to be a police psychologist. And that's what I did most of my masters and my PhD research on. And then I did my externship in, actually in eastern Canada in Nova Scotia just

about you. And I had to do a rotation with kids. And they said, you know, we really think you need to do this rotation. And I was like, Listen, I don't like it. I'm not a fan of children. I just like the big people, I'm better with big people. And they're like, no, you're like a kid, we think you'd be a good fit. And I was like, damn it. So they were right. And I fell in love with these little muffin tops. And I realized that we knew even less about kids and trauma than we knew about adults and trauma. So I came back to Alberta and took my first job on a psychiatric inpatient unit for kids here at the Center of Excellence in Alberta called the Alberta Children's Hospital. And I learned more about kids and families and relationships than I ever learned in grad school. And I started to understand that the heart of everything we do if we want to change this planet comes down to reconnection, and connections. Easy. reconnection is hard. And so I learned and soaked it up. And then I found I landed a husband... took me a while but I landed one. He's a nice guy. He's a farmer, which is fine. And he's got a PhD and how to feed cows. It's a thing. And he's amazing. Then he says, you know, we should get kids so we get one. And I realize I have never been more and competent in anything in my life. So I get a, picture this I mean, we got six degrees between us. On one of them. I'm a child psychologist at this point. They put my own personal child in my arms and I was like I No, no, no, no, not ready. Not ready. They're like no, you could take them home I was like, and as we shared this before we went on air. His name is Asher. Which means like happy and everything so friggin great. The first 48 hours, we had that tiny human home. I was in tears 87 times. I mean, he's supposed to be on a schedule, because that's what child psychologists tell you to do. And the child was not on any friggin schedule. And it was three o'clock in the morning. I'm bouncing on one of those balls that you're supposed to your abs on, you know, like those big exercise balls trying to keep the kid alive. My husband in the room, I realized what the problem was. I told him we're not doing skin to skin because that's what the books say. So I'm yelling at my husband, like take your shirt off. So we're both naked milk shooting everywhere. I'm crying, Aaron's crying, that's my husband. And he looks at me and he says, I'll never forget this. He said, I don't I don't know how dumb people do this. Bye Bye, guys. Oh, So I mean, there we are, we've planned we had all the prenatal prep, we did all the birth planning, we, you know, said to our parents stay away, we've got this, we didn't. And then shortly after, Asher wasn't even two, we're pregnant again. And it's twins, which sweet mother, three kids under two and I was having a near psychotic break. And my husband said to me, You know, I know what will help you. Let's move closer to my mother. So we end up in old Alberta, Canada, which is a small town where we live. And I started to consult with school divisions on the heart kids, the ones that really people started to marginalize in their classrooms. They had Kickers, the hitters, the biters, the ones that couldn't focus, and those are my babies. I love those kids. And I love that typically what happens is we just need to know their story. And so I started to tell their stories and meet with school divisions. And then they said, You know what, good, you speak about it to our principals and our Vice Principals into our community groups. And I said, Absolutely. So that's just kind of blown up in the last three years. And they said, you know, what, you've read a book about my dad, it's called kids these days, as you talked about, and, gosh, it's sold over 150,000 copies. And you know, the first two years that it's been out, and it's blown us away. And we've now got a second book and an event series and COVID has been so kind to us, because it's created so much space for connection in our own team and our family. And yeah, so here we are. And now I find you in New York.

Debbie Reber: 6:28

What a great story and so much of what you shared resonates. And I love it that you love these kids. I mean, that's the way there's nobody else I'd rather hang out with right. Definitely wired kids I find to be the most fascinating humans on the planet.

