

Episode 14. Peaceful Co-Parenting After Divorce

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parent, child, kids, deana, dad, divorce, people, home, year, feel, dentist, person, unkind word, tricky, marysville, mom, hard, partner, lived, marriage

SPEAKERS

Deana Thayer, Future Focused Parenting, Kira Dorrian

- K** Kira Dorrian 00:04
What happens when two parent coaches, one a Christian and the other an agnostic Jew, sit down to talk about parenting?
- D** Deana Thayer 00:10
I'm Deana Thayer,
- K** Kira Dorrian 00:11
and I'm Kira Dorrian.
- D** Deana Thayer 00:12
Welcome to Raising Adults, a podcast about Future Focused Parenting.
- K** Kira Dorrian 00:18
Okay, so today, our topic for this episode is peaceful co-parenting. So really we're talking to our listeners who are maybe in the middle of a divorce or contemplating a divorce or

possibly in a blended family, and maybe a result of a divorce or not. And so what it's like to parent with your former partner in a way that's good for the kids, in a way that's good for you, and that possibly is a way that's good for the new step parent that's in the relationship. There's a lot of stuff in there. So we're gonna start with our whys, I don't really have a ton to say on this topic. I am currently in my first marriage. So I'm not having to deal with co-parenting but what I will say before I hand over to Deana, because I am going to let her do the bulk of the talking today, is that I am the child of peaceful co-parents. So my parents divorced when I was 12 well they separated when I was 12, divorced when I was 13. And did a miraculous job of co-parenting. And I look back on that now and I think how, how hard that must have been because there was hurt there between them. And yet they, they really never let that show and they didn't when they were married either. I mean, the divorce was kind of a surprise because they never fought so it kind of shocked me a little bit. So I guess they must have just kept doing whatever they were doing before, but they did an amazing job of working as a team. We still had family meetings. We still went for dinner together. When a milestone happened for me at school, they both were there and they both took me out and celebrated. When I came home from college, they both picked me up at the airport. And they became, I think, ultimately friends. And as I've shared in past episodes, my dad ended up caring for my mom when she got sick until she died. So whatever, however that unfolded for them, I'll probably never really know what that was like for them. But for me, I never really lost my sense of family. I definitely felt like I had two parents, they were both involved. And, you know, I may have lived in two different homes and that had its parts that were hard, but the feeling of family never shifted for me. And that was pretty awesome. So and I have seen you, Deana, do this so beautifully with your former spouse. And so I think our listeners who may be dealing with this or thinking about this are going to really benefit from hearing how you guys handled that because I think your kids are super well adjusted, and, and really saw exactly what I experienced modeled for them. And so I'm dying to hear all the things you have to say. Go ahead. Tell us your why and your how.

D

Deana Thayer 03:02

Oh yes, well, the why was pretty easy. Their names are Cienna and Marc. And for me this was just about keeping co-parenting about parenting. So what happened...oh, and I should say, just upfront disclaimer, I actually called my ex and made sure this was okay with him that I talked about. Hey, can I talk about how we navigate this? I think we do a pretty great job so you don't have to be nervous. I'm not gonna say anything terrible, but I, I wanted it to be okay with him because I'm talking about strategies that we use, not me and my current husband, so or not as much anyway. He's definitely there but it's a little more peripheral for him - that impact - so anyway, he is a-okay with me talking about that. I just want to say that. And so my reasons were Cienna and Marc. They are the why.

