

Parents & Teachers, NO BS How to support neurodiverse kids i...

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SPEAKERS

Debbie Reber, Seth Perler

S Seth Perler 00:01
Hello, people, my name is Seth Perler, and I'm here with Debbie Reber. Hi, Debbie.

D Debbie Reber 00:06
Hello.

S Seth Perler 00:08
Ah, so, hi everybody, we both just had a big sigh. We have a heavy topic today parents. Parents and teachers, mostly parents, there might be some therapists and admin and good handful of teachers watching this or listening. So I'm Seth Perler. I'm an executive function coach out of Colorado and my site is SethPerler.com if you're not familiar with me, and this my good friend, Debbie Reber. Debbie wanna tell them who you are?

D Debbie Reber 00:36
Sure. I'm Debbie Reber from TiLT Parenting, the TiLT Parenting podcast, and the author of the book "Differently Wired," and all of my content is at tiltparenting.com.

S

Seth Perler 00:48

And we were chatting earlier this week, we talk relatively frequently, and I was just like, really bothered, and Debbie is too. But I was just kind of like super frustrated about what's going on right now. You know, we have COVID and pandemic, and everybody just really trying to figure out how to do this. And we don't know where we're gonna go with this conversation, but our intention parents and teachers, is to really talk about some of the issues from our perspectives. Debbie and I hear from tons and tons and tons of parents, we see a lot about what's going on behind the scenes from parents perspectives, from teachers perspectives, and we want to shed some light on it. So I think (1) people don't feel so alone and you know, you're not alone. And (2) so that maybe we can give insights that are practical for you that hopefully you can make sense of, and that will hopefully influence, you know, actions or choices that you make in a positive way, and you can feel more confident in the things that you're choosing to do. So, Debbie, should I start talking about what really frustrated me or do you want us?

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Debbie Reber 02:01

Yeah, why don't why don't you start? Yeah.

S

Seth Perler 02:04

Okay. So as an executive function coach, what I do is I work with kids who tend to fall through the cracks. And I will say, Debbie, a lot of the kids, the neurodiverse kids, the differently wired kids in her audience, or the kids, or the parents in our audience, they too often fall through the cracks in many ways. Maybe they have an IEP or 504 but maybe that IEP and 504, isn't articulated well enough to make the difference that it needs. Maybe the teachers or the staff that are working with the kid don't have the experience or the resources or the time to make the difference that is needed. That is reasonable. Maybe the IP and the 504, by the teachers that are given the copies of it or that go the meetings, maybe they don't revisit it into the school year and don't even remember what was in it and don't remember the details that they need to know in order to meet the needs, because those teachers are so overwhelmed or, or whatever the case may be. Maybe the kids have not been identified with anything, but have legitimate challenges that have not been identified, and therefore are not getting services or accommodations or modifications that they need. Anyhow, this is all very normal. Anyhow, these are struggles that we deal with. So Debbie is a homeschooler, and why a lot of people will go into homeschooling, or unschooling, or different schools, or look for different teachers with different solutions, because they're just trying to get their needs met. Well, what's going on now, is that, and what's really bothering me is that we still have the same system, which already I take a lot of issue with, but now it's so much less engaging, so much less

