

Episode 48. The Long Letting Go

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SPEAKERS

Deana Thayer, Kira Dorrian, Future Focused Parenting



Future Focused Parenting 00:03

What happens when two parent coaches, one a Christian and the other an agnostic Jew, sit down to talk about parenting? They take their listeners from surviving to thriving. I'm Deana Thayer, and I'm Kira Dorrian. Welcome to Raising Adults, a podcast brought to you by Future Focused Parenting.



Kira Dorrian 00:24

Well, hi everyone, Kira and Deana here. Welcome to Raising Adults podcast. Thank you for joining us today. Today is kind of a cool episode. It's the first time that Deana and I have had a chance to sit down and chat since she dropped her daughter off at college. So we're going to talk about that. And today's whole topic is about this thing that she talks about all the time, that long letting go. And it's kind of interesting timing for an epiphany I had as my kids just had their birthday. So we're just going to talk about what that looks like. What is, what does it mean to be letting go? What are the markers that kind of tell us it's time to shift gears and start handing more things over? And then also, what happens when you let go and they do something you don't agree with? Right, right. And now you have to take that and say, okay, because I've let you go. And I told you that you get to be in charge of that. So it's, it's a, it's a huge topic, and one that I think all parents are navigating and struggling with and trying to get right because we don't want to suffocate our kids. But we also don't want to launch them into something they're not ready for.

D

Deana Thayer 01:29

Yeah, there's a balance there. Yeah. So definitely at the forefront for me right now.

K

Kira Dorrian 01:33

Yeah. Do you want to talk a little bit about what that was like?

D

Deana Thayer 01:36

Sure. Yeah, it actually went really well. She has ended up at my alma mater through some turns of events. And so I really knew I was leaving her in good hands. But that doesn't come without a lot of feelings. Anyway, it's a huge transition. And it was great, though, overall really smooth, we had a really fun time, a great weekend, a really happy goodbye. And it's more like a see you later. So that definitely helps. But what I noticed, and I said this to you even before she went away, is that we had come... and not to say that there hadn't been other times where I thought, I told her it's cold out, maybe you should get a sweater and she did it. But we'd had kind of our first big decision where she'd asked my input and still chosen to do something else. And so I think as I took her last weekend and left her in her dorm, it just really reminded me that now that's going to be happening more. So while that may have been the first time for a bigger issue, it definitely won't be the last. And I was really appreciative to you when I said, hey, could we chat about this on the podcast, that you were really open to it. Yeah, because I think, I think we are all going to have to face that. Our kids ultimately are their own human beings. We have a lot more skin in the game when they're in our house. Yes. But what does that look like, that letting go? And how has the long letting go prepared you for that moment? When this is what I would do... Oh, you chose to do that? Oh, that's yeah, exactly.

K

Kira Dorrian 03:06

And you know what else I'd love for you to talk about? Because you've mentioned it several times, and we've never gotten into it. You've mentioned that your goal is for your kids to have no rules at 16. I'm curious what that really looks like, what does that mean? What does that really look like? So why don't you start with your WHY? I'll talk about my why. And then maybe you can just kind of go chronologically, like, what did this look like with Cienna from tinyhood to now? And what, what were the tools you were using along the way, and especially now this recent event where it's like, okay, this is what I think. Oh, you're gonna do something different? Well, that's, that's your job, you get to choose that.

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Deana Thayer 03:40

So, so my why is somewhat boring in the context of our podcast, because it really was the whole idea of raising an adult. So if I'm moving her toward eventual adulthood that necessitates the long letting go, otherwise, we aren't prepared for it. And I, I do have to say, I think we were pretty well prepared. And I'll admit this, this is vulnerable, but I'm actually doing great. And so the reason that's vulnerable is I'm watching other people who did it just struggle, and they're blubbering in the supermarket or crying over random stuff. I still have to be honest, as far as since the goodbye, and after goodbye, I haven't cried yet. And so there was a little insecurity with that, honestly, like, am I doing something wrong that I'm not super devastated? And I've had to work over these past few days and it's still really fresh. I'm not saying it might not hit me like a tsunami next Thursday, I don't know. But so far, I've had to kind of reframe that and decide that it actually means I've done really well because we were both prepared. And to try to wrap my mind around that is a little bit tricky, but for me, that was the why is I wanted to be able to have that day come and be okay, and to know that she was okay. And so far, it looks like we've done that, but it's very fresh. I'm willing to admit I could dissolve into a bottle. I don't know. But to me so far, it's indicative of a good job on both of our parts, because she was also preparing and starting to try out adulting because of our no rules thing. And I think that so far has, has paid great dividends.

