

# Episode 75: Parenting-Emotional Development in Children

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**[00:02:48]**

Welcome to ConneXions Classroom Podcast. I am Jodi Hildebrandt. It is January 15<sup>th</sup>, I can't believe it. We're already halfway through the month of January 2017. Thank you for joining me this morning.

Today, I want to talk about children and the process that they go through in their development, so not only their physical development but more importantly, what I want to focus on is their spiritual and emotional development.

Children quite naturally will develop physically, and as long as they have their needs met, proper sleep, and nutrition, and they're around people who are providing other physical needs for them, they will quite naturally develop physically.

However, when children are growing up in environments where their psychological, and emotional, and spiritual needs are not being cared for or nurtured, they will begin to have problems, or disturbances, or disorders—psychologically, spiritually, emotionally.

And so, I want to talk about what some of those are and how to rear a child in a very healthy environment—or as healthy as you possibly can.

So, let's start by talking about when children are born, they continue to develop and grow just like they did when they were in the womb, and they just naturally grow into a physical adult. They also develop emotional and spiritually as they begin to interact with their tangible, physical world of people and things. Such as, they interact with food, and shelter, and laws, and rules, and their five senses—taste, touch, sound, smell, sights—they interact with pains of the world, pains in their life, things like temperature changes, they know what hot and cold feels like.

And then, they also interact with their intangible life or their intangible world, such as emotions, and perceptions, fears, expectations, resentments, their gut instincts, all of their emotions that they feel, and possibly things that they try to control. They interact in the non-physical world or the intangible world around creating distractions, and listening to shame, and distortion.

So, there's many things that are intangible that, if those things are not pointed out to them, they will not know how to properly interact with those experiences that are very real. They're just as real as interacting with the physical world.

Kids, when they're born, they're born connected, and they are perfect beings. And at birth, they begin to learn to interpret and place meaning onto their environment. Through this interpretation, they decide whether or not they are safe and they question whether or not they have value and worth.

So, through this interpretation of—and placing and meaning onto—situations and circumstances, children and also adults alike define their experiences—all experiences—

with particular words and phrases that match what they perceive. That's very important: it is their perception that teaches them what things mean. This process of perception is subjective and emotionally-driven and there is no way to prevent this interpretation from happening. So once a child places meaning onto their experience, then the emotion comes, and then comes language, and words that are attached to their emotion. Words that we use to describe the events.

So, the first thing that happens for a child and alike as an adult as well, is that they have an experience. And then they have an interpretation of the experience, and then they place words or meaning onto the interpretation of the experience. And then, they have feelings around those thoughts or the meaning of their interpretation around the experience. And then, they put language to the feelings, and the thoughts, and the meaning, and the interpretation of the experience. And then, they will start choosing, they'll start behaving. And inside their behavior, they will either respond or they will react, which creates additional experiences and opportunities to reinforce new experiences according to what they interpret.

So, the first thing that happens is experience, then interpretation, then thoughts—which is about meaning—and then feelings, and then words, and then behavior. That's the process of interpretation for a child.

So, when children are born because they're perfectly connected, they're vulnerable. And because of their vulnerability, they *will* experience pain. Through this pain and discomfort, children learn to understand what vulnerability means. Their experiences give them the opportunity to think, and feel, and perceive, and place meaning onto their experiences, and ultimately choose an action or behavior and receive outcomes for choices made. This process of experience, perception, thinking, feeling, action, and outcome is an inevitable and necessary process for their emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical maturation, and the ability to become aware and connected to themselves, others, and God. This is the process of *being* vulnerable.

So, this podcast is talking about children and how they develop, and so being able to understand that there is a process of development that starts with having experiences. And because children come and they don't have any words or meaning for experience, we as adults around them or parents, help them to interpret and think certain things around certain experiences, and then they will have particular feelings around those interpretations and thoughts. And we will help them with their word choice and then as they experience their thoughts, and feelings, and words, they then will make a choice to behave a certain way, and they will either respond or they will react according to what they have interpreted or how they are experiencing life.