Jody: 6:44

And listen, I mean, I have to say this, right? Like I've assessed and treated over 1000 kids in this country, and I have never, not one time, met a bad kid. Not one time. And oftentimes, like when I walked into a school division, or you know, when somebody wants to do a consult, the parent or a system, you know, says to me, like I've worked in, done lots of consultations with foster parents who I think are angels on earth. And I often walk into a group of people who are just exacerbated by a kid's behavioral presentation, right? And so when I look at a file on this kid, right, it's usually the size of the St. James. And I don't even have to look in there because I know what will be in there. There's multiple psycho educational assessments. There's ot Pt Imnop, slps. Lots of behavioral support plans. But what I'm most interested in when I look at the table of these people who are so invested in this baby, here's what I want to know. Who can tell me his middle name? Who can tell me what level he's on and fortnight. Who can tell me last time you saw his mama, how many siblings he got? Where's his dad? Where's this? Tell me everything you know about that? And who knows the color of his eyes. And when I got a group of people invested in a kid, you could start to answer those questions. That bio, that "ed file," whatever it's called, is decreasing, right? Because that's what we're trying to fix is, we're trying to connect, because when you are acknowledged when you are seen, you will rise.

Debbie Reber: 8:06

Yeah. And you write about this so nicely in your book, this idea that we are all wired for connection, it's something we've talked a lot about in the podcast, with regards to our relationship as parents and our kids, and your messages for educators. And I'm, and it's so important, right, that they have these meaningful connections with a variety of adults in their lives. I'm wondering, what has, I mean, obviously, the book is sold tremendously. Talk about the response among educators and teachers when they hear your message maybe for the first time.

Jody: 8:38

You know, what I really love about it is that they are not on like our babies, right? They are not on like when you come like perception is a function of experience, right? So when I'm talking to a group of parents who are just struggling to get the voices of their children heard, to have anybody who just can sink into their kids. I mean, if you think about this over Asher's, you know, career and we were talking about this to. My son suffers significantly from anxiety. And the teachers that are counselors or any, you know, any educator that had him that would call me and say, Hey, John, I just want to tell you Asher's amazing. Or my Olivia, who's our youngest. We have boy girl twins, and she's a spit. Like, seriously, Lord, is Jesus specifically for a girl and you know what he said to me? buckle up. Because I've never met a tiny human who is more full of fire than that little one. And so when somebody calls me and says about her or finds me on the street and says like, Olivia is amazing. Do you know what I want to do? Do you know I don't do Debbie. I want to make out with them. In that moment, there is nothing greater. I'm like, Oh,

Debbie Reber: 9:49

yeah.

Jody: 9:50

Because we all just want to be acknowledged. And so this is my take with educators, is when we step in telling them what we need to do and what they need to do and why they need to know the presentation of our children, you're lost out of the gate. Our biggest job Gordon Neufeld is a psychologist who says this so eloquently, he said, You have to collect before you direct. And when you're exhausted and overwhelmed and feeling like nobody has seen your own personal child, it becomes very difficult to have anything left to give to the people who the institutions that are supposed to be serving them. But what becomes so critical in this moment is understanding that that is where our power lies, is when you can acknowledge the people who spend more hours a day with our children than we do. Sometimes. They are our most important and biggest investment. And when I speak about, you know, to systems, you know, when to foster care or to education, I often talk about administration to administrators about your biggest investment is in your people, not in the kids you serve. Your biggest investment is in your people, not in the kids you serve, because the kids will be okay if us big people are okay. The kids are not a problem. And as a child psychologist, I say this all the time. I have parents call me that say oh my god, I'm so worried about my kid. He's a hitter. He's a kangaroo. He's a biter. You know, he's got, he can't concentrate. He's got like, ticks or like, whatever the deal is. They were like, Can you see my kid? I'm really worried like he is just not going to be able to ever leave home. He's like, not functioning. Well. I think he's a psychopathic serial killer. Like I mean, I've heard about, I often say, I'd love to see your baby. And I'd also love to see you. And they say, what, what, why, why me? It's like, it's my kid. That's the problem like, don't do you think I'm the problem. And I always say, You're not the problem I love You're the solution. Because even if I give your kid a beautiful assessment and gold standard treatment, where they haul him into my office, one hour a week, it is a waste of time to do in isolation if I don't include the system, because the system is what is responsible for walking this kid home. And it's often I mean, I keep this quote over my shoulder in my office, and, but it's a quote by a guy named Ram Dass, so he's dead. He's a philosopher, a yogi, and most are like most people, we figure out all of this stuff in this world when we die. But lucky for us, this fella wrote a few things down. And he said this, we are all just here walking each other home. We are all just here walking each other home. And when we have been blessed to either serve parent, walk home, aneurotypical kids, or anybody with a mental health issue or who has been marginalized. We are all just here walking each other home. And when we have that gift, that capacity to serve other humans, whether it's the teachers that are holding our babies every day, or our kids in any capacity, that's where passion lives. See, you understand that your purpose is to walk your community home, not just you know, your baby or my baby. But you know that that's really the purpose of this podcast, Debbie, which I think is so amazing about it right is like, how do we gather as a community and remind each other? We're just walking each other home? I got, I got your mama, I got you, Teacher, this is our biggest job. Right? And some days will be the walkie some days will be the Walker.