motivating. It's so hard for these neurodiverse kids, especially kids with attentional processing issues combined, but I mean for any of these kids, I mean, there's just, it's so hard for them to do what we're asking them to do. Okay, that's fine. Actually, it's not but it is what it is. But what is really, really, really bothering me right now is something that I really don't agree with is letter grades. I think they're morally wrong, I always have. So many of these kids are in schools that still use grades because most schools still use grades, so these kids are being judged, and they're going to be evaluated, and they're going to be given a letter which impacts them. So if they fail a class, they're going to have to either retake it, it depends. Are they in middle school, high school? Are they a senior in high school, and they're going to fail a class? Because it's so unengaging, they can't jump through the hoops. They're emotional, like we have what's called a 'collective trauma' that's legitimate. These kids are being asked to do something that's so hard for them to watch screens and jumped through the hoops and do the tasks that they're being asked to. I'm just really frustrated. The parents and our audiences are trying so hard. Sorry, Debbie, I haven't even let you speak, but I guess I'm setting up the problem, at least a little bit from my perspective. But the parents were in our audiences are just trying so hard to figure out how to navigate this. But what what the the truth of the matter is, is that the parents and the teachers and the kids are trying so hard to navigate something that is unnavigable. It's like the Titanic going through all of these ice patches, you know, you don't know what's there, there's a lot of uncertainty, there's a lot of danger. And what I mean by that is we're trying to force them through this path, or navigate this path, that just is filled with obstacles, and we're expecting them to navigate this. Kids to be able to successfully navigate something that we wouldn't ourselves be able to do if we were in their position. And I'm just so frustrated and fed up. And I feel so powerless. And I just don't, I don't know what to do. You know, I work with my kids and my families and do the best I can to help them. But something that you and I often are saying right now is you just got to let it go. It is not workable, we can't make it, we can't magically wave a magic wand to make this change. Like it is not set up for this. And we're trying our best to do it. But we're trying and what I think is just a losing battle. I think the gift in this is that it really can show us that, hopefully, show us that a lot of change needs to happen in education to really serve all kids. My fear is that we're gonna get lip service, we're gonna get BS, we don't invest in education in this country at least, we don't prioritize it. We don't give teachers enough training, enough support, enough resources, enough money and pay and blah, blah, blah. So anyhow, I just feel very powerless, frustrated, stuck. This is what my life is dedicated to and I feel like we're at a standstill. My fear is that we're gonna get lip service and people making basic changes to make things look good. But a lot of kids are going to fall through the cracks, are going to suffer are going to be essentially punished, for something that's not their fault. It is going to impact not only their life now, but their future, and it's not okay. Hi Debbie.

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Debbie Reber 07:39

Amen to all of that. I mean, you really just shared everything that I've been thinking too. Certainly I'm seeing the same thing, the same conversations with my parent community especially, I have a TiLT Facebook group which is really active. And there are a dozen threads every day from a parent who has a specific problem, especially with some sort of remote learning scenario. Everyone's sharing all this advice, which is great. I love that people are trying to navigate this, but as you said, like that visual of the Titanic, you know, I feel that way too. I feel as though this is an unworkable problem. There is no there is no advice that Seth, that you, or that I could share that is going to to fix this, that is going to make this okay. And that's a hard thing to kind of reconcile, I think because, you know, our passion is supporting families. And you know what, when we were talking about this earlier this week, the thing that I just feel so strongly is, this is not worth it. What we're trying to put our kids through is not worth it, and it's going to harm them more. And what does that mean we do? I don't have all the answers. I have some ideas for families who have the resources to try to get more creative here. But we have such a priority. First of all, there's the whole thing of trying to get back to normal. That's all one thing. But I think when you have a child anyway who's moving through the world differently, we're always trying to kind of work with the system to kind of get them back on track, to kind of work with the tools that we have. And even in that process, we often harm our kids because we are putting them in environments that weren't designed to support them. We're asking them to change who they are and the way that they learn. We're not focusing on their strengths. So there's so many flaws anyway, but what our kids are being asked to do now, at a time in the world where they don't even have the life experience that we do as adults to know that this is going to pass. And I can't imagine how that must feel to be to feel like, "Okay, the rules have changed. Everything is scary. There's no end in sight. And I'm getting, you know, robbed of my childhood," and you know, all of these things. And yet, they're supposed to kind of keep showing up and even working harder in a system that is even less designed for who they are. So kind of where I land with this, which is how we decided to even do this conversation, is I mean, I really believe that if we can say "Sorry, not happening," if we can kind of use our voice more in talking with our kids schools and kind of setting boundaries and saying "This is not doable or workable for my child, this is creating emotional harm. This is ramping up anxiety, here's what we're willing to do. Here's what could work for our family." If you have the bandwidth, and I know we're all hitting a wall, a collective wall, I've been feeling it very much myself. But to kind of let go and really recognize where we're feeling like, freaked out about the uncertainty and about what would it mean if we do kind of break all the rules right now and we go our own path? Like that's a scary thing to consider. But when you consider what's at stake, and our kids love of learning, or self awareness, or feeling good about who they are. It's a gamble I think is totally worth taking. Thoughts?

