

Episode 51. Kids and Temperment with Wendy Gossett

Fri, 10/9 8:32PM 37:04

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

temperament, child, parent, brain function, type, listeners, introverts, test, kira, brain, talking, wendy, family, myers briggs, extrovert, teaching, laundry, learn, adults, people

SPEAKERS

Deana Thayer, Kira Dorrian, Future Focused Parenting, Wendy Gossett



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.



Deana Thayer 00:23

Hello, everyone, welcome to Raising Adults. And we are thrilled you've joined us today because we have a treat for you. Kira and Deana are here. But also we have the privilege today of speaking with Wendy Gossett, who is a family and relationship temperament specialist. And she is going to drop some serious insight into personality and how all that works with you as a parent interacting with your child, but even just all those family dynamics, so we're really looking forward to learning from her. And Wendy, thank you so much for being here today.



Wendy Gossett 00:55

Oh, I am so excited to be here with you guys. You guys have the best podcast, it's so helpful to parents, you give out so many pearls of wisdom and practical advice. I've

listened to so many podcasts that just kind of have a lot of fluff and chit chat. And every time I listened to your podcast, it is just right to the core of helping parents and not wasting any time and all these nuggets of wisdom and all from your laundry room. It's pretty, pretty amazing.

D

Deana Thayer 01:31

Well, thank you for the kind words, and we're so happy that you've been a listener. And we're excited to have you onboard today and to learn from you. And I know Kira has had the opportunity to actually work with you. So hopefully she'll get to share about that too. But if you would maybe just start by introducing yourself and what you do and how you even got into temperament psychology with families.

W

Wendy Gossett 01:50

So my name is Wendy Gossett and I'm here in Denver, Colorado. And I have been an educator for the past 20, 30 years if you count being a mom, which is, that's the best educator of all. But I have a master's degree in education. And I worked as a corporate trainer for a while. And so I have been using Myers Briggs and Carl Jung and David Keirsey, and all the biggest psychologists in the area of temperament, with my students, with adults. But it wasn't until I was a parent that it really came into play. Not with my first son, because he was really easy to parent. But when my second child came around, and because my first child was so easy to parent, we had the second one while my first one was still in diapers cuz we thought this parenting business is so easy. So your, I loved the laundry analogy you used on one of your episodes, you said something about counseling is important because if you just leave your laundry sitting there, it starts to stink, and you gotta clean your laundry. So I came up with a laundry analogy for you guys. So my, my oldest child, my son, my firstborn, he was like permanent press, if you still call it that he's like a blend, a polyester cotton blend, he's easy to take care of, and you can throw him in the dryer. And you don't even have to iron him. He's, he's just fine. And then my second child, she is like this rayon shirt that I just bought that after I washed it, it got so wonky, and I had to just baby it and hang it from a hanger. And it still didn't come out right. And I had to read instructions for how to do it. And I had no clue how to parent my second child. And so it occurred to me that I could use Myers Briggs, like I did with adults, with children. But it was definitely a learning curve, because using Myers Briggs with children is very, very different. And so over time working with my students, I developed a child inner drive assessment that's pretty darn accurate. And I use that now with families to help them understand their difficult to understand children, but also their children that they think they have figured out. Because sometimes those kids are just not saying anything but they don't feel safe and they don't feel like their parents really understand where they're

coming from, but they're just not, they're not letting on, they're not saying anything. So that's how I got into this.

K

Kira Dorrian 04:49

Wendy, I want to give you bonus points for being the only guest to have a laundry metaphor, like, I am so impressed. That was such a good one.

D

Deana Thayer 04:59

It was great, and it was hilarious.

K

Kira Dorrian 05:01

We were cracking up. That's amazing. Okay, so can you tell our listeners like, what temperament is exactly? What do you mean by that when you say you're a temperament coach?