So, if they stay in a place of Truth, then they'll experience life from a place of responding, they won't feel reactionary, they won't feel a need to react, because they'll know that they don't need be afraid of what they're experiencing.

Children, because they are vulnerable (and adults are vulnerable as well), it is difficult for a child to recognize this vulnerability because vulnerability oftentimes is uncomfortable, especially when children experience sickness, or hurt—either emotional or physical hurt and some type of discomfort—they feel the uneasiness or dramatic nature of the pain and they want to control it and “make it go away.” Now, there's nothing inappropriate about wanting a child to not feel pain *and* the adults around the child need to be centered and living in Truth themselves in order to know what the pain, what the uneasiness, what the discomfort *means* and not attempt to control it.

For example, adults try to control things all the time. So one way they try to control is a kid gets sick and they give them some medicine and they don't take them to the doctor for whatever reason. Let's say they have a really high fever for days and it doesn't come down but they won't take the child to the doctor, that is an effort of an adult trying to control the experience.

Or a kid eats a bunch of junk food and feels sick and needs to throw up and the parent blames the candy and chip makers for making the junk food and making their kid feel sick. Can you hear the control in that? Instead of giving responsibility to the child for eating all of the junk food, they blame the chip and candy makers for making the junk food.

Or another example of control is a teenager is speeding and gets pulled over and the parent tells the teen, “The laws are ridiculous and you shouldn't have been stopped for that.” So, that's another way that the parent tries to control the outcome of the child and teaches them that their choices for speeding and the outcome of getting pulled over is not accurate, so they're controlling the experience of the child and teaching them things that are going to create more pain for them and not less pain, because they're teaching them to be irresponsible.

So, going back to the beginning of this podcast, trying to help a child learn how to develop appropriately and healthily as they move through their childhood and teenage years of life. And so much of this birth through 18 has this experience of pain. Pain is inside the experiences of life, inside my years of 1 to 18.

So, this “control of pain” is control of choice and outcome, and control of vulnerability, and control of Reality, and control of Truth, control of pain and discomfort. Because the Truth is, is that pain and discomfort are a part of life and whether pain comes through or by the way of my choices and their outcomes, or someone else's choices and their outcomes that then affect me, or if pain comes by natural outcomes, *pain is going to come*. It's just there; there's no way to stop it.

Pain is meant to be a teacher, it's not your nemesis—it's your ally. Pain is not bad, it is here to temper you, and teach you, and humble you, and refine you, and create wisdom in you. Pain is here to support you to grow and develop, and when pain is present in a child's life—a toddler to a teen's life—depending on where they're at in their developmental process will be how they will “manage” the experience of pain. Let me say that again. Depending on

where a child is in their process of maturation will depend on how they manage the experience of pain.

### [00:14:05] Developmental Stages

So, let's talk about the development process of a child's life. Here are the developmental stages. Your children pick up cues, messages about other's expectations, how your child should behave in various contexts, whether they are good or bad, whether they are safe or not. They pick those things up from around their environment, their school, their family, their extended family, their church, friends, social events, TV, social media, music, movies, etc. Children's senses are constantly absorbing information, and they process that information in complex ways as they develop through childhood and into adulthood.

At birth, they categorize sensory stimuli to mean "I am safe" or "I'm not safe" which is very concrete—it's one or the other. In early childhood, they categorize sensory experiences as "good or bad" or "right or wrong" which is very concrete. Through adolescence, they increasingly break out of these rigid categories and understand their experiences in more abstract ways, which is good.

Now, when I was just talking about pain, depending on where a child is in the developmental process, they will either experience pain in a concrete manner or they will experience it in a complex manner. And what we are wanting them to experience is to be able to hold pain in a way that they can appreciate—and I'm not saying that they like it—but they can appreciate the nuances of pain, and that it's not to here to hurt them. It's here to give them experience so that they can change in their life, and develop and gain wisdom.