I was taking some notes. One thing that you mentioned was voice, I want to speak to that. And I think teachers watching too, you know, I think teachers, at least my experience as a teacher for 12 years, is that teachers often have a voice with their colleagues that they're close to, with maybe teachers in the teachers lounge, but when it comes to speaking up in a staff meeting about how you really feel about something and feeling like you're being heard, or to a district, that's not the most common thing. I said earlier, I really want this to be practical too. For teachers watching, I really want you to know, you do have a voice and you have to speak up and you have to band together, because they're not mind reader's in the system, in my opinion. And any massive system is designed for people to not rock the boat. To keep your mouth shut, comply, do what you're told, follow the standards, follow the curriculum, prep for the test, do your SMART goals, do blah, blah, blah. And this is not that time. And so I just want to encourage your teachers, that if you feel like you're not being heard, to speak up again, and again, and again, and again, and I know that there's risk too then for teachers, you know, might I lose my job or be non-renewed or whatever. But you're not alone in wanting to voice things, and have outrage, and frustration and be able to say, "Okay, I hear what you're telling me, but this isn't working." we need. That was one thing I thought about. And then for parents with the voice too, yeah, the squeaky wheel gets the grease. I've been wanting to start a new podcast, I don't mention this much in public, but for like five years, and it's now in process. Dani and I are meeting about it next week and trying to actually get the site going. Part of the reason that I want to have it is because there are so many parents and teachers that tell me the same story over and over, but they don't share it with everybody. They feel like they're the only one, they feel very alone. They feel like when they try to share the message that they're shut down, or that they're not encouraged to speak, or that there's something wrong with them, or something like that. But parents they are not mind reader's. You have to advocate and advocate again and advocate again, advocate again. Don't let any shame or being told you're a 'helicopter parent,' or stuff like that dissuade you. Be mindful in how you articulate yourself ad don't just write you know, if you're writing something for example, like a monologue paragraph, four pages long, but keep it simple. Be like "This isn't working," and as Debbie said, "We don't even know this work, but here's what might work" You sort of threw that in there. "Here's what might work for us," Get those messages out there a lot. I mean, teachers are doing the best they can do. Yeah, but they don't know. So, and one last thing, Debbie mentioned bandwidth. And Marla Payne Thurman talks about this circle, the way I think of it is, we have this circle of energy every day, and we have 100 points of energy. Once 100 points of energy are reached, we should go to sleep and rejuvenate and regenerate and rest from our day. But when we go beyond 100 points, we're then we're then in our reserves, which creates anxiety, and depression, and frustration, and relational problems, and internal conflict, and feeling exhausted physically, and yada, yada. Our energy goes to four places (1) social, (2) emotional, (3)

cognitive, and (4) physical. So imagine our kids, how much bandwidth do they have in a day and what are we asking them to do? And is that balanced? Oh, my God, when our kids with attentional and processing issues have three or four hours of homework after having to watch a screen all this time. It's not working.

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Debbie Reber 16:24

Yeah. Yeah. I agree with that. Um, so a couple things. One, you know, homework, I'm just gonna say like you, I've been hearing this from people with kids in first and second grade, you know, you mentioned homework at the beginning, or you mentioned grades at the beginning. But we know that the research says that homework, absolutely in elementary school, there's no research that shows it's beneficial at all. And that's an easy ask, you know, that's a very clear thing, "My child will not be doing additional work outside of school," or, you know, "My child will do X, Y, and Z," that's kind of focused in their area of interest, something like that. So that's something we can ask. I think it's also important, when you mentioned being the squeaky wheel, having solutions, saying "This is what we are going to try, this is what we're doing," as opposed to just saying "This isn't working, help." Because yes, I think teachers are so overwhelmed right now, this isn't the way that they want to be teaching either. So if we can offer solutions that are that are clear, and that kind of prioritize the child's emotional mental well being, which is what I think we have to focus on right now more than grades, more than anything else. Because really, grades don't matter if a kid is not thriving and if they're going to tank, they just do not matter. You talked about collective trauma, like this is a heavy time. Actually, I just read an article this week which has gotten a lot of buzz, about our surge capacity being deleted in this moment. And our kids are feeling it too. So really prioritizing our kids emotional mental health, looking at the workload that they have, looking at what their day is, like, seeing what kind of creative solutions there are. I have friends who have looked at their schedule and said, "Okay, and these are kids with attention issues" and said, "You know, these two classes will do with you, we're going to do this on our own," that might not work for some people, but it might be a great solution for others. See if there are ways to outsource some of those classes or to do like an independent project that could be science oriented, for example. Doing a science lab over Zoom isn't so exciting, right? But there might be a way to explore those concepts that would really engage a child, so see what possibilities exist and propose those. This is the case always, as parents, there's often a lot more wiggle room than we would know. And it's our right to ask for and to advocate for what we know would be better for our child, especially in these unusual circumstances. And I feel like what we're going through is creating a window for different models. I mean, what we're going through as a society, there's so much kind of change. We're on the precipice of a lot of change, and new conversations are coming out about all kinds of issues. And so this is a moment for us too, to more firmly say, you know, "Do differently