K

Kira Dorrian 05:17

It's awesome. I love that. Yeah, I think my why is similar. Obviously, I'm passionate about raising some adults. And part of how you do that, as you said, is you have to keep giving responsibility and privileges. And, and this is partly why I do the birthday privilege. Yeah, like you get a new chore, you have this new responsibility, but you also get this new privilege that tells me you're growing in your independence and all of that, but I think also on a selfish level, the letting go is important to me, because I never want them, I don't want to be one of those parents that like micro manages their adults, and smothers them. And I have to tell you, and I know this won't shock you. But I think I could easily become that, like, I am a micromanager. I'm super anal and super, like, I like things a certain way. I'm, you know, it's the only child in me, right? Like, this is how you do it. What do you mean to do it that way? That's crazy, you know. So I think that it would be very easy for me to continue to micromanage. And I am very aware of that predisposition toward maybe oops, going that way. And I want, I really want an amazing relationship with my kids, when they're grown. That is so important to me because I had that with my parents, I want to be someone they feel they can talk to, I want to be a constant place of support, I never want them to feel judged. And I have so many friends whose parents, they don't talk to them. Or they feel like they can't share news with them, because they're gonna have to manage their parents' feelings about it. And I just think that I could so easily become that,

that this became, I have to, I have to do this letting go, I have to be aware of when it needs to happen. So that as we move them toward that adulthood, not only are they prepared, and they feel good, and I feel good, but I know that I'm never going to slip into this kind of other role of, of wanting to fix it for them because I love them, or wanting to tell them what to do, because I love them. And you see that everywhere. I mean, that's just a parental thing. I just want to minimize that. So I think that the awareness of the letting go was a lot for them, but also really, for me.

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Deana Thayer 07:20

And here's a wish I have for you because you're doing this great job laying a foundation. But also a wish I have for listeners is that you one day, get to go to parent orientation at college and go, this doesn't apply to me. Because we went to every, I wanted to go to everything that was offered because I recognized I was a newbie, I've never done this before. But I can say that for me, a good two thirds of it was like, oh, well, next time, I'll skip that session. Because so much of it, and I don't know if this is partly a function of where we're at just generationally, or how we parent in this new world with technology, where we really can find our kids all the time and things like that. But so much of the sessions were geared toward how not to helicopter, how not to over parent now that your child is at college. Because I do think it's interesting, I, I would be probably even a year ago really quick to lay that all at the feet of the parent, like you've got to let go, you're being totally overbearing. But you know what some of it is a function of our world, the more I think about it, we have technology available to us, that lets us micromanage in totally new ways that weren't available when I was in college, you can turn on your location and know where your kids, at least where their phone is all the time. Or you can join a parent Facebook group, which I have. But I'm using it to learn and to know when events are. But I'm seeing some questions on there where I'm like, this really is not your area. I've seen questions about, my daughter has a class at this time. And the next one starts in 10 minutes, and it's all the way across campus. Is she gonna be able to walk there in time? And I'm thinking, that's for her to figure out! And then if she can't, she's gonna have to go to her advisor and maybe register for a different class and give herself... I mean, some of the questions. I'm just thinking, oh, I'm so glad I'm a Future Focused Parent. And I want that for all of you listening. Where you do this stuff on the front end. I mean, if you want to know the truth, I don't know what time my daughter's classes are.

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Kira Dorrian 09:14

Well, why should you they're not your classes?

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Deana Thayer 09:16

No. And I don't need to know that. No, it's for her to manage that. And so if you're doing this stuff now, and your people just turned eight, it's going to benefit you so much. That's truly my wish for people is that they end up someday having a weekend like I just had where I was like most of this does not apply. I mean, I will fully admit I was the bad student in the back row on my phone because I was like, I don't need this. Yes. And how great to not need it.