So, I want to go through the different developmental stages really quickly. So, the first stage is birth to 18 months and it's called *sensing*. So, when children are born, up to about a year and a half to two years old, they are all about sensing their environment. They perceive experiences as safe or unsafe. They're sensing if their world is safe, whether they have confidence or not that their environment is safe. They're very ego-centric, which means the world revolves around them. And they're needing to bond with their parents for a sense of worth, and safety, and value.

The next stage of development is called *concrete* and it's 18 months to about 8 years old. And here are the characteristics of someone who is in a concrete stage of development. They still perceive things as black and white, good or bad, right or wrong. The world still revolves around them, they're very ego-centric, yet they are desiring autonomy. So, they've already bonded with their parents and they've bonded with other adults that are very important in their life and get a sense of worth, and safety, and value. Now, they're trying to individuate and create their own identity, so they desire autonomy and they act independently and capable, they have a sense of self-control and adequacy.

Then, at about 8 years old to about 12, they begin to start learning how to *abstract*, so they move away from this concrete sensing position, into more of an abstract world which, that's

where all of us adults live, is in the abstract. So, they learn to have initiative, and confidence, and organize, and plan, and structure, and understand, and make commitments, and follow through. They understand about the nuances of choice and commitment. And they begin to see different angles on things. It's still difficult for them, they still want to go to black and white like, "You said this to me so it means you're mad at me." Instead of saying, "No, I said this to you and it means I love you *and* I can be mad at you," it's like, "No, no, you can't love me and be mad at me because that's too abstract." But as they hit these years, these 8 to 12 years old, they start learning that, "*Oh, you can be mad at me and love me? Wow, that's interesting.*"

And then, when they hit about 12 through 18, they are getting better at abstracting. They appreciate complexities, and nuances, and angles. They're honoring their own emotional intuition. They're willing to make commitments and follow through with themselves. And they start seeing themselves as a separate entity from those people around them, which is really good because you want them to individuate so that they can launch at 18 and be an adult out in the world.

So, they go from a place of sensing, to concrete, to abstraction. And inside that developmental process is a part of the brain called the frontal lobe. And the frontal lobe of the human brain is where high-order thinking takes place, it's right in the front of the forehead. It's where planning takes place, and strategic thinking, and logic, and emotional regulation, and the ability to control your impulses. This area of the brain is the slowest to develop, not being complete until about the age of 25. It takes a while for this part of the brain to really become set, and so we talk about children and we talk about teens being really impulsive, and not being able to regulate their emotions, and they're really dramatic. Well, part of it is because this part of the brain is still developing. Children thus need continual nurturing and clear direction, teaching emotional honesty, responsibility, and humility, involving their ability to make wise decisions to support their brains to develop fully and properly. Children need help or training to abstract and appreciate complexities that are present in relationships, such as how they affect others, which means have empathy, why they're experiencing conflicts, how to recognize distortion versus Truth, and how to regulate their own emotional system. Children need adult's support and life experience as they think through their own experiences, their own emotions, and conflicts, and relationships. They need to ask and be asked questions to support them to connect with the Truth of their experiences and stay out of distorted thinking.

These skills of empathizing and asking questions, and being curious, and appreciating complexities in relationships, directly affect the development of the child's brain. So, brain development is not exclusively due to the passage of time; the child's experiences play an active role in shaping the brain as it develops, and in building connections between different parts of the brain.

The pre-frontal cortex, which is called the frontal lobe, is involved in complex additional and organizational skills, including following rules, reasoning, suppressing impulses, and

making decisions. If the frontal lobe of the brain is not developed well through appropriate nurturing, honesty, boundaries, and responsibility, the child *will* have a distorted sense of choice and consequence. That's very important to understand—that this part of their brain needs to have continual experience with being honest, being boundaried, being responsible, teaching them how to empathize, giving them validation, teaching them how to validate, teaching them to be responsible and be vulnerable. If the child is not taught these things, they will have a distorted sense of choice and outcome, and their brain will automatically misinterpret experiences and struggle to make appropriate decisions.