wired kids require something different? And the system, this model isn't really serving them." So those are my kind of more concrete things to just kind of think about creative solutions to know that there's more than one way for this to look, and to think about how can I be sure to prioritize my child's mental and emotional health in this moment, because that's got to be number one, above everything else.

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Seth Perler 20:03

So yeah, the thing the SEMG is Social Emotional Needs of Gifted. As teachers, you know, we learn a lot about the social emotional needs of kids. I like that you said that I think now would be a good time to sort of back up for teachers and parents to sort of zoom out and talk about what do kids need? So let's say that we threw everything out the window, how can we start from sort of a big picture? I think for parents and teachers, the parents, you guys were told from the school, "This is what you're supposed to do or what your kids homework is supposed to be," or whatever. And for teachers, you guys were told, "This is what you're supposed to teach," and forgetting the supposed to, what is our own value system of the big picture of what they need? So I know Debbie and I know each other well, so we're very much aligned on this although we probably articulated very differently. So I would start with what kids need. One thing is relationships, learning how to have securely attached human relationships. So one thing parents and teachers that's going on right now is that as you guys are working with your kids to do their schoolwork or navigate school, and teachers as you're trying to teach, the most important thing to me is always the relationship. Are we co-regulating and attuning with the kids? Are we noticing what's going on in their bodies and their emotions, and pausing and addressing those needs so that we're building secure relationships so that our kids feel secure, self confident, know who they are, no tools to work with difficult emotions, difficult circumstances. When they're older and they start their own life, they've been practicing tools for that for many years. And then what do they need as far as content? Well the way we do content and separate content in the math, science, social studies, reading, writing, and other topics, is not real life. So like I said, I'll start this podcast, or Debbie started her podcast, like she learned so much in doing that. And I'm sure she learned math, because there's many mathematical components from the audience, from the the numbers in the audience, the metrics, how much it costs on your monthly bills, blah, blah, to run that thing. There's tons of math, there's tons of researching, there's tons of writing, there's tons of communication and speaking. I mean, there's tons of technology, there's so many things that are melded together and doing something. So I think when you're thinking about what your kid needs, yes, they need to learn. But one thing Debbie said was creative. She used the word creative, but you can really creatively, and I'm gonna give you a very practical one here, look at (and you know, I'm obsessed with guitars). I'll use this one, video games. I don't want your kids playing video games 24/7, I do not think that's a valuable. Is there some