W

Wendy Gossett 05:12

Yes. So you know, they've been doing so much work lately with the brain, and you hear all of these, Brain Balance, and if you pay this huge amount of money, we're going to balance your child's brain. And everything is brain, brain, brain. And temperament is actually the functions of the brain. It's what part of your brain, which function, do you prefer. And so everyone's brain is divided into four quadrants, we have feeling, thinking, sensing and intuition. And this has been since the beginning of time, since cave people, and, and so but we're just now doing all this research on the brain. And my daughter and I actually went into a neuro optimized place. We work, we kind of collaborate with a neuro optimized place here in Denver. And we had our brains mapped, this was totally fascinating. And my brain lit up in the areas of feeling, and communication. And my daughter's brain lit up in the area of thinking, and tactile problem solving. And believe it or not, that is exactly what I show parents, when after they take the inner drive assessment, and I map out all the brain functions of their family, it's like doing an EEG map on your brain, to find out what's really going on inside your child's head. And a lot of times when children are acting out, their behavior is speaking much louder than their words, because they might not even understand what's going on themselves. And so once you know how their brain is wired, you know that if they're saying, Mommy, my tummy hurts, my stomach hurts, you know, how their brain is wired, and you know, this child has, is prone to anxiety. And that that stomach ache, could very well be something that's causing them stress. Whereas if you know your child is just the kind that is that personality that's like Teflon,

and things just roll off of them, you know, that they probably just ate something bad. So it's, it's really, really helpful, even when your children are very young, to find out their brain preferences, so that you can translate what they're doing into why they are doing it.

D

Deana Thayer 07:50

That's really helpful. Thank you for explaining that. And you mentioned just a second ago that even when they're very young, you can you tell, so I'd love to hear how early you can tell. And then just your thoughts on whether temperament is determined more by nature or nurture, or is it a combo pack? Can you address that?

W

Wendy Gossett 08:10

Yes. So they have determined, psychologists have debated about this for years and years and years because the four temperaments first were talked about early on in the book of Ezekiel and the Old Testament in the Bible, where it talks about the four phases of God that, the lion, the ox, the eagle, and the human. And then of course, Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Socrates, you know, these ancient philosophers all echoed that and talked about four temperaments. And then the Wizard of Oz made it clear to just everyone even children, that there's Dorothy, there's the lion, there's the, the Scarecrow and the Tin Man. And they were, all the things they were searching for, symbolize the motivations of each of the four temperaments. And so you can see these motivations from day one in your child, even before day one when they're in utero. I've worked with several moms that have been carrying twins, and they said they knew they had one chilled out baby, and one really high leadership, my way or the highway baby inside and, and they even switched places, so that the leadership baby or the boss baby could be born first. And it was following that order for the rest of their lives. And so that temperament was set within the uterus. And you know, I've had other sets of twins, once again, where the two girls are completely opposite. One of the girls lines up her Barbies in a row and is teaching them like a military sergeant, while the other girl is like doing twirls around the room wearing wings on her back, like a sparkly unicorn, and they're like, two completely and totally different kids from day one. And so it's 50% nature, and 50% nurture. But I'm not saying that kids are fixed. You know, it's that Carol Dweck book Mindset, they're not fixed. But they have the dominant brain function. So that parents, if they know how their children are wired, they can go with the flow of their child's temperament. And, and yes, everyone can learn strengths and adopt strengths from other temperaments. But we don't want to try to force our child into a mold that they were never meant to be put in. For example, some of us are Dorothys, half the world is the Dorothy type, which is a rule follower. You like to check things off the box, you like to have a plan, you like to be organized. Now you can learn to be free, you can learn to scrap your plan, but your core tendency is always going to prefer

to have a plan, and to check things off the list. And so if you have a child that is a lion, who just prefers freedom, and would much rather learn from life and go out and, and figure it out for themselves, rather than have you lecture them and tell them what to do, if you continue to try to do that, it's going to be a much more uphill battle, than just going with the flow of their temperament. And, you know, and using tools to work with that type versus trying to impose your Dorothy way of doing things on your lion child. So um, you know, and it can really show up early, because if you have a child that is a Dorothy child, a rule follower child, they're like the permanent press laundry that I was talking about. Also, if you have a tin man child, which they're very rare, and that's my type, they're the human type, they just wanted a heart, they just want deep, meaningful relationships. And if you have that type, they're also going to be permanent press, but they're going to be actually more of a sensitive type. So you're going to have to use some, maybe some fabric softener with that one. But they are very cooperative, those two types are very cooperative types, and they're relational. So they're easier to parent than the lion type who wants freedom and who has to just do it their way. And also the Scarecrow type who's very proud, who's very independent, who's very intelligent. And they want to do it their way. Also, they cannot stand lectures, they do not do well with any kind of incompetence. So at the age of three, they're already looking like the CEO of the household. And they're also a rare type. And so they're very hard to parent. So almost every parent will say, oh, my gosh, my child is fairly easy to parent, I kind of know how to get them, or oh, my goodness, I don't know what I'm doing with this child. They're really tough. And so they kind of fall into those two categories.

