



A Heart For All Students

Podcast Episode Transcription

AHEART #23 Tips To Parent An Angry Raging Kid

Hey friend, in today's episode, I am speaking to an issue that so many moms face as they parent, and in particular when you're raising a child who doesn't fit the box of the world's expectations. This issue is even bigger. And what is it, friend? It's when our kids lose it and they rage and get frustrated whenever they're asked to do something they don't really want to do or whenever they're slightly corrected. Some of our kids navigate this a lot. How do we help our children through these situations? I'm going to offer a perspective that really is so different than what we have heard in the world and in our culture and in the churches. And I really hope that you'll be encouraged and inspired to shift your perspective so that you can best equip your child. Be encouraged, we're in this together.

Hi and welcome to A Heart For All Students podcast. I'm your host Lindsay Livingston. Each week, we're going to discover how to parent and educate our uniquely designed outside-the-box, kids to thrive as the people God has designed them to be.

If you are a mom raising a child who simply doesn't fit into the box of the world's expectations, this is a place for you. Whether your child has ADHD, ASD, SPD, GAD, or no acronym at all, your child has been intentionally designed with gifts, passions and purpose by the God who loves them deeply. It's my honor to work alongside you by providing actionable strategies, tips, encouragement and support as you homeschool and raise your uniquely designed child to thrive.

What do I do when my child's first reaction to any frustration is rage? This is a question so many moms ask when the world tells us that these behaviors are willful all the time. We end up becoming frustrated and angry with our kids because we are taking offense to what they're telling us through that behavior. We're told that rage and anger and frustration is bad. But the problem is, we're human beings and rage and anger and frustration are just symptoms of what's going on inside. So to answer the question, what do we do when our kids anger and rage is the first response to all frustration, correction or any sort of issue that they're navigating in life? Well, we need to look behind the

behavior and try to figure out what is going on for so many of our kids that are struggling with executive functioning issues or just kids that are wired differently. They're set up oftentimes to constantly receive messages from the world around them that tell them they're not good enough. They know internally that they're different.

And those differences and those struggles that they navigate are constantly corrected, constantly pointed out, not intentionally by anyone to do harm, but just because this is the world we live in, whether it's a look from some person in the grocery store, whether it's a teacher who's talking down to them, whether it's constant correction or discipline in the form of punishment, which really feels like shame, whether it's looks on the playground or whether it's the fact that they never connect with other children. These kids are constantly receiving these messages that they're not good enough when we feel like we're not good enough, when we feel like we're not valuable, when we feel like everything we do is wrong, the only thing we can do is become protective. That lower part of the brain, which God has designed in order to keep us safe in the face of perceived threats, that part of the brain takes over.

Fear leads to anger, fear comes when we feel not good enough, when we feel not loved, when we feel not valuable or valued, and when we're constantly receiving those messages after a while, it's really hard to take any more correction to take any more.

You're not doing this right. How many times a day are our children who are wired differently, whether they have ADHD, autism, sensory processing issues, whether they have a diagnosis at all? It doesn't really matter. We're all just people. And when we feel bad about ourselves, we become protective and that protection oftentimes leads to anger. And I know this is true for adults. This isn't just true for our children.

It's just more exacerbated in our kids who haven't been taught how to navigate the hard thoughts and feelings for our kids, that haven't been given the emotional vocabulary in the modeling of what it means when we feel rejected, when we feel not good enough behavior is information. And unfortunately, in our culture, in our world and even in our churches, we tend to frame behavior as the be all end all, which means when our children lash out or they become angry or frustrated or hit or throw or kick or bite, instead of recognizing what's going on behind the behavior, just like we want, when I lash out at my husband or a friend, they know something's up. I don't need them to come at me in rage.

Of course they do inhumanity sometimes, but the best way to reach my heart when I am losing my ever loving mind is when someone shows me grace and compassion and love.

When instead of becoming angry at me, they see something's going on just like God does for us. God shows us love even while we're a mess. The Gospel is so clear that we cannot behave perfectly and the only way for God to rescue us was through relationship, even while we were still sinners, even while our behavior was still a mess.

If you're a believer in Christ and you know these terms of sanctification or just the changing of how we grow and we change over time through our relationship with God, the only way we change, the only way our desires become more like God's is through relationship.

