

Episode 76:

Parenting-Triggers

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[00:02:48]

Welcome to ConneXions Classroom Podcast. I'm Jodi Hildebrandt. It is the last weekend in January—January 28th, 2017. And we are into the year of 2017 and it has been a wonderful, wonderful month for me personally. Lots of experiences and opportunities to connect with family and friends, so I feel very fortunate.

Thank you for joining me this morning. Today, we're going to be talking about kiddos and triggers. Triggers and kids. And so, when I say kids, I mean teenagers, pre-teens, toddlers, children 5 years old to 10 years old, all ages of children and how children become triggered in their lives.

The same way that children become triggered is the exact same way adults become triggered and so there's not this huge distinction about the process of being triggered. But there is a distinction of how children are triggered, and how they respond, and react to their triggers. Children, because they are not as sophisticated and don't have frontal lobe working for them yet, are not as aware, or awake, or conscious, or deliberate, or capable of really being—I don't want to say responsible—but in a way, responsible, they're not completely culpable for the things that go on in their life.

Now, obviously the older they become, and the more that they understand, and the closer they get to adulthood, they become more and more capable, and competent, and responsible, and culpable. However, during this process of them growing up, they are going to be triggered. They're triggered as infants, they're triggered as 18 year olds.

And so, we as the adults who are around them are responsible to know what kind of level of consciousness they have, what kind of mental and emotional stability that they have, and what kind of ability do they have to be accountable for the choices that they make and therefore the triggers that trigger them into making choices, or I should say the triggers that “cause” them to react into the choices that they make.

That is a judgment call and I am not here to say that just because they're a child, that they are not responsible for their triggers and therefore their choices. What I'm suggesting is that you as the adults around these children need to factor that component in and see if they really are capable of being accountable and culpable for why they are reacting, and having them choose different choices so that they don't react to these triggers—rather that they learn how to respond to their triggers.

Again, I'm a little reticent to say that because I don't want the adults in these kid's lives to enable them, say like, “Oh, well you're 8 years old, so you really aren't culpable.” I hope that you will be thoughtful in your relationship with these kids and teach them that they are responsible for the emotions that they have, the thoughts that they have, the choices that they make. And as you learn how children become triggered, that you also will teach them that in those experiences that they're having, they are going to feel emotion and some of their emotion is going to be unpleasant. And inside that unpleasant emotion, they will be triggered. And so, teaching them how to manage those triggers instead of reacting to those triggers is really what this podcast is all about.

[00:06:47] What Are Triggers?

So, triggers—what are they? Triggers are indicators or evidence that you or a child are feeling emotions. That's it. Triggers are indicators or evidence that you're feeling emotion. When a child feels triggered, it simply means that they have become aware that they are feeling emotion. That's it. It's as simple as it is. Triggers are not good or bad, they are only indicators that you are feeling comfortable or uncomfortable emotions.

Anytime a child is feeling an emotion, they're also thinking a thought and they're having a perception which *caused* the emotion or triggered the emotion. The purpose of a trigger is to draw their attention to the fact that they are feeling and therefore thinking. And that invites the child to become curious and find out what they're thinking. Triggers are their allies. Triggers are children's allies. They are the gateway to awareness to themselves.

That's what a trigger is. When I feel triggered, it means I'm feeling emotion. And the emotion is an indicator that I'm thinking something—I've placed meaning onto something. So, when I feel triggered, I'm having an emotion and then I get to pause and not react, but think: *why am I feeling this?* And that will help me connect to what I'm thinking.

Triggers are responses or reactions to experiences. Now, remember, triggers are connected to emotion, so when I have an experience, I'm going to have a response or I'm going to have a reaction. Response suggests that I am thoughtful, and I pause, and I'm not impulsive. Reaction suggests that I knee-jerk and I have some kind of impulsive “jerk” towards the experience.

So, triggers are responses and reactions to experiences that we place meaning onto. So, we have an experience. Experience is neutral. And then we place a particular word or phrase (meaning)—we perceive the experience when we place meaning onto it.

We place an interpretation or a perception onto the experience and immediately we feel the experience. We feel the circumstance of the situation in a whole new light because we start feeling. So, we're not only thinking about the situation, we're also feeling particular emotions around the experience. So, you can experience triggers and uncomfortable or pleasant emotions, however for the purpose of this podcast, we're going to talk about the emotions that are unpleasant because those are the emotions most of us or children struggle with, because we don't know how to be curious and learn from them. And we don't know how to then manage what the Truth is. Oftentimes, we go into distortion around our triggers.