Debbie Reber: 13:06

Yeah,

Jody: 13:07

I mean, I,

Debbie Reber: 13:08

I just really appreciate this perspective. Clearly, you hear this from parents you hear from and I hear it, there's sometimes this adversarial dynamic that's kind of set up. Because if our kids have been in classrooms where they haven't been respected, or they've been shamed, or they have really struggled, that can be traumatizing for the whole family. And we also know that, you know, I think it's heroic work, especially now during COVID that teachers are really doing and they are so critical to our child's success. So I'm just wondering, what specific thoughts or advice you have for parents in bridging that gap and really creating more of an alignment and connection between parents and teachers?

Jody: 13:53

Oh, my gosh, okay. I love that question. Because it is a universal truth. All right. So I want to tell every, you know, parent that is listening, they're like, I don't know how to do this. Yes, you do. If you know how to get the heart of anybody, you can do this exceptionally well. The people who needed the most are the hardest to get to. So if you have felt like you know, ostracized by a school if you have felt like your supportive community or your even your own family members are like, Oh my gosh, don't bring your kid here because he's too loud or she's too saucy or like whatever the deal is. The root of all this is empathy. And when I can seek first to understand before being understood, Stephen Covey monetizes that. But it's, it's this idea of how do you lean into the people that are going to hold our babies every day now? Now, I'm not going to say this is easy, right? Because I don't condone, support, believe when kids are not treated. Well, I mean, I mean, that's the platform. I'm not okay with that. There's take charge moments, right? It's not if we're gonna have hard conversations. It's how and when I step in first and I open a conversation I at least have like, I just got to tell you, I bet this job isn't easy. I want to know more about what this year has been like for you right here. Here's the three things that allow me to acknowledge when I have to have a hard conversation, right? It's always like, how do I collect? First? How do I sort of open with, here's what I'm thankful for. When I have a teacher and educator, a parent call me who's losing their mind, who's emotionally dysregulated. I mean, when I talk a lot about this in the book, the heart of everything I talk about, comes down to this. It's emotional regulation. When you and I are emotionally regulated, Debbie, we are phenomenal parents. We are phenomenal partners. We are phenomenal leaders when we're emotionally regulated. When we are not when we are emotionally dysregulated, losing our friggin minds. We struggle to be effective parents, effective leaders, effective partners, all of those things. We are at our best when we're emotionally regulated. And we can't do that typically in isolation. In fact, when you bring a baby home from the hospital, how do they let you know what they need? They lose their freaking minds. Yeah, they cry. That's their job. Their job is to get emotionally dysregulated. The job of big people is to walk them home. Again and again. And again. Because you cannot tell somebody how to regulate emotion, you have to show them. And we make this mistake all the time. We tell people to calm down. Relax. Last time your partner said that to you. Oh, Debbie, relax.

Debbie Reber: 16:18

That doesn't happen anymore in my house. Yeah.