Planning ahead, learning to have empathy, making complex decisions, maintaining a strong attention span, and following through with commitments are signs of a healthy brain.

The good news, even after childhood the brain remains plastic—the scientific word is neuroplasticity—or the ability to alter its thinking and interpretation patterns.

If the skills of a healthy brain were not learned in childhood, they can be learned in adulthood and the brain is able to physically change and even change shape to accommodate Truth and Reality. Isn't that awesome? It's wonderful. So, it's never too late for anyone to change, because the brain is an organism that can change, and learn, and develop, and grow, and mature.

So, dependent on the age and developmental stage your child is in, we just went through sensing, concrete, and abstract—depending on what developmental stage your child's in according to their age (and a side note is, children can stay in one stage because of a neurological problem or a psychological problem). So, dependent on the age and developmental stage your child is in—concrete or abstract—you as the parent or adult are responsible to know where your child is and why they are in the stage they're in. Now, what I mean by that is that children, depending on experiences that they've had, can become stuck in a stage.

So, if you have a child that's been horribly neglected and the neglect started when they were born and they were neglected till about the age of 6 or 7, then they could be 15, 16 years old and still be in very concrete stages of seeing things as right or wrong, good or bad, black or white, mean or nice—these very all or nothing kind of statements, because they're development has been arrested in those stages, and so what they need is a whole lot of nurturing, and love, and guidance, and validation, and responsibility, and talking to them in a really honest way, and having them have outcomes from their own choices, and teaching them about boundaries, so that they see you as a very consistent, constant being in their life, that will hold them accountable and also have mercy and validation for them.

If you do not understand why your child is acting in a manner they are, seek for additional resources and support so you can help your child better understand why they're behaving the way that they are.

If your child is behaving really concretely and they're 15 years old, you know that they have the capacity to abstract and they may not want to experience the discomfort of abstracting because inside that abstraction is pain. When I'm 15 years old, what comes with being a 15-year-old is that I need to get up at five o'clock in the morning and feed the chickens, or I need to wash the van, or have a job to earn money for my activities. And the Truth is, is that 15 year olds can do those things—even if they've had trauma, they still can do those things. And part of helping them heal that trauma is having them show up in ways that are really responsible so they start feeling a sense of connection with their self, they start feeling a sense that they can do things and that they are enabled to be strong, and capable, and successful in life, like they're going to feel good about getting up at five in the morning *after* they get up at five in the morning, and they've fed those chickens, and they see how happy the chickens are, and they gather the eggs, and they bring all the eggs in, and they make themselves breakfast, and they're eating the eggs and they're thinking wow, I feel really good about this, I've helped the chickens, the chickens have supported me by producing eggs, and they start feeling really capable.

When kids are between birth to around 8 years old, they perceive things—life is very black and white, right or wrong. Their perception is their reality, but it is not The Reality. They perceive reality, but it is not The Reality, and depending on the amount of distortion of Truth or inaccuracies that they've been experiencing, either because they've been enabled to live in distortion, and/or if they've had people around them that have been modeling distortion for them, that will determine the child's ability to abstract and be emotionally honest and responsible for themselves.

So, another way to say that is depending on if the child has been enabled to not live in Truth and has been allowed to live in distortion, and/or if they've been around other people who are modeling distortion, that will determine for the child their ability to abstract and be emotionally honest. A child who can abstract logically and emotionally can empathize, and validate, and participate in vulnerability. They are emotionally honest and responsible for their own feelings, and choices, and thoughts. They know how to reframe distortion into the Truth.