So, we talk about triggers in general, it just means it's tied to an emotion, but for this podcast, triggers are going to mean unpleasant or uncomfortable emotions. Triggers exist to give a child vital, intuitive information about themselves and their experiences. Triggers can be their best friend or their worst enemy, depending on how willing they are to 1) enter into an uncomfortable emotion and then be responsible for those emotions, and 2) tell themselves the Truth about their thoughts and their perceptions that are creating their emotions.

So, when it says triggers can be your best friend or your worst enemy, it depends on how you're willing to hold them. Will you hold the trigger in Truth, like will you tell yourself the Truth, or are you going to tell yourself a distortion?

For children, they need to be taught this. They're not just going to figure this out, so you need to 1) model it as an adult, and then 2) teach it. So, as you engage in experiences and circumstances, the child has thoughts and perceptions. Thoughts and perceptions elicit or trigger emotions and feelings, because all of us feel emotions, and with every thought, every experience, every situation, every corresponding emotion follows.

When a child feels emotion and classifies it as uncomfortable or unpleasant, it's termed a trigger because it causes them to become aware and conscious of what they're feeling and invites them to become curious about what they're thinking. From this position of awareness, they can then choose to make conscious changes to what they think and therefore what they feel.

If a child will become conscious of their triggers and ask curious questions such as, *why am I feeling this way?* and *what is causing me to react in this manner?*, the child will quickly develop awareness of themselves and create wisdom inside themselves. Thus, triggers can empower them to change their own thinking and behavioral patterns. So triggers, in essence, are their allies.

For children, because they begin only by feeling, so they don't have thoughts—as far as we know, anyways. They're like a ball of feeling. They're triggered constantly, because remember, triggers are connected to emotions.

When we acknowledge our emotions, or when children acknowledge their emotions, we then understand that we're triggered. It's like we say to ourselves, “Okay, I'm present. I'm here. I'm experiencing.” That's what being triggered is—it's like, I'm in the present, I'm in the moment, I'm going to be conscientious about what's going on. Children are balls of emotion and feelings; that's why children are so demonstrative and so dramatic. And when I say dramatic, not to be confused with drama-filled distortion.

We love how children can be so free with themselves, and their thoughts, their bodies, and feelings because unless they've been shamed, children have not been told that they can't feel, or express themselves, or become anything that they want to become. They are free—free from inhibitions, free from distorted thoughts, they're free to become whatever they choose—they are free. It's a place that many of us desire to obtain, though at one time we were once there and many of us long to return to that place of freedom.

[00:13:52] Distortion, A Datsun, And A Song

I want to tell you a story about when I was a kid. I think I was about 7 years old. I remember so distinctly where I was and what happened. I was in our green Datsun truck and for those of who remember Datsuns, they were back in the 70's. And I was in the truck, my dad was at some kind of feed store. We had a farm and he was buying feed for the animals.

I was in the truck and I had the engine on, and on the radio a song came on called *Dust in The Wind*. Probably many of you know this song, “*All we are in is dust in the wind.*” I was singing this song and I knew it, I knew the verses, I knew the chorus. My dad got in the truck and I was continuing to sing and he turned to me, I'll never forget his face, I'll never forget his tone, he looked at me and he said, “Don't sing that song. That's not who we are.” I was shocked, I was

confused. And in my state of what once was freedom, I'd not placed any meaning onto that song or those lyrics, but my father had, and he was triggered. And instead of him taking responsibility for his own perceptions and feelings, he projected his distortion onto me by saying in an angry tone, "Don't sing that. That is not who we are."

I remember being so confused, like what do you mean, *that's not who we are?* I didn't understand what he was saying. He was completely in his own distortion and not aware of what was happening inside his own experience and mind. His triggers were oblivious to him, yet his distorted thoughts told him to shut me down so he could be comfortable and not be in conflict. He reacted to his distorted thoughts and "controlled" the situation, which was me singing. And he was successful in the short run.

