

Multiracial Autistic Neurodiversity Rights Advocate Ashia Ray on Raising Luminaries and "Smashing the Kyriarchy" [Transcript]

Debbie Reber: 0:00

Well, hello, Ashia, welcome to the podcast.

Ashia Ray: 0:03

Hello. It's wonderful to be here. Thank you for inviting me.

Debbie Reber: 0:06

Yeah, I'm really excited to learn more about your work and to share your work with my community because I feel like I get requests all the time for resources to have really important conversations with our kids. And when I discovered books for littles and the work you're doing, I was thrilled. And so I'm really happy that you're joining me today. So I would love it if you could just take a few minutes and just introduce yourself, tell us a little bit about your story and how you came to be doing this work that you're doing? Sure.

Ashia Ray: 0:38

So I run the organization Raising Luminaries, most of which is using children's books as a tool to start talking about difficult conversations with your children, younger children, like zero to eight, because I find that parents get a little bit like tense and frustrated about talking about topics like race, depth, sexuality. And growing up, I grew up in the 80s, and 90s, which was very like, don't talk about things kind of, don't talk about things kind of time. And we also have parents who have been talking about these things, but they can't talk about them outside of their own families. So making these conversations easier, by just you know, you get the book, you open the book, you start reading this book, and then that naturally kind of flows into a conversation, particularly with neurodivergent kids, because a lot of parents who are neurotypical want to like have like a face to face conversation where they're like, this is how we have conversations. And by kind of doing, it's more of like parallel play, you're reading the story together, there's no expectation, no performance when you're reading a story with the child. So you can kind of read these books use declarative language, like I noticed that this person is being picked on because of the color of their skin. And it makes it a lot easier, particularly for parents who have never spoken about race, or these kinds of more taboo topics, I guess, in some circles. The other things that we do are the student ignition society, which is creating resources for caregivers, and educators to talk about these topics beyond books. We have like toolkits about immigration, solidarity, indigenous peoples day, that kind of thing.

Debbie Reber: 2:20

Well, first of all, just in listening to your answer, also, as someone who grew up in the 80s, I think so many of us don't know what we don't know. And so we as parents are educating ourselves and learning. And it's really hard sometimes to know how to start those conversations when it wasn't modeled for us, you know?

Ashia Ray: 2:41

I was really lucky that I had a parent who was willing to talk to me about anything. So it's that paired with the fact that I feel like there's some level of willingness to look at things from an outsider perspective, when you're an autistic person. So you're like, Well, does that tradition actually make any sense? Does it fit in with the values that I hold, as opposed to following tradition, because we see the crowd doing it. So it's a little bit easier for me to talk about things like sex workers with children, talking about things that a lot of people are like. So this is a really good way for me to model that for other people to be like, you know, we did it, my children did not explode. Right? Right. Like they're, they survived, they're very happy and healthy. And we have a really good relationship with our kids, where they're very comfortable asking us anything. And I think that's from these years of opening up these discussions, in terms of not knowing what to talk about. That's kind of the, the trick of what we do is, you know, we meet people where they're at, some people want truck books featuring girls of color, which used to be pretty rare when we started back in 2014. And now we're like, kind of steadily ramping up on that. But while you're there talking about girls and trucks and people of color, then you click through to the rest of the website, and you see like, oh, there's some other things that other parents are talking about with their kids. Not everyone is, especially white families tend to wait until the kids are much, much older or just never talk about race. And there's a little bit of peer pressure and seeing that other people are doing it that kind of pushes them a little bit farther into their discomfort zone. And being like, oh, other other parents are talking about this, and my kids are gonna be left behind.

Debbie Reber: 4:25

Yeah, and I imagine just in the past year, Well, certainly in the past election cycle, but in the past year with the events of the summer, and just more conversations around black lives matter that I bet a lot more families have been coming to you as a resource.