learning? Sure. But is that overall, the best use of their time 24/7? Not in my opinion. But there are so many ways you can use that video game. They can learn so much. If you do a little research about the video game, about who created it, about how video games are designed, about coding, about the history involved in the video game, I don't know. But about the math, the science, the history, the reading, the writing, finding articles for them. The point is they can create their own games, they can create a PowerPoint about the game. They're learning how to communicate their learning, they can learn to do an argument paper, a persuasive paper, whatever. I'm just showing that you can incorporate it. Teachers too, I mean, Debbie said passion based, interest based, curiosities, I forget the word she used, but like how we can teach the thing and break away from the curriculum because the curriculum are often very black and white. And for you more experienced teachers, I know you guys probably take a lot more liberty to differentiate. But for newer teachers, like really, this is a great time to look at it and ask your gut. You know, if you have that gut feeling that this isn't going to work, but you feel the pressure from the district or the school to do it, listen your gut feeling and figure out how to how to differentiate it and make it more interesting, flexible, change the way you're grading change to rubrics that are more open ended choice based democratic, allow them to weave in their their passions and interests and curiosities. And then I definitely want to say well, I don't want to get too off task, but I want to go back to the 'less is more,. I just want to talk about first of all, what's the priority, I was trying to zoom out, and the priority was what curricular things you want them to learn, social, emotional, relational. Debbie said earlier self awareness, metacognition, introspection, self-reflection. This is a great time for parents and teachers, but parents especially, to help build self-reflection as well and self awareness of who they are. That may not seem like you're doing curriculum, but that is important for our kids to have in life. And I guess get everything you can out of this time, because there's a lot of value. The brain is still growing, the brain is still developing, neurons are still connecting, there's a lot of value that you can implement into this time. I mean, getting habits for fitness, habits for sleep, habits for the foods that you're eating, researching foods, teaching your kids how to cook. I can't tell you how many college kids I've worked with that don't know how to cook, they don't know how to do their own laundry, these things can be learned at these times. These are valuable, important things. So there's just a little rant on some of the zooming out on the big picture of what they need. How might you articulate some of the big picture of what they need so that they can filter differently?

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Debbie Reber 26:14

Yeah, I mean, I think you touched upon relationship, absolutely. And that also brings me to just this idea of security, like you said, secure attachment, but really them feeling safe and seen, which is you know, something that Tina Payne Bryson talks a lot about, being

soothed, seen, safe, and secure. But really showing up for our kids during this time is so critical for them to feel that sense of security and who they are. Physical safety, emotional safety, all of that. It's the key, really, to good mental health in this moment. I love what you talked about what the homeschooling. As someone who homeschooled for six years, this is what I did, it was all about interest. And in fact, my son used to, and he still plays a bit, a game called Kerbal Space Program, which is like where you're running your own space program. And he's done a high school level physics class, he's doing an honors astronomy class right now. And I just heard from the teacher that Asher already understood this, I'm not gonna use the right words, but he understood this equation for something. He didn't necessarily understand all the math behind it, but he understood all the concepts because of that game. He's known trigonometry because of that game, like he came into these classes with this knowledge base because he dove deep into that game. And so as parents, it's really important for us to show interest in their games. So if they're really interested in Minecraft, there's so many learning opportunities. And so if your kid is into Minecraft, and you don't really get it, like ask them to kind of explain how it works, and ask them probing questions, and see if there are other ways to kind of expand that. I think there's so many opportunities. There's nothing like how a child feels when actually their parent is showing interest in something like that. That, you know, they may get the impression that it's like a waste of time, or you know, that we don't respect what they're doing. So there are tons of opportunities everywhere. I love that you talked about the life skills, the self-awareness, and then also, you know, what our kids really need, what we know kids need is to feel a sense of control, right? That is one of the key agency and competency, like, those are some of the most important things that they will need when they are ready to launch. And in a time when a lot of kids don't feel a strong sense of control, it's really beneficial to try to create opportunities for them to have choice. And I'm not just saying "Do you want waffles or pancakes for breakfast?" But really, you know, engage them in conversations, help them feel a sense of self-motivation, about how they want to approach something. If you want to talk to a school, depending on the age of your child, or you want to create something different, bring them into that conversation. "What do you think would work for you? What are you finding hard about this? If we could design the most ideal learning environment right now, what would that look like?" It doesn't mean we can snap our fingers and make it happen, but we might be able to build some of those pieces in, and then they might have a sense of ownership. We know that when they feel that, it gets that intrinsic motivation going if they feel that kind of purpose from from within, or agency. So those are some of the other things that came up for me.