Yet in the long run, he lost out. He lost his clarity, his connection, his compassion, his curiosity to understand his daughter. And that's tragic because he did not understand his emotions, his triggers, that he is and was responsible for his own thoughts, and feelings, and choices. He missed out on a connecting experience with me because he was 1) unaware of many things: his triggers, his feelings, his fear, his distorted thoughts, his control that were operating inside of him. And 2) he misused his trigger, which is present to support each of us to pause, to get curious, to contemplate what and why I'm reacting and feeling the way that I am. So, he misused his trigger and he used it in distortion.

Whereas, he could have used it in the Truth which would have invited me at the tender age of 7 to connect with him instead of feeling confused, and scared, and bad, and wrong, and like I'd upset my father somehow. That experience has stuck with me for 40 years because the emotions were so strong, the triggers were so strong. And here for each of us to recognize that we each have distorted thoughts in ourselves and that we are each responsible to not react, to think, to be responsible and honest, to feel the emotion that's connected with the trigger, and to contemplate whether the feeling is connected to a distorted thought or not.

When we do those things and realize that our trigger is connected to a distorted thought, then we can reframe that distortion back into the Truth. Because distortion only hurts the person with the trigger, and all those people around who are having the distortion projected onto them.

The Truth was, my father placed meaning onto those words and was upset at some level by what those words meant to *him*. Now, I don't know exactly what happened inside of his head because I never asked him and it took me about 30 plus years to even figure out what happened, yet he was triggered by what I was saying. "All we are is dust in the wind." My guess is that it hit his distorted thoughts and false beliefs that said something like, "I'm not enough. I'm inadequate. I'm unworthy." And he became triggered, and instead of using it as an opportunity to challenge those lies about himself, he inadvertently kept them alive by projecting his distortions onto me and "making me" responsible. Because at 7, he was making me responsible for his thoughts, and feelings, and distortions, and choices. He missed a beautiful gift for himself to heal his own lies, his own distortion, and engage in connection with me.

So sad. I lost my father last year at this time and it's sad to think about how many times that he in my life projected his own distortions because he was triggered by emotion. I remember

exactly where I was, and how much I was enjoying singing that song, and I liked the music, and I had no idea what I was saying or that the words I was using had any meaning that could be interpreted as bad, or wrong, or inappropriate. But because of his triggers, he reacted and I then got triggered. And I don't know that I ever have sung that song out loud again. If I have sung it again, I always remember that experience because it was so loaded with negativity. What once was a song I really enjoyed, every time I hear it, every time I hear somebody else sing it, I remember that experience and I remember sitting in that truck being assaulted by my father's triggers and then being triggered myself because I then believed his distortion. That's how dangerous triggers can be if not held in Truth.

Now, I want to show the other side of a trigger because triggers can also be gifts. If my father would have been conscious, he could have used that trigger that he experienced inside himself to get curious about *why am I having such a reaction to this song? Why is it that when I hear my daughter sing, "All we are is dust in the wind," why is that so triggering to me?*

So, from that perspective, our triggers can become gifts. They can help the person have consciousness if they'll hold their triggers in Truth. Or they can be destructive and they can feel like they're trapping by reinforcing the distortion and the victim that comes out when I feel a trigger if I hold it in distortion.

I hope that you can see through that story that the triggers that my father was experiencing could have been used as a gift for him to understand himself. Or depending on how the person holds it, if they don't hold it in Truth, they can be destructive. Triggers can feel like they're trapping or they can reinforce your own distortions. They can be dependent solely on the individual who is experiencing them.

So, as you are experiencing life, you will become triggered and so will your children or any child. We all become triggered because we all feel. This is an opportunity for you when you become triggered, to become aware and conscious of what you are feeling and invite yourself, invite your child, to become curious about what they are thinking. From this point of awareness, you can choose to make conscious changes. You can move from distortion into Truth by being conscientious about what you think and therefore what you feel.

Children, though they do become triggered, don't oftentimes have the same perceptions about the world and their life as the adults around them do. So why is that? I was just telling you that, like I was singing this song and it wasn't triggering me at all. I really didn't even understand the words. Now, that I'm an adult and I say, "All we are is dust in the wind." I mean, I can see possibly why my father became so triggered, but as a 7-year-old, I was just singing along and I enjoyed it.

So, children oftentimes don't have the same perceptions about the world that the adults in the world have. One of the reasons why that is, is because they haven't had as many life experiences. As they grow in years and development, they will have more experiences, but the younger that they are, the more unaware and innocent they are, and therefore they're more vulnerable and more connectable. They are able to relate and hold boundaries with themselves. So don't project your distortions onto them. So important to understand that.