Jody: 16:21

Well, someday when it did, and I mean, we don't respond kindly to that, you know, because we don't want to be told how to regulate emotion. Because we don't have the skills in that moment to do it. We need to be shown. And when our babies are infants, we're very good at this right? We do a lot of Okay, okay. Mm hmm. We are showing them how to regulate emotion. Their job is emotionally dysregulated. Our job is to walk them home. And when we are working in community with people to try to get the needs of our children met. So much of this job is exactly the same. How do we collect and build community? How do we acknowledge the hard work of our educators and our foster parents and our community organizations? I'm just so grateful that she gets to come to camp today. I'm just so grateful that you know, you're here. She loves this. I often do this as a parent, I'm often playing matchmaker, often getting the heart of the educator for my baby, you know, like, you know, together we bake this thing. We just thought this will be helpful for you. We know how hard you're working. She was so excited to come today. She told me you did this yesterday in class. I'm so glad you keep on. I mean, how do you keep 16 year olds engaged. Mrs. S, you are crushing life. And I can't remember how many times this year I've sent emails to my kids, teachers, I dropped off wine, I've dropped off, you know various things just to say like I see you. I see. And there's a hockey coach that I love. He says this, I can get a kid to skate through walls for me when I know the name of his dog. Just and that is the most profound statement I've ever heard. I can get a kid to skate through walls for me, when I know the name of his dog. The same principles apply to the educators who are caring for our babies every single day. When you see them, acknowledge them, they will rise

Debbie Reber: 18:08

above it. Yeah, and I also love these reminders to reach out and connect with educators. I often talk about our role as parents is to compassionately educate the people in our lives who may not understand who our kids are, we are in the best position to do that. I feel like we have the most at stake as their parents, but it has to come from a place of compassion or it's not going to be heard. So I love that you're encouraging educators to really see our kids. And the onus is on us as parents to see are the educators and these adults who spend so much time with our kids. There's a quote that I had pulled out about this idea of emotional regulation. You say here's why relationship matters most -- you can teach them strategies, but you cannot teach them how to regulate emotion unless you show them unless you guide them through that process. Here's the other kicker kids can only learn how to regulate when they become dysregulated. Right. So that's where all the learning and growth happens for all of us, right?

Jody: 19:10

Oh my gosh. And and I think that's the part like when you were I have somebody who can walk us home through a hard thing if you've ever been involved in a school, or a relationship with anybody where you're advocating for your kid and you have a leader at the helm a teacher, a principal that says to Debbie, come on in. I want to know everything I need to

know about Asher, can I get your coffee? Right? We are so grateful to Asher as part of our you know how cool that kid is? You know, I really love him. And then you're like, Okay, yeah, right? Because then you're like, I mean when people do that for me, but my kids, I'm like, what, what can I donate? Like, do you need a white board like I'm bringing me trays. I am. I'm all in right? And this we know this to be true. But we have to be reminded of that when we feel like nobody sees us or hears us and we turn it up louder and louder and louder and I don't like it. Kids, right? We know when we don't listen to our kids and they say, Mom, mom, we're like, just a second. I'm on the phone, Mom, Bob. And you're like, Okay, let live said, I need five minutes. And what happens? Do they regulate? No, you turn around and they punch their brother, because they will turn their needs up louder, they'll get more emotionally dysregulated until they get their needs met. And what I really want us to understand is that so many of our resources are tapped that not only are we in the middle of a global pandemic, right, we've had 2020 was hard. I mean, I really hate to say this, but we're going to need to be even braver in 2021 because we've been in a stress response cycle for almost a year. And even when the vaccine cons, even when the numbers start to decrease, we remove the stressor, but we have not removed the stress response. So we're gonna have to be very, very, very gentle with each other for a long time including our babies. Yeah, because everybody's chippy Yeah, what chepe do you say, chippy in New York?

Debbie Reber: 20:59

We do not okay, but I can,

Jody: 21:02

you know, understand so it's like when this is a good example in hockey Kate so like when I'm on the bench and somebody goes out and we're like, we're here to have a good time and some other buddies, defenseman cross checks my defenseman, and they come back to the bench and they say, it's getting chippy out there. Got it. Here's the problem with chippy. We don't say like, oh, let's just go out and love on them. Obviously, they're having a bad day. You're like, which number was it? Don't you hurt? Oh, get it, I'm gonna take his teeth out. Yeah. Here's the issue. When we are faced by a globe who is currently chippy. There is a lot of emotional dysregulation as a globe. Yeah, that very few people have anything left in the tank right now. Yeah. Which is going to require a collective effort, a community effort to remember we're just here walking each other home. My mama, right, we need you the best whether you got a bra on or not doesn't matter. We'll take you. You know, I mean, you don't got us. Yeah, perfect. We just need to show up.