K

Kira Dorrian 09:39

But here's the thing that I think is so interesting about our philosophy, but also like what, what that means about because, okay, what I realized in my big epiphany when my kids turned eight, I had this major epiphany when they turned eight. I think Future Focused Parents, absolutely micromanage on the front end, you actually over parent on the front end. You have to, you have to because you're future focused, and you're laying the groundwork, Deana just made a like, ding, ding. But see this is where it's tricky. If you don't recognize the moments, if you're not keeping your eyes peeled for the moments where that has to shift, now, you're not staying future focused, because you're not thinking about how that micromanaging is gonna play out. But at the beginning, yeah, I was constantly micromanaging. And I think for a micromanager coming out of that role is really hard. So I, it's an interesting thing. It's like the front end, is I want to know what time the classes, I want to know, you know, all that, that way of thinking, I need to be involved, I need to be in their business. And then we hit this point where you start the letting go, because you've laid that foundation so strongly, and I think we kind of hit that point. We were away for the weekend for the kids' eighth birthday. And I suddenly just realized there was this, we're at this place called Great Wolf Lodge. So for people here in Washington, they'll know what that is. For other people. It's like a kid's Vegas.

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Deana Thayer 09:43

Well, luckily, they're all over the country. So some other people might have probably have one nearby. Amazing indoor waterpark, it's glorious.

K

Kira Dorrian 11:15

Oh, right. I mean, it really is wild, you have to like just take a deep breath before you go there. But we love it. But there's this massive inner tube slide. And my husband, you know, just had back surgery, and I have a rib trauma from all my coughing. So neither of us could go on this with them. And they were tall enough to go by themselves, just. Just, and they just turned eight. And to me they're teensy people. And for them to go by themselves,

they have to like drag this inner tube up like four flights of stairs, they disappear. You don't see them for 20 minutes, you don't know, are they crying? Are they injured? Did they get on the ride safely? Until they go down the slide and out they come with a grin on their face. So it was this moment of I can't go with you. I think you're capable. And I have to let you go. Because if I had said no, or tried to micromanage that, what message would they have received from me? I don't trust you. I don't think you're capable of this. Same thing. There's a ropes course there and we had the exact same thing. It's like a four story high ropes course. My kids do rock climb. But my son in particular is a little wary. He's more like me, except he's better than me because he perseveres. And they wanted to go and it was like, okay, well, we aren't gonna be able to come up there and help you. That's okay. And they wobbled. But they got through it. And it's that idea of if I had said, no, I don't think you can do that. Gosh, what message am I sending? But two years ago, I wouldn't have let them go by themselves. So it's, it's so nuanced, right? The long letting go. So you have much more experience with this. I'm at my first real, like, it's time to start handing over. Yeah. So talk a little bit about that. What were the markers for you? And how did you, how did you know you were there? And what choices were you making as you went along?

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Deana Thayer 13:03

Well, and to your point, it is a lot about recognizing it, because you can miss one. And I've missed some and had to be, you know, have to readjust later. And that's less pleasant for sure. It's, I can't remember the book. But there's a book that talks about parenting outside the funnel, that there's this funnel shape. And you should, might have been one of the Growing Kids God's Way books, I'm not sure. But I think it is, it doesn't really matter. But the idea is that the funnel shape is there and you slowly, they're moving up into the wider portions of having more privileges, more freedom. And if you get that backwards, it's really frustrating for them, and for you. If you're having to tighten in things that you've let go too soon. At the same time, though, I think it's frustrating, particularly for them, if you don't let them get to the wide part when they should. So I love that you mentioned trying to be aware of where those spots were because that's tricky. And I don't want to say that it's one size fits all. I think there's maybe some things you can watch for. One being frustration on the part of the child when you intervene. So from, even from toddlerhood, you hear like, I do it myself, you know, me do it! Bad grammar, but so true. And paying attention to that. Okay, this is something I need to back off on. Oh, well, she's really slow with those shoes. So maybe we need to move our getting ready to leave the house back by five minutes so that there's room for that. So that's one way is sometimes they do just verbally tell you, I want to try this. But you also might not get words, it might just be in the presence of frustration. Like I noticed, with my youngest, if I tried to intervene too much on homework time, even in early grade school, he would kind of shut down and want to go by