Co-parenting is when the relationship moves from being a partnership to just being about parenting, which means it's about the kids. It has to quit being about whatever happened between the two of you, and it has to start becoming about the kids. I want to go on on record and say yes, easier said than done, especially if there was a contentious divorce, or if there's a lot of hurt, or if the marriage really imploded in some fantastic spectacular way, that isn't necessarily an overnight proposition. And to be fair, it wasn't even for my ex and myself, it took us time to get where we are now. But one thing we did well, right from the start, was keeping it about the kids. And if we had to talk offline about something between us then we did that, but not in front of them... or as much as possible. So I want to start with foundational cardinal rule one, if you can't do anything else that I suggest today, if it's truly impractical, or distance prevents it because sometimes once a couple isn't together, they don't even live in the same state. Or say there's just a lot of animosity and some of these things aren't going to be practical, then I would say if you take nothing else away, take this and that is the rule number one is you don't ever say anything negative about the other biological parent in front of your children. It's just absolutely detrimental for a few reasons. And I, but, there's two that I want to really mention. One is how ouchie for a kid because you are insulting half of them. That is, they are half you and half your former partner, and you've just insulted something that makes up half of their identity. And so then they're thinking, well, I must not be that great, because this person who made me your saying is terrible. So that's really detrimental to the kids. But the other thing is a lot of parents do this unwittingly, unwittingly or on purpose, thinking it will endear the child to them. If I can just show them how rotten the other person is, they'll like me, they'll prefer me, they'll rather come to my house for visitation... does the exact opposite. They will resent you for doing that. And they will run to the other parent and become more fiercely loyal to them. And you'll lose a really special opportunity to have them maybe confide in you later if things are rough. I always wanted my home to be just safe for all of it. But I have to keep myself under wraps. My kids can be frustrated, and I don't even mind. I've even told them in our house we don't have secrets. If you have a frustrating time while you're with me, feel free to go talk to your dad about it. We don't want to create this environment like no, don't tell your dad that that happened while you were here. I just, I can't emphasize this enough. This is the biggest one. And so like I said, there's going to be other things I'm going to talk about and some just practical ideas. But please, if there's anything you can do, just don't slam the other parent.

K

Kira Dorrian 06:39

How did you do that when you really wanted to slam the other parent? Well, no matter what, you know, you and your former spouse have really come to a great place and, and but when there's hurt, you know, like it doesn't even matter who's right and who's wrong. There's gonna be times where you just want to like punch someone in the face and so how

did you do that in those moments, especially when possibly your children were defending the action more? I mean, I just can't even imagine how tricky that is.

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Deana Thayer 07:09

Let's admit I didn't do it perfectly, okay? So, and I don't think my ex would argue that he has either. We've both slipped up, like, drop the occasional, like, insults of the other. The, the key there is I did do my best to circle back around with my kids and say, you know what, that is wrong. That is not okay. That's your dad. You absolutely have the right to continue to love him, be close to him. And what happened between he and I, that's really just, I don't even need to be talking about that around you. And that was not okay. I mean, unapologetically saying what I did was not okay, like, just don't sugarcoat it, "oh, but I was really mad." I've gotten better at just saying, oh, way not fine. I am sorry, will you forgive me? So I want to be upfront. It's not like I've never said an unkind word about my ex. Please, I'm not an unrealistic, I'm not an angel in that area. And he even knows that. I mean, I've been, I've ended up having to circle back around with him and say, oh, my goodness, I said this in front of the kids, and you're probably going to hear about it. And I just want you to know I'm sorry, that was not okay. So we've even talked to each other when we've had slip ups like this. So that's the first thing is, I don't want to give the illusion that I've done that...

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Kira Dorrian 08:18

But on the whole. You on the whole had it in your head to avoid it.

D

Deana Thayer 08:22

Yes. And it's my biggest thing. And I'm also very careful about that with my stepchildren. I do not say an unkind word about their biological mom. That's their mom. I'm not mom. That's mom. So that's just a hard line for me. Does it mean I've never crossed it? No, but it means I always come back. It's like coming back to your why in parenting. I always come back to remembering that's not good for the kids. Remember, that's not good for the kids. So that's number one. I didn't do it perfectly, but really to answer your question, I vented elsewhere. And I made sure my kids weren't around and that I had a good support system. And there, there is an appropriate place for verbal venting. I'm kind of a verbal processor anyway, I have to talk things through. And so I never want it to just become a slam fest. But I did have trusted friends that I knew I could call. I did know that I could talk to trusted advisors or mentors. People who are older than me who were further down the road were another really good resource for me. So I have some friends who are in blended families, but are way further down, like they're in year 30 of their second marriage. And those were