Ashia Ray: 4:43

Yeah, it was. It was funny because people were 2016 talking about neurodiversity, disability, race, immigration, those kinds of things. I kind of had to slip them under the radar. Be like this is a great book and also by the way, they talk about this, this is a good opportunity to Talk about this. Now that we've got a lot more awareness. Not only do we have publishers who are willing to publish about this, because there used to be that a Eliot talks a lot about gatekeeping, where we have people who are writers who want to talk about this, we're well versed experts and talking about discrimination, but they can't get past, you know, the publishing industry, which is very white, the library and education industry, which is also very white. So we've actually had people seeking out that information, which makes it far easier for us to not only get these people published, but also put the right books in front of them, as opposed to it was almost random around 2017. There's a big you can see almost like a huge change in who gets to write the books. Not most people are still. It's mostly still white people talking about people of color, neurotypical people talking about neurodivergent people. But there's a little bit more of a shift of like what we're talking about, as opposed to just white boys going on a hero's journey.

Debbie Reber: 6:00

So you introduced a word to me, you don't know this, but when I was researching, raising luminaries and your work this term of the hierarchy, I'd never seen that word before. I mean, you talk about smashing the hierarchy. Can you define that and explain what that means?

Ashia Ray: 6:18

Yes, I want to give credit to the woman who actually came up with it. Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza I think that's how you pronounce it. She was a theology feminist. And she came up with this term, that is basically the word for intersectionality. You know, like, we have the concept of patriarchy, which is people assigned male at birth and, and cisgender, males tend to have more power, they're presumed to be more competent, and kind of, there's this mandate of heaven, that they should be in charge because they're more capable. Same thing with being neurotypical over neurodivergent being white over a person of color. So what we study in particular, because there are, there are organizations, kind of like mine that talk about you having to talk about her things with kids, but they're very single identity focused. There are people who are like, we have to talk about race with kids, but they're also not talking about, say fat phobia and sexism. So because it kneecaps them, because if we're going to still position one identity as superior to the other, you're kind of shooting yourself in the foot there. Because how are you going to disengage people from the entire concept, that someone can be more deserving of life and rights just because of how they were born or how they identify. And I can see why they want to do a single narrow focus, because it's far easier. But if we don't, if we aren't willing to slow down and really examine the biases, even within anti bias work, all we're doing is basically using other targeted identities as a footstool, to empower, you know, your preferred group that you want to boost. So it is rare to find a book that doesn't isn't problematic in some way, which is always annoying when someone's like, Can you give me all the best books? I'm like, Well, what are we talking about here? I mean, there's a lot of principles, you know, like you look at like, the Black Lives Matters principles, and I think it's Timo Khan, who has like a white supremacy culture like there, there are practices that we just take for granted like oh, this is the way that humans move and progress and learn things but if you look At these principles, they're all transformative. And they focus on like, okay, instead of quantity and covering everything you can cover, like, you can cover just race and children's books or just disability and children's books. But also you just have to be mindful of the other identities, right? And if you feel like okay, who is missing from this, this roster of speakers, or who's missing in this panel? Who are we assuming is like the headliner. So I found that basically, the easiest way to do it is find the person most impacted by these issues, like when we're talking about, say, discrimination in the workplace for an urge virgin people who is more impacted by that it's going to be someone who's probably transgender, like a black person. And it's not like you are either neuro divergent or something else, there's always going to be many people who are at the intersection of these identities who are hidden. It's almost like they don't like it. I hear a lot from particularly white people with a microphone to boost other people being like, well, I just can't find these people. They're definitely out there. But again, there's that gatekeeping issue. And luckily, we do have resources now. I mean, social media is kind of a dumpster fire, but it has given people who can't afford, say, a dome, a domain name for a website, it has given them a boost in getting some visibility, there are still a lot of obstacles. So I think people are just assuming they're not out there, because they can't find them on social media, there's still a lot of obstacles in terms of just general abuse that you face for being someone who is generally considered the other on social media. I left social media last year, because

it's horrifying and awful. But for instance, pass the mic on. I think it's passed in my dog race book. Oh, didn't have Instagram? Yeah, I think so that they have this, you know, this rundown of black indigenous and people of color who are autistic. And like, you could just go down that list and follow them and learn from them. And, you know, pay them if they educate you, and compensate them and boost their voices. And that is a really easy, simple 10 minutes a day kind of action that you don't have to do outside of your home you can do also while you're raising young children.