Debbie Reber: 22:05

Yeah. And I totally agree with you. It's something I've been thinking a lot about and have talked to some other guests about this idea of the re entry to quote unquote, normal or back to whatever, is not going to be smooth. I think so many of us were kind of waiting right? Or have been just anticipating this switch going back to the way things were but it is going to be slow and painful, I think to get our nervous systems calm down, to reregulate on a global level. It's such a good reminder.

Jody: 22:38

totally right. Totally. And I think you know that that's the issue is that we desperately want to get back to normal but I don't think normal was good enough. Yeah, like mentally let's make it better. What an opportunity, right to be able to then how to, and this is nobody else's fault. This is nobody else's problem to solve, except yours. except mine. Like the government, the administrators, your boss, all of those things. Let's leave from the bench. Right. Let's lead from the bench. How do we show our kids because they're watching as your Asher's watching my Asher's watching? How do we wave at my neighbors on the way to school every morning? When I'm approached by a homeless man, how do I respond to that guy, you can't tell your kids how to be anti racist, you gotta show them? How we lead from the bench becomes really critical. I think right now.

Debbie Reber: 23:23

Yeah. I want to pivot and just talk about a couple of things in your book that jumped out at me, one of the things you talk about are the way that labels and diagnoses are kind of relied upon in schools to provide context, but that they often dismiss the story. Can you talk about, I mean, there that is really, everyone, especially in the States, the diagnosis is so important, right to get support to get the education plan. But where does that get our kids and our educators in trouble?

Jody: 23:53

Yeah, I love that question. Because I think, you know, there's a necessity to being able to streamline this process, right, like, So, what does it mean, when somebody has ADHD? What does it mean, when somebody is diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder? What does it mean when you know, and I think there's a standard practice, which in my profession, we call it the DSM, or the ICD, which is sort of the Bible of diagnostic labels. And it provides a universal language that we can understand where somebody is coming from, it provides a standard of practice, you know, when we think about a policy or procedure, you know, place when we're going to provide funding, if you're quoted in this way, or if you receive this diagnosis, it's helpful in some ways, I think it's super harmful. However, when we just don't understand what a label means. And we just use that to say, Oh, you know, he's got the ADHD, or he's got the autism, or he's got the thing that means he will not be able to achieve and what it loses I think for so much of us is then just our capacity to see the story right, as I said, you know, like, when you can tell me what level he's on in Pokemon and what his middle name is, I can guarantee That you will have somebody who will be much more engaged in the learning process will be much more engaged. I mean, it's like, whenever you hear people say like, Oh my god, there's so much better with grandma. Because we're, here's the truth, we are so much better with other people's children. You know why? Because we're more regulated. So I can have a lot of other kids. I don't know if you've ever experienced this, Debbie. But like, when, like as a coach, I will have kids come up to me all the time. Coach Jody, what sweetheart? Can I have some water? Yes, baby. Coach God, yeah. Can you tell my skate? Yeah. And then my own personal child, you know who I'm there to frolic with and make memories with will say to me, Hey, Mom, what? Right? Because I have so much skin in the game with my personal kids. And truth be told, the opposite is true. People, your kids should be the worst when they're with you. Because they're getting emotionally dysregulated. And so where they're going to learn that the most is the people who can walk them home or with the people who can walk them home. So

parents often say this to me, particularly when their kids, you know, struggle. Whether we consider them typical or not. When they're like, Oh my gosh, like everybody will say this to me, oh, he's such a sweetheart. Like he just does so well. And you're like, Are you freaking kidding me? And then parents start to doubt themselves. They're like, Why is he so awful with me? Like, it must be me. He needs a different parent. I didn't really like the prop. No, no, no, no, you were doing it beautifully. Because I want his biggest safest place to get emotionally dysregulated to be with the people who spend the most time with them, the more comfortable they get with an EA and educator a support person, they should get more and more emotionally dysregulated. That's normal. Because you will learn how to get regulated by getting dysregulated first, and there's got to be a comfort level, right? It's like when you can hold it together with people like you just know, certain people you can't lose your friggin mind with. And then other people, you're like, I don't care if I've got a bra on and like I'm going to, you know, you're going to be able to handle those things. It's because we know that we can engage in that back and forth. I don't know how to do that. I just did my own TED talk.