A kid can say, “I hate you.” And they're like 5 years old. Well, a child saying that at 5 versus an adult saying that at 35 has a whole different connotation. And so, if I get triggered by a 5-year-old saying, “I hate you,” that's more about me as the adult than it is about the child. A child at 5 just feels intense emotion, and oftentimes, they don't know how to manage it. And so, they say things and they do things that don't have a whole lot of meaning, they're just a lot of emotion. But because we as adults, if we have a lot of distortion, we will project someone else our age saying that to us, and we get super triggered.

Now, if we're centered, then we could even handle an adult saying that to us because it won't elicit or trigger emotion of a fearful or an emotion of I'm inadequate. It's just Fred who lives around the corner who's upset because my dog pooped in his yard, and he's like, “I hate your dog.” And that's Fred. What he's saying is, “Keep your dog in the house, I don't want it pooing in my yard anymore.” And so, I can say, “Okay, Fred, I'm sorry.” And I don't have to become triggered and go into distortion with Fred because I understand him.

So, we need to be very careful not to project our own distortions onto our children.

Here are some statements that could be taken in distortion.

[00:25:35] Statements of Distortion

An adult says “Why did you not feed the dog?” And the kid says, “Well because I wanted to play.” Here's the dog, the dog hasn't eaten all day and the child's saying, “Well, I didn't feed the dog because I wanted to play.” And the adult is thinking *oh, my gosh, the dog has been hungry all day and you're being super selfish because you want to play* and the adult gets triggered by the 9-year-old telling him why he didn't feed the dog because he wanted to play. Well, at 9 years old, it seems really reasonable for the child to have a greater desire to go play with his friends than it is to feed the dog. But if an adult takes that in a place of distortion—shame—then they will become triggered.

Heres another one. An adult says, “I can't believe you didn't think of me.” Let's say that they ate the last piece of pie, or last piece of pizza, or the last of the casserole, and the child says “Well, I was hungry, so I had another serving.” And the adult's like, “I can't believe you didn't think of me.” And these kinds of statements are triggering to the adult because they're in distortion as though the child was just being selfish and didn't want to give to the parent. That isn't it all. It's as simple as, the child was still hungry, and at 6, or 10, or 12 years old, they have not developed the skill of empathy. Though you want to teach them to be empathic, they haven't developed it yet. So, the adult becomes triggered.

Heres another one. “How come you didn't get this done?” So, the kid was supposed to clean the kitchen and the parent comes home and goes, “How come you didn't get this done?” And they say, “Well, I wanted to go on a walk with my friends.” Or with the dog. Or, “I needed to get my homework done.” And so, they have a very different angle or perception about cleaning the kitchen—like, the kitchen's not going to go anywhere, so they can clean it up some other time. But for an adult, because they have a perception of *I have a meeting here tonight and I want the kitchen clean so when all my co-workers come over, the kitchen and the family area is picked up*

and clean. Well, the kid's not thinking about that, they have a different angle and different perception, so the adult hopefully will hold onto themselves and not allow themselves to get triggered inside distortion.

Last one. "Don't you see that you've made a mess?" The kid is making a cake or brownies and they've got the mixer, and they keep pulling the mixer out without turning it off and it's flipping all over the place. And the parent's like, "Don't you see you're making a mess?" And the kid's like, "No." They're having a good time ... making a mess. They're not seeing how much effort it's going to take to clean the stuff off the ceiling. Again, different perspective.

Or the parent says, "That's going to cost me an arm and a leg." Because the child has inadvertently broken a window.

Or the parent says, "How could you do that?" Maybe like a 6 or 8-year-old pulled the flour sack off the counter and flour went all over the hardwood floors and it's all through the cracks.

Or a parent says, "You should have ... stayed longer, worked harder, run faster." Those are all statements inside distortion. And the parent is triggered. And what you're teaching your child is a poor model of how *not* to manage triggers.

So, when a parent comes toward a child like this, you are modeling that when you have an emotion, you hold it inside distortion. And then the child will not be able to learn how to manage their emotions correctly because you keep giving them experiences of modeling of triggers and then going into distortion instead of triggers and holding it in Truth.