Children are born connected. They are open, they're humble, and don't understand about responsibility and honesty when they're born. They are focused on themselves and what their wants and needs are. Therefore it's our responsibility to teach them to learn about things and people that are outside of them and help them to connect with the people who are on the outside of them, which means empathize, while also maintaining themselves. So you're teaching them to connect with themselves and you're also teaching them how to connect with another person.

Much of what therapy is or what therapists do is re-parenting people. Therapists take people back to a time where they can feel safe and be vulnerable. And they validate them and teach them life skills such as honesty, and responsibility, and empathy, and compassion, and vulnerability, and boundaries, and humility, which all creates this sense of connection.

Children need to be attached. Attachment happens very young in life and if it doesn't happen at a young age in life, if the parent or the care providers are not connectable because they too are in a lot of distortion and they're not warm, fuzzy things to connect to, then you can learn it later on in life. But ideally, you want a child to be born and you want that child to connect to you and attach to you. And you want to teach them about boundaries and honesty. And you want to teach them how to be vulnerable and teach them how to think, and be responsible, and humble, and compassionate.

And if that is not something that a child gets when they're little, they will begin to act out in ways that evidence that they have not attached. We have psychological disorders for this, it's called Reactive Attachment Disorder. And I have watched children and also teens who have been diagnosed with Reactive Attachment or Oppositional Defiant Behaviors heal. The parents or the guardians start getting help in teaching the children how to show up in ways that are nurturing, and vulnerable, and validating, and responsible. And over a period of time, as these care providers and these parents learn how to behave in these ways and share it with their children, these kids start responding very well to this kind of consistent, constant behavioral patterns that the adults in their life are offering them.

Children want to be held accountable. It causes them to feel a sense of value and safety. It tells them that they matter. When you say, "That is not alright," or, "I'm upset with you because you have behaved this way and you hurt my feelings." Children want to know how they're affecting other people. Now, they may act like they don't care because they're hurt and angry *and* they're human beings and they want to be connected. And this is how you teach a child how to stay connected to oneself, is you hold them accountable, you teach them how to be emotionally honest, and you allow them to have experiences where they can *feel* for not only themselves but for another thing like the chickens, or feel for the van, like the van is dirty and we want to keep our things clean, and nice, and organized, and tidy. And so, they start having empathy for things and for people.

When children are taught distorted thoughts—and the reason why kids get taught distorted thoughts is because they're part of a world where the people that they're interacting with, everybody has distortion. And because everyone has distortion, children are vulnerable to believe the distortion of the people around them. So, our responsibility as adults in these children's world is to really pay attention to how much distortion we have and then clean that stuff up as fast as we can so that we don't pass it on to our kids. And it isn't about like, *clean it all up and then you'll never have distortion again*, it's about when distortion comes, be responsible for yourself and own it, and reframe it back into the Truth so that your child hears the distortion but then also sees you say "*that's not the Truth, here's the Truth*," and they watch you humbly, and responsibly, and honestly turn those things back into the Reality. So they watch you model correct principles of turning distortion back into Reality and Truth.

If children are taught distorted thoughts from their care providers and their environment, it will dramatically affect their emotional and mental development.

I want to share a handful of these distorted statements that are what I call silent killers of children if they're not reframed back into Reality and Truth. So, there's a continuation of distortion of Truth. So, there's either *hold things in the Truth* or *hold things in distortion*. And when I say the word distortion, what I mean by that is that I am in distortion of The Truth. So, when I'm in Truth, I'm in Reality, I'm where the facts are, I'm where things are known and can be stated by a third party, it's where there are eternal principles.

When I'm in distortion, I am literally in distortion of The Truth that I just explained. And inside distortion, there is a continuum that moves from one side to the other and one side of the continuum is self-adulation, which is pride and arrogance. And the other side of the continuum is self-denigration, or being really aggressive, or mean, or hateful to yourself.