Debbie Reber: 12:17

That's great. You know, I know that you have a goal of raising neurodivergent leaders. And my audience, as you know, is primarily parents and caregivers, both allistic and neuro divergent, who believe that differences, not a deficit, they believe deeply that our kids are here to do big things in the world. So I'm wondering what you think are the most powerful ways to raise our kids to have that agency and that self knowledge to grow up into these empowered humans who can become these leaders? What can we do when our kids are little?

Ashia Ray: 12:55

Well, first, just to clarify, it's not just raising our division leaders, it's raising, like we're still looking at this from a down to the roots radical concept of leadership. So it's, it's more of a universal design, we're talking about raising leaders, they don't necessarily have to be neuro divergent. But a truly transformative process of raising leaders doesn't exclude nerd divergent and disabled kids from becoming leaders, the way that we presume that, for some reason, they would be there's some really amazing or divergent leaders out there. So I do have, I mean, I break it down, we have resources, where we break it down over it, there's like on the Patreon thing, there's the concept of, first of all, we have to remove the concepts that we're starting out with, in terms of who do we assume to be competent? Who do we assume to be the other? So like, for instance, my kids right now we're homeschooling during the pandemic. But when they were there, the entire curriculum for literature was designed on heroes, and basically, exceptionalism. They call them classic stories. And by classic, we didn't even realize this, they made classic European stories. So how are we whitewashing things and saying, this is the way all things are when we're really saying like, this is the way onera culture defines it. So opening kids up to that is, is fairly easy using books, right? Obviously, you're going to have a harder time finding books published by and about other cultures that are not non white. But that's a good starting point. Just to point out to kids, like what you're told constantly in the media and in school, is not actually the only truth. And it's not the only way of being. It's not a superior way of being. So dismantling those basic foundations of how we're assuming all of humanity is like the boss talked about to create the next revolution, the next social revolution, you have to think about what does it actually mean to be human? And we have to question that. Does being human means. Leaders are someone who give out commands and everyone follows them when it means to be in relationship with each other? Or are there other ways of seeing it in non white cultures? In collectivist cultures, particularly, being a leader means someone who gets down into the ground and lifts everyone else up. So we have to start to question that. And you can't question that until you actually learn from people outside from where you are. There's a few other things that we kind of untangle from there. But that's basically the concept of finding

out who's most impacted by the challenges in society, those people who are multiple marginalized, presumed competence. And there's, I mean, we saw at the Capitol Building, I guess it was a week and a half, two weeks ago now that like, people are very scared of the concept of globalism, the concept of seeing everyone in the world as a brother and a sister, as a part of your family. And not only not only supporting and caring about and treating as human, the people who you're directly related to, are the people within your local vicinity. Which isn't to say that hyper local work is very, very important. We need to, we need to act much more locally than we are much more deeply with the people around us. But that concept of globalism, why is it so scary to so many people in the United States? And what do we need or need to teach our children about it? Same thing with, you know, religion and things like that? Like how can we talk about religion and find our own personal values, even within other religions that we don't really understand? And how can we understand them? Because the more you understand someone, the more you love them. And it's really hard not to love someone if you understand them. So that's just seeking to understand people like why the people that I find the most repugnant, right? Like, why, why do you believe this right, go in with some curiosity as opposed to like the arrogance of assuming that we're, we're right, and we have to fix everyone else, make them more like us.

Debbie Reber: 17:08

So you have so many great resources. First of all, listeners, I will have a bunch of links in the show notes, pages, because they're, you know, you have six kids books for trans day resilience. You have six books for seven unschoolers talking with kids about the gender spectrum, there's just so many great resources on there. And you specifically said, you know, this is for really baby through around age eight. You know, I, I'm a big believer, especially like, I feel like preschool is just such an amazing age for kids, because they recognize difference, but they don't assign value to it. And so I'm just curious to know more about the opportunities for our little kids, and why you really focused on this time of life.