great resources to, to be able to look back and go yeah, at the beginning that was hard for me too, that made me feel like I'm not nuts. I'm just normal, that this is still really hard and fresh and gross. And now it's so rare. I mean, it's like a minor, it's like the difference between a minor irritation and a gaping wound. So it doesn't mean that he and I won't sometimes disagree on something or feel that little familiar friction rise up, but it's so small by comparison to what we were dealing with in the beginning. We've now been fully divorced for eight years, or rather for 10 years and apart for 12. So I mean, we had time. So I want to encourage people too, if you're in the newer part, don't expect it to be all unicorns and rainbows right away. But I would say make sure there's some other people in your corner that you can talk to, because airing that out in front of the kids is no good. So that's the rule number one. But there are a couple practical things. And you actually mentioned one of them. So I'm so glad you did. And that is when there's events whenever possible, don't make this a battleground for your kids. So one of the things I would say is if you have the bandwidth for it, and that works for your relationship, when you can, sit together. And the reason for that is then when they come off the court if it's a sporting event, or down from the risers if it's a choir concert, they aren't having to look and choose who to go to first. That is stressful for them and they're going to automatically be thinking, whoever I go to first I've just hurt the other parent because they're gonna notice I walked over to him, didn't come to her or whatever. And I just whenever possible, I don't want to make my kids feel like they have to choose.

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Kira Dorrian 11:06

That's so stressful. And can I just say, you may not even know this because obviously I'm, I'm your kids, right? Like I'm your kids. But it not only do you remove that piece, but like I'm gonna get all teary too talking about this but like, you still see your parents together. Does that make sense? Like, because my parents did the same thing, they always sat together. And when I looked up, because I did theater growing up, right? When I looked out in the audience, like my mom and dad, were still there. My family came to see me and they were right there. And so I think that's so contributed to my heart feeling like I still had a family. They may not be together, but they're together for me. So even though I never thought about because I never, they never did that to me, so I never had to pick, so I never thought about that angle. But you saying that made me remember what that was like to see them together.

D

Deana Thayer 11:56

It's huge that that wasn't taken away from you. I think that... see, look that like, still made you emotional all those years later. So it's a big deal. Now I want to say, that isn't possible for everybody, it might just, it's not gonna be good to sit by each other. Or maybe you've

both remarried and it's uncomfortable with step parents in the picture or whatever, but then what I would say is then you have work to do, because now you've made it so your kiddo has to choose. So you have to make sure you're fine with whatever they choose. You can't be sitting there fuming. Oh, they went over there first and so one, one way...and I don't think my kids even do this on purpose but something I've noticed is they've just started going to whoever... they go to the parent first that they're not going home with, because it's like I get to have them all night later. I'm gonna go see this one because they're gonna drive home and not with me. And I don't even know how much of that is conscious like I said, but I've just watched that little pattern develop. If they're, if I've gone to the school concert, but it's my night, they go and talk to their dad afterwards because they're coming home with me. We can process later and debrief. And, and that's it. I've just learned to be great with that - good, they should get to see him because they're not spending the night with him tonight. So that's kind of work you do as the adult to just get okay with that if they walk over there first and don't make it gross.

K

Kira Dorrian 13:10

Do you think as a parent, you can actually suggest it like, hey, you're coming home with me tonight. So why don't you go see your dad first? Like almost giving the permission to not come to you first, so that you at least, even if your co-parent isn't able to do this, you're at least sending the message to your child. It's okay. We're cool.