K

Kira Dorrian 13:45

Well, and I remember one of the things you said to me was, you know, so with Rhiannon, she is going to really crumble when you are like big with your words, when you go on and on and you're processing and you're externally feeling. Basically, she can't handle that. And so you were saying that, really, she's going to be my best teacher, because I have to learn to, when I'm talking with her about something that needs to change, or something I didn't like, to have short succinct sentences, which, as our listeners know, is an area of growth for me.

D

Deana Thayer 14:16

Maybe not your specialty?

K

Kira Dorrian 14:18

No, but I, what I, what I noticed immediately was as soon as I started doing that, as soon

as I had to take a moment, get my two sentences together, spit them out to her in a clear, calm way, it was game changing.

W

Wendy Gossett 14:31

Well, I was gonna say the reason that kids rebel, is because, and also the reason that a lot of times a second sibling, maybe excels in sports, where the first sibling excels in academics, is siblings are always trying to differentiate from one another. And they're trying to differentiate from their parents and that's what rebellion is and they don't have to rebel, you hear that word rebel, it doesn't have to be in a major way. But when you differentiate, you are doing the differentiating for your kids by having an open narrative, so Kira in your household that would look like, oh my goodness, I am so emotional. And I realize that I have a lot of words. And I know that you like to have less words and me to just get to the point. And that's the difference between the two of us. And just to kind of have a running narrative about the things you understand about your own personality. And then I always would teach my daughter about how, this is how a lot of girls are wired, a lot of girls are very emotional, and they need to talk about their emotions, and you don't need to do that as much. And I would really have to teach her about how she was different, and how she could be around me, but then how learning how to be around me would help her learn how to be around other girls. And then I would tell her, that didn't come out quite right to me when you said that. This is how it made me feel because I'm a feeler. And so how could you maybe rephrase that, rather than right away getting my feelings hurt, I knew that she didn't know how to phrase it correctly. And so it's just this constant teaching between the two of us and I tell her that she teaches me as well, just like you, you put it Kira, that, that it's a mutual teaching for one another, when you find out each other's brain preferences, you really can see how your child like Jerry Maguire, how your child completes you, how your husband completes you. And instead of letting that be an irritation, like it can be when you're not aware of it, it can actually become this amazing blessing that you realize your kids and your spouse are making you a more whole and complete person.

D

Deana Thayer 17:04

Oh, very beautiful. Kira might cry again. So I know we went a little bit out of order, because we ended up getting to have a great chat about how you use the information with families, once you've discovered those temperaments. But could you share the process of how you go about discovering a child's temperament, or even your own as a parent for that matter?