Ashia Ray: 17:56

Honestly, I focused on this time of life, because this is what my kids ages are. Like, as my kids, my kids are six and eight. And as they approach, the older one is now moving into graphic novels, and I can't keep up with them. He's reading one or two books a day. And then the younger one, he's, you know, he's aging out of picture books, he's aging out of books that are short enough that we can kind of sum up an experience and really dig deep into conversations over the course of a couple of hours. So the main focus there, I mean, a lot of people will tell you, they focus on early childhood, because that's when bias sets in. And that's true. It's more of like, I had young children at my disposal. And this seemed like the best tools to use. And like if my goal is to raise kind children, which my goal was back in, like 2014. And that swiftly expanded to courageous because you can't have courage without, you can't have kindness without courage. That's just niceness and niceness is trash. So like, if we're gonna have kind, courageous children, what is the best way to do it. And the best way to raise kind courageous children is to do anti bias, anti oppression work that kind of just naturally flowed in based on the concept of having a kind kid, the leadership is mostly because everyone wants their kids to be leaders in the society.

Debbie Reber: 19:42

I think about the parents who show up to my community, especially I have a Facebook group that's, you know, they may not have even heard the podcast or read my book or kind of get the philosophy behind tilt. And many of them have kids who've been newly diagnosed and they're grappling with labels. They are identifying You know, my child is level one this or high for, you know, functioning labels and all of these things. And so I'm always trying to meet people where they're at and also introduce, actually, you know, functioning labels, you know, the autistic community is very against it. And you know, here are some resources and that kind of thing. I'm just wondering if you have resources or ideas for parents who are listening to this, and they're having some lightbulb moments and realizing Not only do I need to share this stuff with my kids, but I need to do my own work, I need to kind of explore my subconscious biases, or just stuff that I haven't thought about. You mentioned, the social media campaign of sharing the mic, which I think is great, just following lots of people and people of color who are different from who we are, and learning about other perspectives. But do you have other just ideas or thoughts about how parents can start doing the work themselves, so they can show up in a better way for their kids?

Ashia Ray: 21:02

Yeah, so there's a few different ideas behind that. One of the reasons that we focus on books and young children is because within our society, particularly for people who identify as women and mothers, there's this expectation that you do not do anything for yourself, you only do something for the betterment of your children, and you're somehow selfish or evil or something, if you you know, pee with the door closed. So if, if we can't, we can only do so much like make sure to take care of yourself, parents, and like, that just doesn't work. You can shame people, you can give them affirmations. But that's just trash unless you give them the resources to actually do this work on their own. So where people are at is they want to raise leaders, they want to raise kids who are going to be able to survive in a new economy and a new way of being. And there's a lot of fear there because everyone's worried that their kids are going to fall between the cracks. And that expanding wealth gap. So if we get people where they're already looking, they're already looking for resources. And children's books or parent quick resources, like a picture book doesn't take that long to read. So we're meeting people where they're at, and the entire secret, like, honestly, I'm just gonna give away the secret. It's not about the kids. And it's not about the freakin books. That's why it gets a little annoying when people are like, tell me about the perfect book like no, it's not about the books. It's about by educating our kids. we're educating ourselves. Like, if we're going to open a book about how sex workers deserve, deserve dignity, and life, it doesn't matter what we do for a living, we're still humans. And you tell people like all the other kids know about this, all the other kids are talking about sexuality, that you have to talk about it with your kids. And then you just have to cram it right, like have to go on Wikipedia and learn some stuff. And you have to like, just read the process of reading the book together with your kid and discussing it. And that's very relational. The approach right now in our schools is, there's a person with all the information they relay it to the younger people who have less power. But that's not how actual learning really works. So right now, we're homeschooling and my kids mutiny and take over the class, maybe three out of every five days. And that's totally cool. Because it doesn't matter what they want to take over the class and teach me about, we create conversations and we generate information, we're not just making stuff up, we generate questions that we can go seek together. So by the process of doing this work, parents or parents and caregivers are just kind of forced to learn about this work, because