So, holding triggers in Truth will look like this:

"Why did you not feed the dog?" And instead of it being an accusation, you ask a curious question. And they said, "Well, I went and played." And so, then I say, "Come here. Come sit in front of me." And then, I call the dog over. And I say, "Do you see the puppy? The puppy hasn't eaten since 7 this morning and I'm sure he's really hungry. Do you know what it feels like when your tummy is hungry from 7 in the morning and you don't get fed until 7 at night?" And the child's like, "Yes." And it's like, "Well, that's how he feels." And you're trying to help him connect, you're trying to help the child connect with the puppy through empathy, through validation, through emotion. And so, you're not being accusatory of the child where you would be triggered. You're taking that emotion that you feel and that sorrow you feel for the dog and you're trying to teach your child to feel the same thing.

Where they ate the last piece of pie or last piece of pizza, instead of saying "I can't believe that you didn't think of me," you say, "Oh, I'm disappointed that there's no more pizza left." So, you feel the emotion but you hold the emotion in Truth instead of distortion, so you don't allow the emotion to go into a place of distortion and trigger you.

When you see a child making a mess with brownies or cake, instead of saying, "Don't you see you're making a mess?" You say, "Wow, let me help you. Look up on the ceiling, do you see all the cake batter on the ceiling? That's what happens when you pull the mixer out, so let me teach

you how to keep all the batter in the bowl because it's going to be quite a feat cleaning that up. And I'm going to let you help me so you can learn.”

And so, instead of having these emotions that react in you and you turn into distortion and then you model them inside this not favorable model of trigger and then distortion, you model it from a place of Truth. You still feel the emotion, but the trigger / emotion is not then projected onto the child.

Let's kind of flip this and talk about *children* becoming triggered, and children not being taught to manage their own thoughts, feelings, and choices. If the adults in the child's world aren't doing that, the child will never be able to learn this skill. So, children are triggered as well. Children say and do things out of reacting because they believe, as adults do, that something outside of them is doing something to them—hurting them, offending them, upsetting them, attacking them, accusing them, blaming them, belittling them—and the Truth is, this is not so. Just like I was giving the example of the adult feeling attacked, and blamed, and upset, and offended, that wasn't happening. The same thing is not happening to a child.

When someone feels triggered, it's all happening inside their own mind. Even if someone says, “You're stupid” to a child or an adult, the Truth is, the child is the only one who can or gets to critique themselves. When you realize that you're the only one that can critique you, you are holding boundaries. Just because someone says *you can't figure this out because you're not smart*, or *what's wrong with you*, or some other type of insult or remark, does not mean anything about you. The Truth is it means that there's something about **them**; they're talking about themselves.

Teaching children that people or other kids and adults get triggered too, and they are not being taught how to be responsible for their triggers, and so their distorted thoughts and false beliefs come flying out of their mouths and manifest in their actions. So, that's why this thing is happening. So, what is it that's happening? Someone says, “You're stupid. You can't. What's wrong with you?” That's not about your child, that's about the other person. And that's about them every single time. Someone—a child or adult—when someone's mean, or aggressive, or snide, or rude, or inappropriate, or disrespectful, or dishonest, or irresponsible, or blames, or makes excuses, or someone feels attacked, they're reacting inside their own distortion. And we can teach our children to have compassion for them, because we or they have experienced distorted thoughts and false beliefs before. So if someone's coming at me and they're saying things like, “What's wrong with you?” And, “You're so dumb,” and “You can't,” and “You never do anything right.” Teaching your child that the person that's talking that way is talking about themselves. It's not about the child. It's about the person who is saying those things. And teaching your child to have compassion for them because your child has experienced triggers and your child has experienced distortion before. They can understand how hurtful and how nasty those distortions feel.

So, when children say, “You're not allowed to play with me.” Or, “It's mine and you can't touch it.” Or they tell a lie about you, you can then invite your children into compassion and have them truly see what is happening, because it's not about them, it's about this other person who's being triggered and it's hitting their distortions and they aren't managing their distortions well.

And they're "throwing them up" on you and others, and that's not responsible or honest of them to do that. It teaches children to have empathy when they can understand when someone else is coming towards them. It teaches them to have empathy, compassion, validation, and boundaries as they are on the other side of someone else's distortions, someone else's triggers.