himself to do it or whatever. And that was my clue. Like, okay, back off. I'm gonna have to trust some of this. Now, I do think in the early years, like you said, there's a lot of micromanagement in the beginning to lay the strong foundation so it still was important to me to ask, do you have homework? And to follow up when it was done, and maybe even look it over, but he was letting me know, you know what, I don't want you over my shoulder while I'm doing it. Whereas some kids maybe want that extra support a little bit longer. He was over it by like second grade, no, I'll do it myself, I'm happy to check back in with you and let you be my accountability. I don't want the help. So I think we watch for things like frustration, and it might not come out verbally, it could be moving, or he would over erase until there was a hole in the paper if I was hovering sometimes. And so it was like, this is an action that's showing me, I don't like this. So pay attention to those kinds of cues. So I think child frustration is one. Of course, if they verbally tell you, that's another. But a third one that I think is a really important and we sometimes miss it is our own over managing. You've got so many things in your mind. And now you're trying to remember to turn in the field trip slip. And did they do this, and now you're owning things that you shouldn't own, they should actually be on your child's plate. And that one gets missed, because we just think well, of course, this is what I'm supposed to be doing. I'm the parent. But looking through your list and all the things that are swimming in your mind and going, okay, which ones of these really should I have off my plate or not be thinking about? We've got to pay attention to that. And I think interestingly, we might be even more prone to pay attention to our kids than ourselves and think, wow, I've got things on my mental to do list that do not need to be there. There's that analogy of having monkeys on your back. And you've got to figure out which monkeys you can give to your kid, because you can hand them more and more over time. And we sometimes forget to hand off. And we're not paying attention to our own cue that we're paying attention even, even mentally, to things we don't need to. Because that's where it would happen for me is I would notice oh, I keep, I keep thinking of that deadline. I need to ask them about that deadline. Instead of you know what, at least once or twice - this is a very healthy exercise. I'm going to give you a practical thing right now. Let the deadline pass. And let what happens happen, let your kid either pleasantly surprise you because they got the thing turned in or let it go by and let them wear the consequences of that. And I think sometimes we're trying to manage things and preventing, instead of coming, sometimes we will need to come on the back end and go wow, that didn't go great. Right? How can we do better? So those are, those are just three things off the top of mind, I think are good to pay attention to. Maybe you have others.

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Kira Dorrian 17:12

Yeah, no, I love, I love how you broke that down. I think that's spot on. And like I said, you know, we, we are really at the beginning stages of this like, and I'm seeing it. I don't know

if this is just a year of independence or my kids in particular. But even such a small thing. But the other day, I always pour the drinks. And I know Montessori kids are pouring drinks from like....

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Deana Thayer 17:34

Four, three and a half.

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Kira Dorrian 17:36

Yeah, they like tottle over, they just started walking and they're like, you know,

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Deana Thayer 17:39

Cutting cucumbers with sharp knives.

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Kira Dorrian 17:40

I could not, I have the greatest admiration for Montessori. Because like, that's like my worst nightmare. But anyway, I digress. Um, yeah, the other day Rhiannon just like went to the fridge, pulled out the the thing of sparkling water, poured herself a glass, tucked it away, put it back, closed the fridge. And I was like, oh, I guess we're ready for you to pour your own drink since you're already doing it. Yeah, it was, it was kind of amazing. But things like that, I think I'm, I'm maybe because I'm selfish. But I am very focused on the what can I hand over? We are four human beings living in a home together. It is not my responsibility to do everything at all. So even little things like I've always been the mean mom in the cul de sac, because I won't go get my kids a glass of water if they're thirsty. Can I have a glass of water? Yeah, you can. You know where the cups are? Yeah. You know how to get it from the sink? You know, it's like, I'm not gonna go do that for you. And I think a lot of moms kind of side glance you like, oh, you're being mean or selfish. And I am. I actually don't want to go and leave the conversation. But I also think...