D

Deana Thayer 13:26

You know, I love that you used the term give permission because it can sound a little bit too parent-y, but it's actually perfect. Kids need to know they have permission to still love both parents, right? They need to feel free to do that. There's this proverb that says when two elephants fight, it's the grass that suffers. And don't make your kids be the grass. So if you guys can be grown up enough to say, hey, I'm going to actually encourage, go, go see the other parent first after this event or I'm going to encourage time with that parent. It is huge in them feeling I have permission to love everybody. I don't have, have to pick a side, they shouldn't have to pick a side. These are their parents. And on that same note, one of our just, and I guess this is almost an unspoken policy. But when my ex or myself calls the other one and says, hey, could I borrow, so to speak, so and so... it's, it's your weekend, but I'd really like to take them to this and here's the date we can do it. We've made it a policy that really unless there's something huge, we say yes to that. We are not going to be like, well, that's my time. Look at the message that sends. Like now your children are a pawn in this kind of yucky game. We don't ever want to do that. So if my ex calls and wants to take the kids to a concert that happens to fall on my weekend. Yes, go. If I say hey, can I take the kids to lunch? Just the way these weekends worked out I haven't seen them in a few

days or whatever. He's like, yes, absolutely. So we have this kind of unspoken rule that we encourage time with that other parent. We say yeah, you enjoy that. And I still, my kids are gonna be 15 on Saturday and the other one is 16 and a half. And I still I did it just today. I say, have a great night with your dad. I tell them to have fun. I don't make it like, begrudgin, I'll see you tomorrow. It's, this is your time; enjoy that. And it seems really silly, but it's a small, another small way of giving permission. Just... you have a great time, you enjoy that time together. So that's a, that's a big thing with events. And my daughter Cienna actually said to me recently, I love that you haven't robbed me of pictures with both of my parents. So when she has an event, we get over ourselves for a minute and we both stand with her in the picture and I hope will continue to do that for graduations, for her wedding. She deserves that. So is it anybody's favorite? No. Let me tell you as the step mom, it's not my favorite when my husband and his ex take a picture with their children. I don't particularly - just being real - like, here's the human part. I don't particularly like seeing them literally framed by my cellphone camera and looking like oh, they're back to being this little happy family. That's kind of hard for me like, seeing them look like a couple again. And like, I have to deal with some feelings about that. But we just had this happen a year ago, when our oldest graduated, he wanted a picture with both his parents, guess what? He should get that. And so I actually took the picture. And I felt like that was a growth moment for me, because it wasn't the easiest. But what did I just say? It wasn't easy for me, right? And again, it's about getting the adults out of the way. This is about the kiddo. And that's a huge thing. He graduated from high school. He's sharing that with his mom and dad. Yeah, that's the big E on the eye chart. And so as the events come, that's my encouragement is if it's friendly enough, sit together, but if not, don't deprive them of pictures together, if that's what they want, and don't make them feel like they have to pick a side.

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Kira Dorrian 16:53

What do you think you do... I mean, again, you and your ex husband, for the most part, get along really well, and have that same goal. What do you think you do if one parent sees that, and the other parent just can't get there?

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Deana Thayer 17:08

Yeah, that's hard. I hope the parent that sees it is you listening. That's what I'm gonna say. Because if you have a faith paradigm, there's literally a verse in the Bible that says, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. But say you don't, even if you, that's not your thing at all, we all know that the only person's behavior you're really responsible for is your own. And so that's when it becomes well, I can see they're not going to join me on this, but I'm still going to do it. I'm still going to be gracious about hey, yes, go ahead.

Spend time with them. You know what? You're coming home with me tonight. Why don't you go say hi to dad after the concert? Spend some time with him first, chat for a minute. So you choose to do those things. And what I will say is, it doesn't always happen. So I don't want to give some kind of guarantee per se, but often living in that way, the other parent does see that and gets on the bus. It might take years, but they realize that's actually more productive and better for the child. And then they might start to emulate that. So you get a chance to kind of be an example even to another adult.

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Kira Dorrian 18:10

Yeah. And I suppose even if that adult never gets on board, your child will see that you always tried. You always try to, to meet the other parent halfway.