W

Wendy Gossett 17:26

Yes, so this is an area where people that work deeply in temperament, really have a bit of a dilemma. Because the way that people are familiar with working with temperament is you take a nice little test, and then you read a little paragraph about your type. And then you kind of go on your merry way, and you got a little nugget about yourself. But there's really so much more to it than that. And Kira can attest to that. And also what happens is, as adults, we tend to take those tests, based on our learned behavior, it's not who we truly are. We take the test based on our role as a mom or role in our job. And most of the time women test fairly accurately on these tests, whereas men are almost always wrong. And so what will happen is if they take an online test, and they get their result, they'll Google it. And they'll be like, ah, that doesn't fit me at all. And so they discount this type of psychology, when really it is so amazingly accurate when you get a correct type on yourself. And the way to do that, the process I come at it from, so many different schools of thought I use. I named some of them in the beginning, but primarily I use Carl Jung, who came up with the eight psychological functions of the brain. And it's like a geometry formula. Your Myers Briggs letters are like the car you drive. Kira is driving a sedan, so am I, with the top up, and we're driving on a highway with a GPS. But when you find out your brain functions, you find out who the passengers in your car are. So my driver has a GPS and he's on a highway. Some people are driving a sedan, but their driver is on an open road with no map. And so there, they look a lot different. And some people are driving a convertible with a top down, but they're on, their driver is on a highway with a map. And so you can't tell that from just the Myers Briggs. All you can see with the Myers Briggs letter is the car. You can't tell what the passengers in the car are doing. And every single one of us has four passengers. And the two passengers in the back are like an infant and a teenager. And infant is the one that causes us the most stress, shows up when we're stressed out, because our infant brain function always stays like a three year old child. And so once we can learn about that function, and learn how to balance it, we can overcome a lot of the things that are tripping us up in life. And it really helps parents to know when their child is at an early age, what to expect, in all the different areas of their lives. Like I heard you guys talking on your episode about consent and dating, and you I can actually tell you what to expect from your kids, when they're in that dating age. And I can tell you what to expect when they're in the in between years, because that's when their third psychological function starts to develop and starts to mature. And so I can actually kind of forecast the future. And, and how to, you know, pick activities for your children. And so, um, I know it's a big answer, but you take a test, you know, that's the first step. And then I listen to what's going on in your family dynamic. And those are clues for me. And then I will come at it from these psychological functions, and from all these different schools of thought. And that is how we get an accurate typing. And then I do a family map for the family. And then we we talk about what all that means.

K

Kira Dorrian 21:47

Yeah, I remember, you know, I think part of what you do that is, that is so important for our listeners to hear is different than just taking some Myers Briggs test online, is the nuance of the questioning that you do around the family dynamic. You're like a little detective I felt like, and you just kind of unpack it all, to get to the root of okay, here, here are the four cars parked in the garage. And here's why sometimes it's like bumper cars. And here's where you're all driving really nicely together. It's just, it's incredible.

W

Wendy Gossett 22:16

I was also going to say that you do take the tests on behalf of your child, even when they're older, because kids don't have the self awareness to test themselves correctly. And we tend to want to become something we're not. And I find that people tend as, they tend to test as extroverts more often than introverts. And introverts aren't, there aren't as many in our society. But I feel a lot of that is inaccurate, because our society is so extroverted. And I think there's a lot of pressure to be an extrovert. And so through these psychological functions, I can find out pretty quickly, whether you are truly an extrovert or an introvert, and that alone, with a lot of people, really helps them. Like my daughter seemed like an extrovert. When she went out of the house, she could just be with people all the time. And when she's in the car with me, she does not talk. When she's at home, she does not talk. And so for me, it was really, I was taking it personally for a while until I discovered her temperament and found out that she is an introvert. So when she's out, she is that lion type that needs to impress. And so she's out there impressing everyone and putting her best foot forward. And she comes home and she is out of steam. And she has nothing left. And so she's settling into her very black and white, logical, introverted thinking brain function. And so that's why it's so important to go through these different steps, not just take the test, and then kind of think you have enough information. It's so important and foundational to find out all the brain functions.

D

Deana Thayer 24:19

Yeah. And you know, what's so nice about that, that I was thinking about as you were talking, Wendy is, it can also, I think, bring the parents some peace, because you mentioned you were taking it personally. But in so many ways, once you know their temperament, it's actually a compliment, oh, they can be their true and real self when they're at home and with me, and I should really be grateful that I've created the space for that. And I think that takes off a lot of that pressure or that tendency to take it personally and instead to turn that to, this is great that home and family is where she's safe to be who she is.