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Deana Thayer 18:45

there's a side benefit.

K

Kira Dorrian 18:46

Yeah. In like, are you capable of doing that yourself? Yes? You should be doing, unless you can articulate to me a fantastic reason, which sometimes they do, right, as to why they

need help, or they want you to do it or whatever it is. No, if you're capable of doing it yourself, you do it yourself. And that I think is something we've always been really good about handing off and same with the, that's one of the beauties of the new chore. Every year. What are you capable of now that I can, I don't have to do any more? I'm handing that over. So talk about the no rules by 16. Like, I want to, just personally want to hear okay, what does that mean? What's it look like? What does it really look like? Like, there must be some...

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Deana Thayer 19:27

Oh yeah, my kids still have responsibilities. I mean, they don't get out of helping around the house or hearing from me, I'm gonna have some opinions about the different things they face. Really my idea with that is that there's no, you may not do dot, dot, dot, because they might really need to try dot, dot, dot to figure out that was a really bad idea. So for instance, they don't have a curfew. Instead, we have a dialogue. We talk together about, what is this activity, how long will it go? What seems like a reasonable time to come home once that's over? What do you have tomorrow that might affect when you need to get to bed? I mean, things like that. So it starts to become a conversation instead of I just say, here's how it goes. So that's one really practical example. But essentially, what it looks like is, is we remove things things like, in order to do this, you have to do this. So... you can't even go to your extracurricular activity till homework's done, no. I let them manage their time. So that's another really practical example. And the reason for that is I actually want my kids to practice decision making, time management, and even higher executive function like planning for their schedule or goal setting, while they're still home. Because they will make mistakes, not because they might, they will. And I would rather them make some of those first, young adulting mistakes under my roof, where there's still support and scaffolding around it to handle it. So they're not making the first oh, I totally fell down on that. While they're often alone with no support. That's what's a big deal to me, is I'd rather you practice some adulting at home.

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Kira Dorrian 21:01

So do you is the dialogue required? So let's say one of them, cuz I remember we did an episode and you talked about something about, they weren't supposed to have friends over of the opposite gender, right? So are rules like that still in place? Or is it, you know, if they come to you and say, hey, I'm gonna do X, Y, or Z, that you always have the option for dialogue? Like, okay, we're gonna dialogue.

D

Deana Thayer 21:23

Okay. Well, I love that you said that, because one of the things you just did is one thing that is still not allowed out of respect, and they do not tell me what they're doing. So they'll, they might say, here's some things I'm thinking about, or my friends are making these plans. Does that work for our family? Do we have anything? So one of the things I've told them is just by virtue of my place in your world, as your parent, you don't just come and announce your plans to me, it's not courteous. And I, I just feel that's not very respectful. So while they still live with me, and when they come home from college, so Cienna knows this, too, we don't just tell me what's going on. You can ask, or you can let me know some of your thoughts, and we can figure it out. Now, here's the thing with that, that means 99.9% of the time, I'd be like, great, do that thing, because it was approached to me in courtesy, right? So how that works, though, is with, say, the opposite gender thing is we then talk about that, okay, I'm having this person over and say they happen to be the opposite gender, and we've had that rule in the past, particularly, the rule was not being in the bedroom with the door shut. And so I might talk to them about okay, well, what are you envisioning? What are you guys planning to do? And where are you planning to be in the house? And this so far hasn't happened. But if they did say, we're planning to be in my bedroom and looking at YouTube videos, and I might say, well, are you planning to have the door shut? And we get to talk about that. And now they've had a long enough time of knowing how that even might look, or what might even be implied by the shut door that they generally won't choose that. I haven't had, I just haven't had that happen, though. So to be fair, I want to say like, that exact thing hasn't happened so far. Every time they've had opposite gender people over, they stay downstairs. But again, Cienna did that after 16. And that was by her own choosing. I asked her, what are your plans? Where will you be? Oh, we're just going to hang out down here. Great.

K

Kira Dorrian 23:15

Well, and some of it is that you've set a tone for courtesy and respect like, no, it's not a rule. But I would hope that you would continue to act in a courteous way in a respectful way, based on what you know, I would prefer in my home.