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Deana Thayer 18:20

Yeah, that you at least put in that effort. So I think that that one is really huge. Another one is, and we talked a little bit about this when we've discussed boundaries and things like that, but when possible, and as long as it's reasonable. I try to backup the other home. So we, my ex and I don't parent precisely the same way. I don't expect that. But if there is a consequence that needs handed down, or a policy that they've implemented, within reason, I just match it. And that's another way I communicate to my children that even though we aren't married anymore, or say you weren't married, even if, okay, so we aren't together anymore, but we still work somewhat as a team when it comes to parenting. And that they get to see that it's not like, well, I can, I can cope with this for a few days, because in two days, I'm back at dad's and it won't be that way. And as much as possible, we wanted to avoid that where they're kind of, well, I'll just hang in there, because now I'm gonna be at the other house. And it's not, they're not going to do that. It's really interesting when they go to the other house, and it is still like, oh, I see, you guys are actually on the same page about this, that sends a really strong message. But it also... even if they don't like the particular boundary, or whatever it is, that could also send a really big message of care and concern and love, like we love you enough to make sure that this, this issue that cropped up gets dealt with. And so we're going to deal with it in a unifying way across both homes. So that's a way you can really respect the other parent. Now, there might be times where you have to say no, or you just don't even tell them. I mean, that happens. I'm not, I'm not saying everyone is quite as communicative as maybe we are. We're pretty communicative about hey, this happened and this is what I had to enforce, are you willing to do that? That isn't a reality for everyone. But if you're in a position where you can do that, I suggest it. If it's reasonable and where it matches with how you would parent, I just think that's kind. And again, in that parenting on the same page episode, we talked about that unity piece. And being able to give any semblance of

unity after the ultimate in disunity when a marriage breaks apart or when a couplehood breaks apart, it sends a pretty big message to a child.

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Kira Dorrian 20:25

Yeah.

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Deana Thayer 20:28

So I think that's big. There's just so much here to unpack. I feel very challenged to squeeze it all in. But another one that I definitely want to mention is when new parents do come on the scene, how that gets handled, because even though now I'm parenting with a spouse, I have an ex spouse and everyone needs to be considered and now my children technically have four somewhat parental figures and that's really tricky. So one, one thing we've done is made it a policy that biological parents win. So absolutely my husband weighs in, my ex's wife weighs in, and they have a say because they're in the household. But if there's a hard impasse, then my ex and I win. So for things like, a really good example for this is schooling, the education choices. Almost every year we have to revisit private school because it's expensive. Is it going to still be doable? Do we still feel like the the benefit cost ratio is in our favor? All of these things. And certainly at different times, my spouse and my ex spouse have weighed in with different ideas. Maybe we should try this. What about public school? What about a different kind of private school? What about homeschool? And we have homeschooled at various times, but they have a voice in that. But at the end of the day, it's my ex and I who decide where Cienna and Marc go to school. So that would be a really good example. That's a pretty big issue. I think also things like medical care or how you handle that in your home is, that's huge. And some families are a lot more holistic. And we're going to go to a naturopath. And some people are like, I prefer my MD. Well, on that, bio parents have to win. And what they've decided, and maybe what they decided even when they were still together, sometimes has to win. That's just a respect piece. And I'm really blessed. My husband gets that he will weigh in, but he's always like, you guys decide that and he's very respectful in that regard. And I feel very thankful. I know that's not always the case, but I would encourage it. The other thing is that a child who is dealing with co-parents is watching very closely and that's just always a good thing to remember. Even over simple things like when you go to the doctor or the dentist, my ex - bless his heart - has driven to Marysville twice a year because I just want to keep the same dentist and we lived in Marysville when we were married. And for many of you that might mean nothing. But in the Puget Sound region, I'm down more by Seattle. So it's like a serious drive. But he's been able to say, it's only twice a year. And it's the same dentist they've had since the beginning. It was the very first person who ever looked at their little pearly whites. And I just like that consistency, especially for my kids. We've had so much

inconsistency. They've been through a divorce. They've been through moves. They've been through school changes, church changes, new parents on the scene, new siblings on the scene. You know what? If I have the power to keep the dentist the same, I'm gonna do that.

K

Kira Dorrian 23:35

What do you think he would have done? Like, I have a really good friend who's in a co-parenting situation that's just really not as amicable and she is doing the best that she can but she's just coming up against a partner who absolutely would not drive to Marysville. You know what I mean? Like, almost just to, just to make her more upset would not drive to Marysville. So, you know, what do you do with that?