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Seth Perler 29:48

Let's dive into the agency one for a moment longer, because I think that's really important. And one of the things that tends to happen is that a lot of parents will think

well, "If I gave my kid the choice on this they are going to choose the wrong thing," or when kids will say, "Well, I think this," and the parents will try to use logic or reason to convince them why that won't work. With the wisdom of the parent they may see, you know, a year down the road or 10 steps down the road, that that's not going to work. And they'll often invalidate it with good intention, but they'll nonetheless invalidate what the kid is saying. So I think when we're giving agency, this is such an important topic that you and I can maybe give. Because you do a great job of this with Asher, like, I remember when you're you were talking about moving you involved him in the discussions. He doesn't necessarily get the say on everything when you talk about schools to go to things like that, you really say, "What do you want? What do you think?" But for the parent who's really like, "But Debbie and Seth, if I give my kid these questions, they're gonna make bad decisions," or "I need to convince them that's not going to work. I don't want to see them fail or have a bad experience with this." What kind of thoughts do you have on this? Because again, I think the agency is really good, but I think it's tricky.

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Debbie Reber 31:04

It is tricky. And I think, you know, there's two things that popped into my mind. One is Dr. Ross Greene's work where he has the, you know, proactive and collaborative problem solving, which is also a way of building agency. It's going into a situation where there is tension, or there's a lagging skill, or there's a problem that you're trying to resolve, and you're going into that conversation with your child without an agenda. You're going in without knowing the outcome you want, and that is really hard because we think we know what's the best solution. So part of it is just being willing to listen to our kids if we're doing that problem solving and saying, "Well, we can give this a try for two days. Let's see how it goes and we'll circle back." Part of it has to be our willingness to play in this, you know, if it's a safety issue that's a whole other story. But if it's something where we have wiggle room, let's have more of a curiosity or an experimental mindset. The other thing I was thinking of, especially with older kids, and this is, you know, really stems from Ned Johnson and Bill Stixrud's book, "The Self Driven Child," but you know, one of the phrases I say a lot is "I trust you to make your own decisions and to learn from your mistakes." And so part of this is us just recognizing that our kids need to screw up, they are going to need to fail, they're going to need to learn things the hard way, sometimes. But that is how agency actually develops. If we make the decisions for them, we tell them we know what's right, all of those things. They're not going to launch having a sense of how they operate in the world and what they need to be successful, or even what they think about things. When that person isn't there kind of micromanaging their life, their classwork, all of those things, they're going to be a deer in headlights and not have a clue. Developing agency for a kid to feel that they're being trusted, and yeah, they may make some really bad decisions. And we might be like, "Oh my gosh, I can't believe this is the choice." Play it out

for a little bit and and see what happens and circle back and don't shame and don't judge. Don't be like, "I told you that was going to happen," be like, "That was really interesting. Do you think that was successful? I wonder if we could tweak it," right? As much as we can remain neutral and not have an agenda and remember that our job is to coach and support our kids, not to manage them, then that is where they are going to start to become more aware of who they are and what they need and how to operate in the world.

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Seth Perler 33:43

Excellent. And again, what we tend to do is the sort of "I told you so" type thing, and there's a lot of emotion in it, and "Why did you do this?" But we're not really holding that space and what we want to do. One of the things that Debbie and I both hear in our audiences, is when they start really diving into doing their own deep inner work, is that the conversations in the household change. So your conversations going to start changing to things like "Wow, that's interesting. I'm sorry, that happened to you," or "I'm sorry you went through that. What would you do differently next time?" Rather than saying, "You should have, you should have, you should have," or "I told you so," you know, it's more like "Wow, can I be helpful? How can I be helpful? What would you like from me?" Rather than, "We're gonna fix this, here's what you need to." Say, "Wow, that's really interesting. How can you grow from that? Do you want to hear what I think? Do you want to hear what I think later?"

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Debbie Reber 34:37

"I'm here if you need me. I'm here if you have any questions. I have some thoughts about this, but it's totally your call," and then leave.

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Seth Perler 34:45

Yeah, and it is not easy. Especially if your whole life you've been very attached to these sorts of things and you feel this emotion in your body that's like, "I have to address this in this way," and it's just screaming at you. Yeah, but you have to listen that quiet voice. Listen to the voice that's like, "Okay, walk away." Be like, "I'm here for you," and really think through in the long game, what's going to be more beneficial in the conversation to my child? How are they going to receive the wisdom I'm trying to impart on them best?

D

Debbie Reber 35:17

Right. And we do have a lot of wisdom, I mean let's you know, just to keep it real. So I

understand that we want to share, like, we experience. But it's really worth it to let our kids discover some of these things on their own, because they'll feel totally different about it.