W

Wendy Gossett 24:52

That's right. And it really does. I'd like to say that instead of going against the tide of that temperament, you can go with the flow of their temperament. And you can actually have peace of mind to know that the decisions you're, you're making with your child. Like, for instance, if your child is one of the biggest introverts on the whole scale of 16 types, you know, that the right thing to do is not to force them to go to the birthday party, you know, that it's okay if they have one friend, that they're perfectly happy with that. If you're a screaming extrovert, it's going to be really, really hard for you to know that that is the way you need to parent your child. And so it really does give, give peace. And it's not to say, once again, the fixed versus the learned mindset, it's not to say that you can't encourage your child to go to the party. But now that you know how they're wired, you don't want to try to force the square peg into the round hole. And I love what Kira said on the episode about consent where you were talking about, you don't want to tickle that child if they don't want to be tickled. And there are a couple of types that are extremely serious types. They're completely in the box, they're very black and white, they don't like surprises, they get really upset if they have a little tiny spot on their clothes, and this can really translate into the behaviors that we see in children like sensory processing disorder, OCD kinds of behaviors, ADD, ADHD, this is all brain function related. And so this child that I'm, that I'm referring to, right now, that's so serious, they tend to have sensory processing, they tend to have some OCD types of behaviors and be very anxious. This type does not like spur of the moment types of things. And so you want to always point out to this child the way they're wired, and say, you know, it's really important that, that you do learn how to do things that aren't scheduled, because you know, life is not always going to be scheduled. And so you know, you point it out to them, that this is something they need to work on. But you don't just force them into that tickling match because they're uncomfortable with it. I just worked with a mom and a daughter who were really clashing. And the daughter was this type and her mom was one of the most creative, surprise oriented, silly outgoing types that you can have. And she was just being herself trying to lighten up her daughter. But really, she was stressing her daughter out. And since her daughter is a total rule follower who wants to do what's right, she was trying to please her mom, but it was just, she was stressed out constantly, and it was coming out in stomach aches, and just all kinds of other issues. And so the awareness there for these two is that they're going to help each other kind of meet in the middle. And, and that's, that's what growth is all about. It's about having the right expectations, and then learning how to compromise and meet in the middle, and respect each other's boundaries and differences and strengths.

K

Kira Dorrian 28:35

And what a gift to give our children for them to feel truly seen, truly understood. And for us as parents to help them grow into their strengths and help the, the parts of them that

need extra help get that help. But from a place of understanding, instead of a place of frustration, which was my experience. I mean, I was frustrated. Now I understand.

W

Wendy Gossett 28:57

And it's so interesting, because I've been working a lot with adults lately, who need to understand their own family of origin, they need to understand their own parent, and I will coach them before a family gathering. And my own mother, I was able to finally have peace with her and forgive her because she is the personality type that has a dominant brain function of sensing, which means her five senses are the most important to her. So when she has sticks in her yard, she is stressed out and she gets extremely worried over her microwave oven being dirty. And I could easily poopoo these things as oh my goodness, why are you getting worried about your sticks in your yard? But that would be the same as her pooh poohing my emotional needs.

K

Kira Dorrian 29:54

I think that's so beautiful and in our current climate, our societal climate just think it's, the work you're doing is so important because it's teaching understanding. It's teaching differences. It's teaching, we don't all have to be the same to get along, we can see things from different points of view, and actually have respect and love for each other. And so kudos to you, Wendy. It's awesome stuff.

W

Wendy Gossett 30:14

So just want to interject real quick, some types are extremely rare. And so if you have one of these extremely rare types, all of society is not going to understand them. So it's even more important that their parents do understand them, and that they speak over this child that you are unique for a reason, you are created this way for a purpose. Because they're going to go out into the world and feel like they don't have anyone wired like they are.

K

Kira Dorrian 30:16

So Wendy, will you please tell our listeners how they can find you, how they can take the first test and how they can launch into coaching with you? And if they're interested in that, how can they find you and make use of your wonderful services?

W

Wendy Gossett 31:00

Yeah, so I am Wendy Gossett, G-O-S-S-E-T-T, and it's just at wendygossett.com. And if you Google it, you're going to find my crazy viral dancing video of me dancing to the Backstreet Boys on the highway embarrassing my kids. But that is my website. And you'll go to my services page, and you'll just find the child inner drive assessment. And that is the first step, it's only \$29. And it comes with a video explaining your child's type. But what you won't get from that is the understanding of yourself and your spouse and any other kids in the family. So if you just want to go ahead and do what Kira did for the whole family, that would be my standard package for the whole family. But then there's also a basic where it's just one parent and one child. And so if there's just one child that you are really wanting to focus on, but I really think it's important for a parent to understand their type as well, because it's the whole interaction piece that's so powerful. And I have a free ebook on my site right now, 14 Instant Ways to Connect With Your Child. And it's just kind of a compilation of all the work I've done with families over the past five years. And then even with my educational work before that, and I'm coming out with a book. It's called Your Child's Inner Drive: Parenting by Personality, From Toddlers to Teens. And it's talking about babies. I know you guys are the baby whisperers. But it actually talks about how to spot that temperament in babies all the way through their teenage years. And then it even mentions how they are as adults as well.