Debbie Reber: 27:04

I think you answered it. But I and I like where you went with it. And yeah, that was great. And it's so true. It's so true. And you know, we hear this all the time, right, that we want to be a safe place for our kids biggest feelings. But I like the way that you framed that. And it is an opportunity, right? Every time they become dysregulated. With us, it's an opportunity to, to practice emotional regulation for us and for them.

Jody: 27:29

Totally. Yeah.

Debbie Reber: 27:31

So you have a section in your book, is it ever too late, and you address the challenges of older kids who may have experienced trauma or, you know, had really tricky conduct? The kids who have been labeled bad, which I know many of my listeners are thinking that's my kid. And maybe those kids have risen to the occasion, as you say, so I'm wondering, how do you help an educator like, what does that look like when you're talking to teachers to help them reframe their thinking around these kids who might come into their classroom with bad reps?

Jody: 28:03

Yeah, so you don't start by teaching them? You start by collecting them. And this is going to be exhausting, like I can already hear and see the drop shoulders of people like listening, going, like, What is she even talking about? You want me to be nice to the people that are not nice to my children? Yep, I do. Not for them. But for you. And are there charge moments? Absolutely. Are there things where it's unacceptable, and you need to go, you know, higher in an institution to be able to say, Hey, I, we need to take a look at how you know, this child or my child's being treated? Absolutely. There's moments, there are take charge moments. But what I think we often forget is the necessity to step in the necessity to ask questions first. How is my kid showing up in class? What is the hardest part? I mean, I

often say yes. A lot of questions. My dude. I mean, I know he does, right? When, when the virus first came out, I mean, like multiple conversations about like, okay, so if there's a plane that flies over, and if it fell, like, what if the virus like leaks out the plane and then comes into the ventilation system of the school over the plane that went over my like, is it possible that we could get so I might open with like, so how's the questions been going? from Azure? It's got a lot of me. I hear them say like, Oh, yeah, yeah. Yeah. And I bet sometimes it's exhausting. Well, yes. And, and then that's a common ground, right? And I'm like, I bet it is. I mean, I gotta tell you as his mom, I am so grateful that you get to answer some of those questions someday, some of these days because I'm pretty tired some days. I bet you get that way too. And here's what I got to tell you about him. You know, this, this anxiety drives him pretty solid. And he's, he's quite concerned, I'm gonna die. He's quite concerned, his dad's gonna die. And that kind of consumes his thoughts. And I'm wondering a little bit about like, do you have any questions about that? Is there any way I can help in that way, right. And I'm still going to get there, but I really want to be able to just like Align in some way, just to acknowledge the fact that I mean, I bet my bet my kids are exhausting. I bet it doesn't make them any less great doesn't mean that I love them any less. It means like, I want to acknowledge the fact that, here's the story. Here's how we got here. And I mean, he was just so grateful last week, you know, he came home, and he told me about this game that he got to be the leader on and I don't know if you know this, but like, he came home with a smile on his face. And I haven't seen that for many years. Right? Then just like you and me, you know, when people give us a compliment, we want to make out with them, or at least me. And then the same response happens, right? And the next day when Asher walks into school, they see him a little bit differently. It's like when I tell the story about like a bus tour, I often I think I told the story in the book, but when, like I say, to a bus driver, for example, he's going to pick up a kid who's been kicked out of six different schools before it gets to this guy, right? And I'm like, okay, I need to talk to you for a little bit. Okay, this guy's eight. And I hear he can like shoot a spitball, like three football fields. That's why. And I need to tell you that, you know, he's been kicked out of three different schools. And so you can imagine this conversation goes one in two ways. We could be like, okay, so we got to be ready for him. Okay, you understand? I want a police officer waiting for the bus if he so much as looks sideways. You give him a he's on a three strike rule. We are going to get this. Okay, you can imagine Stan's fired up. Kid comes in. He's got his hoodie up. That's a rule. You can't have your hoodie up. So the first interaction that Stan has with this kid is Hey, hody down. Okay, you can imagine, right? He's already fired up. When I say this, this guy Stan, he's been in three different foster homes in two years. He's got an anxiety disorder. And he's experienced physical abuse on multiple occasions by two different foster parents. And he said any scared and I don't think he's had a male figure in his life who he could respect. I just wanted to give you that heads up. When he steps on the bus tomorrow, can you, I mean, Stan, you've been doing this with us for 25 years, but I just here's what I'd love. I'd love to get. I'd love to keep this kid here till June. Do you think you can help me with that? Stan, you understand is a grandfather. He's got six grandkids of his own. And he said, What do you mean, this guy's never had a dad? No, sir. And I mean, I don't expect you to be one, Stan. But I also tell you this. He's a huge fan of the Steelers. And I know you are too. I just wanted you to know, to tell you that because he often wears that Steelers hoodie. And he keeps his hoodie up around his ears all day long. Because he's, he's, he's pissed off at the world. He's like, I bet he is. That's what Stan says. Yeah. So the next day he picks this kid up, he's got a Steelers hoodie up. He's mad at the world. And said, Stan says the first thing out of his mouth is Oh, yeah. Did you see the game last night? Um, Steelers, I'm telling you, they're making a