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Deana Thayer 23:59

Yeah, super hard and then, and then it becomes issue by issue, I think. Because if you have a difficult person that you're interacting with, a difficult ex, and an X like that, who might almost just for spite, I just want to make it harder. Yeah, basically or I'm just going to pick a fight wherever I can pick a fight, then it becomes issue by issue. And what I mean by that is maybe then the dentist, you let it go, it's twice a year, but maybe on something more critical - where your kids spend seven hours of the day, maybe the school thing - you're going to choose like, I'm going to give this one a go, this is an issue I'm going to pick and I'm going to choose to stand on it. Or something around your kids' emotional or mental health. I think you said this in a previous episode that we really, this is a lot about advocacy as parents, we are our children's advocate. And so for me, that's kind of a line that, that's where it doesn't get crossed. I have to advocate for Cienna and Marc and what I truly believe to be best for them. So those are the ones where I might be willing to disagree with my ex, I think this is actually best for them. So we'll go there. But with... if you have a more of a stinker partner or ex-partner, then it's going to be really important to choose those. And I really don't like the phrase pick your battles because please, as much as possible I'm for avoiding battles with the spouse, we don't want to create that battleground, that elephants fighting analogy. But it does mean you might have to pick some issues, and that you're gonna have to be ready to go for the long haul. And it might be kind of gross. But it also means you get really wise about going, oh, they're going to pick a fight over every little one. I'm going to let that one, that one, that one, and that one go, and be okay with that. Because really, in the grand scheme, you can find a new dentist. Right? But yeah, that's not easy. And I just want to say to those of you who are in that situation that you have my empathy because I'm, and I understand and I'm aware so I want to say this, I understand that I might be the anomaly. We've been able to get to a good spot. No, no, not everybody can. So these are more tips and tools if you can do it,

and then my encouragement to you is if, if you can't do it as a team, then you do it. You be the bigger person and you do it where you can. Because it's not always pleasant and amicable, like you said, that's just not always the case.

K

Kira Dorrian 26:13

Right? So I have a question.

D

Deana Thayer 26:15

Oh, no way. You don't say?

K

Kira Dorrian 26:18

Shocking, Kira has a question. So I'm curious how you and if you, you must be aware of how your ex husband introduced new partners or people who didn't become new partners, but were you were dating because... I ask because my parents did this very differently. And I would say one way was very successful. And the other way was really not. So I had my mom, my mom dated a lot after my parents got divorced, and I met everyone. And I was 13. So you're still young enough to get attached and you're still young enough to you know, you're not an idiot. You're like, this could be my stepdad. I better get to know him, right. Give him a chance, etc, etc. And then they would leave and it was another loss and, and all of that and my dad did the opposite. I think I met two girlfriends in the entirety of whatever that was eight years that I, or seven years that I was still at home. So, yeah, I'm kind of curious.

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Deana Thayer 27:18

Am I allowed to ask, did you have a preference?

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Kira Dorrian 27:21

Oh, yeah, I preferred my dad's a million times over. Yeah, it was, it was incredibly hard to keep losing people. And, and it was hard on my mom's and my relationship too. I felt a little bit too involved, if that makes sense. In saying that though, I also felt a little disconnected from my dad because there were times where he was dating someone and he would say like, I'm just not ready. I don't know where it's going. And I'm not going to introduce you until I know where it's going. And, and then even though that made sense to me, I felt kind of cut off from... I lived with him so I felt kind of cut off from his life a little bit. It's not like he would go out and I would be at home. You know, he saved that for

when I was with my mom, but yeah, that was kind of tricky. And I will say that neither of my parents remarried in the end. So I never had the step-parent experience, which I think probably ultimately really enabled them to keep co-parenting so well, because I'm, as you said, it must be significantly more challenging when new partners come on in the future.