So, when they go into their own distortion, because they will, like when they say, "I hate you." Or they're getting into trouble at school, or with a friend, or they lie to you, or I say I'll do something and I don't do it and I blame my siblings for something, or I take something without asking. Your children can then realize how human it is to be triggered, and then you can teach them how they can manage it. Because if they don't manage it, if they're not willing to be honest, and responsible, and humble, their triggers will just continue. They'll continue to have more and more triggers. Or you can invite them to be honest, responsible, and humble. You can invite them to manage their own triggers and help them remember that your perception and meanings are different than the other person's.

That's a sophisticated concept.

When someone is triggered, like my father when he was triggered, if someone could have taught me that when anyone around me comes at me with emotion like that, it's not about me. Whether it's a child or an adult, it's not about me. It's always about the other person. I would not have spent 30 years trying to figure out what that was and how aggressive that distortion was that came out of my father's mouth, because it attacked me and I have walked around my whole life with those thoughts and those feelings inside my soul. It's very sad.

So, if I get triggered, I need to get myself centered because I've got to realize that my perception is different than the other person who's triggered. It's a different perception than them. Even though they're triggered, it doesn't mean that their trigger is the Reality, it just means that they're feeling an emotion and they have a meaning they're placing on the emotion. And that doesn't mean that I have the same meaning.

So, my responsibility is to become centered. Then I can engage the other person's distortion. This is how I resolve the conflict, because the conflict originates inside the being, not outside the being. So, what that means is, is that when I'm triggered, I'm having a conflict and it's going on inside my own body, inside my own mind. It's not going on outside. So, my father thought me singing the song was the conflict, but that wasn't the conflict—his trigger was the conflict. I was a seven-year-old girl singing, "All we are is dust in the wind." That was all, that was it. There was no meaning to it, it was just words to a tune. And I remember sitting there with my eyes closed and singing at the top of my lungs and then when he snapped at me, it scared me because *he* was in conflict and he thought that it was me singing the song that was creating the conflict and that was not the Truth.

Once the being is clear about the distorted perception and they have reframed it into Truth, they can now address the situation on the outside of them, i.e. the other person's meaning, the other person's aggression, or comments, or behavior, the unfairness of something. If the person is not settled in Truth, it will be a huge, massive distorted thought cycle, and it can last—the pain, and

the confusion, the sadness—it can last for decades and be passed along to future generations that have zero percent of responsibility to do with the original distortion.

So, that's what happened between me and my father, if I wouldn't have become conscious, because he never did. In fact, he probably doesn't even remember he even did that. But if I wouldn't have become conscious, I think I was probably like 37, 38 when I finally figured it out, then that still would be sitting inside my system and it still would be hurting me. But I was able to reframe it and get it out of my soul because his trigger was not mine. I did not have the same meaning that he did.

Let's talk about perceptions. How can two different people be in the exact same circumstance but feel completely different about it? How can one person feel completely different at different times about an identical circumstance? It's kind of interesting. That's what we've been talking about this whole time. Well, the Truth is, is that two different people *can* be in the exact same circumstance and feel completely different about it. That's what happened to me at 7 and my father at 47. He had a very different experience than I did because he had a different perception. But the problem was that he was not willing—really, it wasn't even about willing, he didn't even know. He was uneducated about perceptions, and meanings, and how his perception was different than mine. He was into right and wrong; he was actually into shame. Shame tells us to control things, and that's exactly what he did.

Our emotions are not a direct result of what we see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. Rather, our emotions are a function of the stories we tell ourselves about what we experience. That's important. Our emotions are a reaction to the stories we tell ourselves about what we experience.

So, why do we so often tell stories that lead us to pain rather than peace? That's interesting.

Let's talk about what things mean. Let's say that it starts raining. If I'm in distortion, then my perception says *rain is bad*. And what means is that I'm not enough. Because it's raining and that's bad, it means that there's something wrong with me.

Let's say I plan to have a party outside in my backyard and now I'm frustrated because I'm not going to be able to hold it there. And I feel like I'm being punished for all the bad things I've done in my life because now it's raining. And so, that means that I'm unworthy, or I'm inadequate, or I don't matter.

And the Truth is, is that rain is not good or bad—it just *is*. Rain is just something that falls from the sky just because. And even though I've planned a party out in my backyard, I can feel frustrated and I can act disappointed. And I get to be responsible and honest about all my emotions. So, rain isn't bad, it just means that it's falling.

Let's say my son says he hates me and that means ... in the Truth, he's upset because he felt embarrassed in front of his friends when I came to pick him up after he was late for his curfew.