comeback. So then what happens to this kid? First of all, he doesn't trust it. He's looking like he's drunk. And then he's like, right, because that's not his expectation, right. But when you are acknowledged, you will rise and this kid might still push it. But now Stan's got enough in the tank to know why. So we can sit with them. So it's this capacity of building an understanding of the people who serve kids with the most difficult stories, so that it takes a village because our staff is going to get exhausted, Stan is going to get tired when we have kids that continually get emotionally dysregulated and push the boundaries. You it is not we make a huge mistake, right? I'm putting that on the responsibility of one person, one EA, one support person, one, whatever, that they think that they could then build a village, I've created a training program, actually, for mental health professionals in K to 12 education, where it's a module like a 12 module program that we're going to launch in March. And it really is because there's no standard practice for mental health training in K to 12 education, depending on the school division that you ascribe to you get somebody completely different with a different whatever. And if it's not relationship focused, and trauma informed, we will try to behaviorally modify a kid out of their bad choices. And you can't not do that.

Debbie Reber: 34:02

Tony, that story is so powerful. Thank you for sharing that. I mean, it just illustrates so beautifully, what a difference that connection can make. And that it doesn't have to be hard. It does require it. It requires someone to show up to show up for that child to see them beyond their behavior. And, Wow, thank you so much for sharing that. And you do talk a lot about trauma in the book as well, which I think is so important. And there's so much I want to talk with you about but I also want to be mindful of the time. One of the things I just wanted to ask you before we wrap up is you remind teachers to remember their power with the parents of the kids they teach. Can you say more about that?

Jody: 34:46

Yeah. Again, I think it's a little bit like you know, what we talked about earlier was just really that idea of don't ever underestimate a phone call home. And I think sometimes you know, when we have to make a call home as an educator, it's because We want to say okay, so Asher was late today or Okay, I have to tell you what happened on the playground today I heard Asher telling like, and every time still to me when when I see the school's number comes up, I mean, I right? Like, obviously somebody did or somebody has done something bad. I mean, we go into that place, or maybe not we but I do have like, oh god, oh god, what's wrong? And what happens when you get that five second phone call. And I often say this to teachers, you know, I mean, when I've worked with dads who have had their kids apprehended or moms who've had their kids apprehended and some of my favorite things are like, you know, when I have to do these silly supervised visits, I would step into that with like, I can't wait to see your baby light up when they see you. Right? How do we sort of do that matchmaker thing? How do you never ever underestimate your power just to call home that dad that, you know, drops his kids up three blocks from the school, and he's never invested in? He hates everything. He's written letters to your government officials in the schools, a piece of whatever. And what is it like to call him if allowed to the phone and be like, hey, Earl, this is, you know, this is Mrs. s. Oh, I know who you are. I just wanted to tell you. Asher was amazing today. What? And then what else? that nothing. Dude, he is the funniest kid, I just feel really lucky that I get to spend time with your boy. I just wanted you to

know that he does get a sense of humor from you. And you could see this guy, right? He'd be like, what? Yeah, like, ma'am, kind of funny. I bet you are. I just wanted to say thanks. And I wanted to chat to tell you he had a good day, hang up the phone. How does this dad greet his kid? Exactly. So this kid comes up. And he's like, and this kid is like, what is happening? The bus driver was nice. My dad is drunk, like, what is good. And that's exactly how we want kids home, we build a village because there's going to be some days where his dad is exhausted where the teacher is, like, good to unappropriate, right. So we need a village to be able to make up for the fact because as parents, if we get this right 30% of the time, it'll be okay. There's data.