We have to learn to look behind the behaviors and seek the heart of our children. So when a child freaks out because they've been corrected or when a child resists learning something new and they freak out, instead of our reaction being to become offended by or surprised by or angry by their behavior, we have to take a step back and think what's going on? How can I connect with this child so that this child feels safe enough to let out all of the garbage that's going on inside of them so that they can be their best self. It only comes through relationship. Some of our children are living in a world that tells them everything about them is wrong.

That tells them by virtue of how it's set up, where we tell our kids what to do every second of the day, that everything that they enjoy inherently is bad when we come to them, when they lose their mind and we say, hey. Friend, you look like you're really upset right now. I can see you're feeling really frustrated. You look like you might be feeling a little sad inside. Sometimes I feel sad inside.

And when I feel sad inside, sometimes it comes out in anger when I don't talk about it. It's going to be OK. You're safe and I love you and we'll get through this. Relationship has to be first. We cannot get our kids to do what we want. We can not get our kids to obey without having a relationship. And even though we know deep down inside how much we love our children, we have to think about it from their perspective. What are the messages they're receiving from us on a daily basis where they just out at the grocery store and someone gave him a crazy look and now they feel bad because it reminds them of that time a year ago when so-and-so was mean to them. Again, it all goes back to what do they feel about who they are. When we kick and we kick and we kick and we kick, when we constantly push, when everything is wrong, when we just want from our kids, we want them to do this. We want them to do that. We want them to do this. And it's not that these girls are wrong. Of course, we want our children to learn how to read. Of course we want our children to learn how to clean their room.

But none of that matters if our kids don't feel loved, don't feel connected. That's what God shows us in the gospel. And the crazy part is, is that's what science shows us. Science will never contradict the Lord. We might later find out that some of what we know about science is wrong.

But what I've seen, what I have seen in the studies of neuroscience, that's all I do these days is learn and learn and learn and read about neuroscience. It all falls in line with the gospel and what Scripture says. God designed us. He cares about what we think and what we feel. Nothing matters apart from relationship with him.

The story of the prodigal son, that kid was out of control according to our world standards, he didn't deserve any grace. And yet God shows us through this story of this father, the incredible grace of this father towards his son, which allowed his son to break down in humility and apologize. Now, our kids aren't going to apologize right away. Our kids aren't going to respond perfectly right away. Do we, as adults? And our brains are fully developed. The part of the brain that is responsible for reasoning, that is responsible for executive functioning, which basically allows us to override our big emotions, to override our desires to do that which we're not supposed to do. That part of the brain doesn't even develop until the third decade of life. And even when we have a fully developed higher part of the brain, which is called the prefrontal cortex, if you're interested, even when we have that fully developed prefrontal cortex, we do not, as adults behave right away and obey right away all the time.

We do not do that. We lose our minds and we have a fully developed prefrontal cortex and we have maturity and experience and hopefully by God's grace, we've had deepened relationship where people saw us and loved us. How in the world can we expect children who are constantly being told that everything they're doing is wrong? And obviously I'm exaggerating, but you get the point that part of the brain is not developed in our kids. So the way we reach them is we bring down fear, we allow them to feel safe. And that comes through relationship. It's OK to give our kids grace, it's OK to not lose our ever loving mind. That's us throwing a temper tantrum. That's us having a meltdown. It's OK for us to not lose our ever loving mind on our children when they're losing theirs. It's OK to come alongside them in love and give grace and spend some time just focusing on relationship instead of what we want from these kids. Can we just allow them to feel delighted in by their parents? Can we carve out some time where we ask nothing of our children but just to be together and enjoy the things they enjoy?

There's so many ways to love our children well, and often times that comes from really examining the expectations that we have. Are those expectations of the world, of our church culture? Are those expectations appropriate for my child? What does my child need in this moment? It's really hard in the moments where we are spent and exhausted. Jesus says, "love each other as I have loved you." Is it going to be done perfectly? No, but it is OK to give our kids grace and parent them differently.

Hey, sweet friend, do you desperately want to be a good Christian mama, but daily you just feel like a failure.

Hey sweet friend. Do you desperately want to be a good Christian Mama? But daily just feel like a failure? You love your child deeply and you want her to thrive but there's just one problem. Your kid has meltdowns over everything, every single day.

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And if you're looking for more practical tools and encouragement as you homeschool and parent your outside-the-box child to thrive, go to www.aheartforallstudents.com. There are tons of resources, freebies and lots of extra support over there. Don't miss anything. I don't do this thing alone. Friends were in it together and together we can change the narrative for our neurodiverse outside-the-box kids.