you don't want to raise a bigot, right. I don't think anyone wants to raise a bigot. It's people want to raise kids based on their own personal values and foundationally. As humans, we're social creatures, we want to raise children who can engage with society. And to do that, we need to teach them something and to do that we need to come along with them. And that's also the transformative education involves intergenerational learning and support. So that's just kind of come a little bit naturally, not saying that parents don't have to step a little bit outside of their comfort zone as well. But you know, there are these studies on influence. And if you get someone to sign a petition about like, I care about the climate or whatever, you come back a week later, you say, Would you be willing to put this billboard in your saw in your lawn that says, hey, slow down, when you're driving to keep you know, the streets safe? And people are much, much more likely to say yes to that. If we had planted in their mind to care about other people to care about the climate, even though it's a different issue. So it's going to be very difficult to start to identify yourself as someone who picks up a book about anti-racism. And then the next time you see a march that's happening down your street, or next time you see legislation that's going that you know, needs support, it's gonna be very hard. It's going to be a dissonance for people to be like, no, that's not my problem. So just By doing these little itty bitty things you end up growing. That's the courage element of it right, you end up growing more courageous because a lot of people don't say they see someone getting arrested for Black Lives Matters, protest, and like, I could never do that. I'm not an exceptional hero, human being like that. But it turns out that a lot of the people who started out reading these books are the same people four years down the line, who are putting their bodies in harm's way to protect the most targeted people. And it's not something, it just becomes natural, it becomes a part of who you are.

Debbie Reber: 25:32

So I'm wondering, with raising luminaries, I just have this feeling that you've got big plans, I might be wrong, but it seems like you, this is a movement, it's a revolution. And I'm wondering if there's anything that you're thinking about that's coming up, or that you're hoping to do that you'd be willing to share with us?

Ashia Ray: 25:49

Sure. What I'd like to do is I go over my, my goals every week, and I like to keep my primary goal, crashing the sun into the moon, because that makes everything seem much easier. And I said that correctly, the sun into the moon, in proportion, everything seems so much easier compared to that goal, right? So after that, it's you know, keeping it down to the next 20 or so years raising kinda courageous humans, I don't know what I'm going to do after my kids leave the house, I can figure it out later. But for now, that is the goal. And just like any kind of anti oppression work, you kind of have to keep a little light on your feet, which is hard to say is autistic person. I want to have the next like my entire life everyday planned out for routines for the rest of my life, that's very comforting. But I also know that it's my obligation to be a person of a world. So you have to kind of keep light on your feet, you know, you know, growing up multiracial, and at the intersection of a bunch of identities that make it kind of difficult to navigate the world. I've always felt strongly that we should build a better society that doesn't just drop people off a cliff. So how do we need to get there? What do I have at my disposal, you know, when you're a young parent with a two and a four year old, the only thing you have at your disposal is like a couple of cloth diapers and two screaming children.

And it's really easy to be like I can't, I can't do any more. And that's where education comes into play, where you see like, oh, they're also black mothers, like black single mothers who are doing this. And it would be very easy for me to opt out as a person with a partner. So we actually do have to do or like we have to take the resources, I have a two year old and a four year old who I can screen books, and I can really analyze what engages kids. And then I can share that with the world. And I can use that platform to boost other people who don't who aren't boosted. So it's just you know, if you're it could have been something else. It could have been gardening, it could have been cooking shows, it doesn't really matter what it is, as long as your goal is to I guess crush the sun into the moon or raise kind and courageous children long term. Is there and every decision you make along that way aligns with that?

Debbie Reber: 28:01

Yeah, so good. So how can we at Tilt Parenting help that? There'll be a lot of listeners for this episode. Certainly, I'm going to direct people to your resources, but how can we support the work that you're doing?