And inside this distortion of Truth is where I'm trying to control Reality. I'm trying to control the facts. I'm trying to control my vulnerability. I'm trying to control my feelings by controlling my thoughts and that's where I start distorted them. If I distort my thoughts, then my feelings will be skewed and I'll feel a sense of **control**, which is completely illogical and dishonest. However, it feels like if I can control—which is an illusion—my vulnerability and control the Reality, then I won't have to think the facts and therefore I won't have to feel the uncomfortable feelings that come with the facts. So, as I'm sitting here talking to you about this, you can see how ridiculous that is, that you *cannot* control Reality. It's like saying I want to control the river from flowing downstream—you cannot do it. Or I want to control the weather, or I want to control my brother, or I want to control the fact that I got sick, or I want to control that I broke my arm, I don't want to break my arm, and it's like, I've already broken my arm—I can't control that.

There's no way to control Reality and therefore your vulnerability. But distorted thoughts of self-adulation and self-denigration teach children that they have this magical ability to do so. And so, we as adults, as we start hearing their distorted statements of self-adulation and self-denigration, it is our responsibility to **very quickly confront them** and invite them to see their distortion of Truth, invite them to see how they're trying to control their vulnerability and Reality, and invite them to come back into the Truth of what it is.

## [00:35:54] Statements of Self-Adulation

Here are some statements of someone who is in the side of self-adulation. Now, again, this is distortion of the Truth. They say things like this.

- “I don't have to follow the rules.”
- “I'm better than... you, or them, or that.”
- “I'm an exception.”
- “Because this, I can do that.”
- “They should have given me \_\_\_\_\_.” They should have given me more food. Or they should have given me more time.
- Or they say something like, “I'm going to do this just this once.” Or they'll say, “I know we're out of time but I'm going to continue.” I'm going to still talk to you even though I know we're out of time.
- They say, “I'm right and you're wrong.”
- Distortion of self-adulation says “That shouldn't have happened.” Like, I got a paper cut and that shouldn't have happened.
- It says, “I'm the best, or I'm unique, or I'm different.”
- Or I say, “What's wrong with you?”
- Or I say, “Because I said so.” Like, “You need to do this because I said so.” It's very controlling.
- Self-adulation says, “I'm great and I always know what I'm doing. I'm an expert at everything.”
- “I don't need help, I can do it myself.”
- “I don't have to apologize. I'm not sorry. They should apologize.”
- “I didn't do anything wrong.”
- “I don't know and they do know, and you can't control me.”
- “You can't stop me,” or “You can't make me.”
- “I'm untouchable. I'm invincible.”
- “Don't you wish you were me?”
- “I did all of this.” Like, *I* did all of this.
- “You didn't do that.” Let's say somebody did something, like they painted something, or created something, or accomplished something, and I say to them, “You didn't do that.”
- People who are self-adulating react to something and act like you know what was said, or done, or felt without gathering Truthful, accurate information.
- “What I say goes.”
- “It's not my fault.”

And the false belief behind all those self-adulating statements is this belief that says I'm not enough. That's the false belief behind it.

## **[00:38:21] Statements of Self-Denigration**

Now, let's go to the self-denigrating side of the distortion.

Again, this is still dishonest statements, an ability, or an illusion, or a fantasy trying to control Reality, trying to control their vulnerability. Here's what self-denigration sounds like.

- I'm bad.
- I'm stupid.
- I can't do it.
- You're right, I'm wrong.
- It's too hard.
- What's wrong with me?
- I'll never measure up.
- I'm always in the wrong.
- I'll wait until it comes again.
- You first, I don't deserve.
- I'm too fat, I'm too tall, I'm too short, I'm too smart.
- I don't know, I need to give up.
- They show up like a martyr and they show up in victim language.
- I'm usually the problem.
- I'm not important.
- I don't matter.
- You know more than I do.
- I'm less than you.
- I'm less than dirt.
- I shouldn't have gotten the raise.
- I never know what I'm doing.
- Do what you want, I don't care, I'll take what's left over.
- I'm sorry for \_\_\_\_\_ (breathing, for coming, for talking, for apologizing).
- My opinion is stupid and dumb.
- Wow, I could never do that.
- Things like this just happen when I'm around.
- I always get lost.
- I'm horrible.
- Nothing matters.