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Deana Thayer 23:26

Absolutely and well, isn't this in a way all of parenting, is teaching them to be their own internal compass. So what I'm hoping is most of my values have passed on and slowly become theirs. But even for the things where they disagree, we still at least have them. I'm respectful of the fact this is my parents' house, not mine. So I'm willing to do some of the things they prefer.

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Kira Dorrian 23:45

So okay, so then let's talk about when they do something that just happened to you. So she's a big grown up. She's at college, she made a choice. She asked your opinion, and then she...

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Deana Thayer 23:58

...and then did the opposite.

k

Kira Dorrian 24:00

And that's okay, because she's a big college girl. And you've raised her to be an independent thinker. And this is what she independently thought. So what was that like? I have a mini version of, an eight year old version of this, but it's mini. So tell our listeners what that was like, and how did you, how did you handle it?

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Deana Thayer 24:17

So here's what it was like. It was highly unpleasant. The first evening, and thankfully, I mean, she knows this, but the first evening of this decision, I was, I went the whole spectrum. I went from sad to pissed off, to how could this happen? And it was rough. So I want to be real, but I had a lot of feelings about it, because it was kind of the first fork in the road where she still really invited my input and then did the totally other thing,

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Kira Dorrian 24:44

But these are private feelings. Is that right?

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Deana Thayer 24:46

I did not announce these to her. In fact, she told me the one thing holding me back from making the decision I want to make is that I don't want to disappoint you. And I said, you know that's really not a good reason. Yep, that is not a good reason. I wish you would just decide what I wanted, but that's not a good reason. So what I said and what I felt were different in this case, there was some dissonance. But what I conveyed to her was, there's literally nothing you could do that would make me love you any less or jeopardize our relationship. I mean, literally, I have thought down the worst trail, and I'm gonna take the 10 seconds to say this, even if my children ended up being serial killers, I would not quit loving them. I'm going to tell you, I'd be the first call to 911 if they confided in me. I will let

the consequences fall. That's how I parent, but I will go visit them, I'll write them letters, I love them, love them. So this situation was not even close to that. There's no crime involved. Let's be clear. And so I just told her that like, there's nothing you can do, that's gonna change how I feel about you. And wanting to not disappoint me isn't a reason to make a decision that you really feel is right for you. On the inside, of course, I was like, eek. But when she asked, what do you think? What did I tell her? Here's what I would do. Here's why. Here's all the things I think you should think through. Please don't do something hasty. She literally did it that night. So that was hard. Yeah. But how I handled it was, you know what I came around to, two things. One is, how amazing that she still asked for my input. And that's what I don't want to lose. Because if there ever is a really big hard thing, I don't want to risk a young adult child that goes oh, my parents aren't a safe place to talk about that. Right? This is what I'm most scared of. And that's why you have to hold all that in which you and our listeners know, it's hard. It's very hard. So I so admire that. Because you're absolutely right, what you said, is exactly the right thing. And what you felt makes total sense. But sometimes as a parent, you actually can't say what you're thinking and feeling. You have to say what they need to hear to preserve your trust. Absolutely. And what I said wasn't false. So I, I'm not advocating lying, I'm saying that you might have to keep your own feelings somewhere else, I ended up just letting, sharing that with my parents, and my husband. So that, that had to go somewhere else, the feelings couldn't come out on her. But what I told her was all very true, I do believe she should make the decisions that are best for her. That's how I've raised her. That's what I want. That's the ultimate goal. But that, that was the first thing is I went, oh, she still came to me for input. So that's a win. And then the second thing I did in handling it was make a really calculated decision based on timing. At this point, we were one week out from her leaving. And I thought, even if she figures out that I'm upset, we're not going to have a thing, because I'm not wrecking these last few days with her. So that was a calculated choice. She did figure it out. I'm a lot of things... subtle isn't really one of them, especially with emotion, so I'm sure she could tell I wasn't thrilled. And I just, this is what I ended up saying to her. I'm proud of you for making the choice you thought was best, you know it isn't the choice I would have made. So all I'm going to ask from you, is room for me to have my feelings about it, and that I'm not dancing for joy, and that that needs to be okay. And she gave me the space for that. And so it was actually really beautiful.