Ashia Ray: 28:15

So what I really love is to start questioning some of the assumptions that we go into. And obviously, you know, like you said, you have to meet people where they're questioning like, why do we need to use euphemisms when we're talking about neurodivergent? People? Like why are people still using special needs differently wired that still others differently implies that there's a base and of regular humans, and then there's the different ones. So let's start questioning that, like, as far as I can tell, almost the entire at least I don't know, the more radical progressive side of the nerd diversion community prefers neurodivergent. So why are we still using words that kind of tap dance around that? Why are we not using the word disabled, it's not a dirty word. Because disabled means society through the social model of disability. Disabled means that just society is not designed for you. Right? I have a neurotypical kid. And some of our routines are not designed for him. Right. So within our household, there is no dis visibility, if we kind of design it the right way. We can also start questioning like when we look at that, the study of the intersection between our diversity and other targeted identities. Tony Atwood, I think I have very strong feelings about why is it okay to examine autistic girls through the lens of the other and use all these very, very sexist presumptions and stereotypes, but we would, I like to think that most of your feminist listeners would be up in arms if he talked about, you know, typical women that way. We have to start asking what are the foundational presumptions that men like Tony Atwood are making about women and for women, that just might be true. Something he grew up with, but isn't true for all of humanity. And then primarily, we need to start not just reading about the compensating autistic people of color and targeted like mildly disabled people of color. Sorry. Yeah. And ultimately disabled neurodivergent people so listening to their own voices, people first voices. So in terms of like, it was an artistic typing on Facebook who has, I'll send you the link so you can put in the show notes, but they have a list of black indigenous people of color, who are autistic to follow. I don't agree with all of them, like some of them, like, you know, we don't we don't all have the same foundational values, but I can see the humanity in them. And if the more people it's just like, the more books you read, the easier it is to tell what's nonsense, right? The more people you start to be like, Okay, what is your personal experience? Now? What are your weird theories? But what is your personal

experience? It's a lot easier to see like, Oh, what is what actually is the common link that ties autistic people together? Not from like an Asperger's supremacy thing and functional label but like what is like what ideas? Do we have that separate non speaking autistics from speaking autistics? And how can we read more non speaking autistics so that we can be like, Oh, wait, we actually have everything in common except for the speaking part, right? We just communicate differently. So definitely following things like the autistic well, black hashtag, which is it's strange how much the autism community is still controlled, and the loudest in the white male sphere, the pursuit of the cisgender ones. Karima Trebek, coined autistic well, black, she runs the blog intersected. She is a black multiple a disabled woman neurodivergent who raises a black autistic son. And she's and they're Muslim. And like, there's so many intersections and she's able to tie together the the challenges in the history of growing up, and then raising a son in a way that say, like, me as a as an Asian, as an Asian parent who lives with so much more many more privileges, like I don't have to think about I don't even know to tell you about it. Why don't we start boosting that and start supporting people who are multiple targeted like that right? Following the autistic women and non binary network, which is a very intentional, again, it's a slow moving organization, because it's very intentional about the intersection of indigeneity people of color, black autistics and, and of all genders, right, or targeted genders. And then, you know, going to your local neurodiversity library, which, so we Wiley mitski, is an autistic mom with an autistic kid, she developed the nerve diversity movement, they're popping up everywhere, right, the neurodiversity library movement. So there's little micro libraries, you might be able to find or if you have like, an autistic community, you could start one. And we have the resources out there, we have the books that you could include in, you know, we have these little free libraries, why not? See who's running your local one and see how you can support them. Because I don't know if this is surprised. But it is very hard to go out into the world and speak to people. If you're very divergent, be like I have this library. So like, hey, let's see people come help. Talk about the weather, make small talk with people so we can make our connections. And then just, you know, try and try and just keep focusing and the most key point is when someone says something that really just gives you that sense of fragility like that like, which up which always feels like righteous anger at first whenever you start feeling Oh, that's not me or like, Oh, that's not me or I don't mean it like that, or like I do that, but, but there's a good reason for it or like, how dare they just sit with it, don't email them. Don't like, Don't scream at them on the internet, don't hunt down our personal Facebook profiles and like private messages that is so creepy. Just sit with it for a little bit, talk with a friend, and then come back and be like, Okay, what did I learn from this, and sometimes, you know, people just say stuff that is just actively not aligned with your values. But those profoundly uncomfortable places are really good places to go into, I tried to go there, you know, consistently. You know, you have to come up with a balance. Do you try and seek out people that you disagree with? Because it's not the people that you completely agree with, that you're going to learn from.