D

Deana Thayer 32:50

Awesome. Great, thank you so much, Wendy, for just taking some time out of your busy schedule, and all the things that you have going on, to share with our listeners. Because this is, we're all about parenting. And we're all about doing the best job that we can for our kids and being intentional. And what better way to be intentional than to learn who your people are so that you can parent them appropriately? So thank you so much for being with us. We really appreciate you lending your insight today.

W

Wendy Gossett 33:16

Wow, my pleasure. Thank you so much for having me.

D

Deana Thayer 33:20

Well, that was something. I haven't had the privilege of working with her like you have. But I learned a lot just from that. And hopefully you as our listeners gained a lot from that. She's just not only a wealth of information, but she's just relatable and so conversational. And you can see how much this knowledge about temperament makes a difference in

how people interact. And we are different and we interact well. So we're, we like that. We're all about those things and acknowledging that, that we can be different and still honor those differences, and then work within that. So we're really hopeful that this was helpful to you too, and that you might even seek her out if you feel like this would be helpful to your family. Because I know it was really game changing for you and your family.

K

Kira Dorrian 34:03

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think, I think it's so easy when you're in close proximity, you just bump into each other in a different way. You know, like, I feel like I have a lot of understanding for my friends and the differences that maybe we have, and oh, it would be easy for me to take that the wrong way, but I know that they're like this, and they didn't mean it like that. But when you're like, like next to someone, you know, like you see each other with your hair in the morning and your teeth haven't been brushed yet. It's a lot, it's a lot harder, I think you tend to bruise each other and you tend to bump into each other more. And I think as parents, you know, especially future focused parents, I think because we have this idea of who we want to raise and the qualities we want them to have, it can be, it can be a trap to think that that has to look a certain way and not leave room for the person to be their person with these qualities, with these attributes. And that you actually may have to change how you foster that.

D

Deana Thayer 34:58

That's right.

K

Kira Dorrian 34:58

And that was for me, even as a parent coach was eye opening, especially on the empathy piece. That was probably the biggest thing I got was this misinterpretation of what I was seeing and how just having that misinterpretation changed how I feel about what I'm seeing, and as a feeler that was a really slippery slope, right? Whereas suddenly having this understanding now when Rhiannon does something empathetic, which is a lot of the time, I'm impressed by her and proud of her that she has learned at seven this skill. As opposed to focusing on what she didn't have, which is how I felt about it in the past, when she didn't do it. I was focusing on that and getting upset. Now when she doesn't do it, I swoop in and I teach her because that's my strength. But when she does do it, I'm proud and impressed. And then for me, the the biggest thing of learning how to be succinct with her and really, really honing that skill. You know, I'm her teacher, when it comes to empathy. She's my teacher when it comes to that. So it's, it's really been getting to learn

from each other which is beautiful. And actually, I think what families should do, I always say, my kids teach me more than I teach them. And I think as a self aware individual, they really are an opportunity for us to grow and be better, and this really helps with that.



Deana Thayer 36:14

They're great teachers, and they're really great full length mirrors. Yes, they really show you all your stuff, even the things you'd rather not look at. So if you have comments, questions, please send them our way. We are happy to hear from our listeners and enjoy that. You can find us, info@futurefocusedparenting.com if you haven't yet, we always want to encourage you to follow us. You can find us on both Facebook and Instagram @futurefocusedparenting and @raisingadultspodcast. Raising Adults is produced by Kira Dorrian, Deana Thayer and today the wonderful Eric Johnson and recorded partially with Eric, partially in the laundry room today, partially in Colorado, we're all over the place. Music by Seattle band Hannalee. Thank you so much for listening.



Future Focused Parenting 36:57

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