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Kira Dorrian 27:59

Because there's an enormous amount of trust between the two of you, she trusts that she can come to you and you're not, she's not going to be told what to do, or how to think. She's going to be encouraged to think things through, hear your thoughts, and make her own decision. And then there's trust that even if I make a decision that isn't what you would decide, you're going to love me anyway. And so why wouldn't there be space for

your feelings? Because you've made it clear that those two things are allowed to coexist. And that's I think, what a lot of parents get wrong, and I get this wrong, too. So I just want to like say that, but that somehow your feelings about their choice, and their choice cannot coexist. And that's not true.

D

Deana Thayer 28:41

That's yeah, they don't have to be mutually exclusive. But I did feel it was important to ask for that. Because I also didn't want her to be in my face, oh I'm so relieved and, right. Or, I was like, I'm not ready for that, you know, and that was fair, too. So we both had to have room for that. But it was actually pretty amazing. But on the inside, I was not a fan.

k

Kira Dorrian 28:59

We have this eight year old version of this.

D

Deana Thayer 29:00

Yes, let's hear the eight year old version.

k

Kira Dorrian 29:02

The eight year old version of this. So I'm trying really hard with Rhiannon in particular, for reasons that I won't go into right now, to hand over a lot of independent thinking. I think she often looks to me as the authority figure. And I'm somehow like the compass on right and wrong. And I, like we've talked about she has to have that internal compass and start making decisions and they're not always going to be what I would do, and they're not always going to be the ones that she ends up feeling were the right decision. But that's how she's gonna, she's not gonna figure it out from me, being that authority figure all the time when she was little. Now we're moving into a different phase. So she has a couple different dolls like Barbie type, not Barbies, but Barbie type. And she's really into hair and hair cutting and all these things. So she came to me and she said, an I cut one of my doll's hair? And I said, well, let's talk about it. And I said, you know, it's not going to grow back and she said, I know. And I said, and you know that those are our belongings, and we care and value our belongings. She said, I know, but I really am into cutting hair. And I'd like to try and give one of my dolls a style. I was like, okay, well, you would be responsible for cleaning up the mess. And she said, okay. And I said, but you know what, Sweetie? Those are your things. So you actually get to decide what to do with them. So she cut it. She cut it. And she loved it. It was so, and it's such a testament. Here's the other thing. It's also a testament to we're different people. Yeah, I probably would have regretted it. She didn't,

and that's okay, we are different people. But she took the time to think about it. Talk to me about it. So then she said, well, can I cut my other dolls' hair? And I said, babe, they're your dolls, you get to make this decision. So she cut every single one of them and she loves them. She shows them off when people come. Look what I did to my dolls' hair. So for her this was really meaningful. And so I was, so I was proud of myself, because my instinct was to be like, no, you may not, we spent money, you know, blah, blah, blah. But the truth is, they are hers. She gets to decide. That could have gone either way. It could have been she was miserable. And then we'd be talking about, well, this is why we need to think ahead of you know, what might it feel like if I'm not happy with it, blah, blah, blah. But she did all that. And she made a choice that was great for her.

D

Deana Thayer 31:22

Yes, I love your point about that, that they're differentiating, they're a different person. Because I do think sometimes our input, while it may be really helpful, and we come from a place of more life experience and some wisdom that they often don't have at these younger ages, but we are going to come at it with our own slant, right. So it's very important to recognize that even though for you, you might have done it and not been a fan, she needed room to do it and love it. And that's so important, what a great point.

K

Kira Dorrian 31:49

We talked about this before we hit record, but it's not the same as a character or integrity issue where that's a place where I think you and I both agree. No, we're gonna go ahead and draw a line there. Yes. Um, but this is a personal preference.

D

Deana Thayer 32:02

Absolutely. I mean, there's things that are just amoral, right, it's not....and this was the same thing with my daughter's decision, it wasn't a right or wrong. So it just wasn't a hill to die on. It wasn't worth a battle. And yeah, I can be over here. Now had it been something where there really was a different moral implication, especially because I still have a pretty unique place in her world, and I'm funding the college education, I have some leverage. And I think that's okay. Everybody makes different choices around that. And I understand, but for me, if I am financing your life, I do have a different say. And I wouldn't be afraid to step in or intervene in a stronger way, if there was a character implication. This wasn't one of those.