My teenager is having trouble at school and that means ... he or she has made choices that resulted in a disciplinary action, and they're now experiencing outcomes to these choices that they don't like. This is a visceral learning experience for him or her.

Or my child hit the neighbor boy, and that means ... my child felt angry and he has not yet learned to feel and manage his emotions responsibly. It means I will coach him to clean up his offenses to the neighbor boy and his family, and he will have the opportunity to learn from the consequences of his choices to hit. Those are all experiences that elicit emotion, but instead of putting it in distortion, I hold it in Truth.

Here's the Truth. The Truth is, we're all going to continue to have experiences, and therefore we will all continue to feel emotions or be triggered by emotions that are attached to those experiences. And at times, dependent on how much distortions or false beliefs we have in our unconscious, we will have distorted thoughts and false beliefs touched. So, if I'm a soul that isn't cleaning these things up, then I will have those distortions, false beliefs touched more often than maybe you. If you are being conscientious and you're reframing your distortions into Truth quite often, you won't have as many triggers because experience will not upset you. It won't be uncomfortable, you'll move *with* the experiences. We are all responsible to manage our emotions when they're triggered. We are all responsible to be honest about what we're thinking, and feeling, and choosing to do with those thoughts and feelings.

The challenge is that most people don't even know that they're being triggered because it's become such a way of life for them to react, and attack, and drop responsibility for themselves.

[00:47:10] How Do I Know I'm Being Triggered?

Here's how you know you're being triggered.

Every time you experience an emotion, that's it, you're being triggered. Now, you have to decide *is the emotion I'm experiencing in Truth or distortion?* Because you need to look at your thoughts and see if your thoughts are in Truth or distortion. That's how you will know what your emotions mean. Let me say that again. Every time you feel something, you're being triggered. And instead of reacting to what you're feeling, you need to stop and say, "Why is it that I feel this? What is it that I'm thinking that then is creating this emotion?" Because your thoughts always come before your emotions.

And so, if your thought is in the Truth—which means the facts, the objectiveness, the Reality, the eternal nature of Truth—if your thoughts are in Truth, then your emotions are aligned in Truth. But if your thoughts are in a distortion, like my father's thoughts were in a distortion, I was singing a song and he said, "Don't sing that." And then he said, "We are not that. That's not who we are," he said.

And I remember hearing that thinking *that's not who we are, what?* I didn't put it together for years. Because he was in distortion.

So, this is the Reality. You are responsible to become conscious of you. You are the only one that has that ability to know what's going on inside of you. No one else can know what's going on inside of you, but you. So, when you see yourself blaming, or lying, or keeping secrets, or becoming angry—and I don't mean anger is always distorted, but watch it and make sure it doesn't tip into distortion. Or you find yourself fearing, or accusing, or gossiping, or trying to intimidate, or scare someone, or being dishonest, or not open, not transparent, being unwilling to

listen, if you find yourself manipulating, making excuses, distracting, acting out in addiction, feeling entitled, selfish, acting like a victim—you are in distortion. You need to stop immediately and find someone to walk you through the RAISE process.

If you don't know what that is, listen to podcasts 68 and 69 and you will learn what the RAISE process is. The RAISE process is:

R, recognize your triggers.

A, ask for validation.

I, invite feedback.

S, spot false beliefs and distorted thoughts.

E, embrace the Truth, reframe your distortion back into the Truth.

This is what we need to teach children, that they are responsible for their emotions and they are responsible to know what they're thinking—the thoughts that come preparatory to their emotions. They do not get to react to things, they get to respond; so they get to pause, and they get to contemplate about what it is that they're feeling and why they are feeling the way they are. They are responsible for that.

They also are responsible to understand why they're being triggered, which means why they're feeling the way that they are—triggered. And they get to clean that up. This is how a child can wisely heal those distorted thoughts that the triggers are so lovingly inviting them to see, so that you can maintain connection in all of your relationships, particularly the relationship with yourself. You want your children to be connected to themselves.

Connection is an outcome of living in Truth, not distortion. So, track your triggers, teach your children how to track their triggers, use that word, say, “Kiddo, I think you're triggered.” And have them get connected to how they're feeling and then what they're thinking, because they just as adults, think that something on the outside of them is happening to them. Something is doing something to them. And that is a distortion. And so, invite them to become connected to their own emotions and be thoughtful about what it is that they're thinking, so that they can find their own triggers and bring them back into Truth and back into connection.

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