Debbie Reber: 37:12

So, so good. I love that the light up. That's something I consciously practice every day, I'm not picking my kid up from school. At the moment, I'm trying to unlock a store from the outside to peek in between classes, but still love that. And I also just circle back to something you talked about before. Thank you also for the reminder of how to talk to our kids, teachers, I think, you know, I have great relationships with my son's teachers now. And I am still and even hearing what you shared, realizing that I'm sharing information. And I'm not checking in as much as I'd like to. So just asking those questions, so that they feel really seen right before I started sharing what's challenging, or what I'm noticing with my child. So thank you for that. Reminder, I just have one last question. You have a whole section in the book with strategies to keep teachers lit for the whole year, you wrote this book pre COVID. I'm just wondering, what can we as parents do to support our teachers and feeling lit up at a time when they are most likely feeling really burned out?

Jody: 38:21

Yeah. I love that question. And it's, I mean, we can insert, you know, what we do for our teachers are each other, what we do for our, you know, our parent groups, like any of these things apply. And it really is about just not only looking but seeing, right, truly noticing, waving, giving, writing the email, sending a video message, sending a voice message, really being in that place of like, even in this hard time, like I missed your face. I wish we were in the same room. I like slowing down long enough, I think is the number one trick. And then the other deal is, I really want us to make sure we're looking after each other, okay? Because if we're not okay, our kids don't stand a chance. And part of the quickest way for me through that, or to that every single day is to find the joy. As a psychologist, people come to me all the time and they say, you know, I just, I'm just not happy. I just want to be happy. And that is so dumb. Because I really don't know anybody who's happy. It's a stupid thing that we all like sort of aspire to and we think everybody on the Instagram is happy. Nobody's happy? Like Have you ever met anybody who's like, Oh, I am such a great parent. I'm just like, my kids are so lucky. And I just love my body. You know, like these 40 extra pounds that I have on my back end tears. Oh, it's so good. I love my body. And I'm such a good wife like oh, my marriage like I just chose the right partner. You know what I mean? Like so but nobody's happy all the time. But our biggest job every day is to seek the moments of joy. When is the last time you belly laughed with your babies. When is the last time you'd danced in your kitchen. When is the last time that you grabbed you know your partner, even if you co parent with somebody and sent them a text message and said, here's what I love about you.

Or this is amazing about like, do you want to change the trajectory of relationship? You look and you see.

Debbie Reber: 40:18

So good. Thank you. Thank you and listeners, I just have to say that Jodi's book kids these days captures Jodi's energy that she shared with us today, and it's very accessible, you feel like you're sitting down to having a coffee. And that's something I just loved. The writing style was so warm, and relatable. So, listeners, I really encourage you to check this book out. I loved it. I didn't know what to expect when I opened it, especially because it is written for caregivers and parents, but it's primarily for educators, but I got so much out of it. So for listeners who want to engage with you more or learn more about your work, where should they go?

Jody: 40:58

Yeah, we're all over social. I'm on Instagram at Dr. Jody Carrington. And our website is Dr. Jody Carrington calm. And I jump on a live show every morning, Monday to Friday at 7:30am Mountain Standard Time, so it's a little later for you. Yeah, we would just love you part of our community. We call ourselves Reconnection Revolutionaries. And it's the finest group of people I'm sure very similar to your community. So we'd love to have you.

Debbie Reber: 41:22

Thank you. Thank you so much, again for taking time to chat with us today and share all of this and the good stories and just the inspiration. So appreciate it.

Jody: 41:31

Yes. So great to meet you, Debbie. Thank you for having me.