K

Kira Dorrian 32:44

Yeah, and then that's exactly why when we can let go in all these other areas, then if we do have to swoop in on a character issue, it becomes, you know, it's not like mom's swooping in all the time.

D Deana Thayer 32:55

We're not overparenting and helicoptering.

K Kira Dorrian 32:57

Exactly.

D Deana Thayer 32:58

So then they also see, well, this must be important because she's swooping in, right?

K Kira Dorrian 33:03

Right. I think we talked about that on the drugs and alcohol episode, when my dad, the one time he said anything to me, I took it pretty seriously, right? Because he never said anything. I was like, wow, he's speaking his mind, it must be pretty important. So we hope that listeners, you got some ideas about your own version of letting go and what that's going to look like no matter where you are in your parenting journey. I love, can you go over those three things one more time?

D Deana Thayer 33:27

The things to watch for?

K Kira Dorrian 33:28

I love that. Yes.

D Deana Thayer 33:30

So of course, if your child says something that they need to look different, or they want to do independently, pay attention to that, but also it could come out in frustration in just actions. So watching for frustration on the part of your child would be a second one. And then paying attention to yourself and your own mental lists. And what are things that

you're carrying and trying to keep track of that you can let go?

k

Kira Dorrian 33:51

Yeah, fantastic. We just want to remind our listeners that if you have any issues that you're struggling with in, in your parenting, you want to sit down with us for an hour and just hash something out or ask questions, or just look at something from this future focused lens, we are always available for coaching. You can reach us at info@futurefocusedparenting.com. We have some packages available. But we're also always just happy to meet for an hour and just talk through of course, something random. And if you haven't written us a review for the podcast, we haven't asked for those in a little while, always grateful for positive reviews of the podcast. And, and we'll give you a shout out if you, if you leave us a nice, nice five star review. Don't forget to follow us on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube @futureFocusedParenting and on Instagram and Facebook @RaisingAdultsPodcast.

D

Deana Thayer 34:38

Perfect and I'd love to leave our listeners with just a few questions they can be asking. We always like to get to the practical. So those three things are really helpful things that you can watch for. And here are some questions that you can be thinking about as you're parenting. And this comes from JulieHanks.com. And it says parenting young adults but I would argue you could think about these questions from the beginning. So five questions to ask yourself. Are my parenting strategies, number one, moving toward independence? Number two, are they balancing freedom and responsibility? Number three, are they motivated primarily by love or by fear? Such an important one. Number four, are they providing guidance without enabling? And lastly, are my parenting strategies part of an ongoing dialogue? So some really good questions to think about, especially as it pertains to divergent decision making and this long letting go.

k

Kira Dorrian 35:30

Yeah. And just really quickly to update our listeners for those who are interested. This year's birthday chore was an actual, this is the first time I was like, it's time for real chores, because they've done you know, they make their beds and they tidy up and they put their laundry away. But these are not like cleaning chores, I guess. So this is their first year of cleaning. So one has to vacuum the entire downstairs on a Saturday and the other one does the windows on a Saturday. And their birthday privilege was a big one. They are now in charge of snacks. Mom does not do anything to do with snacks. And this was huge, because it was such a place of authority. It was like Mom, can I have a snack? Mom, can I have a snack? So we went over, we reviewed healthy snacking guidelines. I said snacks

happen between this time and this time, like we don't have a snack five minutes before dinner. And now you get to decide when and what you snack on. And that has been really, they've been really excited and feeling super proud and independent. And for me, it's part of handing over and letting go of food stuff. Yeah, right. I'm not gonna micromanage your food. I've taught you hopefully somewhat well, ish. And now I launched you into your own decision making.

D

Deana Thayer 36:36

That's a great point because there's a lot of little launches on the way to the big launch.

K

Kira Dorrian 36:40

Absolutely. Well, thanks for listening everyone. We look forward to bringing you another episode next week. 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 36:53

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