S Seth Perler 35:34

And as you said before, when it's a safety issue, or there certain times when there are boundaries too, you have your clear boundaries, your hard No's and your hard Yes's? Listen, I mean, we're not saying that your kid just is gonna blow up the kitchen and burn the house down and whatever because they let the burner on and you're like, "Well, that's their choice." That is not what we're saying at all. I think I have two more directions to go. One is the less is more.

D Debbie Reber 36:04

I'm just gonna say this before, because I have...

S Seth Perler 36:06

You have five minutes.

D Debbie Reber 36:08

Yeah. All right. Let's keep it real.

S Seth Perler 36:13

Okay. All right. Less is more.

D Debbie Reber 36:16

Less is more, yes. I feel like I'm on a game show all of a sudden. So okay, when I hear less is more what I think of is, for me, I think about the fact that the real learning happens when we don't know that we're learning. And so, you know, we might get really caught up on timelines about this, this, and this has to happen at a certain time. But actually, sometimes it's the things we've just been talking about that actually can kind of lay the foundation for the other learning to happen really quickly when when the child is internally motivated to do that learning. So yeah, how about you?

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Seth Perler 36:54

One of the things that I think about is, particularly for teachers, is one of the biggest examples is in math. But it can also be writing, it can be reading, but with math, if you give your students 20 problems to do that night, particularly for these students that are struggling with stuff, for them to do one or two or three high quality, polished questions, and give them the option openly to do that, and don't fail them that they didn't do all 20 and they get a bad score, but to reward the effort. Not look if it's right or wrong, but to reward the effort, give credit for the effort. We're so addicted to points in school, forget that. We're looking for, can we keep them engaged in an experience? And less is more. Sometimes just doing a couple problems. I will sometimes spend 20 or 30 minutes on a fifth or sixth or seventh grade student on one problem because there's so much richness in that problem. And so many holes that need to be filled often at that level with these problems. So just know less is more in any content area you're teaching and see how you can adapt it. Think of the word 'micro.' I talk about micro lessons a lot, do micro lessons. In your class, give them one good micro learning experience a day. That's it. And I guess I guess my last words for teachers in particular, in 30 seconds or less, because Debbie has to go, is I'm a big fan of rubrics, differentiating content process and product, the democratic process, giving them choice, trying to tailor it to their interests. And this is an art. So I'm not giving you two seconds, you know, just go do this. I know it takes time. But it is less work for you teachers in the long run, actually, when use your artistry and your craftsmanship to craft micro learning experiences that land. I think teachers be aware of what people aren't telling you, that they're struggling, the amount of time it takes just to find what the work is and to get clear on it. Just being really aware and giving them the benefit of the doubt I think it's really an important time, and just building the relationship. So I guess those are my final words for teachers. And my final words for parents, I guess, will be really consider what you're prioritizing. You know, you have 16 waking hours a day with your family, or in general, where are you going to prioritize your energy? Is it in getting the stuff done and having them jump through hoops and finishing all the homework and blah, blah, blah? Or is it in relationship or self-care or enrichment activities, or creative learning experiences, or nothing. Vegging out and saying, "You know what, we're taking a mental health day from school," even though it's Monday, on the first day of a week, and, you know, you just need it. Listen to your heart. The mind is so noisy, so noisy. So much static and clutter, and listen to this and follow that, and keep following that would be my final to parents.

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Debbie Reber 40:12

I don't know that I can say anything better. I could reiterate what you just said, but I feel the same way. Just you know, for parents just be present. As you know, we're all spread thin. But try to make a moment every day where you can just be fully 100% present for

whatever your child needs to share with you or what they want you to do with them, even if it's just sitting on the bed while they're doing something with their headphones on and ignoring you. Like just show up for them every day.



Seth Perler 40:42

Awesome. All right. I know Debbie's got to go. If you like this, give it a thumbs up. Leave us a comment. What do you think of this? What are your thoughts? Do all the things. Sign up for our stuff and share it like crazy. We put our hearts in our lives and our work. And we really, really, really, really wish you the best in this very difficult time.



Debbie Reber 41:00

Yeah, thanks for the conversation Seth. Good luck, everybody. We are thinking about you!



Seth Perler 41:04

Alright, take care, everybody.