- I'm a chump, I'm goofy, I'm retarded.
- This always happens to me.
- It's always my fault.
- I can't do things right.
- My body is bad. My body betrayed me.
- I'll never measure up.
- Life isn't fair.
- You never understand me.
- I'm not good and I never will be.

Aaah! That doesn't feel good. So, those are just a handful and there are thousands and thousands of more distortions of Truth that children (and also adults but we're talking kids), children go into the self-adulating and/or self-denigrating side of distortion in their effort or their belief that they can control Reality and their vulnerability, which they cannot.

Now, I want to go back to the beginning of the podcast where we talked about children and how they develop. When children are taught and allowed to stay inside distortions of Truth such as self-adulation and/or self-denigration, they get sick. They get sick, they get emotionally and psychologically sick. So, as children develop, they need adults in their world to hear their distorted thoughts, their self-denigration and self-adulation, and invite them to reframe them back into Reality and Truth.

If children are allowed to think distortedly, they will grow into adults who think distortedly. This is where people—children and adults—become emotionally, and mentally, and psychologically ill. They are diagnosed with all sorts of emotional and mental issues. They can be healed if they are 1) willing to hear the Truth and reframe it back into the Truth; 2) tell themselves the Truth and be emotionally honest about what distortion they entered into, and be willing to step out of it; and 3) if they're willing to take responsibility for their choices to enter into distortion and then be willing to responsibly reframe their experiences back into Truth by being honest, responsible, and humble. These three steps exit distortion.

A child's development from birth through 18 years is so crucial, **and** there's no one in the world who goes unscathed through childhood and adolescence. The children who have relatively healthy adults around them and environments that are healthy do rather well, and launch into the world and are willing to continue learning, yet other children who have much distortion around them struggle more, because they don't realize and they continue to perceive their experiences in distortion, and thus they keep creating—for the most part—their own comfortable outcomes. And that is why they need to learn how to reframe these things back into Truth.

So many of these children, now adults, are unwilling once they've lived so much in distortion, they become adults and then they become unwilling to humble themselves.

They have not practiced humility all through their childhoods. They've been living in distortion which is the violator of humility. And so, they refuse to humble themselves because it scares them to enter back into Reality, and Truth, and vulnerability, because that is where responsibility lies.

So, when children are being taught how to be honest, responsible, and humble, they are taught that their choices have consequence and that they are responsible to experience the consequence.

And so, typically as a child, you don't have a difficult time being humble and working through your choices and consequences, being willing to feel the discomfort of your choices and your consequences. But once you become an adult and you haven't done that in your childhood, it's very threatening to be asked to do that. They have deceived themselves—and they're usually unconscious when they're in childhood—that they don't have to experience Reality and Truth the way the rest of us do. And because they've done this for so long, they believe that their reality is The Reality. And it's very, very painful to come back from that space and therefore few people ever do so because of the pain of it, because of the pain of experiencing responsibility, the pain of being humble, the pain of learning how to empathize. The pain of it. The pain of realizing that you were disconnected for years, the pain of not feeling the attachment to your environment, or to your care providers, or your parents. It's very painful. It's another testament of why it's so important to correct distortion when they're children. When they're children, they're not as prideful, they're not as scared to be wrong and change as a person who's been caught in that life for years.

So, I invite anyone, whatever age you are, whether you're an adult or you're a child, to always reframe distortion back into Truth. And if you have charge over a child, help them to experience the natural implied consequences of their choices so that they will learn how to choose to be humble, they'll learn how to be responsible, they'll learn how to be honest, and stay inside Reality where Truth exists, and where emotions are present, and where connection awaits them.

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