Debbie Reber: 36:08

So good. And yes, such a good reminder to lean into that discomfort. And I mean, our bodies give us information all the time. So when we get that, that hit that feeling that's a sign to pay attention, and there's something worth exploring here, right?

Ashia Ray: 36:25

Yeah, there's, there's it's like, like a vaccination, right? There's pain but it's a good like, you're like, Oh, this is a good thing. Like, this is my body learning. This is my brain learning how to deal with pain. And you know, if you to get a little bit Buddhist about it, like we're discussing with their kids, like there's pain and their suffering, and those two do not have to be intertwined, like you can be profoundly uncomfortable and feel the pain, watching George Floyd being murdered and you can still learn from that and you can you can send that back out into the world in the form of action, like mobilize to action instead of just wallowing in the pain and feeling bad. And that's that that is a directive for people who are not black By the way, black people can process that wherever they are wherever they need to. But it's important that we don't appropriate that pain in I see that a lot for like, you know, the autism or your parents who are like leech animating their kids and supporting Autism Speaks like you have to not appropriate your children and instead of like, instead of outing them into the world, and talking about them and kind of profiting, not profiting financially, but profiting socially, by having a child with a targeted identity. Instead of appropriating their challenges be like okay, what can I do to be an accomplice for you, right, give them as much agency as possible early on. And also don't just assume that they're incompetent, and they're going to if they're incompetent, now, they're going to be incompetent later, like, there's this assumption that neurotypical kids will grow like, just because they eat with their hands now, doesn't mean they'll eat with their hands when they're 20. But we don't make the same assumptions about autistic and our diversion and disabled kids, which is very bizarre.

Debbie Reber: 38:07

Yeah, no, that's great. Thank you so much for all of that. So much food for thought. listeners, the website for Asia's raising luminaries, his books for little stock calm. And where else can listeners connect with you? I know you said you're off social media. So being completely off is extreme.

Ashia Ray: 38:28

I am on Patreon. Yeah, so I'm on there. That's where it is nice. Because I do all this work for free. And I'm trying to support my family. But then I'm trying not to be complicit in social media, even though it would be a nice way to get people to see when I post new things. That's also we have enough people who stay on social media just to follow us and I don't want to be complicit in that. So Patreon. This year, as my kids aged out of books for littles and we've explored different things, we're always making up new inventions and things. Well, this year, we'll be exploring newsletters, maybe a podcast, and a ridiculous cooking show. I don't know that all the way above. The point I want to make is this doesn't have to be limited to just books. And I consider it personally. It's just unethical to write about, say board books if you don't have a toddler to give you personal advice on whether or not this is actually for toddlers. So long term, it's going to be unethical for me to write about books. I can't be like, Oh yes, I highly endorse this picture book if I don't have a child who the picture book is written for, to be like, something's a little bit off. So we're exploring all kinds of things this year, and that's going to be something that I keep people updated over on Patreon. Awesome.

Debbie Reber: 39:48

Well, so listeners, please check out the show notes page. I will have links. There's so many wonderful resources on Asia's website. So many booklets I kind of got lost exploring them, ah, it must be a lot of work to curate these lists and do all the research you do. I have links for the Patreon as well because that's another way to financially support the work that he is doing. And I just want to say thank you so much for this conversation. I am really grateful that you took the time and kind of walked us through all this and just for the work that you're doing in the world. Thank you so much.

Ashia Ray: 40:21

Thank you.