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Deana Thayer 28:19

Yeah, it definitely adds a layer of complexity to have extra extra grownups in the mix. But I asked you, which you preferred on purpose, and you actually matched my answer, my answer would always be err on the side of not a lot of introducing because it is - and you said this too - see this is what's so great. You're, you're I mean, an adult child now, but the child of this and then I'm the parent of this. And I've never experienced being a child of divorce and so I love hearing your perspective, but and I'm not saying I did this perfectly either. My kids met a few people who did not end up being Scott, right. Okay. So I could have, I could have done that better. But my, my suggestion would always be err on the side of not introducing until you either know it's going to end in marriage or it's at least headed in a really strong direction, even if you're not. I mean, I'm sure some people just aren't even planning to get married, but they know it's going in a really committed direction or because it is interpreted to the child as yet another in a series of losses. Now I'm kind of getting close to this person. Oh, and now they're out of the picture. That is really hard. And when you've got two parents doing it, that's extra tricky. The other layer that we had, that was hard, and again, I have permission to share but is that there were some times where my ex introduced people and it didn't match what our belief system was either. And so I got hard questions from my kids about is what daddy's doing okay? So that was really brutal, because then you go back to rule number one, don't say anything negative. But I also have a job to tell my kids the truth of what we believe as Christians, etc. So it can get really tricky and so that's why I would say overall, just keep that to a minimum unless you really, you know, it's headed somewhere. Because there is a point where it makes sense to make sure that's a fit and how does your child interact with the person? And, and how do, how do they do? Maybe they don't already have kids. That happens too where people get remarried, and one or the other of them has not already been a parent. So you kind of need to see how that looks. But I would save it until things are pretty far along, if that makes sense.

K

Kira Dorrian 30:19

Oh, yeah. My dad, unfortunately, of the two women that I met, one of them I really liked. I liked them both. Actually, I would have been very happy with either one of them. But one of them had kids. And so I was 13. And she had a five year old and a two year old. And I got really attached to the five year old. And I remember, I'll never forget this. I was doing a

play and my dad had told me that they were splitting up. But they already had tickets to come and see my play. And she - bless her - didn't want to let me down and wanted to fulfill that commitment. So she came with her five year old and I knew this was gonna be the last time I was ever going to see them. And this just horrible, tearful goodbye with the five year old. I mean, it was just dreadful. And it's like, it was no one's fault, because I think they were very serious. And, and were, it was an appropriate person to introduce me to. But oh my gosh, it was just, it was terrible.

D

Deana Thayer 31:17

And I didn't even mention that, but you're right. There might also be other people you think might be about to become your siblings, and then they're taken away from you. So just brutal.

K

Kira Dorrian 31:27

Final thoughts?

D

Deana Thayer 31:29

Well, I feel a little bit bad that I didn't come up with some amazing quote for this episode. But here's what I would say. It's a, it's a thought that works for fitness, parenting, whatever, and that is... progress over perfection. And I think it's almost no, nowhere more applicable than here because it might be really baby steps on the way to peaceful co-parenting, but take those baby steps. Celebrate the victories when you make a little bit of progress. It's not about being the perfect ex-spouse overnight. That's probably unrealistic, but progress over perfection. It really makes a difference.

K

Kira Dorrian 32:01

Awesome. Well, I hope you, our listeners, have gotten some helpful ideas from Deana today if you are in the middle of a co-parenting situation, whether it's new or it's been around for a while, maybe it's giving you some new ideas as well. I just want to say, as I always do, that we are super grateful for our listeners. And for those of you that are rating and reviewing the podcast, it really does make an enormous difference. Those five star reviews and ratings and also those of you that are following us on Instagram or Facebook, we are at Raising Adults Podcast so you can find us on there. We post some really good quotes and some also just like helpful things that we find we'll repost. So that's a good spot to follow us as well. And if you have any questions off of this episode, if you want to ask Deana more questions about peaceful co-parenting, you can email

info@futurefocusedparenting.com. Raising Adults is produced by Kira Dorrian and Deana Thayer and recorded in my laundry room. Music by Seattle band Hannalee. Thanks for listening.



Future Focused Parenting 33:06

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